

Arkitektur- og designhøgskolen i Oslo

**Masteroppgave i Urbanisme**

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## Other Cities

**How may feminist and gender theory contribute  
to contemporary, Norwegian, urban discourses ?**

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”The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city.”

(Harvey 2008)

Figure 1 (front page): The Book of the City of Ladies, Christine Pizan, 1405.  
Pizan challenged contemporary notions of women as unruly, incompetent and sinful - serving to undermine the good and orderly society and masculine civility and superior moral. She uses the lives of virtuous ladies and deeds as building blocks to assemble an alternative vision of women in the methaporic *City of Ladies*.

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Figure 2: This bag with its associated pamphlets () were produced by the Female Society for Birmingham as part of their campaign for the abolition of slavery. () The bags were made by women at sewing circles where objects decorated with abolitionist emblems were produced to decorate their homes and for distribution as part of their campaigning activities. The image of the black slave woman nursing her child printed on the front of this bag was one of a series commissioned specifically by the Society for distribution in albums of prints and on their propaganda merchandise. () The significance of this image of a nursing mother is that it countered the common stereotype of the time of black women as licentious and lustful. These images were very successful in encouraging an emotional engagement with the plight of slave women, but in the long term passive stereotypes such as these were very detrimental in the struggle against racism.

(Line 2017)



Jeg ser, jeg ser...  
Jeg er vist kommet paa en feil klode!  
Her er saa underligt...

I'm looking, I'm looking  
I must be on the wrong planet!  
It seems so strange here..

(Obstfelder 1893)(my translation, 2017)

Many people find resonance in Obstfelder's description of alienation in the modern world. To introduce this master thesis on a personal note; some of my own personal feelings of “being on the wrong planet”, have had to do with observing the, to me always mystifying, intriguing and “strange” process of gendering in the many different forms that it takes in everyday life. Being a white, educated woman in a wealthy welfare state, with long traditions of egalitarianism, do not render the experience of severe individual oppression and victimisation an obvious cause for taking an interest in gendering and feminist theory. On the contrary, much as I identify in solidarity with the suffering of women all over the world due to gender inequality, it is not something that I personally emphasize in the present work, all though it is an inescapable part of the feminist cause historically and at present. Instead I would draw attention to the empowering and creative side to feminist and gender theory, as a source of interest and inspiration for urbanism and urbanists. It is the unconventional radicalism, the explosive transformative power, the self-reflexive and probing mode of action and the benevolent and generous cause, that prove an attraction and draws me personally, to feminist theory. As well as the creative and explorative spirit - which is the most felicitous side of feminism to me, as an urbanist in the making. In terms of the urban feminism bears the promise of infinite other possible ideals and models of sociospatial relations, based on values of pleasurable and egalitarian coexistence. In this thesis I would propose, that feminist and gender theory indeed has the power to transfix us in dreams of other kinds of planets - other cities.

I approached this master thesis without any academic background from social science or feminist theory. This, in addition to the wealth and diversity of academic traditions that inspire feminism, meant that large parts of the work have consisted in gaining fundamental knowledge on feminist theory, in order to identify concepts and themes of particular germaneness to urbanism. I share in the experience of Virginia Woolf's, that “any question about sex” is – seemingly - controversial (Woolf 2002, 6). A proclaimed interest in gender and feminist theory is often met with counter-challenges of legitimacy and relevance. This is especially true in the context of contemporary Norwegian academia, architecture, planning and urbanism, as well as everyday life. In response to this, I found it imperative to look at the history of the *gendered city*, going back to the earliest records in antiquity and building the argument, that there is in fact such a thing in existence, before and now.

A twofold hypothesis lies behind the work: Firstly, that all western cities, being the cultural product of gendered societies, are also thoroughly gendered. Secondly, that feminist and gender approaches to the study of the city, can produce rich and complex new knowledge and methodology, relevant also to the present context, and provide inspiration for alternative city ideals – other cities. I have found support for both assumptions. At the end of the work I adhere to the idea, that feminist and gender approaches may prove constructive to normative urban theory and policy, involving issues of social sustainability, the discourse of Just Cities and Right to the City and public health issues in the context of the urban. These issues suffer

from lack of address and can be overrun within the present regime of neoliberal, capitalist urbanisation (Harvey 2009; Susan S. Fainstein 2011; Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015; Hofstad 2017). More significantly I believe feminist theory to be a propitious and largely unexplored source of inspiration offering alternative and radical ideals of the city based on individual agency, creativity, playfulness, performativity and pleasure. Although I have not come as far as conceptualising or demonstrating in detail what a feminist urbanism may consist in, hopefully I have manifested the promise and potential of such a concept, and assembled background material from which research questions can be formulated. I propose the formulation of three feminist inspired alternative urban ideals that encompass notions of otherness as a positive agency and quality: The performative city, the pleasurable city and the radical city. Together these constitute an investigatory platform upon which ideals of the other city can be explored.

I would like to thank my family for steadfast backing, unwavering enthusiasm and admirable patience. Gerard, Nikolai, Synnøve and Matilda - without your sustenance of “a room of my own and” (a bit more than) “five hundred pounds a year” (Woolf 2002) - I would never have had the courage to embark on this project, notwithstanding the stamina to carry it through. I am particularly grateful to my husband Gerard, for enduring the feminist invasion of family life with good humour, a philosophical stance and stoical patience. Thank you for the many critical dinner conversations, (and for the expedite dealing with the dishes afterwards). Not the least, thank you for the provision of an authentic native English proofreading!

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Feminism as applied to urbanism

On first sight the image of Christine Pizan's city of ladies, would appear to support a separatist and exclusionary city ideal, a city *for* (only) women, promoting superiorist, biased and antagonistic gender relations. In fact the city of ladies is a metaphor for inclusive, benevolent and egalitarian gender relations in common efforts to sustain ideals of a good and moral life. Pizan contemplated the legitimacy and authority of the exclusively negative representations of women in all contemporary cultural production, which served to belittle women's competence, will and agency to be pillars of a good society. She took it upon her to embark on a journey through historic material that would serve to disprove this idea. *The City of Ladies* is constructed using stories of good women and their deed as building blocks, in an ideal of the good city where gender relations are seen as mutually supportive and induce feelings of affirmation, acquiescence and respect. It is an ideal of the good society and the good city very different from that of learned men in her time, and for centuries to come, who based their ideology on traditional values of patriarchal privilege. The city Pizan lived in was of an entirely different mould, being gendered through and through and maintaining existing asymmetrical power between genders as well as other socially constructed groups of difference. In and through the values upon which the city was produced, it served to reproduce an inegalitarian and divided city to the benefit of the dominant cultural elite.

The feminist paradigm states that most societies are organized along such asymmetrical social relations between males and females, privileging men and putting women at a disadvantage. Along with other categories of socially constructed difference, such as material wealth and ethnicity, the gender dichotomy is evident in all cultural production, including cities. Gender systems and stereotyping of male and female character display much cultural variation, attributing to the constructed nature of such relations (Eriksen og Frøshaug 1998; Bourdieu 2001). Cultural landscapes such as cities form part of a sociospatial dialectic, whereby the spatial is a resultant of the social and in turn tend to reproduce the existing social structures and distributive patterns of power (Soja 1980; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1994). Structural gender relations are particularly resilient to change, due both to the deeply rooted nature of them. Critiquing gender is therefore controversial, and spatial gender transgressions, as when women venture into the public sphere presumably on an equal footing with men, are often met with repercussions, as will be demonstrated (Bourdieu 2001; Bourdieu 2010). Urban structures are most often analysed through the lens of the dominant societal order. This is so because those in power have the means to define culture and produce and preserve lasting evidence, whilst the underprivileged pass through the world leaving less trace physically and culturally. The representation of the dominant culture continues into academia; what is deemed significant of research is also defined within the dominant societal order. When it comes to issues of gender and the city this is evident in a long line of gender blind academic research and tradition, which leave large blind spots in resource material and epistemology when it comes to gender. In a patriarchal society, history is told in terms of a male perspective, at the same time pertaining to be universal. Supplementing His-Story with Her-Story, through the accumulation of resource material, new epistemology and development of methodology so as to generate a fuller picture, has been one main strand of feminist academic work.

Urban life is contradictory when it comes to social equality: Cities provide opportunity for accumulation of wealth and power to privileged groups, as well as increased vulnerability to others, due to anonymity and lack of networks. For women, as well as other underprivileged

groups, a compact, specialised urban environment can impede daily life and even physical movement in societies with strong social control. At the same time urban life can offer invisibility and opportunity, access to economic independence and societal mobility. A closer study of urbanity through the view of feminist theory will reveal both sides to the city; the perseverance of gender difference and the slow wheel of change to increased social equality. Cities have provided the main harbour for incremental subversion of gender and outspoken feminist political activity. Cities also provide a major research field for contemporary academic gender and difference study (J. Butler 1988; Evans 1995; Ravetz 1996; Wilson 1992). The dual role of the city, both as a scene of legitimisation, representation and reproduction of existing societal order *and* simultaneously as an arena of diversity, opposition, and innovation, has made the city an object of focus for many radical movements and theoreticians (Wilson 1992; Harvey 2009; Allen og Young 2011). The urban is seen as a model for transformations at the level of society as for individuals. Can feminist and gender theory likewise support alternative and radical concepts of more egalitarian cities?

It is beyond controversy, that in the overall global context today, the gendered city is an obstacle to realising basic human rights and principles of democracy and egalitarianism. In the context of the developing world, gender is still very much a legitimate category of analysis. For instance, in addressing the consequences of the powerful divide between male public sphere and female private sphere so characteristic of gendered cities, to which we shall return later. This sociospatial construct bars the safe and free admittance of women to the public sphere in large parts of the developing world, diminishing their access to health care, education, work opportunities and other infrastructure as well as basic democratic rights to the vote and political participation (UN Women 2016). Likewise preventing men a more equal involvement in the affairs of the private sphere, such as family activities and childcare. But are concepts of the gendered city also relevant in the context of western societies like Norway, with strong egalitarian traditions and a reputation for a well-established institutionalised gender equality? There is relatively little evidence that the gendered city in the western context has received much attention in social and humanistic sciences, urbanism, planning or architecture. Although gender studies has had a formidable academic growth and recognition in the past few decades - and has had an impact on social and humanistic sciences, it has not to any substantial degree spilled over into the field of urban theory. Does this indicate that the concept of a divided city is obsolete and irrelevant in developed countries?

This master thesis is directed at establishing some overview of relevant intersections between feminist theory, gender theory and urban theory. More specifically it looks at some areas where feminist and gender theory might have particular bearing to issues in contemporary Norwegian urban discourse and practice. Research indicates that social sustainability receives less attention than climate and economic sustainability in the context of the current neoliberalist urbanisation regime, where processes are largely market driven, and conducted by privatised or semi-privatised bodies. There are tensions between concerns for climate and economical sustainability, which both promote multi-nodal, high density, attractive compact city development, and social sustainability, that question the quality of this particular form of built environment as well as the distribution of urban resources amongst different social groups (Harvey 2009; Susan S. Fainstein 2011; S. S. Fainstein 2015; Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015). The hypothesis behind this thesis is that feminist and gender concepts of difference, othering, sociospatial dialectics and divided city, are apt and promising tools for addressing these tensions.

The feminist critique is controversial, likewise the concepts of a gendered city, in particular in the contexts of modern western societies. In response to this, the thesis starts with a selective history of the concept of the gendered city, as it has developed in western thought from the origins in antiquity, through medieval to modern times and to postmodern concepts of divided cities. It starts with a brief comparison between Plato's and Aristotle's conceptualisations of

the difference between the sexes, and the way this influences and legitimizes their models for gender relations and society as a whole, including ideals for the good city state. Furthermore it turns to Augustin and the Christian development of gender difference, that was fully developed in medieval times. We will see how Aristotle's advocacy of the supremacy of men was given religious authority, with a particular eye to the use of spatial metaphors that support ideals of a Good Christian City, that was fundamental to the development of European urban ideals for centuries to come (Benevolo 1995; Cruickshank mfl. 1996; Kostof 1999). From then on we latch on to the history of feminism, from the period of the Enlightenment through the four so-called waves of feminism until present times. We starts with some forebears of the feminist critique; Olympe de Gouge, Mary Woolstonecraft and Jane Austen (Evans 1995; Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, og Cohen 1989; Rampton 2015). Then turn to the first real wave of feminism within the suffragette and the anti-slavery movements, continuing with Virginia Woolf and modernity. Simone de Beauvoir receives due attention as a central theoretician of the modern feminist critique, introducing key concepts of *seconding* and *othering*. The second wave of feminism looks at the period between the wars and addresses the development of feminist theory as part of the socio-political and transformative urban movements of these years, and the intersection with issues of housing, social welfare planning, architecture and modernist ideals of the Good City. Third wave feminist coincides with postmodernity and post structuralism, along with the future fourth wave emerging horizon of feminism. This takes us through many of the most central concepts of feminist theory and critique that are particularly promising and relevant to urban theory.

Following the feminist practise of focusing on the everyday lives of women, the thesis is anchored down in the urban gendered reality of women, looking at the dynamics between this experience, the advances of the feminist theory and policy, and the developments within urban theory and planning. It builds up the argument of the gendered city as the lived reality of women in the west through the last two millennia, highlighting the development of gradually more gender-equal cities and the relevance to urban discourses. The last part of the thesis discusses in more detail the relevance of feminist theory and concepts of the divided city in the context of the postmodern condition of globalisation, multiculturalism, capitalism and neoliberalism. It advocates some urban discourses where feminist theory is particularly relevant, such as normative urban discourses of the Right to the City (Harvey 2008; Harvey 2009), and Just City (Susan S. Fainstein 2011; Brenner 2011; Ellefsen 2013) and the use of feminist methodology to address social inequality in public space through a concrete example (Rishaug 2015; Aspelund 2015). It goes on to relate feminist and gender theory and concepts of divided cities to overarching issues of equity, diversity, and democracy, (Susan S. Fainstein 2011; S. S. Fainstein 2015) and concepts of the city as an ideal for "unassimilated otherness" (Allen og Young 2011, 227). The thesis concludes with pointing in the direction of what a conceptualisation of a feminist urbanism might entail, and highlighting some research questions that may be relevant to developing the concept.

As will be evident, this work does not adhere to any one particular academic tradition or conventions in its approach or style of writing. The work lies closest to humanist traditions, as I have a background in Archaeology and History of Art, specializing in Early Christian Art and Architecture. But the methodology and actual writing is also influenced but my background in architecture and planning, and inspired by architectural prose, essayist text and fiction. Both feminism and urbanism are interdisciplinary fields, spanning across a wide range of academic disciplines, traditions and conventions. This is evident in the eclectic and often assembled nature of both feminist and urbanist literature, theory, methods and discourses. Both fields are young and therefore dynamic and constantly evolving. The same goes for the research-material of this thesis, namely the city and the urban environment, as well as urban processes of contemporary society. Overlapping the two fields of feminism and urbanism establishes a third space, where there are no long-standing conventions. This leaves the field open to the formulation of new research expectations and forms. I would advocate that this allows for a degree of freedom and an explorative approach. What this work may lose in

terms of academic rigour and systematics, I hope it gains in the willingness to investigate using multiple perspectives and issue open-ended interpretations. This is what has earned feminist and gender theory a reputation as a fresh wind in academia.

Identifying some interdisciplinary areas of interest between feminism and urbanism, from the perspective of the urbanist, has proved challenging within the confines of a Master Thesis study. The sparse background tradition, the lack of an established ontology, epistemology and methodology, as well as my own lack of training in social theory and feminist theory, means that the process of establishing some platform to work upon, some mode of approach, has been a major challenge. This is true for trying to establish a research approach and a methodology, but also down to the practicalities of identifying relevant source material and establishing a bibliography. I have included a full bibliography at the end, for those who may want to venture into this very promising and acutely relevant overlapping field. I see the final result not so much as a product as a contribution to an ongoing process. The aim has been to establish some overview of the interdisciplinary relevance of feminist theory to urbanism, from the point of view of urbanism, upon which research questions may be formulated. I am content in the likelihood that I have managed to trace the contours of what may emerge as a feminist approach to urbanism. I do not, in Woolf's words, pertain to be "telling truths", but rather "...only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold..." (Woolf 2002, 6). And that opinion is that in the intersection of feminist and urban theory, there is a timely and promising interdisciplinary arena for research and mutual inspiration.

## **1.2 Some notes on terminology**

Gender studies have roots in modern feminist theory. The term feminism is most often used to describe a broad movement of social critique and political activism, focusing on a culturally constructed gender difference. Its theoretical foundation - feminist theory, critiques cultural, economic and political practises based on gender. Contemporary feminism also addresses gendering per se, and has branched out to include not just the cause of women, but also men, transgender concerns and other categories of social difference, contributing to postcolonial theory, black theory and multicultural theory. For the purpose of this master I use the terms feminist and gender theory indiscriminately, unless a particular interpretation is specified in the text. This is partly due to the historic nature of the research material. In addition I believe that in a global overall context, the category of women, which is addressed through a feminist stance, is still both necessary and constructive, in addition to general gender research.

When it comes to the terms sex and gender, more detail will be provided later. It suffices to mention beforehand, that it has been customary to use *sex* to describe biological difference between male and female reproductive roles. Gender, on the other hand, has been used to denote the socially constructed genders of man and woman, along with stereotypical manners of behaviour and practise. This divide no longer applies in contemporary gender research, which views gender as a social construct - a representation that is owned by the individual. By this logic, a person with male reproductive organs can identify as a woman, but in a binary gender culture as ours, will be at risk of social misgendering. For the purposes of this Master Thesis, I utilize the historic divide between sex and gender, because of my historical material, and because it suffices for my intentions of looking at gendering in and through the city.

## **2 A room of one's own - and five hundred pounds a year - Virginia Woolf and post structural feminist theory**

But, you may say, we asked you to speak about women and fiction - what has that got to do with a room of one's own? I will try to explain. When you asked me to speak about women and fiction I sat down on the banks of a river and began to wonder what the words meant. They might mean simply a few remarks about Fanny Burney; a few more about Jane Austen; a tribute to the Brontës and a sketch of Haworth Parsonage under snow; some witticisms if possible about Miss Mitford; a respectful allusion to George Eliot; a reference to Mrs Gaskell and one would have done. But at second sight the words seemed not so simple. The title women and fiction might mean, and you may have meant it to mean, women and what they are like; or it might mean women and the fiction that they write; or it might mean women and the fiction that is written about them; or it might mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together and you want me to consider them in that light. But when I began to consider the subject in this last way, which seemed the most interesting, I soon saw that it had one fatal drawback. I should never be able to come to a conclusion. I should never be able to fulfil what is, I understand, the first duty of a lecturer - to hand you after an hour's discourse a nugget of pure truth to wrap up between the pages of your notebooks and keep on the mantelpiece for ever. All I could do was to offer you an opinion upon one minor point - a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leave the great problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction unsolved. I have shirked the duty of coming to a conclusion upon these two questions - women and fiction remain, so far as I am concerned, unsolved problems. But in order to make some amends I am going to do what I can to show you how I arrived at this opinion about the room and the money. I am going to develop in your presence as fully and freely as I can the train of thought which led me to think this. Perhaps if I lay bare the ideas, the prejudices, that lie behind this statement you will find that they have some bearing upon women and some upon fiction. At any rate, when a subject is highly controversial - and any question about sex is that - one cannot hope to tell the truth. One can only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold. One can only give one's audience the chance of drawing their own conclusions as they observe the limitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncrasies of the speaker. Fiction here is likely to contain more truth than fact. Therefore I propose, making use of all the liberties and licences of a novelist, to tell you the story of the two days that preceded my coming here...

(Woolf 2002, 5)

Within the opening pages of *A Room of One's Own* Virginia Woolf draws an outline of some of the most central themes and paradoxes of feminist and gender discourse. It was published a century ago, and based on a series of lectures Woolf held in 1928. But even after several 'waves' of feminism and decades of feminist and gender studies, the text still holds the position as one of the great polemics of the feminist paradigm - as well as providing inspiration for what may be conceptualised as a Feminist Urbanism.

### **2.1 The gender dichotomy and sociospatial difference**

The first pages span a range of relevant issues relevant to both academic and general cultural production due to a long line of androgynist tradition: The lack of female authorship in most areas of cultural and academic production, exclusion or denigration of existing female authors or works, a systematic lack of interest in themes relating to women's particular lives and affairs. All of it resulting in a lack of epistemology, ontology and methodology on the difference between men's and women's actual life experiences in a gendered society. The stereotyping and naturalizing of female and male identity in most arenas of cultural production, often renders femininity as a mystical, unruly, raw force - an agent of disruption

and opposition to existing male law and order. (Massey 1994; Pettersen, Tove 2011; Foxhall og Neher 2012). These unsymmetrical gender relations that Woolf critiques in *A Room of One's Own*, create structural social differentiation based on gender, that privilege men and masculinity whilst disadvantaging women and femininity. Non-egalitarian social relations condition the opportunities and life-possibilities of individuals, through systematic reinforcement of difference, normalising the status quo and legitimising policies that support it. Furthermore it affects individual's perceptions of themselves and others, in creating what Marx calls a false consciousness, affecting the self-determination and self-belief of individuals (Marx, Spencer, og Griffith 2013). Difference-structures based on gender, race, class, cast, age and ethnicity are usual in all known societies and have great permanence (Eriksen og Frøshaug 1998). Power-relations between social positions are mutually constitutive, meaning that social mobility of a subservient group directly effects the prestige and privileges by a relative dominant group through the transferring of power. Gender structures work both on the subconscious level, where differences between the sexes is largely naturalized and normalized, as well as on the conscious level, where gender difference often is highly politicized and outspoken. This makes gender, as one of many categories of social difference, very resilient to change (Bourdieu 2001). Gender differences make the lived experience of men and women very different. This makes gender a valid, and often very constructive, category of social analysis, although it is bound with resistance. (Wilson 1992; Zukin 1993; Massey 1994; Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999; Scott 2000; S. S. Fainstein 2015).

Structural relations are built into, and operate through, our physical environment, and when unchallenged, condition future actions, and contribute to the reproduction of the existing social structures. Hence the well-known quote by Winston Churchill in the House of Commons on October 28, 1944: "We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us." («Churchill and the Commons Chamber» 2017). This is what Soja and Lefebvre call a socio-spatial dialectic (Soja 1980; Lefebvre 1991). *A Room of One's Own* explore the complex dynamics that exist between social gender structures, social institutions and the physical organisation of it's built form. It articulates what Massey calls "the gender characteristics of space" (Massey 1994), where the built form is conceptualised both as an imprint of the formally differential positions of women and men in a society, and at the same time a means of reproducing these structures in and through space. On the other hand the system of male "superior turf", that Woolf describes, like any power structure, will reproduce in and through spatial practise unless it is actively negotiated and resisted (Massey 1994; Bourdieu 2001; Woolf 2002). Woolf's meanderings in fictional Oxbridge, where she time and again steps off the public path and onto the exclusive male turf of the campus, and where she fails an attempt to enter the library, only to be barred on account of not being a man, describes the affects of the spatial framework of power on the behaviour and identity of an individual. The small-scale efforts at subversion she describes is a very typical strategy of a subdominant group. Such micro-spatial strategies have most likely given women more freedom and presence in historic cities than the gendered urbanity that comes down to us in literary texts and arts reveals (Hayden 1997; Foxhall og Neher 2012). In fact we know from literary texts and through the material remains, that the spatial boundaries around the seclusion of women in a highly gendered city like the Athenian state, in fact was far more nuanced through daily informal practise (Cantarella 1986; Foxhall og Neher 2012). Woolf's transgression on the university grounds of Oxbridge continues a long tradition of representation, that describes the ever-ongoing dynamics of spatial negotiations between different social groups in the city. Furthermore the story raises the notion that sex, or gender as we would say today, is a *highly controversial subject*. Like any meta-narrative, gender difference is so deeply ingrained in our means of conceptualisation and discourse, that attempts to challenge it is likely to cause incomprehension and questions of legitimacy. Feminist and gender theory, along with multiculturalism, post colonialism and queer theory, share ground with post structuralism in attempting to disclose and deconstruct such meta-narratives.



## 2.2 The feminist challenge to objective truth and the concept of relativity

It is only recently that feminism has risen out of its position of liminality and controversy, and gained its present standing in academic disciplines and mainstream politics, due to the questioning of the legitimacy of the cause. The origin of feminist theory rose from the political activism for worker's rights, the suffragettes fight for the vote and the cause for the abolition of slavery. All movements expressed themselves in action-based demonstrations on streets and public arenas, and both emphasized the close link between various forms of structural social difference and the multiple axis and experiences of oppression that it can cause. Today this form of *intersectionality* is central to all forms of critical theory dealing with disclosing social power relations. The contemporary feminist is conscious of the need to address the dynamics between such multiple forms of difference and overall social inequality.



Figure 3: Suffragette march in the streets of London, photo © Hulton-Deutsch Collection/Corbis, 1911, from newspaper article [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com), 2009.

The banner reveals the close ties between the labour movement, the social reformist movement and the suffragette cause in the first periods of feminist activism.

Woolf radically uses the issue of women and their place in society to raise a critique of *objective truths*. Although male *logo centrism* is at the core of her story and the origins of feminist theory, it is true to say that it goes beyond gender, and presents a critique of the very *idea of singular truths and universality* per se. Instead she promotes *pluralism* of multiple viewpoints. She voices her opinion as one *particular view* open to *multiple interpretations* by *a reader*, and promotes the idea that her perspective is *situated*, in which the *particularity* of her position will inform her view and knowledge of a subject and influence her standpoint and opinions. Lastly Woolf emphasised the *power* that lay in public discourse, the ability of dominant voices to define what is normal and acceptable, which are the “nuggets” of eternal truths (Woolf 2002). Access to public discourse and the power to define *normality*, are tools of social mobility and status, that women are not granted alongside men, as Woolf demonstrates in the metaphor of being barred from entering the library. Fiction, she claims, is as good a source of truth as science, in that it freely admits to be producing subjective, relative, fictitious narrations about a perceived reality, rather than the one authoritarian truth promoted by traditional science. These ideas are perhaps the most central inheritance of the early feminist theory. Furthermore, in this very post-structural scepticism, Woolf represents one of the first theoreticians of postmodern critique, a position that is largely unrecognised.

The relationship of feminist theory, postmodern and post structural ists theories, will be looked at in detail later on.

### 2.3 The feminist critique of gendered private and public spheres

The use of the built landscape as metaphors for male and female spheres, and the description of how the physical environment act as medium for reproducing existing social relations, makes Woolf's story interesting to urbanists. The topography of 'A room of one's own' consists of three spatial categories. The turf and library of the Oxbridge university institution, the private realms of the academics and the natural landscape of river and public path. Woolf uses these three landscapes as a means of conveying the differentiation between public, semi-public and private spheres, and demonstrates how social relations are produced through the patrolling of women's bodies in space. The cultivated, orderly grounds of the campus is male domain, the public sphere of work, knowledge and institutionalized authority and political power. This sphere is carefully monitored and actively defended against the intrusions of certain groups of *others*, in this case women, which are barred on grounds of biological gender. This is the archetypal public sphere in the history of western cities. Although it pertains to be the domain of *all* and the political arena of the *state* and *democracy* (Old French: of the people; of the state; done for the state, Old Latin: Populus, meaning people («Online Epistemology Dictionary» 2017)), it is a socially constructed *all*, which is exclusive. Public arenas in western cities are always heavily gendered in exclusion of females, as well as other groups and act as the main axis of social, economical, cultural and political power in patriarchal societies.

The half-natural, agrarian landscape of riverside and path, on the other hand, is semi-public and less exclusive. It represents the *other* space between private and public, where women and other historically subservient groups carry out everyday activities at the intersection of public and private domains. Historically this other landscape accommodated insignificant and repetitive activities such as farming, trading, fetching water, tending to graves, participating in religious ceremonies and so forth. In the age of Woolf and modernity it also came to include recreation and non-productive work. This *other*, interstitial space is less gendered in western urban tradition, and has provided a legitimate extension of the realm of the private interior, in a dynamic which we could call the *stretching of domesticity*. In societies that are characterised simultaneously by weak social control of men and correspondingly strong social control of women, the practise of veiling of women can also act to construct a 'mobile interior' within which females can circulate in public space, while maintaining the ideal of virtuous female domesticity. The veil worked as an 'extension of the house' often referred to as a "tegidion" meaning "a little roof", a practise that lives on in strong patriarchal cultures today. (Llewellyn-Jones 2003). All in all, women have had more relative freedom in this intermediate sphere, than in the formal public sphere. Sitting on the riverbank, Woolf finds the reclusion necessary to immerse herself in preparing her lecture. Under cover of resting and drawing air in the greenery, in a space dedicated to recreational activity, her activity presents no threat to the established social order, and is left at peace.

The remaining story is built up through a chain of sequences in domestic interiors. Woolf is invited to take meals in the private realms of friend's homes at the outskirts of the Oxbridge grounds. Female access to the social topology of the Oxbridge institution is limited to the private realm, the traditional scene of female lives and affairs in western cities. Beyond being the scene of domestic production, the private sphere is also the arena for small-scale communality, where a private circle of family, relations and friends perform informal and temporal social activities. In heavily gendered societies, the most private spheres of the home are exclusionary of men and require a legitimate pass of entry involving symbolically laden social rituals. In this way the exclusive female private sphere constitute the opposite counterpart to exclusively male public, creating a culturally stable, seemingly natural social

dichotomy of sociospatial difference (Wilson 1992; Victoria and Albert Museum 2011; Foxhall og Neher 2012). This dialectic of sociospatial spheres is a recurrent theme within existing feminist approaches to urbanism. Woolf conveys the idea of subversion and negotiation of space between different users. Through repeated miniscule battles in the actual terrain she oversteps the boundaries between the three spatial spheres, and meets with varying degrees of retaliation. These negotiations and subversions of spatial order and privilege by different groups of users are particularly relevant to the private-public ambivalence of many spaces in today's global cities. Using the feminist concepts of the gender dichotomy, the dynamics of sociospatial gendering and the challenge to objective and universal truths, including that of science, can be useful tools with which to approach postmodern urban issues. These concepts may be particularly useful in developing policies that address the challenges of multicultural diversity and heterogeneity. How do we formulate urban ideals that are sensitive to social difference? Cities that accommodate for, and even celebrate, difference without inequality? How do we analyse the dynamics between extreme physical proximity and at the same time extreme social and cultural distance in urban processes and environments? How do we address the dynamics between social and spatial relations, whether from a gender or any other relevant social perspective, in the increasingly fragmented and polarized urban landscape of the network society? How do we evaluate the social consequences for various social groups resulting from the increasing privatisation and commoditisation of public space? How do we go about formulating some basic common values that represent the many truths about urban reality and quality today? How do we deal with tension and conflicts that are bound to arise in the social and cultural diversity of postmodern global urbanity? Feminist theory would argue that taking a particular social perspective is useful to address these kinds of issues. It also argues for the normative character of these questions. Lastly it advocates a utilitarian approach to research, whereby the questions that we pose, and the ways in which we go about answering them should rise out of the actual need on the ground, that is in the practical urban reality. The measure of usefulness and success is thus in solving actual sociospatial challenges of contemporary urbanity. Both empirical and theoretical research, and look at both processes and actual results. This is especially relevant in relation to the neoliberal regime of increasingly privatized production of the urban environment, where normative issues to do with fairness, equality and public health often conflict and loose out to economic interests (Harvey 2009; Madanipour 2013; Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015).

### **3 Female as 'The deformed male' - early roots of western gendered ideals**

#### **3.1 The origins of western gendered topography in antiquity**

Various forms of gendering of the built environment are evident in most known cultures, but play out in a wide array of spatial models (Massey 1994; Hayden 1997; Eriksen og Frøshaug 1998; Bridge og S 2000). In western urban history the overruling urban model for well over 2500 years, has been one based on a gender dichotomy of male female. The exterior public space has been large scale, communal, and representing the state or nation, a municipality or a town. The interiors of private spaces are particular, small scale, segregated and isolated representing the unit of the family. This sharply defined structure is evident in literature, art, through various fields of academic work and in the physical forms of cities. The spatial turn in social and human sciences with increased focus on the particular and the lived lives of individuals, has nevertheless contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics between the cultural representations of the gendered city, the actual physical reality and the lived lives. The picture that we see today of the dialectic between the male public exterior and

the female private interior is much more ambivalent than the history of urbanity have had us believe. Along with formal patriarchal structures that assign strict spatial differentiation between various societal groups, there emerges now a parallel picture of informal negotiation, temporality, resistance and creativity, most often on small scale, whereby individuals or groups challenge and subvert the sociospatial structure. Sometimes this happened in formalized, temporary spatial activities like the religious processions and ceremonies in classical Athens, where women had prominent roles marching through public space and being represented in public art. More often it happened in multiple, clandestine, informal trespassing in daily lives. In Athens this could consist, for instance, in women utilising their access to spatial border zones, such as roof terraces, balconies, cemeteries or wells, to gain a greater freedom without compromise.

### 3.2 Aristotle's formulation of woman as a lacking man

In order to legitimize the idea of the western gendered city and to gain knowledge about the dynamics that have sustained it, we will take a look back to the formative influence of the Athenian City state in the 5th century BC. We will spend some time in looking at this because looking at historic material from highly gendered societies and cities, from our removed position in a relatively gender-equal context, is a very effective way of divulging the mechanisms of gendered space and formulating a concept of what the gendered city is, as well as what it offers in terms of research angles.

We know from literary sources that the difference between male and female, and the degree to which the difference should inform the organisation of society, was a much debated political and philosophical topic in Ancient Athens. The classical scholars had empirical knowledge of sexual difference and the processes of conception, pregnancy, birth and breast feeding, but a limited understanding of the biology behind it. The core of the gender debate lay in the significance that was attributed to these differences; Was there an *essential* gender difference beyond biology? And to what degree should such a difference inform the social and relationships between the sexes, the distribution of work, politics and the material built form. In large parts of the world today, a dual gender model which advocates *essential gender differences* beyond reproductive organs and abilities, still informs a strict male-female gender divide in societal and political organisation (Wilson 1992; Massey 1994; NCFW 2016). Antique philosophy, as well as archaeology, provides us with the means to increased knowledge of past models of the gendered city, as basis of a feminist critique of contemporary urban ideals.

Aristotle (348 - 322 BC) conceptualised the gender difference that came to bear until the enlightenment, and then gradually lessening onwards. His theoretical position conformed to, and legitimised the conventions of the Greek City State - a hierarchical society divided by gender, class, ethnicity and citizenship. Individuals were assigned essential characteristics and roles in society accordingly. Aristotle used biological gender-difference as a defining criterion for stating that females were lacking when compared to men and therefore had lesser ability and lesser value to society. He legitimised this view in his theory of reproduction. Females came into being as the result of a faulty conception, due to the lack of male heat and excess of female cold during the time of intercourse. Female fosters were faulty male fosters. Maleness was therefore the measure of natural perfection and the divinely ordained universal standard for human beings. A woman was lacking and misshapen to the degree that she lacked the physical and cultural characteristics of males (Pettersen, Tove 2011). Aristotle transcribed the classical binary ontology of nature versus culture, matter versus spirit, body versus mind, passivity versus activity - to female versus male (Paulsson 1962). This cemented the concept of a gender *dichotomy*, that takes the form of man/ not- *man*, as in the logical pair of *a/* not- *a*. This mutually constituting and logically proved truth, was to influence the relations between men and women and their roles in society. The definition of females as the

lacking other, was used to legitimize the discrimination and policing of women. Femininity was the antithesis to existing stability and order, and needed controlling by masculine virtues: “as regards the sexes, the male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject” («Classic network: ‘The Nature of Women in Plato and Aristotle’» 2016). Accordingly Aristotle advocated that the more fully developed, morally superior, male must hold a dominant position in private and public life. Women, along with slaves and children, although equipped with reason, lacked the ability to wield it as men, were driven by volatile, shameless and animalistic emotion, and needed to be by governed and ruled over (Pettersen, Tove 2011). Females were assigned in domestic service to male relations in the private realm, and given only conditional access to the urban spaces, veiled and in the pursuit of necessary duties. They were “for serving as faithful guardians of what’s *inside*” (Woolf 2002; Foxhall og Neher 2012). More unusually there was also in Athenian society an ideology that actively insisted that men be *outside*, in the public sphere. Otherwise they risked social branding as ‘banausoi’- a derogatory term to denote the pursuit of (feminine) activities by the fire side (Foxhall og Neher 2012).

The terminology of domestic space reflects the gendered arrangement of the private realm. The private ‘Oikos’(house) had ‘andronlandronitis’ (men’s quarters) and ‘gynaikonitis’ (women’s quarters), and although the spatial gender divide in homes was more complex than the terminology would render, the venturing of male strangers into female quarters was considered a violation of honour to the male head of the family. The interface between the inside and outside of the house thus became a border-fence of sexual and moral control and the very openings of the house became eroticised. Women were discouraged from transgressing the border of the wall. Even being seen through the windows and doors was a moral issue of adulterous nature. Strict policing and sexualisation upheld the gendered differentiation of public and private space. Nonconformist behaviour on behalf of women was met with formal and informal reprisal, using the very terminology of male public space. The selection of terms for the widespread practise of female prostitution in Athens, accounts for the association of vice and the presence of a woman in the urban space. Female prostitutes are described as ‘bridge women’, ‘wanderers’, ‘alley-treaders’, ‘foot-soldiers’ and ‘ground-beaters’. (Cantarella 1986; Foxhall og Neher 2012).

The Athenian city state is often portrayed as one of the most rigidly gendered cities in history, in both contemporary testimony and historic study (Foxhall og Neher 2012). Participatory democracy took place in the Agora and was open only to free Athenian men of a certain economic status and excluded women. Likewise, men conducted commercial life in the agora, market squares and streets, although we know that female household members assisted them. Lisa C. Nevett has argued that the gendering of everyday urban life of the city-state was more adapted to practical life than previously assumed. Through studying evidence of actual movements of women in the architectural spaces of the city she has divulged a more complex sociospatial dynamic. Firstly, the plasticity of the architecture allowed a less stringent inside-outside divide, as roof terraces and second floor windows allowed contact between inside and outside. Furthermore, respectable women tended graves outside of the city walls, visited relative’s homes and fetched water in fountain houses, as well as having prominent roles in religious urban processions (Foxhall og Neher 2012).

Likewise, Athenian men spent time socialising and doing business in their homes. Nevett also argues that the small-scale structures of narrow parallel streets and passages between main thoroughfares in historical Athens could have provided micro-communities where many women could venture relatively freely. This *third space* resonates both with Woolf’s depiction of a gender-neutral interstitial landscape, or the everyday space. It also resonates with the mahala neighbourhood of so many middle- eastern cultures, that have been administrative, religious and geographical micro-units within larger urban structures. Such neighbourhood units have offered a micro-cosmopolitan everyday life, with a range of social groups, urban functions and services, that was small scale enough to allow more flexible

sociospatial arrangements (*Staden: «Grannskap- stadens byar»* 2017). On the whole Nevetz argues that the binary sociospatial structures of the Greek city state, as in many gender divided societies, are likely to have been more elastic than traditional research have indicated. It depended on social class and age, and was bent to meet the pragmatic need of individuals and passing needs in time. Also it was constantly negotiated and sometimes openly challenged by multiple individual practises in the urban landscape. (Foxhall og Neher 2012)



Figure 4: Terracotta hydria (water jar), the Metropolitan Museum of Art, unknown artist (ca. 510–500 B.C.)

Five women filling their water jars (hydriae) at a fountain house (krene), ca. 520 BC. The scene probably illustrates the formal activity of fetching water as part of a ritual ceremony. It is debated whether women of all social classes actually did venture out to wells in pursuit of water on a daily basis. There was most likely a wide array of sociospatial practises in Athens as in many societies historically and today, as to which urban activities and arenas are considered appropriate to women of different socioeconomic classes. Age, ethnicity and necessity also typically play a role in these intricate spatial systems.

The Athenian city state is not representative for the whole of ancient Greek culture when it comes to gendered cities. Spartan girls were for instance raised in a fashion more similar to boys, receiving training in sports and warfare. Women in Sparta enjoyed more personal freedom and moved more freely in the spaces of the city. Their less strictly confined role allowed them greater access to participation in some arenas of public life, most notably sports. In that respect Sparta would provide interesting research grounds for the sociospatial dynamics of gender, which so far has not been addressed in great detail (Paulsson 1962; Cantarella 1986; Foxhall og Neher 2012). Aristotle scorned Greek peoples that allowed for greater gender flexibility as lacking in the necessary virtue and character to build an optimised city-state. To his school, gendering was a political issue. The strict binary gender relations of Aristotle's discourse would champion city and state ideals for the next two

millennia. The determining binary gender model justified the conventions and power relations of the capital of antiquity. The model was passed up through history to our day, bolstered and legitimised by the authority of classical culture as a whole. It cemented the idea that women were essentially and naturally *out of place* in public affairs and public space. Judging by the literary sources from contemporary philosophers as well as the academic classical research traditions, women were only tolerated in streets, marketplaces, cultural and political arenas as an exception, a visitor only suffered by necessity and then heavily policed. New feminist research has shown this to be gendered theory and knowledge, which only partly reveals the actual physical sociospatial reality of everyday life in the ancient city. By using alternative approaches to the material and focusing on women less as subservient and passive individuals and more as active agents, has given a far more nuanced picture. So knowledge, is gendered, which is a central stance to the feminist critique. This is a point we will be returning to all through the discussion of the historic material.

### 3.3 Plato and the ideal state - a radical critique of the gendered city

Reading Aristotle's teacher and opponent Plato (427- 347 BC) still has the power to demonstrate, how a gendered city by no means exhausts the possibilities of sociospatial organisation open to us. It reminds even the modern reader of the degree to which gendering of the physical environment has become normalised to us. Plato represents a critical opposition both to his pupil Aristotle and to the contemporary Greek ideology of the Good City (State) (Pettersen, Tove 2011). His writings have inspired alternative ideologies of social organisation where gender difference does not constitute the most basic premise. Plato acknowledges biological differences in reproduction and nursing, but departs from Aristotle in the importance he ascribes to these differences. Unlike most contemporary philosophers, he places little emphasis on how empirical difference should influence relations between men and women, the roles ascribed to the sexes in society and the overall policies of the city-state. Plato claims that reproductive difference *in itself* is of no consequence as to the overall *characteristics* of individuals, their ability to perform various tasks in society and to fill different social roles in the state. He proposes that individual merit, developed through processes of equal training and education for men and women, would be the best ground on which to select the best suited for all positions in society, including public office and political roles (Pettersen, Tove 2011; «Classic network: 'The Nature of Women in Plato and Aristotle'» 2016).

*The Republic* as well as *The Symposium* entail a strong critique of Plato's contemporary society (Plato 2007; Pettersen, Tove 2011; Bragg 2017). His radicalism of gender as well as one of several socio-political issues did not take hold in his day, but has persisted as a source of social critique, and is still fresh today for its analytical force (Pettersen, Tove 2011). It has inspired various reformist and political movements through history, including both far-right authoritarian ideologies and far-left communitarian ideals (Bragg 2017). This also includes radical, communitarian feminism that promotes female solidarity and separatism from men. For moderate feminists Plato has a central role as the first political philosopher to refuse gender essence based on reproductive capacity and for the utilitarian approach to the relations between society and the individual. His advocacy of equal education for men and women, has inspired feminist theoreticians most visibly from the period of the Enlightenment and onwards (although for Plato other forms of social differentiation were still valid) (Plato 2007; Hobbs 2017). If feminism is interpreted not only as the cause for women's rights but rather as the movement for equality regardless of socially constructed difference - which is a valid argument in postmodern feminism - then Plato could be argued to represent the early ancestry of feminist theory.

Although Plato is not specific on the built sociospatial topography of his ideal society, it is possible to draw up some ideas of the kind of built space that Plato's ideals support. It is one

where traditional divides between the private and the public spheres are partly dissolved in order to promote communitarianism, although not one without difference. *The Republic* is based upon a concept of social inequality when it comes to material wealth, ethnic characteristics and legal status (citizenship). Plato's social engineering involves absolving marriage and the nuclear family, along with the family home and existing inheritance laws. The state controls reproduction through genetics, service the domestic needs of the professionals of the upper classes and brings up children collectively within an institutionalised child-rearing programme. It is an authoritarian state, where the compact city (state) has a central role as the infrastructure for Athenian social and political life. Plato critiques parochialism and his ideal leave little room for the traditional dense social networks of extended family and relations, as they are organized through local neighbourhoods (mahalas) and villages. Instead he promotes strong and formalized centrality catering to authoritarian state institutions. Plato's egalitarian, communitarian and utilitarian ideals (although still exclusionary), can be argued to have provided inspiration for a range of alternative models of the city through history. This includes renaissance ideal cities based on principles of centrality and abstract order, and instrumental, reformist sociospatial engineering as in the model (worker's) towns. It also includes the authoritarian spatial propaganda of far right ideologies such as fascism and Nazism, as well as Stalinist socialism. It may also be reasonable to argue that the ideological foundation of modernism in planning and architecture represented by CIAM, with its emphasis on the built environment as a tool for political, economic and social reform, ultimately rest on Platonic ideals of utilitarian egalitarianism. Gender is not explicitly on the agenda of modernist planners and architects and there are few women in the ranks of modernist theoreticians and practitioners. Nevertheless, I think it is valid to say, that the line from Plato through to the enlightenment's ideals of egalitarianism (although still relatively gender-exclusive) and on to modernist urban ideals, represents a slow, if faltering, march away from the antecedence of gendered cities in the Western world.

### **3.4 Original sin and the expulsion from interior divine space**

Aristotle legitimised the definition of essential gender difference and male supremacy as one of the most basic principles for organising social relations - something that came to dominate all cultural theory (Smith 1983; Pettersen, Tove 2011), including city ideals. The concept of women and femininity as an unruly, adverse force - a threat to civilized ideas of beauty, order and morals, became the authoritative idea of the nature of gender difference. This gendered model has proved to have great resilience against change, as Bourdieu has shown (Bourdieu 2001), and duly the dualism of gendered space was increased throughout the middle ages by the theoreticians of Christianity. Theologians of late antiquity and the early medieval speculated on the essential difference between the sexes and developed the idea of woman as 'the incomplete man' further. Women's inferiority and duty of subservience to men was conceptualised as divinely ordained by the doctrine of theologian Augustine (357- 430) as Christianity developed from an independent sect to the state religion of the crumbling Roman Empire. In mediaeval times these ideas of social relations became the only ideology of the Western world, taken onward particularly by the writings of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who wrestled with inconsistencies between ideas of female inferiority in traditional theology and the strong position of Mary, mother of Jesus, in the early Catholic Church. (Paulsson 1969; Lowden 1997; Pettersen, Tove 2011). The cosmic consequences of *woman* tempting *man* to oppose divine order are depicted in The Fall of Man. In terms of city ideals, which are often used as metaphors for Heaven and divine order in the Bible as in Christian iconography, it is interesting to read this narrative of the falling-out of Grace as a falling-out of civilized space. Eve's transgression casts humanity from within the walled confines of a safe and domestic interior - much like that of the walled historical city - to exposed and infinite outside space:



6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'

"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life."

23 So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

(NIV Holy Bible 2015)

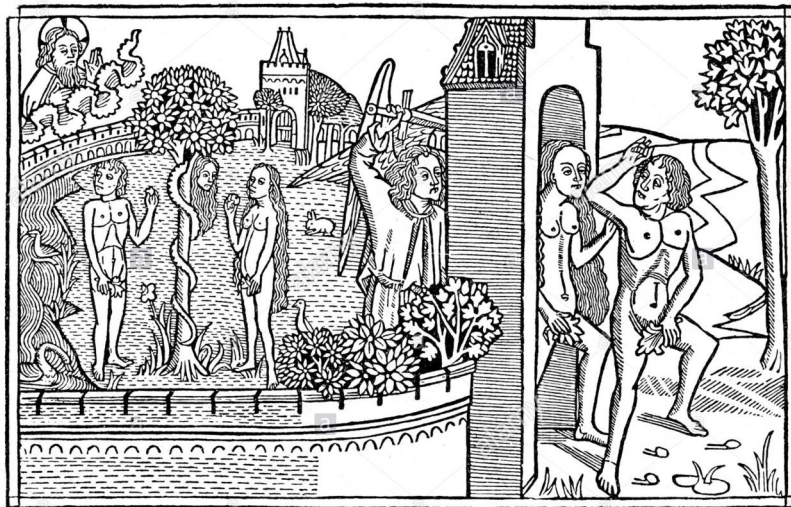


Figure 5: The Fall of Man and the expulsion from paradise, woodcut, Cologne Bible 1479. Adam and Eve are driven from within divine grace in the cultivated enclosed Garden of Eden to the raw nature of the extramural.

Following the disobedience to universal order, mankind is cast out. The sexualisation of the narrative is interesting when compared with the sexualisation of the wall, that Nevett describes in ancient Greek sources (Foxhall og Neher 2012). Adam and Eve emerge from within the wall not merely as humans but as gendered beings. The narrative represents the duality of antique and medieval space: Divine order is represented in the built environment of a walled garden or city - versus the extramural uncultivated, barbaric and homeless territory

of the extramural others. An interior of in-place versus an exterior of out-of-place. The meta-narrative of both Jewish and Christian doctrine is based on this dualism of a settled patriarchal community versus a homeless wandering people. The earthly city is a mirror image of the paradisiacal heavenly city. The other metanarrative is the one of female disobedience to divine order and the sexualisation and lack of morality involved in religious transgression.

Feminist research of late antiquity and medieval theory, presents a more nuanced picture of the gendering of the period, than written historic sources and classical and medieval academic tradition would lead us to believe. New approaches to the material show far greater gender flexibility in society, which increased during the medieval period in Europe. Following feminist traditions of looking selectively at one particular social group - in this case women - necessitates a different methodology. The traces of actual women's lives are different to the presentation of women in historic literary sources and formal art. Feminist methodology involves a heightened sensitivity of gendered representations in the research material itself, as well as in the academic traditional representations of it. Feminist research therefore employs a broader range of methods. Being self-reflexive about the meta-narratives behind one's own approach produces different research questions. The meta-narrative of historic societies built upon dichotomies of victimized, passive women and oppressive, active men, are challenged and supplemented by other approaches to the material. A perspective of women as active agents in society is a typical feminist research perspective. Using gender as an analytical category necessitates new etymological approaches and new methodology. The new knowledge it produces adds complexity to our perceptions of the historic material, and challenges our academic situatedness and competence, and the political consequences of being non-reflective of it (Scott 2000; Foxhall og Neher 2012; Bennett og Karras 2013).

When it comes to medieval feminist research, we see the emergence of a more complex landscape in the historic city, where the dynamics of the public and private sphere is far less binary and static. (Bennett og Karras 2013). Although feudal medieval town plans in Europe have none of the formal public arenas of democracy in ancient Athens and Rome, the street and the urban market place gradually gain prominence with growing commercial activity. The jumbled, organic plan of medieval European towns, accommodated collective spaces, where commercial activity mixed with thoroughfare and various small-scale industry, in the fine grain of historic cities. In addition, medieval cities had *commons*, for agrarian purposes, mainly outside of the urban structure, but also within it, as in the broad urban thoroughfares in Bergen, Norway. Actual life in the medieval city has been described as revolving around three domains: *home*, *street* and *city*. Both men and women moved between various zones of intimacy, privacy and publicity, depending on other social characteristics such as age, material standing, ethnicity, as well as out of pure necessity, as we also know from Antiquity. Women were still mainly anchored down in the domestic sphere, and excluded from centres of learning, thought and politics. Nevertheless, the rise of the street and the urban market as an arena of growing mercantilism, may have allowed more spatial diversity and a softening of gendered practise. We know that women partook in commerce and public life in the spaces of medieval European towns. Also the growth of monasticism offered women alternative lives to the role of wife, mother and housekeeper, and greater freedom to gain professional training, education and to partake in public life and public space. Monastic life was nevertheless cast on the traditional female role of performing domestic, duties as well as nurturing and serving to the needs of children, sick and the elderly. Monastic life involved medical training, although not theoretical, which was considered male expertise. Women's role in medieval times can be argued to entail a stretching of domesticity, just as the veil allows for a more elastic spatial practise of public and private life. Similarly monasteries, churches and ceremonial arenas, although gender exclusive, were more gender neutral, allowing men and women to partake in similar types of activities including the accumulation of knowledge, capital and political power (Paulsson 1969; Pettersen, Tove 2011; Foxhall og Neher 2012).

This discourse of Antiquity and Christianity constructs a meta narrative on gender and space, that still exerts considerable cultural, religious, political influence in the world today. It is safe to argue that within the world at large the ideology of the gendered city still holds ground, based on the type of gender essentialism that Aristotle and Augustin conceptualised. The political agenda of the feminist project aims at disclosing the endangeredness of our environment with the view to social reform. Feminist research on ancient and medieval cities aim at complementing established notions of history with so-called *Herstory*. This involves a rereading of history using gender as a category of analysis as well as a methodology, for instance, in also paying attention to small-scale temporary activities. (Scott 1986; Evans 1995). Gender aware research reveals to us not just the complex dynamics of the sociospatially gendered environment, but also accumulate evidence of the gendered nature of academic traditions - gendered knowledge and gendered methodology. Feminist research also serves to inspire social reform, and may help us formulate strategies to realise goals of more egalitarian cities. Postmodern feminist theory highlights the ethical and political implications in all scientific work, whether it is explicit or implicit. Lack of critical self-reflexiveness always serves to justify sets of values. In a gendered world, the aggregated influence of millennia of gendered environment as well as gendered knowledge, will contribute to reproduce existing power relations between the sexes. The feminist critique falls in step with a broader post structural idea that promotes a plurality of 'truths', as a scientific methodology. In terms of urban theory and practise, a feminist approach to historical material would involve using gender as an analytical category. Methodologically, this could entail paying closer attention to the particular, the relative and the temporal, as well as to the actual spatial practises as they are evident in the material sources, as Nevitt demonstrates in her interdisciplinary approach to studies of the ancient Greek city (Scott 1986; Foxhall og Neher 2012). This mode of approach may also be an constructive for conceptualising contemporary urban issues.

### **3.5 'The guilded cage' and the pioneers of the modern feminist critique**

After this brief introduction to the origins and the legitimacy of the concept of the gender city, the study now turns to reviewing some central feminist theoreticians and concepts, presented through a brief history of 150 years of feminist history. The feminist movement is often described in terms of four main waves, starting towards the onset of the 20th century with the suffragette movement, and often described as three main surges until the present date and the emerging fourth horizon of feminism today. But antecedents to feminism are to be found already in the intellectual hothouses of the sprouting civil society of the enlightenment. Olympe de Gouge (1748- 1793), Mary Wollstonecraft (1759- 1797) and Jane Austen (1775- 1817) are three seminal figures, that between them represent a feminist critical position in their contemporary time, engaging in politics, producing literary work on social reform, as well as leading non-conformist radical lives. These three theoreticians are best understood against the backdrop of the broader critical and progressive climate of their day, where the traditional distribution and reproduction of power and the relations between the individual and the new modern state, was debated. The idea of situated knowledge spurned the notion that the conditions of the less privileged social groups were a general societal concern. This included systems of differentiation based on gender, class and ethnicity as well as age. The conditions and rights of children, colonial slaves, working class people and women received public address. Ideals of social reform propelled the publishing of treatises on education, penal practise and social welfare, and saw the opening of new schools and academic institutions, also for underprivileged social groups. Upper class women engaged themselves actively both in the cause for the abolition of slavery and the education of women. The experience and organisational skill that women gained through this involvement, formed the platform on which the feminist movement was to rise (Landes 1988; Wilson 1992; Finlayson 2016) .

This intellectual climate saw the emergence of a new secular public sphere where at least upper class women were admitted. In cities and villages throughout Europe, the flourishing of private salons allowed women to partake in public debate. The intellectual climate stimulated and legitimised their participation in political debate and gave many women an opportunity for educating themselves informally. Many salons were indeed run by women. It is significant that these arenas were framed within the intimate interiors of the bourgeois home. The salon thus represents permeability between the public and private arena, which allowed a further stretching of the domestic sphere for women. The semi-formal, semi-private setting of the salon gatherings, like the practise of veiling, the use of roof terraces and the excursions to the well in Ancient Athens, were social practises that mediated between the private and the public realm, and allowed greater porosity. The growing presence of women in the public sphere, paved the way for the challenge to gender inequality to come with the suffragette movement. The growth of literary clubs, societies and associations as well as a public press, had an overall effect for women of all classes. (Landes 1988; L. Perry 1991; Wilson 1992; Finlayson 2016).



Figure 6: In the Salon of Mme Geoffrin in 1775, oil canvas, Anicet-Charles-Gabriel Lemonnier, 1812. The literary salon widened the public realm in which women of some social classes had access to public debate, not as consorts to men, but as individuals of their own merit.

Nevertheless, the Aristotelian ideal of gender-difference and male privilege underlay the progressive ideals of the time. The formal ranges of reason, democracy, egalitarianism and human rights were initially not extended to women (or other marginalised groups), and women's presence in the truly public and urban realm was always fraught with ambivalence, and is still controversial. The musings on gender by the (otherwise) progressive philosopher, writer and composer Jean- Jacques Rousseau is exemplary of this:

Once it is demonstrated that man and woman are not, and should not be constituted the same, either in character or in temperament, it follows that they should not have the same education. In following the directions of nature they must act together but they should not do the same things; their duties have a common end, but the duties themselves are different and consequently also the tastes that direct them. () Give, without scruples, a woman's education to women, see to it that they love the cares of their sex, that they possess modesty, that they know how to grow old in their menage and keep busy in their house.

(Rousseau 1991)

In other areas than the salon and the semi-private club, such as the new public institutions of libraries, museums and concert halls, as well as the new civic and political positions, as well as in urban space, women were not at home on same terms as men. Their presence depended on a once-removed position. The women of the upper classes ventured into public arenas as consorts, governesses, hostesses, wives or daughters (Wilson 1992). For the lower classes the gender divide was as always less stringent and more pragmatic, especially when it came to the new work arenas of the industrial city. Women and men shared similar types of jobs in agriculture and industry, although there were absolute gender divides, for instance in physically hard work, such as the coal mining, which was exclusively male. Likewise, there were types of work out of the home where women dominated, such as the spinning industry in Britain. In addition, many women worked in home industry, sometimes allowing for economic independence. In the hustle and bustle of crafts and trade in the urban spaces of villages and cities, men and women both partook. (Massey 1994). As in most gendered societies, there was a blossoming market for prostitution conducted in public houses and on the streets. Whereas the lives of men in cities increasingly entailed participation in a range of public arenas and urban spaces, the participation of women in these arenas were narrowly tolerated. Women out of the home were still basically out of place, both physically and morally (Wilson 1992; M. Perry mfl. 2015).

The essentialism and gender stereotyping of Aristotle and Augustin whereby women and men were considered essentially and naturally different, still fed the concept of femininity and masculinity as opposing and contrasting characteristics, in the rapidly growing cities and metropolises of Europe and the Americas. Public city life was considered masculine domain. Independence, self-realization, mobility and entrepreneurialism were ideals for a successful male. This formed men for a role in the fields of commerce, politics and leadership in general - also in the family. Femininity was defined along an axis of domestic service within the confines of the home, the monastery or a care institution. Modesty, subjugation, discretion and lack of ambition were considered female virtues (Wilson 1992; M. Perry mfl. 2015). Women were, in Simon de Beauvoir's later words conceptualised and raised to be, "The Second Sex" (Beauvoir 1997). The strong stereotyping of gender roles, generated an obsessive interest in gender and sexuality, as in many highly gendered societies (Bourdieu 2001). It also lay down a sociospatial praxis that was precarious and fraught with danger if overstepped by women. Both the city and the street were arenas of moral risk, where the reputation for female virtuousness was always at stake. A binary cult of domesticity and publicity, developed in the Victorian era, as the spatial expression of this persistent gendered nature of society and cities.

Nevertheless, exceptional women partook in the male urban intelligentsia of the European capitals, as well as leading radical cosmopolitan lifestyles that broke the female mould. De Gouge and Wollstonecraft delivered esteemed philosophical and political contributions to the general intellectual debate, taking a special interest in feminist issues, such as the kind of education open to women and the constitutional right to vote. They challenged essentialism in theory, practise and politics, actioning for the education of girls, and advocating changes to the law to give women equal rights in marriage to men. Wollstonecraft established and ran a girl's school. The two of them suffered respectively beheading and academic ostracising, the first for her outspoken political role, the second primarily for her radical lifestyle of being an unmarried mother, with successive male partners (BBC 4 Radio In Our Time 2016).

A seminal text from this rise of feminism is Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Being part of the leading circle of radical Anglofrankish humanist philosophers, she was inspired by Rousseau's treatises on education, but deeply critical of his ideas on the role of women. The *Vindication* advocated the idea that femininity is socially constructed, through social and cultural practise, and through differences in education. Women internalize the ideals of intellectual deficiency, narcissistic vanity and domestic obsession that contemporary society assign to femininity, claimed Wollstonecraft, urging

women to escape their golden cage: "Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman's sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and, roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison." (Wollstonecraft 2015)



Figure 7: "An apparition " of Mary Woolstonecraft, stencil on mural wall of New Unity Church, Newington Green, Stewy, 2013.

Woolstonecraft advocated the education of women along the lines of the words of Jane Austen: "Give a girl education and introduce her properly into the world, and ten to one, but she has the means of settling well, without further expense to anybody" (Austen, Littlewood, og Carabine 1992). Both authors critique the lives of women as the economic dependants of their fathers and husbands as a foremost obstacle to both a society that gains access to it's full means of production and creativity by both sexes.

New feminist research on Mary Wollstonecraft and early female humanists demonstrate that they had a more central role in the humanist intellectual movement than they were credited for, both by contemporaries, as well as by later research. Although they are of special interest to feminist research, because of their attention to the status of women, they are in fact an integral part of the more general humanist movement that had received little attention and credit. Within feminist tradition this is argued to be the result of a gendered History. Deconstructing it critically and rewriting it, reveals that the women in the French progressive circles had a more prominent role in the progressive movement of the enlightenment. They delivered contributions to the theorisation on particular and subjective experience of individuals differed from so-called universal life experiences that took hold. They were pioneers of critical science and rejected the ideas of universal truth and authority in general, demonstrating the situatedness and relativity of contemporary enlightenment ideals of human rights, democracy, freedom, and equality. Instead they showed them to be reflections of a class-biased, white, male supremacy, with negative political and moral implications for all other social groups. They advocated the moral implications of sustaining uneven power relations - something Hegel developed further in his master-slave dialectic, and that is an integral part of difference theory today (M. Perry mfl. 2015). The inheritance of this forefront of feminism also consists in the personal activist approach to a politics of change. This is evident both in the (unusually) numerous presence of females involved in the cause for abolition of slavery and the radical lives that the early feminists led, despite the dire consequences for them personally (BBC 4 Radio In Our Time 2016; Rampton 2015; Finlayson 2016). It paved the way for the first real feminist movement through the case of suffrage.



### 3.6 The suffragettes and the first wave of feminism

Out of the Enlightenment's amalgam of progressive humanism, social critique and the campaigning for civic rights to marginalised groups, rose the first wave of a broader feminist movement, gradually forming into a body of theory and epistemology. The socioeconomic restructuring of the European geography from the 18th to the 20th centuries from a rural, agrarian feudalism to urbanized, industrial nation states formed the constituting framework. The gender-space history of this period can be seen through two opposing stances, depending largely on the academic viewpoint taken (Massey 1994; Finlayson 2016).

On the one hand the new work and home divide that followed the shift in production from local home produce to a centralized industry, created a stronger economic-spatial gender differentiation. Waged, male workers with various degrees of skill, partook in a collective everyday life of a workplace away from home, as well as in the burgeoning labour organizations, which were important arenas for public and political competence and inclusion. They also partook in the flourishing masculine social spheres of clubs (upper classes) and pubs (working class). Women, being unskilled as well as being tied up with unpaid domestic work, including the care of children, sick and the elderly, had far fewer opportunities for participation in the public sphere. There were few types of wage-work available out of the home, and women thereby lacked the kind of public and political voicing of their socioeconomic cause that labour organizations provided. The example of the spinning districts in England proves the importance of labour organizations as a public sphere. In these regions female labour movements propelled a more gender equal economy and culture at large, that is detectable in the region even today (Massey 1994). There were also fewer opportunities for semi-public socialising for women, although this was largely class dependant. All in all, women, along with other under-privileged social groups, did not to the same degree as male, white, workers partake in the progress of the times. On the contrary the essentialist gender divide persisted and in some ways deepened with the onset of industrialization, specialisation and urbanisation (Scott 1986; Massey 1994), as is expressed by John Ruskin in *Sesame and Lilies* in 1865:

The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation, and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest... But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle - and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision... She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise -wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she many never fail from his side.

(Ruskin 2008).

On the other hand a feminist critique of this picture presents ample evidence of critical thinkers of the era that prepared the ground for what we recognize as a more modern concept of humanism and democracy, as well as more self-reflexive academic knowledge production. The development of a critical feminist theory propelled the cause of the inviolable individual, independent on gender as well as ethnicity or social class. John Stuart Mill in his 1867 'The Subjection of Women', polemicalised:

Think what it is to be a boy, to grow up to manhood in the belief that without any merit or exertion of his own... by the mere fact of being born a male he is by right the superior of all and every one of an entire half of the human race, 'How early the youth thinks himself superior to his mother, owing her forbearance perhaps but no real respect; and how sublime

and sultan-like a sense of superiority he feels, above all, over the woman whom he honours by admitting her to a partnership of his life. Is it imagined that all this does not pervert the whole manner of existence of the man, both as an individual and as a social being?

(Victoria and Albert Museum 2011)

A milestone was established when the first convention for women's rights was held in Seneca Falls, USA in 1848, to "discuss the social, civil and religious rights and condition of woman." The outcome was a *Declaration of Rights and Sentiments* modelled after the *Declaration of Independence*, stating; "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal". Of all the resolves in it, the right for women to vote is perhaps the best known. The series of conventions that followed forwarded the politics of women's rights. In 1851 Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) delivered the speech *Arn't I a woman?* laying bare in simple words the interactive oppressive mechanisms of gender and ethnicity. It critiqued the exclusionary and biased white, upper- class first feminist movement, and broadened the consciousness of the cause to include a wider horizon of oppression. Truth demonstrated that within the group of women, there were immense differences that were not recognized or addressed. It lay the fundament for the conceptualisation of *intersectionality* that is a central to the feminist critique. This is the idea that the experience of oppression varies for each individual, depending on the particular form of multiple social forces of inequality the one person is being subjected to:

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

(Sojourner 1851)

Whereas traditional studies of gender and gender-space relations, within disciplines of social anthropology, cultural studies and so on, have tended to conceptualise social groups as essential and substantial, they are defined according to some common attributes, believed to be constitutive of their shared identity, such as in (biological) 'women', or (certain age) 'children'. Feminist research, see groups as non-essential and relational. Using theories of subjectivity and intersectionality they instead define groups concepts that are structural for purposes of research and sociopolitical policy. Political theorist and feminist Iris Marion Young defines a structural group as a self-constituting collection of individuals who share in the experience of being structurally disadvantaged in relation to other groups. A structural



group consists of persons that are culturally different and may have access to different degrees of privilege or power, but that identify with each other through a common cause of structural change on their own behalf (S. S. Fainstein 2015). This could, for instance be a group of people in a local neighbourhood. This means that feminist research also necessitates alternative approaches to the research material. Looking at the spatial arenas of one essential group is not a productive approach to structural group research. Homing in on the lives and environments of the actual individuals in the group will be essential to form relevant research questions and assess political effect. Addressing differences between groups of women therefore constitute a more relevant approach to structural difference, than a general gender categorization. The divides of differentiation within a gender group typically run along lines of upper or middle class women versus working class women, urban versus parochial, and women of different ethnic background. Other criteria of difference are often age and geography. The much more nuanced picture that these subjective and intersectionally oriented studies reveal, demonstrate the difference in the situation for women in a particular period of time, context or location (Scott 1986; Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999; Finlayson 2016).



Figure 8: Moulin Rouge The departure of the quadrille, Henri de Toulouse- Lautrec, 1892, Oil on canvas, 60.5 x 80 cm.

Lautrec confronts the differences within social groups of women in modern cosmopolitan life, and comments on the precarious role of femininity in an age of sexual obsession and oppression.

The relative variations between women, is evident in the changing times of the urban industrial era (Wilson 1992; Massey 1994; Goldstein 2004). Although gender divides in some areas of social strata deepened towards the end of the 19th century, various strands of social

critique united by the cause of women, converged into a broad feminist current, that benchmarked the period as a era of gender progress (Massey 1994). The suffragette's lobbying and demonstrations for women's rights cemented feminism's radical image. Starting out as a peaceful cause, it was met first with public overbearance and ridicule, but increasingly with social and political concern, as well as penal counteraction. This caused an escalation to more extreme forms of action, such as material destruction, and eventually martyrdom. The leading proponent of the suffragettes threw herself to death in front of a galloping racehorse, before a shocked public and royalty.

### **3.7 The sociospatial dynamics of industrial labour**

First wave feminist propagators are also to be found within the unionist movements that fought for equal pay, social security and better welfare for industrial workers and their families. Best known are those that rose out of the female cotton millwork culture. Men could find full-time work within a range of unskilled and semi-skilled work. They were supported by increasingly powerful labour organisations that lobbied to provide legal security, benefits and 'family wages'. The arrival of women in arenas of paid work followed the collapse of small-scale home industry and urbanisation. The cotton industry was considered lighter work and provided the major source of female industrial employment. Women were at the onset regarded as an attractive, malleable 'green workforce' due to their lower wages and lack of labour organisation skills, and became a competing force that pushed men out of the mills. The cotton girls had no rights to family bonuses, regardless of their economic responsibilities, and divided their time between part-time work and care of children and home-duties. They had few other work opportunities, and were accordingly systematically exploited by the growth of profit driven capitalism in many industrial regions (Massey 1994; Goldstein 2004).

Feminist geographer Doreen Massey has researched sociospatial relations within the geography of historic British industry. The coal mining districts of Durham were highly gendered societies. The lack of female paid work outside of the home, coupled with extremely work intensive domestic duties supporting a male shift routine in the mines, left little opportunity for women to engage in anything else. This reproduced a strongly gendered social and cultural structure that we know from contemporary literature, such as D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. In the cotton-districts of Northwestern England however, the establishment of female labour in the mills, contributed to a softening of gender relations in the private as well as the public realm. This so-called upside-down world, with men sharing domestic duties and women supporting the family with work outside of the home caused much controversy (Lawrence, Booth, og Carabine 1992; Massey 1994). Women in the cotton-districts gradually developed trade unions, and in time became a leading force in the onset of the suffragette movement. They were described as independent and proud, and partook in the civic lives on the streets and public arenas much more so than in the colliery areas. Massey demonstrates both how sociospatial divides develop through gendered labour distribution, and how changes in gender structures are transformative of place, but also how such systems can be static and reproduce inequality over time. The differences in socioeconomic gender divides of the industrial labour divide are still evident in these geographic regions today. (Massey 1994)

One other area of female paid work in early industrial cities, was sweated labour at home, often shared between mothers and children. There is an important difference between the cotton girls and the rag industry of the urban homes. The separation of home and work place, took women into a mixed company, the street and worker union public meetings. The sweated trade was socially and culturally conserving, as men still were the main breadwinners away from home, leaving women to juggle work and domestic duties at home. The small scale, part time marginality and inconsistency of the work, as well as the isolation of individuals apart from each other, meant that there was no occasion to organize in order to better

conditions. The home labour culture lacked the substance for women to form economic and cultural autonomy, and become independence of the traditional gender structures and conventional family life (Massey 1994).



Figure 9: Kone som syr (woman sowing (my translation), Harriet Backer, 1890, oil on canvas. Women's everyday life was Harriet Backer's speciality. Her art is sensitive to the difference within the group of women in her contemporary society. It also addresses the confinement and isolation of women in the private female sphere. Her paintings often portray working class women absorbed in repetitive housework chores, with a stark poetic beauty that engages the spectator in the life of the underprivileged.

### 3.8 New urban arenas of female consumer culture

The great European cities of the *fin de siècle* grew into a progressive cosmopolitan culture, that is celebrated lavishly in both arts and literature (Simmel 1903; Wærness 1991; Wilson 1992). It produced the ideal for city life that have influenced urbanity as well as urban theory to this day. Liberal capitalism, technical innovation, industrialisation and rapid urbanisation, supported a flourishing urban consumerism. It offered a rising class of urban workers of both sexes, new liberties and material temptations. Cosmopolitan city life represented a significant counterculture to the constraints of small scale, traditional, rural societies. Walter Benjamin defines the onset of modernism as drastic changes in the public sphere following the advent of the mass produced culture and communication (Benjamin 2002). His *Arcades Project* is a cultural investigation of the sumptuous Paris street life, focusing in particular on the glassed arcades that were the forerunners to the modern concept of shopping as leisure. Along with Zola's *Ladies' Paradise*, it described the new phenomenon of female leisure and mass consumption that these premises responded to (Benjamin 2002). Shopping - conspicuous consumption of domestic goods and luxuries - produced a new form of public space, predominantly tailored towards traditional, virtuous feminine needs - a further stretching of domesticity. It also generated work for young women of the lower classes, and the urban shop girl became an enduring new typology for cultural representation (Wilson 1992). The new feminine commercial arena materialised in malls and enclosed passages, semi-public interiors

that allowed for a degree of downscaling and privatisation of urban space. It catered primarily for the personal needs of the new bourgeois women, as well as the growing group of independent workingwomen. The shopping palaces and passages with their cafes and entertainment venues represented a genteel, feminised form of urbanity, so different from the hustle and bustle of the street and market places of historic towns and the new industrial cities alike. It is a new urban ideal characterised by aestheticisation, sanitation, safety and commoditisation that can be argued to constitute ideals of urbanity and city life also today. It also legitimised a new cast for women- that of the female cosmopolitan.

### **3.9 Subjectivity, intersectionality and situated knowledge in relation to contemporary urbanism**

Contemporary feminist reassessments of the era have demonstrated something that is central to the feminist critique: "It is only when we analyse women as a diverse social group with a variety of historical experiences that we can begin to grasp the tensions and nuances of the historical gender ideologies that continue to affect women's lives today." (Goldstein 2004). Although the first wave of feminism started off as a political struggle for the vote propelled by white, middle and upper class women, it gradually and broadened the scope of the cause for social justice. It paved the way for the understanding of multiple oppression, in particular the intersection of gender and economic class. When Virginia Woolf's musings on the mutual workings of poverty and gender, she rightly concludes that what a women needs in order to produce, is a room of one's own and (an income of) five hundred a year. She ponders the new feminist consumer culture that perhaps served to pacify the otherwise resourceful and politically engaged women of the previous era: "What had our mothers been doing then that they had no wealth to leave us? Powdering their noses? Looking in at shop windows? Flaunting in the sun at Monte Carlo? ..."(Woolf 2002)

In terms of contemporary urban ideals, one could argue that feminised ideals of attractive, city life, consumer urbanity, as inspired by the cosmopolitan *fin de siècle* malls, still pose challenges of difference and exclusion. Whereas the historic town and the industrial city, though gendered, was less exclusive in terms of economic status or other categories of social difference. A broad group of (predominantly male) workers had access to urban workplaces, streets and public spaces. In today's increasingly privatized and commoditised urban environments, both space and place-making, as in allowing people to identify with and create an attachment to space, are contested between social groups. Identifying the axes of difference, is relevant to issues of place-making, urban quality, local democracy and participation, urban justice, and ultimately social sustainability and public health. Young refers to Marilyn Frye metaphor of multiple axes of structural oppression as birdcages (S. S. Fainstein 2015, 393). One by one wire or axis of experience difference cannot impede a bird. But as a total structure, the strands of wire serve to imprison. According to Foucault, committing the body to systematic discipline and policing results in the internalisation of the cage, so that even if it is removed, the prisoner continues to reproduce the unequal power relations (Foucault 1991). The ideal of a compact, attractive city which underpins contemporary urban production, is an instrument of profit that can be at conflict with issues of social sustainability and politics of justice (Harvey 2009; Brenner 2011; Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015). Identifying structural groups that share experiences of exclusion or lack of representation, are relevant to place-making and social sustainability, in a increasingly diversified and heterogeneous urban society. Creating cities of difference without exclusion is a central concern for a feminist inspired urbanism.



Figure 10: Passage des Princes, Paris, unknown artist, published in L'Illustration, Journal Universel, Paris, 1860.

The covered glass arcades supported a growing mass consumption, that developed into the phenomena of 'Les Grand Magasins,' and later- the shopping mall, all of which provided women of the growing bourgeois a respectable public venue for conspicuous consumption, as well as women of the lower class paid work and aspirations of class mobility.

## 4 'One is not born a woman- but becomes one.' - the modern feminist critique of Simon de Beauvoir

### 4.1 Existentialist feminist concepts

One of the most formative and enduring texts of the modern feminist critique came from philosopher and social theorist Simon de Beauvoir (1908- 1986) towards the middle of the 20th century. Beauvoir's earlier work was mainly fictional, but both in fiction as well as a philosopher, she grappled with the existentialist ethics that she and her colleague and partner Jean-Paul Sartre are well known for. The French existentialists believed that we are nothing but our actions. Through our choices we constitute who we are, and only through our acts can we lead truly authentic lives realizing the radical freedom of all human beings. How is it possible to transcend the circumstances that externally cause inflict upon one, the immanence in which we all find ourselves, that is inauthentic, and that might lead to a life in frustration and oppression? "There is no justification for present existence other than it's expansion into an indefinitely open future.", Beauvoir expelled in the introduction to *Le Deuxième Sexe - The Second Sex* in 1949. (Beauvoir 1997). In this influential text she took existentialism to the cause of feminism, analysing the history and mechanisms of social gendering and the threat to inauthenticity that gendering poses for women: "Now, what peculiarly signalises the situation of woman is that she - a free and autonomous being like all human creatures - nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other." (Beauvoir 1997). Man has historically defined what it is to be human, constructing a concept of universal human-hood, as the opposite of female. This makes woman the other. In patriarchal traditions women must assert their equal freedom, existentialist Beauvoir claims. This requires creating a change in social relations, allowing all individuals an equal chance to pursue in the moral obligations of realizing what they consider an authentic life for themselves. Only in this way can women in a patriarchal society, "aspire to full membership in the human race" (Beauvoir 1997).



Beauvoir builds on the philosophy of the self and the other of Hegel and phenomenology. She rejects conceptualism, i.e. the historic idea that there is an essential, inner nature to everything, including the character (and purpose) of women and men. She conceptualises socially constructed gender, drawing a divide between biological sex, based on female and male reproductive and secondary attributes, and socially constructed gender, which instructs what is characteristic, and acceptable, feminine and masculine behaviour. The existentialist Beauvoir takes a constructivist view, that human beings develop and create knowledge through their own individual experiences, in a given society and through interaction with others. From this viewpoint, the idea of what it is to be a man or a woman, is informed by the dominant social coding. Women and men are not born gendered, but rather gradually assume one out of two contrasting roles through traditions, cultural coding, social coercion and political pressure: "One is not born a woman- but becomes one" (Beauvoir 1997). There is a fundamental ambiguity that marks the feminine being. The obligations of radical human freedom, is impeded by social structure, granting a limited freedom. According to Beauvoir, a lack of action is also a choice, a choice not to be free. Self-empowerment is fundamental to existentialist difference theory. Human beings, as Nietzsche said, must assume a position in the middle of one's world and create that world (Nietzsche 2014).

Nevertheless, Beauvoir criticises the idea that the categories of man and woman should lack any real substance. There is a difference in the actual life experiences of females and male due to their different societal positions. The shared empiricism of being disadvantaged or privileged according to gender, contribute to shared understanding and solidarity, both between men and women. It is a notion of gender which is close to Young definition of a structural group (S. S. Fainstein 2015). A common interest in establishing a society where all human beings are free to pursue their own authentic identity is the existentialist cause. Freeing women of status as the second or other sex in a patriarchy is the feminist existential quest. For Beauvoir gender is not exclusive as a category of difference, and she extends the notion of othering also to race, ethnicity and material poverty. Beauvoir's constructivism leads to a similar conclusion to Plato's in that biological traits should not be a determiner in it self, for the role of an individual in society. For Plato the principle of masculinist privilege in his day is a political obstacle, as it serves to suppress communitarian self-less ideals, as well as prevent the best suited to rise to eminence. For Beauvoir, the masculinism of a patriarchal society is an ethical issue, whereby female individuals are hindered from realising authentic lives through what the existentialist call transcendence; Creative, productive, public lives, extending into and interacting with the wider world. Instead women are bound to the immanence of the passive, static, private and interior-bound roles in the service of males. This is not the process of free choice, but rather a process of external circumstance and structural power exerting itself on the individual. In terms of society as a whole, Beauvoir also addresses the conserving and counter-innovative nature of gender structures. In cementing the lives of individuals, and limiting their range of ambition and action, curtails the creative force of society. It is not possible for a society to seek evolution and transcendence without the freedom of choice of each individual (Beauvoir 1997). *The Second Sex* established a platform for feminist theory within the existing intellectual climate and discourse. Perhaps even more significantly it contributed to a theory of difference, that is not only sensitive to gender, but to structural difference dynamics in itself. Her work also influences the new generation of difference studies that emerged over the following decades, including the fields of black, multicultural, male and transgender studies, as well as the developments within critical science theory (Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, og Cohen 1989).

#### **4.2 Beauvoir in relation to developments in modern social science, philosophy and psychoanalysis**

Beauvoir's academic standpoint must be understood within context of the growth of modern social science, philosophy and the psychoanalysis of neo-Freudianism. The conceptualisation

of the self as an active, conscious subject sparked an interest in the subjective and relational, normative social issues and the politics of power, where the relationship between the individual and the overarching social structures are addressed (Pettersen, Tove 2011). Beauvoir critiqued Freudianism as being gendered, masculinist and heteronormative. He formulated a theory on the formation of the ego, according to which the female ego grew out of the anxiety of lacking a penis. This androcentric concept builds upon Aristotle's idea of a female as a 'lacking male'. A man is defined as an active human *subject*, constituted through difference. A woman is all that a man is not - the complementary passive *object*. A woman's femininity thus hangs on her usefulness and attractiveness to male culture. Beauvoir is also situated within the advances in humanist and social sciences, represented with for instance Levi-Strauss. But whilst a traditional androcentric perspective within academia spoke from the position of the dominant social group, Beauvoir took the perspective *of* the other. This change of perspective allowed her to formulate a feminist critique of for instance Levi Strauss' dichotomy of orderly, male culture versus chaotic, female nature, which underpinned social-anthropological research. Beauvoir thus is the first prominent feminist theoretician, to demonstrate the necessity self-reflexiveness in social and human science. In the age of postmodernity, this is a dogma of both science and art. The authority and legitimacy of the observer, versus the observed, must be taken into account in the evaluation of any representation, in terms of truth-value and legitimacy. The deconstruction and demystification of hegemonic western ideologies have revealed the constructed nature of cultural accounts and the privileged position of the narrator. A sceptical and self-reflexive mode, that questions the authority of the author and the language involved, is perhaps feminists' major contribution to the fields of academia and politics of power. Conceptualisation othering as means to critiquing structural models of difference, has resulted in a heightened awareness of the relational within social and humanist science (Fraser og Nicholson 1989; Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, og Cohen 1989).

Beauvoir's compared the idea of gender constituted other to other categories of difference and oppression, such as various ethnic groups and colonised people. She likened women's situation under patriarchy to the oppression of colonised people under their masters, as well as ethnical or cultural minorities under the subjugation of majorities. "The category of the Other is as primordial as consciousness itself. In the most primitive societies, () one finds the expression of a duality - that of the Self and of the Other. () Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought." (*Beauvoir 1997*) She draws most importantly on Hegel's idea of the other as part of the creation of a Self: The self is constituted by negation, i.e. by defining what the self is not. In other words it makes it possible to build self-awareness through the introduction of contrast, a non-self, different other (Pettersen, Tove 2011). We describe many phenomena through contrasts and dichotomies, such as light and darkness, or inside and outside, public and private. Levi-Strauss considered Othering as a "fundamental and immediately given data of social reality" marking the passage from a state of Nature to a state of Culture (Beauvoir 1997). The concept of a self - or a one - versus an other, also applies to social group dynamics, whereby one group defines itself as a primary social entity, being the norm(al) by which others are defined as outsiders, nonconformists and contrary. Othering is always exclusive and oppositional, stereotyping and reinforcing differences, and subduing likenesses, as when we call a wide range of shades of blue – blue – in order to conceptualise a range of phenomena into an entity, in this case as different from for instance the colour red. Beauvoir uses the empirical evidence of social realities through history to argue that othering often involves devaluation and sometimes dehumanisation of other groups of people, facilitating and legitimising antagonism and exploitation of others. Othering is relative, and is always met with resistance and counter-othering. A traveller will suddenly find oneself in new territory and be regarded a strange(r)- an other, as will a minority people or a newly formed group versus a majority or an established group identity. 'One-ing' and othering is therefore always a battle of power, and always political. Beauvoir denaturalizes this state of human affairs. It is equally possible to promote any model of the one and the other the opposite way around, she claims. In other words, gender and other social categories are not a

given, it is a fiction - a cultural product. Beauvoir does not argue that men to a greater degree should be objects or that women and men should share these roles in relation to each other. She argues that every individual ought to be a subject, that there not be any objects whether based on gender, ethnicity or any other lines of objectification, all humans have valid goals and should be able to pursue them.

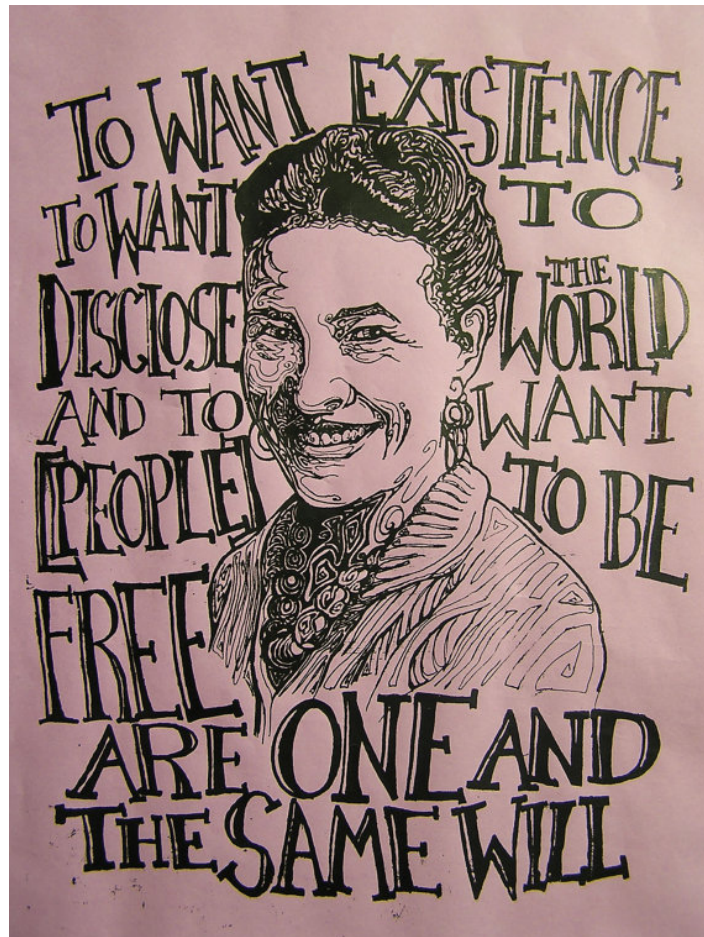


Figure 11: Simone de Beauvoir, Lucy Valkury, silkscreen print, 2012. De Beauvoir's portrait includes a quote from the author and renders a fitting representation of the intellectual, activist and existentialist philosopher who was renowned for her quick wit.

Unlike other socially and economically marginalised groups women do not represent a minority and are not Othered due to a historically induced change such as war or colonialism for instance. As such women also lack a communal entity going back to a time before the othering commenced, such as for instance colonised people often do. They are on the contrary bound to individual men through a complicit web of interdependency. On a private scale women and men are bound together by mutual effort to sustain the human race and society. This fragmented social pattern does not easily allow for establishing the means to organising themselves into a unit of standing "stand face to face" with an existing structural system of differentiation. (Beauvoir 1997). This is the main reason why women through history have subjected to the process of systematic gendering. Beauvoir last element of feminist critique is an attack on the ethical justness of social and political difference systems in general. She



argues against the philosophical, biological, religious and political claims that legitimize societal differentiation on ground that it is a natural, essentialist and a God given order to the overall advantage of human society as a whole: "For our part, we hold that the only public good is that which assures the private good of the citizens; ...in giving concrete opportunities to individuals." (Ibid.) The only just and ethical society is one without social difference. A feminist society is a good society in as much as it promotes the allowance of every person to be an autonomous individual agent. For Beauvoir the case of feminism is not just political, but ontological. It entails developing a new concept for what it is for a woman as a subject. This can only be achieved by women, independently of social and cultural categorisation and circumstance. Women have a moral obligation to assume the responsibility for themselves: "Change your life today. Don't gamble on the future, act now, without delay." (Beauvoir 1997)

Beauvoir grapples with the effects of gender-based othering both on the individual level, the level of the family and the scale of overall society. The idea that 'maternity is enough in all cases to crown a woman's life' and that "the child is sure to be happy in it's mother's arms" are both "preconceptions" of "dangerous falsity" (Beauvoir 1997). Society should assume extended responsibility for aiding pregnancy and the care for children, so that maternity would not be incompatible with a career. She also points to the negative effects of domestic isolation of women, something that Betty Friedan later came to address in her book *The problem with no name* (Friedan 2010). Friedan describes the psychological hardships that many homeworking women felt within isolated suburban homes, cut off from public life in the workplace and other public spheres. "Shut up at home, woman cannot herself establish her existence; she lacks the means requisite for self-affirmation as an individual; and in consequence her individuality is not given recognition." (Friedan 2010) This leads us over to the relationship of Beauvoir and urban issues.

### 4.3 Beauvoir and contemporary urban issues

*The Second Sex* heralds the shift from modernist universalism to postmodernist relativism in intellectual discourse in general. Perhaps the most interesting side to Beauvoir in terms of contemporary urban issues, is her challenge to conventional doctrine, authoritarian regimes, and asymmetrical power dynasties, which she defies by placing the individual at the centre of creation, as a knowledgeable and potent agent, able to make own choices and act upon them. She demonstrates how uneven social relations limit the actual scope and freedoms of individuals, and how oppressed groups fail to raise their expectations and realise the lives they want in face of this. Beauvoir can be read as a critique of the universality of modernist architecture and planning, suppressing alternative values in favour of a western, white, masculinist world-view. She defies such dominant perspectives and demonstrates the very different experiences of the world by subdued social groups, and the obstacles to their creative and participatory role in society. This is a rally against dominant - expert - opinion in praise of subjectivity and particularity. It is tempting to draw a parallel to critical journalist Jane Jacob's fight for the little (wo)man and the local neighbourhood, versus the master planner Moses' proposed schemes for urban regeneration in New York. In fact the two are almost contemporary and both raise a critique to the effects of structural power on the incapacitated and the disenfranchised (Jacobs 1961). Although Beauvoir is not explicit in terms of the city and urban issues, it is possible to read her as a support for participatory democracy, bottom-up planning and communitarian processes in urban planning. Involving neighbourhoods and local stakeholders in order to strengthen social entrepreneurialism, empower the residents and encourage place making would be true to Beauvoir's ideals of individual competence and agency. It also supports the idea of identity politics in urban regeneration, where in particular minority groups or socially disadvantaged groups, are encouraged to take an active part in local urban projects, participate in local politics and influence both the physical and social environment of their lives. Supporting individuals or

groups that want to engage and contribute to the actual sociophysical environment and reimagine the public spaces, are effective tools to encourage local entrepreneurship, place attachment and place-making (Manzo og Devine-Wright 2013). One could say that Beauvoir's notion of multiple subjective agency paves the way for Iris Marion Young's ideas of contemporary urban life as the sum of 'an infinite number of utterances' (Young 1986), as well as her promotion of diversity without difference and inclusive democracy.

Beauvoir's advocacy of radical individual freedom and the break with social conventions, is nevertheless also part and parcel of the progressive ideal of modernism, that changed the actual lived lives of men and women in her contemporary society. In Scandinavia in particular, it is relevant to read Beauvoir in the context of the development of egalitarian ideals of the welfare state. The establishment of new public institutions eased women's ties to the domestic sphere. It propelled a new repertoire of public architecture of health care clinics, hospitals, kindergartens, public schools and homes for the sick and elderly. This went hand in hand with economic growth, technological development and urbanisation. The new urban and suburban home was functional and equipped with technology to aid the daily chores of housework. New public infrastructure projects gave increased mobility and access to greenery and recreation. This produced the first generation of women that were less bound up by pregnancy, nursing, unpaid caretaking and manual domestic work in the cities. It allowed the family more freely as to the distribution of domestic and income work, and gained women access to education, welfare pensions and economic independence. A growing consciousness of the dynamics of social differentiation, both in terms of gender and other social groups, is evident both in civil society, politics and within academia (Massey 1994). It made the actual life experiences of both women and men, less differentiated and segregated, particularly in the context of the Nordic welfare states. The ideals of social cohesion and the mitigation of inequality, came to be lasting a planning and urban ideal in Norway for the next century.



Figure 12: "Look - No Work! Let the Maytag Do the Work - Designed to Set Your Free From Washday", Maytag, Unknown artist, 1946

At the onset of the second wave of feminism, the pioneering feminist movement and the first real wave of a feminist critique had conceptualised a divide between biological sex and social gender. Feminist theoretician established a critique of the authority of universal truths and advocated critical self-reflexiveness and scepticism in science and research. The relationship and dynamics between social and physical structures became a central theme to social and humanist sciences. Increasing focus on subjectivity and the relationship between individuals and structures meant that relativism took hold. Beauvoir's supplemented this with a gender perspective that critiqued androcentric epistemology, ontology and methodology. The gradual deconstruction of gender as a natural and essential phenomenon, paved the way for an even more radical critique of gender difference and sexuality. Her advocacy of individual agency spurred women as well as other groups that experienced structural disadvantage, to form feminist self-empowerment groups and Beauvoir was embraced by the political auctioneering that characterised second wave feminism. Beauvoir's critique of conventional lifestyles, that she lived by in her personal life, became a source of inspiration for radical feminist that followed in her footsteps (Rampton 2015; Finlayson 2016). The general scepticism to the truth-value of existing systems of meaning, such as language, points to the post structural horizon ahead, which also left its mark on architectural and urban theory.

## **5 "The personal is political" - the second wave of feminism towards contemporary concepts of gender and the urban**

### **5.1 Towards a more inclusive feminism**

*The Second Sex* had a profound influence on what is often described as the second wave of feminism, covering the period from the 1960's roughly through to the 1990's. A central issue for women was the need to define a new role for themselves as subjects. This involved taking control also of the cultural representation of gender difference and the stereotyped images of womanhood produced by a male culture. Androcentric perspectives on femininity, as that which is attractive to men, was replaced by new ideals of femininity, that sought independence from the gender dichotomy (Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999; Rampton 2015; Finlayson 2016). These feminist concerns unfolded within a climate of a broader, radical societal critique and activism, and shared the ground with a range of identity and civil rights movements, such as black's rights, gay and lesbian rights and anti-war campaigns. They all shared in the critique of othering as a tool of structural group differentiation. Beauvoir's theory had contributed to an expansion of the concept of othering, beyond the focus on one societal group, to the process of othering as a phenomenon in itself. The increased sensitivity to cultural difference fuelled politics, activism and academic theorization. Minority groups all over the world were gaining growing self-awareness and found shared experience and solidarity, that fuelled cultural and political self-assertion ( Giesecking mfl. 2014; Bridge og S 2000; S. S. Fainstein 2015).

There was also increasing awareness of intersectionality and the unique type of oppressive experience that this caused, particularly within black feminist's theory. The blindness to other axis of difference that the early feminist movement was criticised for, found support across many minority groups. It led to the development of a more self-reflexive feminist epistemology, opening up new research approaches and defining other research questions. An example is the shift from early feminist focus on the access to work as the means to liberation for women to the focus on the work conditions of women. Although it is true that the suffragettes and the first feminist activists were driving forces behind both social reform and

the abolition of slavery, it is also the case that the members largely drew from the privileged social groups. For white, middle and upper class women, access to work out of the home was an obvious political goal. Most poor, black women had straddled work and domestic responsibilities for centuries, and rights to health care, child minding and public responsibility for the care of the sick and elderly were far more relevant concerns. The second wave of feminism drew from a broader group of women's experiences. Feminists redefined themselves as a group across socioeconomic class, ethnicity, cultural diversity and geography, sharing in some concerns and divided in others, joined by solidarity as to the gendered nature of their experienced disadvantage to men ( Finlayson 2016; Bridge og S 2000).

In activism and in academia, the second wave of feminism span from radical and separatist groups to conservative essentialists, encompassing a broad middle ground of moderate, but diversified feminist schools of thought and activist groups. They all share in a utilitarian approach to gender. It is the particulars of actual women's life experiences feminism must answer to. This should inform research questions and methodological approach, and be the guideline for success. This is expressed in the feminist slogan: "The personal is political", which was a rallying call of the student movement and later reissued in an essay by Carol Hirsch in 2006 (Hirsch 2006).

## 5.2 Broadening the concept of the other

Feminist theory gradually conceptualised a broader knowledge base on the mechanics of structural group differentiation and marginalization, that fuelled the growing assertiveness of many minority activist movements. It also fed the growth of difference theory in academia, beyond the cause of feminism, taking the forms of for instance post-colonial, gay, black and multicultural studies. There was increased focus on the intersection of socially constructed difference and politics of power, which addressed the reductiveness and utilitarianism of othering as powerful ideological tools for religious, political and economic control. A seminal work on this is Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* which lays out the mechanisms of othering and stereotyping of the East by the West (Said 2003). Said drew on his own personal experiences of being an foreigner in describing the effects of cultural othering both on a personal and societal level. Ideas of the Orient originated in a period when the West was a dominant power in the Arab World and entails a way of looking at the East that accentuate, magnify and caricatures Arab culture as compared to Western. The Orient was portrayed in art and fiction as uncivilized, wild and underdeveloped and the West as more advanced culturally, philosophically and morally (Said 2003). At the same time the Orient represented the exotic and desirable, in terms of Arab women often sexualized, object of attraction and value for the Western male. The parallel to historic gender othering, based on an androcentric dichotomy of male and female, is evident, and Said have by feminist theoretician Sondra Hale been called "an accidental feminist" (Hale 2005) Like Woman, the Orient was seen as a potent and ever-present threat, to the white, male order of the West. This is an idea that still could be argued to feed today's paranoia of Islamist terror in parts of the western world. The threat was particularly potent in the Oriental Woman, which accordingly has been the object of severe sociocultural stereotyping and stigma in the West. This meta-narrative also underlay the academic field, and is manifest in traditional academic approaches to the Oriental. *Orientalism* contributed to the deconstruction of the dichotomy of Orient and Occident, and revolutionized Middle Eastern Studies. It also delivered a significant contribution to feminist theory. In today's climate of urban, global multiculturalism, Said is relevant both in addressing issues of intersectionality, the situation of female cultural minorities and in understanding the diversity of the female experience.

One of the central agendas of feminists of the second wave concerned the right to the domain of one's body. Firstly in terms of establishing women's control over the use of their own physical bodies and their welfare and safety, but also in the representations of the female

gender. This entailed the rights to female sexuality independent of reproduction, rights to female healthcare, family planning, contraceptives and abortion. There was also a rising awareness of safety issues in the domestic life of women (and men). What had previously been regarded as private family matters came to be regarded as public issues, in need of public policy. This included the distribution of housework, and responsibility for childcare as well as physical and psychological abuse and violence. The focus on the body as personal domain also spurred a critique of traditional cultural and social norms that dictated both female appearance and behaviour, in particular in public. Women took to the public sphere with provocative art and action expressing a break with the conventions of acceptable female behaviour and with symbolic relinquishing of conventional feminine apparel, such as bra's, high heels and make-up. On a political level feminism continued to advocate civic rights, most importantly the constitutional right to vote, which was still not granted to all even in Euro-American context, not to speak of the developing world. As women of all social classes gradually became a part of the paid workforce, feminist movements turned their attention to the work place, advocating equal access to education, equal work opportunities, same pay for same work and reforms in welfare including childcare, rights to maternity (and later paternity) leave and independent old age pension. (Evans 1995; Hanisch 2006; Rampton 2015; Finlayson 2016) In the Euro-American context, most of the goals of the feminist movement of the post-war period have been met, allowing economic and personal independence - "A room of one's own - and 500 pounds a year" (Woolf 2002). For the world at large these basic demands are still a central concern of feminism today. As such the manifold expressions of the feminist movement of these years were productive both on an individual and societal level, as well as in terms of academic progress in the fields of social and humanist science.



Figure 13: Cut piece, Yoko Ono, still photo from performance, Yamaichi Concert Hall, July 20, 1964. The piece is typical of 70's feminist movement's focus on the to the body as the arena of political and cultural struggle, and the gendered aspects of cultural representation, something that later feminist artists, such as Guerrilla girls also take an interest in. Ono examines the way the female body has been used in art, as the object of male gaze, by sitting passive on a stage and allowing the public one by one to cut away her clothes.

Feminist theory and method increasingly came to be seen as legitimate, and find common ground with existing spatial disciplines in the period leading up to the 90's, providing a critical perspective for the sciences of human geography, sociology, social anthropology, philosophy and more (Evans 1995; Pettersen, Tove 2011; Moi 2015a; Finlayson 2016). The intersection between feminist critical theory and the fields of architecture, planning and urban theory is less evident. Perhaps the best-known overlap is separatist radical housing schemes that offered women an alternative, often community based, lifestyle, as an alternative to the heterogeneous nuclear family model. A brief sketch of the main themes in the critique of modernism from the 60's and onward nevertheless, nevertheless show an alignment of urban issues to central motifs of critical feminist theory. The Athens-charter, published in 1943, defined the ideals of modernist planning and architecture. It was based on Le Corbusier's grand visions of the new democratic, functional city of the future - a reaction to the perceived chaos of the mixed, dense cityscape of the industrial era. It proposed high-rise housing schemes and office blocks separated from each other, and from the environmental hazards of industrial production, by wide corridors of greenery, and linked by a rational network of roads and transport hubs. The schemes were based on quantifiable qualities like functionality and light that were seen to be universal and independent of time and place. The critique of modernism that was raised towards the 1960's operates on the same basis of relativism and subjectivism as feminist theory within the contemporary intellectual climate. It critiques elitist authority versus subjective experience, the lack of individual influence on the schemes and politics of the built environment of local communities, the inhuman qualities of the planned versus the self- grown historical cities of Europe, and lastly the lack of awareness of the qualities pertaining to a small scale, natural social community (Jacobs 1961; Nielsen Tom 2008).

### **5.3 Feminist critical theory and method as a critique of modernity**

In addressing the sociocultural fabric of the city, feminist theory can be seen as a strand of the broader critique of modernity, advocating role of the individual as a competent and active agent rather than a passive consumer, and the importance of the symbolic physical fabric of the city as a source of meaning, emotional attachment and cultural self-expression. In the inner cities, as in smaller places, everyday life revolves around the local, self- made, small-scale, close knit and self- governing communities, argue Jane Jacobs in 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' (Jacobs 1961). The life experiences of individuals are closely connected to the actual physical structures that frame their lives. These structures can either support or negate social interaction of between humans, and influence whether it takes positive forms or give rise to tensions, conflict and antagonism, she argues. The multifunctional, mixed and diverse city that is the sum of many local places challenges modernisms urban ideals. The idea of the intimate reliance and identification with one's physical surroundings as a necessity for a good life, is supported also by Lynch (Lynch 1960), Cullens (Cullen 1961) and Gehl (Gehl 2011). They all argue that the unique and the local are more supportive of the good city life, than the universal and a-historic city of the modernists. This line of thought is taken further by the "new urbanists" that argue that the historical language of architecture and urban planning is an accumulated inheritance and wisdom that give meaning to human lives. In this they share with the feminist focus on subjectivity and relativity, and the challenge to the relationship between cultural representation and dominant power. According to feminist doctrine the built environment is based of values that are defined by patriarchal dichotomy, and serve to reproduce the advantage of one social group. In the same way that Middle Eastern culture did not acknowledge or identify themselves with the orientalism of the West, women may feel misinterpreted and underrepresented, in a male cultural reality. Following Beauvoir, denying women the role of active agency and creation of the communal environment, denies them the aspiration of leading lives as full human beings. The actual cultural diversity in contemporary global cities would make us concede that theories of difference and othering is aptly relevant. Sensitivity to the reductive dynamics of



othering would actuate urban policies targeting minority groups, but in process and as to the final result. The project Superkilen in Copenhagen is the result of a determinate public policy for an urban regeneration project involving both the physical and social fabric. The project involved ethnical groups of 60 different nationality backgrounds to participate in the regeneration of urban space. The aim her was to create places that reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of these neighbourhoods, and that local communities could identify with and through. The project also served to build local entrepreneurship and spur social contact across cultural barriers («Archdaily: ‘Superkilen / Topotek 1 + BIG Architects + Superflex’» 2012). These ideas represent a turn from the instrumental urbanism of modernism to a relational and culturally sensitive urbanism drawing on feminist and multicultural theory. It is also a turn to an affective urbanism, animated by emotion and setting the urban scene for the experiences of atmospheric and staged performances of life. The urban then becomes the mediator for an aesthetic performativity expressive of cultural difference as a resource. This is different from the political functionality of modernist urbanism, in it’s emphasis on performance, playfulness and contemplative qualities (Samson 2012; Manzo og Devine-Wright 2013).

Lastly the radical social critique of conformist life styles and standards of the second wave feminism can be an inspiration to alternative lifestyles, in particular nonconformist, collective and shared forms of living in the city. The 1970’s saw an influx of experimentation with alternative living, most often in connection with alternative, student culture. The compact city ideology of today, fraught with issues of economizing with space and the need to address climatic - and social - sustainability, make these aspirations valid again. The growth of the shared-economy culture may well provide an infrastructure that lends itself well to new forms of unconventional living. Again the Danes are ahead with several innovative projects, as for instance Lange Eng collective living in Albertslund is an example of. Two hundred people representative of all ages, various social and cultural background and in different family constellations, share the dining room, kitchen, living room and common garden, whereas they also have their separate individual apartments of different sizes. The inhabitants are free to choose how much they get involved in collective activities such as cooking, child minding and socialising («Hvad er Lange Eng?» 2017).



Figure 14: SUK, Iwan Baan, Photo, 2012

Superkilen, Copenhagen regeneration project demonstrates the multicultural richness of the area, allowing all groups a stake of urban turf in which to plant a flag of identity, meaning and belonging.



## 6 "Feminism is the radical notion that women are people" - feminism and postmodernism

### 6.1 Feminist contributions to concepts of postmodernity

At the onset of the 21st century it is customary to talk of both a third and fourth wave of feminism, spanning the time from roughly the 1990's and on to the horizon ahead. This thesis makes no such chronological distinction, considering this period the present landscape. Based on the foregoing selective account of historic gender essentialism as well as the presentation of some central concepts to modern feminist theory, which have both been discussed in relation to some contemporary urban issues and discourses, we now turn to feminism and urbanism in the context of postmodernity and post structuralism, globalisation and multiculturalism.

"When a subject is highly controversial- and any question about sex is controversial- one cannot hope to tell the truth. One can only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold. One can only give one's audience the chance of drawing their own conclusions as they observe the limitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncrasies of the speaker."

(Woolf 2002, 6)

Virginia Woolf's quote from 1928 (Woolf 2002) is an apt description the horizon of feminism within the contemporary condition of postmodernity. Gender critique is still controversial, precisely because it unsettles naturalized metanarratives of society in deconstructing the idea of gender dichotomy. It is indeed hard to conceptualise a world of knowledge where the binary model of man and woman does not form the base, so embedded is such concepts in our way of thinking about, and interpreting, the world in which we find ourselves. The unveiling and rejection of such metanarratives, is a central project for postmodernism and post structuralism (Christopher Butler 2002; Gieseeking mfl. 2014), which will be used as interchangeable terms hereafter. Lyotard describes metanarratives as totalising, comprehensive narrations of cultural phenomena, such as historic events or human experiences. They legitimize certain values and most often imply hierarchies and oppositions (Lyotard 1984). The critique of gender as a *natural* category of difference legitimizes a society structured upon gender hierarchy, privileging masculinity over femininity. Deconstructing such myths involves putting them up for critical investigation and discussion, with a view to promote alternative or supplementary models and values (Scott 1986; Pettersen, Tove 2011). Woolf brings forward the rejection of objectivity - there is no one unquestionable truth - only multiple, subjective perspectives and opinions. The idea of relativity is also part of the postmodernist premise, replacing knowledge and principles held to be universal with particular knowledge, scientific authority with the notion of situated representation. Indeed post structuralism does away with the very idea of the legitimacy of universality, claiming that it always serves to hide an underlying set of values, and an agenda of accumulating and maintaining power. Post structural ists insist on the need for establishing the position of the author of any representation, and the values and motives behind the authorship. This also generates critical self-awareness in all manner of representation. Postmodernist and feminist thinkers join in the premise that universalising concepts tend to promote reductionist and simplified systems of knowledge. Concepts are frequently built up around constitutive dichotomies, as have been discussed earlier, such as light and dark, man and woman, form and content, structure and decoration. The relations between such mutually constituting concepts are always one of asymmetrical value and power. They are therefore always hierarchal, and often prove robust to change. Sociocultural dichotomies are formulated by the dominant culture, and serve to support and legitimize their standing and superiority in the existing society. Similarity, overlap and ambiguity are suppressed, in order to enhance clarity and the forcefulness of the difference argument. Although this sort of

method is a useful tool for conceptualising the world, it also tends to be exclusionary and simplifying and often serve to undermine the very idea of complexity and alternative perspectives (Pettersen, Tove 2011; Christopher Butler 2002; S. S. Fainstein 2015).

The postmodern critique of authoritative systems of knowledge encompasses all forms of cultural representation, but particularly that of language and signs, including written text. A central concept is Derrida's 'différance', a deliberate misspelling of the French 'différence'. Both terms originate in 'différer' meaning both to differ or to defer, and are pronounced the same. It is only in writing the two meanings of the term come out. Derrida uses the concept to draw attention to the unstable relationship between language, text and meaning. A central notion for Derrida is that meaning in language is forever deferred, i.e. it is not possible to trust in the relationship between a text and the content, only the meaning of the re-reading of each new reader (Sallis 1989; Christopher Butler 2002). So the trust in language that was previously seen as a direct link between humans and their world is come to be seen as a volatile and arbitrary tool. Any perceived fact is a narrative of an author, revealing not so much a reality but someone's 'take' on reality. Postmodern deconstruction aim to establish a once-removed, sceptical standpoint to all utterances and cultural representations, including one's own, and systematically subject them to scrutiny, as to the authority and validity of their truth, and to the author's ultimate objectives. In drawing attention to the "imitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncrasies of the speaker" (Woolf 2002), the postmodern thinker offers one's opinion for dissection, displays the situatedness of the author, in order to reveal (potentially unconscious or wilfully hidden) objectives or agendas behind it (Moi 2015a; Christopher Butler 2002).

Disclosing and undermining the power dynamics behind cultural representations, have always been central to the feminist critique, from the onset in the Enlightenment (Pettersen, Tove 2011; Moi 2015a). It has been part of the methodology for subversive acts of undermining status quo, as well as provided a source of experimentation and innovation. Postmodernists and post structural ists share in the creative indulgence of juxtapositions, ambivalence and anachronism, that deconstruction encourages. Both Woolstonecraft, Woolf and Beauvoir produced progressive scholarship, that in hindsight positions feminist theory centrally in the ancestral lineage of the postmodern and post structural critique (Pettersen, Tove 2011). It is perhaps a testament, to the claim of feminism, that female academics and feminist research have been systematically discounted and ignored in academia, when the major postmodern theoreticians seem largely ignorant of the convergence with feminism.

Following the doctrine of self-reflexiveness, the present horizon of feminism is also sceptical to overarching and stereotyped categorisations of itself as a movement or a body of theory, and is indeed challenged to survey their own perspectives and objectives. This is true for instance in the critique of areas of the feminist paradigm, within gender science, man science, trans and queer studies. Nevertheless, it is possible to talk of some common themes and objectives that encompass a mainstream of contemporary feminist theory. Most would adhere to the idea that historical patriarchy has been a major agent of gender inequality and oppression, advocating the necessity of social reform. This is feminist own overarching metanarrative. Most would also agree that increased and eventually equal access to basic health and life quality for all individuals, regardless of gender, is the ultimate agenda for feminism globally today. Lastly most agree that feminists are a structural group, as Young defines it (S. S. Fainstein 2015). Feminists are not a group of individuals characterised by essential sex or gender, sexuality or other criteria, but by a shared notion of structural gender disadvantage compared to other gender categories, and an aim to reform. Beauvoir's divide between sex and gender still stand with some feminists today, but is increasingly substituted in academia by the notion of sex/ gender as a socially constructed category altogether. Challenges to address a wider spectrum of gender and sexuality identity issues than those of women, have shifted the policy to a more inclusive agenda. Indeed one of the central issues for gender research and activism today, consist in debates as to what the multiple gender

categories today entail in terms of gender equality, and how to employ them in an inclusive and constructive way. "What is a woman?" Beauvoir asked. "'Woman is a womb' says one" it is "the eternal feminine" says another (Beauvoir 1997). These are more than ever in the postmodern context of relativity and subjectivity relevant questions to be asked. From this shared middle ground, feminists spread out in a wide array of various fractions and schools, including for instance radical and separatist feminist, essential and conservative feminists and Neo-Marxist feminist, that believe the overturning of capitalism to be a necessary condition for gender equality are the best known (Pettersen, Tove 2011; Finlayson 2016).

Likewise there is no such thing as a postmodern unified body of theory. "The status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as the post-industrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age" says Lyotard in the opening lines of his book on the postmodern Condition (Lyotard 1984). Postmodernity as feminist theory today, can be interpreted as a condition relating to late modernity capitalist society, rather than as schools of thought. Which features and practises are shared by postmodernist and feminist and which are not? Most significantly the emphasis on self-reflexiveness, that challenges the adequacy of academic discourse and is sceptical of the representations that academia presents as authoritative truths, is common ground. Furthermore, the dedication to expose hidden power relations masked behind accepted dogmas is also a shared objective. The emphasis on how cultural representations and in particular language and text, is used rhetorically, is common, involving the activity of deconstructive re-reading whilst searching for ambivalence and hidden values. Revealing the position of the author, laying bare the situatedness of a particular approach, and instead investigating multiple perspectives and offer open-ended interpretations are also central to both feminists and post structuralists. This activity often results in a quest for original and novel forms, unconventional and deconstructed styles, detectable in academic work, literature, music, the arts - and in architecture and planning.

The main point where feminism, if there is such a body, differs from postmodernism, is in being outspokenly and conspicuously political. Feminists have a pronounced agenda of social reform to abate structural gender inequality, improving the actual life experiences of those who feel they suffer by it, including all genders. This is true for scholarly work, the creative arts, activists and what we may call everyday feminism- conducted through ordinary life acts. Whereas postmodernist theoreticians *describe* the condition of late modernism and capitalism, feminists also venture to *prescribe* alternative perspectives and life forms, alternative ways to organise societies. In this, feminism is utopian, building on a long tradition of social reform seeking to improve conditions for those worst off. For moderate feminist this involves a peaceful reform within the present regime of capitalism and liberalism. (Fraser og Nicholson 1989; Pettersen, Tove 2011; Moi 2015b) For (Neo-)Marxist feminists, reform involves overturning capitalism as well as patriarchy, seeing these as two sides of the same regime of oppression (Bridge og S 2000; Christopher Butler 2002; Harvey 2009). What joins feminist is a clear agency on behalf of what Iris Marion Young calls a structural group. It is not sex or gender, neither race, ethnicity, age, cast or any other social category that unites such a group, but a common agenda based on a common feeling of unfair disadvantage. The declaration of an explicit purpose to change the circumstances that produce and reproduce inequality per se, defines feminism as one of the most radical and transformative, yet both socially inclusive and practically grounded ideologies of postmodernity. This makes it a promising and influential source of knowledge and inspiration to most humanist and social sciences today. When it comes to urbanism and architecture, there is no such spillover effect, which is curious, given the focus on sociospatial dynamics that are emphasized in all spatial sciences today. The usefulness of feminist epistemology, ontology and methodology to urban studies is nevertheless evident in the few works that pave the way (Massey 1994; Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999).

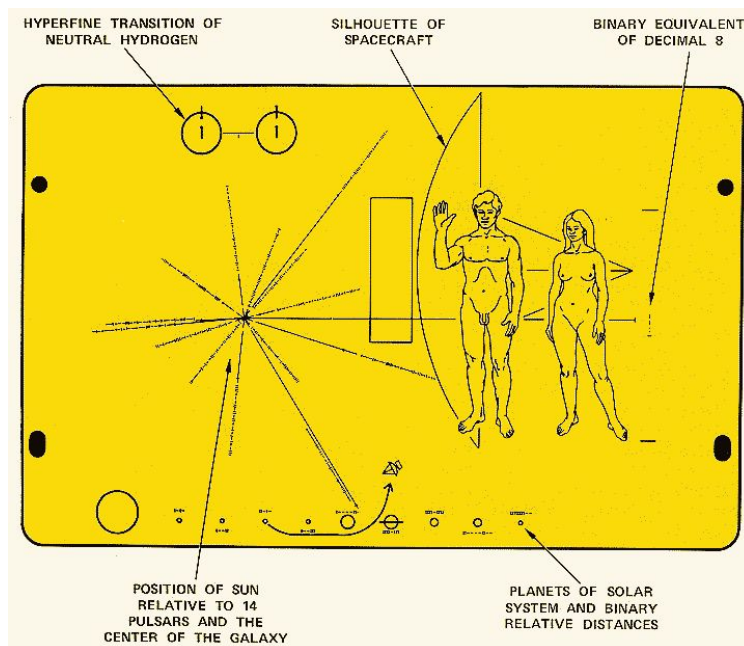


Figure 15: An annotated version of the plaque from spacecraft Pioneer 10 and 11, which were sent out to communicate to life forms in outer space- the ultimate 'other'. According to NASA, the plaque is based on universal statistics of the human race: 'On the plaque a man and woman stand before an outline of the spacecraft. The man's hand is raised in a gesture of good will. The physical makeup of the man and woman were determined from results of a computerized analysis of the average person in our civilization.' Anthropologist Craig Owen comments the underlying ideology of a gendered universalism in the representation:

'Like all representations of sexual difference that our culture produces, this is an image not simply of anatomical difference but of values assigned to it.' The subtle difference in the performance of the two characters, whereby the man has a frontal pose, gazes directly at us and raises his hand in greeting, signals a major difference in cultural roles. It makes a convincing argument that man is the primary, active personae and 'speech is the privilege of the man', whereas woman is his (secondary) passive consort.

(Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, og Cohen 1989)

## 6.2 Contemporary inclusive and moderate horizons of the feminist movement

The much-quoted definition that feminism is "... the radical notion that women are people", stems from Marie Shear in *New Directions for Women* (May/June 1986). Shear's broad and pragmatic description of feminism, is a reaction to the radical activism of the preceding decades. The separatist and socialist agendas of radical feminist groups had alienated many people from the cause of gender equality, not the least men, who were targeted as the cause of oppression. Aggressive attacks on male culture, existing socioeconomic conditions and heterosexuality, prevented broad identification with feminism. Shear's down to earth description, is illustrative of a return to an inclusive, broad feminism committed to social equality through democratic, legislative change. The main divide today could perhaps be drawn between individualist feminism and socialist feminism, resting on different interpretations of equality. Individualists work for the renouncement of gender as a category of social difference, claiming equality for all people. Socialist feminists side with Neo-

Marxism and do not believe in gender equality without the overturning of capitalism, which they claim disadvantage women due to systems of exploitation of unpaid labour in the home or lesser pay for the same job out of the home (the pay gap) (Bridge og S 2000; Hanisch 2006; Gieseeking mfl. 2014; Finlayson 2016).

The typical essentialist gender metanarratives of the 1960's and 1970's, such as that of universal motherhood, women's naturalness as carers, women's closer relation to a mother nature, have largely been deconstructed, i.e. their authority has been disputed and they have are not shared by most feminists today (Christopher Butler 2002). We see a falling back on Plato's sociocultural relativism. The fight for issues to do with the right to the body continues, as in the law enforcement of the right to family planning. Issues of the body also, in the right to self-defined gender, independent of reproductive attributes. The demand that people undergo genital operations in order to change gender is gradually being relented, as it has been in Norway. The right to be free from gender and sexually based discrimination is also gradually enforced by law in the so-called developed world. The belief in the potency of individual agency in fighting established authorities, such as the neo-liberal capitalist regime of urbanisation or political autocracy, is evident in the present horizon of feminist culture, as in postmodern culture at large. Grrlism - the forefront of female activism, hails the empowerment of individuals, and expresses itself, not so much in marches and appeals in public space, as through various forms of personal digital mediation, where politics mix with art in acts of resistance to conventions. It is sometimes claimed that the representations of femininity that comes to expression in Grrlism is reactionary, and a return to traditional expressions of femininity and masculinity, very different from the aversion to conspicuous traditional gender difference of preceding generations' bra-burning and relinquishing of lipstick. A postmodern interpretation will claim that the next generation of feminists of the horizon, are taking possession of symbols of femininity and masculinity, free them from their ties to normative sexuality, and apply them demonstratively and ironically in practises of self-mediation and representation. (Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999; Rampton 2015) Women, as well as "other people" (Shear 1986), claim uncensored ownership to shifting identities and the freedom to express themselves through urban performances. Feminist likewise must have shifting alliances. The creative freedom of the postmodern, global, multi-ethnic urban life, that this is representative of, is articulated in performative presentations of the self, often tongue in cheek. The city that these phenomena express is no longer a geographical or stable locus, as in the traditional European city, but a cosmopolitan mode of life, affecting social relations everywhere.

### **6.3 Gains and challenges of feminism on the contemporary horizon**

Many of the underlying goals of gender equality of the previous era has gradually gained sociocultural legitimacy and secured in law and politics (in the context of the Euroamericas). Large groups of women have access to "money and a room of her own" (Woolf 2002) constitutional rights to vote, economic independence, jurisdiction over one's own body, increased safety from violence and the possibility of combining motherhood with a career. In most parts of the developing world, these basic gender rights, that were so central to the first and second wave of feminism are far off, as is evident in the UN's programme for women (UN Women 2016). This is perhaps one reason why feminism has manifested itself less in the public domain in the Euroamericas in past years, whereas globally it is a pronounced political concern. In academia and the arts, feminism has had more of a continuous course, being a vital and transformative field offering critical research and academic innovation. Feminist theory now supports a burgeoning array of difference-studies. In addition it has provided a breaking edge for the development of a academic critique, with interdisciplinary effect. Joan Wallach calls the concept of gender "a useful category of historical analysis" (Scott 1986), a way of constructing knowledge through looking at social relations from a different perspective. It is a different way of looking, raising other research questions and providing

more complex interpretations of historical (or indeed any social or humanist) material. Looking through gender is relevant for any social science, including urbanism and planning theory as well as for practical architecture and design (Hayden 1997; Hayden 1997; Gieseking mfl. 2014).



Figure 16: Punk Prayer, Pussy Riot, concert in Kremlin, March 2012.

International row broke out following the jailing of the band after the performance: ‘Virgin Mary, drive Putin out! Virgin Mary, become a feminist!’. Pussy Riot is exemplary of 21st century ‘grrlie’ political feminism, that build grassroots alliances based on the feminist challenge to traditionalist institutions of power, and that finds often controversial expression across various art forms, but perhaps most notably through live music in the public arena.

#### **6.4 An overview of postmodernist feminist concepts: Bourdieu’s social distinction and social space**

Until now we have looked at some central concepts of modern feminist theory, and suggested why and how they may apply to urban history, theory, methodology and practise. As mentioned, the object of this master is not an in depth analysis of any one research problem. Rather it aims at providing the urbanist an overview of feminist theory in relation to urbanism, through tracing the outlines of an overlapping field, and inspire interdisciplinary research questions, approaches and methods. The remaining part of this chapter will therefore provide an overview of some central contemporary feminist concepts, chosen for their relevance and applicability to postmodern urban discourse.

Bourdieu is a central theoretician for all areas of social science today, and a central theoretician on the hidden workings of power in social relations. Bourdieu is not a proclaimed feminist. As a theoretician of social conflict, focusing primarily on the unacknowledged and subconscious forms of power, he has nevertheless taken an interest in gender and patriarchy, presented in *Masculine Domination* (Bourdieu 2001). He takes both an academic and political interest in social inequality and advocates a broad methodological approach, where empiric research and theory support each other, both of which align him with feminist paradigms. Bourdieu is puzzlingly absent from the feminist reference frame, although he delivers important contributions to the discourse, describing gender as one of the most resilient

categories of social difference. A central concept to Bourdieu is the notion of habitus, what we could call the sociocultural ecology that shape our body and mind through our lived lives as members of a social group. It results in distinctive patterns of thought and behaviour, and the formation of identity. Differences in habitus provide a different schooling of individuals shaping us to fit in with our societal milieu. These processes result in what he calls relative class distinctions between members of a society that are indicative of positions of power. The term distinction describe the criteria by which various social groups identify themselves as members of the same social group, such as taste, manners, speech, dress and so on. Within the total field of social space, different groups, or classes, crystalize and tune their distinctive differences. Distinctions are capital that legitimises a position of privilege relative to other classes. In addition to the Marxist notion of economic capital as a divider of social status, Bourdieu adds social and cultural capital. Social capital is gained by the family and relations network to which an individual belong, learn from and are supported by. Cultural capital is the refinement that results from being raised within a dominant cultural group that set the standards of society, education being one aspect. Capital bestows position and power and is convertible, so for instance the lack of cultural capital can be compensated by more economic capital (Bourdieu 2010).

In terms of gender in the context of contemporary Norwegian urbanism, perhaps the most interesting concept that Bourdieu draws attention to is that of doxa from old Greek, which to Plato meant opinion based on subjective experiences, as opposed to objective knowledge. For Bourdieu doxic fields describe those sides to one's social experiences that are taken for granted as natural, as the acting out of stereotyped gender characteristics (Bourdieu 2001; Bourdieu 2010). The idea of subconscious or internalized gender, throws light on Woolf's declaration that anything to do with sex (gender) is controversial. In other words; it is in the everyday, repetitive and seemingly inconsequential actions of our bodies in space, that we find the most resilient and fundamental gender operations at work. Gender relations are unwittingly reproduced through our normal thought patterns and influence our accumulation of knowledge. "We live in the house of language", Wittgenstein said (Moi 2015b). We interpret the world through gendered concepts, and thereby reproduce the values of existing social relations. Gender is invisible to us most of the time, and therefore controversial as an issue. The concept of doxic fields supports Beauvoir's gender concept, i.e. that the experiences of women and men as socially differentiated groups in a patriarchy, is most likely to be radically different. This teaches us two things: That looking at particularity and social relations, however subtly expressed, is both legitimate and necessary in regards to urban processes aiming to operating in a democratic way. Two: That women as a group is a relevant and necessary category of analysis in a society with a long history of patriarchy, along with other disadvantaged groups.

In terms of urban issues, Bourdieu's emphasis on the importance of habitus in the formation of social identity, social and cultural capital and power relations between groups, reinforces the significance of the sociospatial dimension of the city. Whilst policy makers and practitioners dealing with urban space production no doubt are aware of the functional aspects of space and the importance of a high quality environment, there may be less awareness of space in the way Foucault (Foucault 1991), Bourdieu and geographers Hayden (Hayden 1997), Zukin (Zukin 1993) and Doreen Massey defines it: As social space - the intersection and product of peoples relations and actions and the power this represents:

If time is the dimension in which things happen one after the other, it's the dimension of succession, then space is the dimension of things being, existing at the same time: of simultaneity. It's the dimension of multiplicity. We're sitting here, and it's somewhere around midday in London. Well, at this moment it is already night in the Far East, my friends in Latin America are probably just stirring and thinking about getting up, and space is that cut across all of those dimensions. Now what that means is that space is the dimension that presents us with the existence of the other; space is the dimension of multiplicity. It presents me with the



existence of those friends in Latin America and that means it is space that presents us with the question of the social. And it presents us with the most fundamental of political of questions which is how are we going to live together.

(Philosophy Bites 2017)

Hayden calls this the *Power of Place* (Hayden 1997). It means that the production of space, and processes of place-attachment through emotional involvement with space, are fundamental to the formation of identity as well as to the distribution of social and cultural – as well as economic capital. In this way spatial policies can serve to either challenge or reproduce asymmetrical and non-egalitarian social relations. Bourdieu enables us to be more aware of spatial production in the city also as processes of social entrepreneurship, and to evaluate whether both process and outcomes are democratic, socially sustainable and contribute to policies of public health. Mindful of Foucault's notion of how we learn and internalise social power relations through the body in space (Foucault 1991), the city may serve as a medium through which social groups learn 'to stay in one's place' or a medium to create more dynamic space. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, fields, social space and doxa can provide useful tools of understanding and analysis. In forming notions of social groups for the purpose of analysis, we must remind ourselves of Young's cautions: Groups should not be formed on basis of essential criteria, such as male or poor. Such groups rely on internal coherence and identification that may not be felt within the group, causing exclusion and/ or disagreement about the issues at stake. Most importantly it denies difference, tending to emphasize likenesses and ignore variation, highlight the interest of some and neglect that of others. Group analysis along gender must operate on the structural level, including those that share an experience of disadvantage due to institutionalised background conditions, which is hard for any individual to do something with alone (S. S. Fainstein 2015). This is a caution for urban analysis, where sociospatial concerns are addressed. Lastly Bourdieu is also useful to keep in mind when it comes down to actual methods. Relative capital between social will influence involvement and presence in urban processes and participatory situations. Acute awareness of the danger of uneven representation is necessary in order to avert distorted knowledge and policies.

## **6.5 Acker processes of gendering and landscapes of power**

Joan Acker's description of processes of gendering is the second field of theory that may be of particular interest to urbanists and urban issues. Acker's essay *Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations* from 1990, deal with gender and organisational structures (Acker 2016). Acker describes the different forms that processes of gendering can take, and in particular draws a distinction between open and hidden gendering. Open process are known to all involved and often formally institutionalized, as in the distribution of different civic rights to men and women. The object is to create hierarchal difference along what is presented as a natural and essential difference, granting legitimacy and authority. An example is the unequal right to attain a divorce to men versus women in some cultures and states, based on religious doctrine. Open gendering also takes place through space, as in the divide between male public and female private space. A good example is the traditional gendered office plan, where the male leaders have separate big offices with a window, whilst the female staff have a desk in a shared open space in the interior of the plan (Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999; Acker 2016). In patriarchal and strongly gendered societies these open processes of gendering affect the lives of individuals on a structural and political level. In the context of less gendered societies, such as contemporary Norway, open structural gendering have lost political legitimacy, and can be opposed to by individuals and groups. The other form of gendering is a hidden process. These are embedded deep in structures and organisations, and are entirely naturalised and normalised – including physical and psychological embodiment and internalisation - by all involved. An example relating to urban space is the gender bias involved in public funding for sports and play facilities in Norway, which is looked at later.

Hidden gender processes most often happen subconsciously and unwittingly and serve to reproduce existing social relations. They can also happen in a purposeful but clandestine way, where a dominant party gain from not divulging a hidden agenda of supporting or strengthening existing power relations. Acker describes four processes by which gendering takes place: division of labour, production of symbols and concepts of gender, interactive processes between men and women and internal mental construction of gender identity.

Divisions of labour have been described as a central area of gender practise historically. It involves access to the same work, equal pay, access to political power and influence and the hierarchy of social relations for instance in an organization. As we have seen, labour has been a central concern to feminism. The division of labour is also central in constituting dichotomy of urban gendered space in terms of the female private and the male public. From a feminist Marxist point of view the exploitation of women through unpaid domestic labour is also part of the mechanism of spatial and work related oppression. In terms of urban policy there are two important aspects to this. Firstly it teaches us the necessity to address gender in planning, public expenditure and actual use of space. Taking Acker's perspective it is particularly relevant to address gender by looking at commercial or work related space versus housing space, in terms of infrastructure investments and other the public resources that support it and the quality of the location and the urban attractions. Secondly it would advice us to be cautious of hidden gendering, due to the male dominated traditions in academic and practical professions related to urbanism, planning and architecture, as well as in democratic processes.

When it comes to the production of symbols, Acker would advise us to be aware of asymmetrical representation and the power of symbolic language in the urban built environment. Architect Louis Sullivan's description of a skyscraper as an icon of male domination, is an apt example of the symbolic power of the built landscape, here openly declared and undisputed;

No; I mean, here is a man for you to look at. ... a real man, a manly man; a virile force-broad, vigorous and with a whelm of energy- an entire male.

...it stands, in physical fact, a monument to trade, to the organized commercial spirit, to the power and progress of the age, to the strength and resource of individuality and force of character; spiritually, it stands as the index of a mind, large enough, courageous enough to cope with these things, master them, absorb them and give them forth again, impressed with the stamp of large and forceful personality; artistically, it stands as the oration of one who knows well how to choose his words, who has somewhat to say and says it- and says it as the outpouring of a copious, direct, large and simple mind.

(Condit 1973, 62)

Sullivan is legitimising the privilege of man, authorizing maleness as a position by nature bestowed upon the best fitted. A position that is secured in and through the superiority of the products of the male world. Architecture becomes the symbol of what it is to be masculine, and what it is that propels the world forwards and create prosperousness. It is an essentialist model, bearing witness to the deep gendering involved in the conceptualisation of the physical environment, the architectural profession, the idea of progress and the power of liberal capitalism.

In speaking of the interactive processes between people, Acker means the everyday social encounters between individuals, both men and women and same-sex interaction. These processes involve a broad spectrum of conscious and subconscious social patterns where inclusion, exclusion, alliances and loyalties serve to support, or contest, the established hierarchal gender relations in society. Men and women assume different roles in different circumstances depending on the gender dynamics. The tolerance for out-of-gender behaviour

is cultural and situated, as will be discussed in the chapter on Butler below. In terms of urbanism it is useful to be sensitive to gendered interactive processes, both when it comes to urban policy and designing space. A very simple example of these gender dynamics which most women have experienced, is the unwanted attention that being alone in public places can extort, in particular in urban empty spaces. The cultural code that underlies this, is that women are out-of-place alone in public space, and only have access as guests; in transit, in action or accompanied by a male. Programmes of gender - mainstreaming in Vienna, as well as UN Women policies have addressed the issue of gendered urban space as an area of urban concern, promoting policies that create more inclusive and attractive urban environments to women (Stadt Wien 2016; UN Women 2016). This would pave the way for more inclusive collective concepts of urban space, where all social groups assert themselves as contributors to the place-making processes of urban space.



Figure 17: Still photo from "The Fountainhead", film directed by King Vidor, 1949, based on the novel by the same name by Ayn Rand, 1943. Rand was a political philosopher who supported what she called objectivism, advocating laissez-faire capitalism. She argued for ethical egoism and in *Fountainhead* explores the tensions between individualism and collectivism: "I don't build in order to have clients. I have clients in order to build", proclaim Gary Cooper as the Architect, pursuing his artistic, modernist icon vision of the skyscraper.

Lastly Acker describes the internal mental construction of gender that is the resultant of the social coercion of gender identity. Individuals experience how their position in society or an organisation is affected by their culturally ascribed gender role. It provides a context for the kind of aspirations and realistic possibilities individuals form for themselves, forming their personality, goals and behaviour subconsciously and consciously. Individuals may choose various gender strategies as a result, for instance in repressing or accentuating gender characteristics in order to avoid repercussions or open possibilities. This can happen through sexuality, in dress, in speech, choice of profession and so on. This notion support Bourdieu's description of doxic fields. In terms of urban issues, it is relevant again to the sociospatial dynamics, where the formation and performance of identity always has a spatial dimension – it takes place, i.e. creates place. Addressing urban policy in terms of social dynamics and identity issues is therefore a necessary measure to ensure a socially sustainable urban environment and accomplish goals on public health and inclusion (Gieseking mfl. 2014; UN Women 2016).

## 6.6 Crenshaw's Intersectionality theory as an approach to placemaking

Intersectionality describes processes of multiple oppression and the way it affects identity, personal ambition and ability. It was conceptualised as a critique of reductionist and biased ideas of feminism and notions the female condition, particularly as they unfolded within the first generations of feminist. The white, middle and upper class women that stated the agenda for the first wave of feminist, were largely ignorant of, and indifferent to, the diversity and inequality within the group of women, such as the life experiences of their contemporary poor, black, female citizens (Hayden 1997; Scott 2000; Gieseeking mfl. 2014). Kimberley Crenshaw properly coined the phrase intersectionality, drawing on her experience from gender theory, race theory and law. She argued that the identity of any individual is uniquely compounded by the actual experience of belonging to several overlapping sociocultural categories. This makes for a multidimensional, interlocking and always unique matrix. It is not just that an individual will experience multiple oppression, but rather that the person's actual experience of a form of oppression will differ from another person's (Crenshaw 2015). The concept of intersectionality demonstrates how it is possible to be discriminated along one axis and privileged along another, as a white *woman* could be disadvantaged to a white *man* in a masculinist environment, but have advantage as a *white* person over all *black* persons if the environment was racially biased. The theorisation of intersectionality shifted the focus of difference-theory from generalisations on behalf of a seemingly culturally naturalised social group, such as women, to the pronounced experience of one individual or one particular subgroup, that shares in the experiences of structural disadvantage and will to reform. For feminism it meant a step further away from essentialist categories and universalist approaches. There is no such thing as *a* woman and *one* sort of oppression, according to Crenshaw, only multiple identities and dynamic fields of social constellations, felt through the unique experiences of actual lives. Intersectionality is thus a multidimensional conceptualisation. Based on the notion of sociospatial dialectics and the role of place as part of the habitus that influences the formation of identity and the accumulation of different types of capital, also pertains to time and space in and through the urban.

The shift from objective universalism to that of subjective experience and from essentialist reduction to cultural diversity, is evident in all post structuralist schools of humanistic and social science, and spills over into urban issues. In terms of urban policy, and theories and practise, the concept of intersectionality is representative of the shift from the quantifiable values of modernism, defined by an expert elite and applied as a universal principle across local or individual actual experience, to the postmodern realities of a diverse and heterogeneous, socially mobile and globally inspired urban lifestyle. Post structural approaches to the city, applying Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality, leads us to focus on the ambiguous, complex and qualitative experiences of space and the city. The phenomena of the urban, can thus be seen "an infinite number of utterances", using Young's phrase (Allen og Young 2011). City life, full of wonder and exoticism, yet also divided and unjust, would provide inspiration for a more democratic society, based on difference without exclusion (Young 1986), as we will discuss later. These ideas are relevant to the design of analysis for urban policy and individual projects and in tailoring processes of democratic participation and communicative planning, where individuals and groups act as both stakeholders and creative resources. It would lead us to promote urban space as the sum of multiple places, created through local entrepreneurship, involving participation of local communities and interest groups, and building place-making skills, targeting minorities and disadvantaged as focus groups. Place-making processes can provide a meeting place across cultural difference, where people can engage with each other through a common cause. This entails acting as a structural group, rather than as a coherent identity group based on principles of assimilation, likeness and consensus. It may also inspire us to prescribe design principles that result in more inclusive and open urban spaces, what Karen Franck calls loose space (Franck 2006),

where broad groups of users feel in-place, and are allowed to appropriate and engage in space in their own way, building place-attachment. Such spaces would provide media for exploring interaction with others, without losing the integrity of multiple identities. Multifunctional, flexible, heterogeneous and complex urban spaces that are located, programmed and designed with particular attention to minority or disadvantaged groups, allow confrontation of difference, and when successful promote what political theorist Chantal Mouffe calls agonism – the acknowledgement of difference without antagonism (Mouffe 2013). Lastly it would lead us to investigate the potential of performativity in urban space, as the medium through which the playful and explorative individual spirit of postmodern life can be mediated.

## **6.7 Herstory and history – a challenge to universality**

Herstory, is a neologism based on the word history - the rewriting of his-story. It shifts the androcentric perspective of traditional academic history from that of the lives of men, male activity and male arenas, to that of the lives of women, their activities and the spheres they inhabit. A traditional approach to historical material is heavily gendered, occupying itself predominantly with what have been male issues, such as state politics, warfare, technological and industrial innovation and commerce. Herstory complements this picture by approaching other sides to civic life, filling in the blank fields of private affairs, the everyday family life, the lives of children, the sick and the elderly, homebound production and innovation and so forth. This also involves a shift in methodology, from looking at formal, official and ceremonial material, to taking an interest in sources of information pertaining to short term, trivial and temporary activities, as well as undercover practises. Herstory has a commitment to issues of social power relations - focusing on and from the perspective of subordinate groups - the others in society. In terms of urban, social and architectural history, herstory is only at the onset of a new epistemology, ontology and methodology (Scott 1986; Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999; Foxhall og Neher 2012).

An interesting example of both theory and practise is Lisa C. Nevett's article 'Towards a Female Topography in the Ancient Greek City: Case studies from Late Archaic and Early Classical Athens (c.520- 400 BCE)' in the antalogy 'Gender and the City before Modernity' (Foxhall og Neher 2012). Nevett demonstrates how the literary sources relating to ancient Athens consist of the writings of a small number of elite men, for an audience identical to themselves and with the specific goals of legitimising and supporting established (patriarchal) culture. She investigates the tensions between these written records, the androcentric knowledge production that have resulted from them, and alternative forms of knowledge that arise from approaching evidence left unwittingly by women and other subordinate groups. She studies the archaeology of domestic quarters and neighbourhoods, which were women's environments, as opposed to the remains and records of public and formal activity and institutions, the domains of men. Studying trivial artefacts, deriving from small- scale, short-term, local activities is influenced by social anthropology, where it has proved productive in gaining knowledge of subordinate social groups. Minute domestic archaeology reveals the sociospatial framework of women's lives in the ancient city. This methodology presents a much more nuanced picture of the actual lives of men and women, than the attention to formal written records have drawn up. There is a tension between the morally precarious, carefully controlled lives prescribed for Athenian women in writing, and posterity's simplified interpretation, and the traces of actual everyday acts. Some of these reveal regular informal practises, such as women's regular visits to family and friends in other neighbourhoods, unrecorded freedoms of movement, such as the accepted practise of women to tend graves outside the city walls, or clandestine transgressions and subversions such as socialising from rooftops and terraces, or socialising with other women under cover of domestic duties.



Figure 18: The Book of the City of Ladies, Christine Pizan, 1405 (Also shown on the front page)  
 Supplementing history with Herstory have early antecedents, here a medieval example. Pizan explains the reason for her project in the introduction:

”In order to judge in all fairness and without prejudice whether what so many famous men have said about us is true, I also thought about other women I know, the many princesses and countless ladies of all different social ranks who have shared their private and personal thoughts with me. No manner which way I looked at it and no matter how much I turned the question over in my mind, I could find no evidence from my own experience to bear out such a negative view of female nature and habits. Even so, given that I could scarcely find a moral work by any author which didn't devote some chapter or paragraph to attacking the female sex, I had to accept their unfavourable opinion of women since it was unlikely that so many learned men, who seemed to be endowed with such great intelligence and insight into all things, could possibly have lied on so many different occasions.”

(Pizan og Brown-Grant 2004).

This put such a burden on her shoulders on behalf of women, that she set about accumulating contrary evidence. The illustration depicts the Lady of Reason helping her in building the wall around the City of Ladies, an allegorical city of women. The merited females serve as ‘building blocks’ for the piecing together of historical evidence that women, as well as men, contribute to society in positive ways.

Being a useful methodological critique in terms of history, it is also easy to see the transfer value of herstory approaches to contemporary urban policy, theory and practise. To a certain degree the idea of gaining new knowledge through studying particular groups of users, is embedded in Norwegian planning and building law and practise. This involves that of children, the young and the less-abled, which is implemented in equal access and universal design principles for processes and results. It is possible to enlarge the scope to accommodate other groups at disadvantage, in particular in the context of increasing cultural diversity and social inequality. It is also a reminder to question our methodological approach and the way it affects knowledge, for instance in analysis or evaluation of a particular policy or scheme. More significantly, herstory would lead us to question and challenge the legitimacy of the very idea of universalism, and disclose the suppression of difference and the social exclusion that these principles tend to disguise (Young 1986). It would also lead us to address tensions between concepts of universality, and the actual realities and qualities of urban physical reality. This entails not looking from one theoretical perspective, but from the localised, unique and infinitely varied realities of actual urban space.

## 6.8 Hook's centre periphery theory as a landscape of radical openness and possibility for future urbanity

Hook's centre periphery theory explores space as a medium of social and economic power, and in particular unsymmetrical and static social relations that is produced in and through space. She belongs in the broader tradition of critical urban geography, mentioned above. The sociospatial mapping of everyday life of women in antiquity exposes, what Edward Soja calls the sociospatial dialectic (Soja 1980), where space is conceptualised as politics of power:

*Space is not a scientific object removed from ideology and politics; it has always been political and strategic. If space has an air of neutrality and indifference with regard to its contents and thus seems to be "purely" formal, the epitome of rational abstraction, it is precisely because it has been occupied and used, and has already been the focus of past processes whose traces are not always evident on the landscape. Space has been shaped and moulded from historical and natural elements, but this has been a political process. Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally filled with ideologies.*

(Soja 1980)

Soja builds on French philosopher Henri Lefebvre's reconceptualisation of space from being a neutral, quantifiable, physical entity to being a tool of power and politics. Lefebvre describes how through the everyday lives in common places, space is being produced in support of existing power relations in society (Lefebvre 1991). This is a position shared by critical geographers Harvey (Harvey 2009), Massey (Massey 1994), Zukin (Zukin 1993) and Hayden (Hayden 1997), as we have seen earlier. It provides a springboard for postmodern feminist theoreticians conceptualisation of the position of the margin, as a space of radical openness, as opposed to the centre. Hooks supplements the perspectives of white, middle class, professional women, with that of marginalised groups within the group of women, such as the poor and the black, and the knowledge gained by their marginal social stance:

To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body. As black Americans living in a small Kentucky town, the railroad tracks were a daily reminder of our marginality. Across those tracks were paved streets, stores we could not enter, restaurants we could not eat in, and people we could not look directly in the face. Across those tracks was a world we could work in as maids, as janitors, as prostitutes, as long as it was in a service capacity. We could enter that world but we could not there. We had always to return to the margin, to cross the tracks to shacks and abandoned houses on the edge of town.

There were laws to ensure our return. Not to return was to risk being punished. Living as we did - on the edge - we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside in and from the inside out. We focused our attention on the center as well as on the margin. We understood both. This mode of seeing reminded us of the existence of a whole universe, a main body made up of both margin and center. Our survival depended on an ongoing public awareness of the separation between margin and center and an ongoing private acknowledgement that we were a necessary, vital part of that whole.

This sense of wholeness, impressed upon our consciousness by the structure of our daily lives, provided us with an oppositional world-view - a mode of seeing unknown to most of our oppressors, that sustained us, aided us in our struggle to transcend poverty and despair, strengthened our sense of self and our solidarity.

(Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999).

Hooks' description of centre and margin, and the "unknown mode of seeing" that can be gained by a position on the margin, rejects the authority of a socially privileged position in



the centre. She uses a spatial metaphor to illustrate the idea that the margin can provide original and potent new knowledge(s). The spatiality of the margins provides a multiplicity of viewpoints, as opposed to the centre. Standing at the margin yields an indefinite number of different perspectives and truths. Hooks put forwards the idea of the margin as a transformative landscape, a chosen position that provides “a space of radical openness” (hooks 2000), as opposed to being a position of oppression and passivity: ”I am located in the margin. I make a definite distinction between that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as site of resistance - as location of radical openness and possibility.” (Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999). Hook’s centre-margin theory creates a shift in the feminist paradigm, by conceptualising the marginal not as within a role of passive victimisation but one of mastery and agency, aligning with Beauvoir’s urging women to take responsibility for changing their lives under patriarchy (Beauvoir 1997) or Nietzsche urging for individuals to take charge of their true world (Nietzsche 2014). It is reminiscent of the brilliant opening line of David Copperfield: “Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.” (Dickens, Gavin, og Carabine 1992). Hooks’ influence obviously stretches beyond that of feminist theory, into the fields of black, multicultural and postcolonial theory in particular. More than anything Hooks is a theoretician of difference, vitalising the radical and reformist potential of difference sensitive theory.



Figure 19: Barcode, Oslo Central Business District, 2016.

Rhetoric of neoliberal capitalist power in the drawing up of Oslo’s new skyline, promoting Norway as a global market player by allowing the waterfront to transform into an emblem of international finance, insurance and retail. Fjordbyen, being the largest waterfront rejuvenation project in Norway in recent times, create new notions of centrality and marginality, and has been critiqued for reinforcing ideals of a divided city.

In terms of the urbanist field of issues, Hooks is supportive of normative discourses advocating the right to the city, as with Lefebvre (Lefebvre 1996; Chris Butler 2014; Harvey 2008) and Harvey, and just cities discourses, as with Fainstain (Susan S. Fainstain 2011). Lefebvre’s description of how the physical centres and suburbs of cities unfold unto another in a ‘push and pull effect’ (Merrifield 2011) easily comes to mind as a literary example of this. Urbanisation processes contribute to a ”sucking people into the city while spitting others

out on the periphery” (Merrifield 2011), where the circuit of capital creates constantly changing constellations of centrality and peripherality in space. Whilst Lefebvre’s perspective is Marxist and focuses on the spatial-economic processes of exploitation and marginalisation, Hooks focus is on the social relations and dynamics of structural difference and inequality. Both advocate the need for social reform and new policies of social relations. Perhaps the most interesting side to centre periphery theory is the emphasis of the radical and transformatory potential of the margin, in creating entirely new concepts for social relations and urban ideals. For urbanism this would support a critique of the conventions of the (neo)liberal, market driven urban production, which have been the dominating paradigm and regime since the onset of urbanisation by the industrial revolution. Shifting the focus from this centre position of capitalist urbanisation, to the many other possible concepts of sociospatial relations, may indeed allow us to venture into “a landscape of radical openness” (hooks 2000) where new ideals for future cities can be conceptualised .

### **6.9 Mary Mc Loud’s everyday and other spaces as research fields for other cities**

Feminist theoretician Mary McLeod conceptualises the terms everyday and other spaces in the essay with the same title (Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999). The concept is akin to Nevitt’s small-scale, temporary and individual activities in everyday life space. It shares in Lefebvre’s conceptualisation of spatial production through trivial, repetitive practises, as well as performative gender theory, which is dealt with below. Mc Loud critiques the prevalent use of the term other in postmodern and post structural theory, in particularly in architecture. For a range of theoreticians that deal with sociospatial issues, like Foucault, Sartre, Beauvoir, Lefebvre, Certeau, Lacan, Derrida and Hooks, otherness carries political and normative substance (Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999; Bridge og Watson 2000; Christopher Butler 2002; Gieseking mfl. 2014; S. S. Fainstein 2015). It draws attention to the inequality and perspectives of marginalised social groups and looks at ways to understand the controlling – but also the liberating and transformatory – power of otherness. For postmodern architectural theory however, otherness seemingly represents little more than an aesthetic exercise of subverting formal architectural signage, of interest only to a small circle of elite, western avantgardists, McLeod ascertains (Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999). Is the concept of othering sufficiently explored by skewing angles and fragmenting form in the built environment? Addressing othering should involve far more than introvert aesthetic exercises, and address the deconstruction of universalising, discriminatory ideologies, she rallies. The call for architecture as well as other social practical sciences is to disclosing dichotomies of difference, which privilege some and disadvantage others, always establishing a hierarchy of value. If this is accepted as a normative position, the study of othering, involves researching the actual experiences of difference by others. McLeod underlines the necessity of recognizing difference and otherness, not as a phenomenon per se, but as the multiple experiences of difference by multiple actual people. Searching for the ”desires of those multiple others”, is the task at hand (Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999), women being an apt category of investigation, and feminist traditions providing a theoretical and methodological fundament. Looking at ”how the feminine is experienced differently, at different times, in different cultures, by different people” would then be the issue from which to proceed. (Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999; Chase 2008).

McLeod’s understanding of everyday and other space draws most heavily on Lefebvre as the ”here and now” (Lefebvre 2000), where material life is lived out and experienced in all it’s trivial banality, as well as it’s rich poetry. Furthermore her concept aligns with Certeau’s description of the local and transitory quality of the everyday landscape, and the attention to the many freedoms and transgressions which are constantly being exercised there. Certau calls the traces of these forms of spatial misdemeanour a ”network of anti-discipline” on the physical geography (Certeau 2011). This shares some resemblance with Nevett’s micro-topographies (Foxhall og Neher 2012). All three theoreticians draw attention to the dynamics

of power through the policing and controlling of bodies in everyday space, as well as the choice, invention and creativity that is found and activated by individuals, providing joy, pleasure and urban innovation. McLoud points to the mundane arenas of trivial urban life, such as the home, the shopping mall, the park, the laundry, the playground, where the lives of women, children, the elderly and the poor pan out, as relevant study fields to build knowledge of the dynamics of otherness, to inform policies of reform counteracting negative effects.

McLeod's arenas of urban otherness, like Hooks conceptualisation of the openness of the periphery, serve to support a double agency for urbanism. It can provide a methodology to address the negative impacts of othering in and through urban space. This can involve normative approaches addressing the undemocratic and unjust nature of urban policy and use of urban space. But also as a public health issue, where alienation, deprivation of urban quality and infrastructure and loneliness due to exclusion are issues to be confronted. On the other hand McLeod's arenas of otherness can serve to inspire urbanism and urban policy by learning from the vital, expressive and playful forms that these practises leave on the urban landscape, so emblematic of the diverse and compressed nature of urban life. It is exactly such informal and loose qualities, that often provide a conflict with the ideals of packaged urban landscapes, bent to the ideology of attractiveness, sanitation and commodification (Gieseking mfl. 2014; Zukin 1993; Certeau 2011). The everyday landscape displays the full range of diversity, creativity and complexity that is contemporary urban life. McLeod points to theoreticians such as Jane Jacob's, whose empirical studies of life on the neighbourhood street, advocated the mixing of functions and the mixing of people, providing chances for social engagement and interaction, enjoyment and pleasure, exoticism and safety (Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999; Jacobs 1961). She also points to Denise Scott Brown and Robert Ventury's analysis of popular consumerist culture in *Learning from Las Vegas* (Brown, Denise Scott, Venturi, og Izenour 1977), as a relevant approach to addressing contemporary urban culture through the everyday other. To feminist theoreticians, consumer culture is of interest, both as a historical and contemporary scene for women to engage in public life. Brown and Ventury's research address exactly the often-overlooked landscapes of otherness and arenas of the everyday life, in the space and symbols of popular consumerist culture.



Figure 20: Denise Scott Brown in Las Vegas, photo from *Learning from Las Vegas* project, ca. 1966 Exploring commercial landscapes and symbolism of popular culture

## 6.10 Judith Butler's performative gender theory and the urban as performativity

"When Simone de Beauvoir claims, "one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman," she is appropriating and reinterpreting this doctrine of constituting acts from the phenomenological tradition. In this sense, gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time - an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts. Further, gender is instituted through the stylisation of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self."

(J. Butler 1988)

A citation from a seminal text of postmodern feminist theory introduces Judith Butler's performative gender theory. Butler's essay *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory* (J. Butler 1988) and her book *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory* (J. Butler 2006) have been widely influential for postmodern feminist theory. Butler shares a phenomenological foundation with Beauvoir, relating gender - performance theory to the actual lived experience of individuals. She also accepts Beauvoir's divide between biological sex and socially constructed gender. But whereas Beauvoir's 'becoming a woman' implies a sociocultural process whereby females attain a largely prescribed and stable identity of what it entails to be a woman in her culture, Butler sees gender identity as an ever ongoing negotiation between the individual and society. You *are* not woman or man, Butler claims, you constitute women(hood) or man(hood) through *performing* the role of stereotyped gender that is advocated and coerced onto you by your society. Butler reconceptualises gender from the stasis of being or having, to the dynamics of doing - you do woman or man, to a lesser or larger degree. Gender performance can be compared to playing a theatrical role on a stage. The gender role is constructed by an external subject author, the dominant culture. But playing the role also involves drawing on your personality, and allows for personal interpretation to varying degrees. This means that gender performance to a certain degree is a voluntary act. In many ways it does involve coercion and pressure but ultimately relies on submission and adherence. Performance theory opens for personal agency, allowing resistance and subversive acts, as well as the possibility of creative freedom.

The performative act of doing gender is based on historical archetypes of gender, contemporary cultural representations and social osmosis and pressure. Most performative processes are largely unconscious, naturalized and frictionless in our everyday lives, as we unawares reproduce pre-established, recognizable patterns of gender behaviour through our bodies in space. This happens in a multitude of ways, including the cultivation of our physical bodies, the ways we move, speak, dress and relate to other genders, including practise sexuality. Gender performance mainly attracts our attention when it breaks the mould of social expectation, in which case it can generate severe controversy and result in sanctions. The flexibility and tolerance for temporary or persistent deviations from the dichotomy of masculine - feminine heterogeneous cast, vary with culture and with sex/ gender. In the context of the EuroAmericas, it is noncontroversial for females to do crossover gender, for instance in wearing what is considered traditional male clothes, such as trousers, shirt and tie, or in doing traditional male jobs. The opposite is far more controversial. Men wearing dresses, high heels and make-up causes, or working in stereotypical female jobs, raises attention and controversy, and is often sanctioned with ridicule or aggression by mainstream culture, although this is culturally dependant. Transgressive behaviour can lead to severe oppression and punishment, even death: A female in shorts and a T-shirt in public space would meet with social resistance in many cultures, homosexual practise might meet with death penalty (J. Butler 2006).

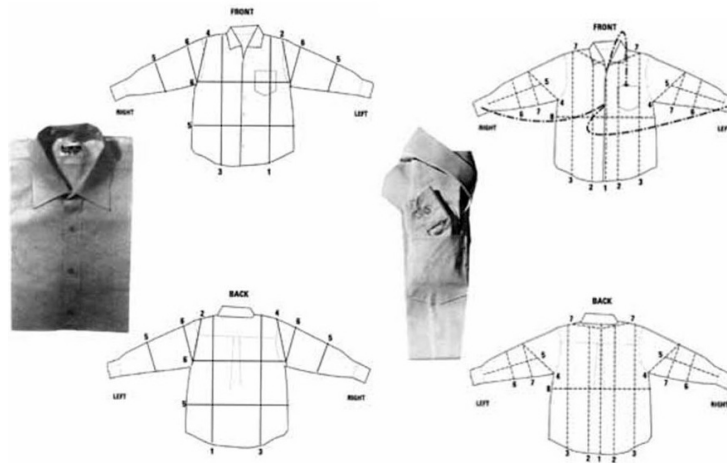


Figure 21: Bad Press: Dissident housework- series, Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, mixed media, 1993-1998

Bad Press is an exercise in dissident housework made with 25 generic men's white shirts, an iron, and spray starch. The project scrutinizes ironing as one among other household tasks that are still governed by motion- economy principles designed by efficiency engineers at the turn of the century. The standardized ironing pattern was devised so that a minimum of energy would be expended in pressing a shirt into a flat rectangular shape that would fit economically into orthogonal systems of storage: The shipping carton, the display case, the dresser drawer, the closet shelf, and the suitcase. The residual trace of the orthogonal logic of efficiency is worn on the body. The parallel creases end crisp, square corners of a clean, pressed shirt are a sought after emblem of refinement. But what if the task of ironing could free itself from the aesthetics of efficiency altogether? Perhaps the effects of ironing could more aptly represent the postindustrial body by trading the image of the functional for that of the dysfunctional.

(Diller and Scofidio 2017)

The concept of gender as a performative act means that sociocultural categories make for a much more fluid dialectic than often assumed in cultural studies. Performative (gender) theory points to the agency of the individual rather than raise a group focus to address social oppression. As the individual is coerced into performing gender, likewise exists the possibility to resist and create gender. Indeed Butler encourages transgressions and experimentation, an idea not unlike Lefebvre's and Certeau's concept of opposition through everyday, repetitive small acts (Lefebvre 1991; Certeau 2011). Lefebvre's acts of resistance are *mainly* political-economical, in that it wills the defaulting of capitalist exploitation. Butler, although she promotes acts of resistance to sociocultural inequality, also celebrates and encourages gender performativity in itself, as a source of provocative and affective artistic expression. Her rally to performative transgression, aims to undermine externally constructed essentialist ideas on gender, by advocating ambiguity, ambivalence and playfulness. We could say that performance theory celebrates difference and diversity and heralds the transformative potential of sociocultural transgressive representations.

Butler addresses the way social difference is operated through the policing of the body in space, building on Foucault's identification of the body as the locus of social control, whereby external pressure and surveillance eventually results in internalisation (Foucault 1998). She differs from Foucault in emphasizing the freedom that lies in the creative agency of every individual, exercised through the will and ability to resist and subvert in the creation of the self. In terms of urbanism it is interesting to relate performance theory to the creative individuation of Deleuze, and the idea that "empiricism is always about creating." (Bryant, Kolb, og McCumber 2008). In other words, we build knowledge, as we build notions of selves and others through performing and interpreting other's performances. Butler's performance



theory is relevant to issues of public space, cultural representation and identification. It raises questions of the meaning of public space and whom public space belongs to - which has the power to perform publicness and public space. Particularly in the diverse, capital driven landscapes of compact, urbanisation, actors compete for authorship. Ali Madanipour raises the issue of access in the international case study *Who's Public Space*. He looks at the privatisation and commodification of urban space along ideals of compact, attractive city urban ideals (Madanipour 2013; Madanipour 2014). The packaged landscapes that result tend to police and exclude nonconform or untargeted identities and practises. One could argue, that the stereotyped urban repertoire of commercial recreation, that is so characteristic of contemporary urban regeneration, deny the very notion of public space as a medium for performativity (Bridge og Watson 2000; Chase 2008; Gieseeking mfl. 2014; Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999). It also denies the creative, and very urban, meeting between performative cultures and experiences of difference, as well as the transformative production of shifting urban cultures in and through urban space. Performance theory is inspirational to urbanism, as it allows us to consider sociospatial and cultural structures as much more fluid and malleable than perhaps we are used to. It has potential for political subversion, as well as cultural transgression. It challenges the idea that we can formulate universal principles of the good-for-all. Instead it inspires urban ideals of difference, flexibility, flux and change, promoting a variety of life performances, playfulness, pleasure and sensory stimulation, as guidelines for the good city life. In this, performance theory would be an interesting approach to the field of affective urbanism (Kim og Bianco 2007; Anderson og Holden 2008). This would involve conceptualising public space as performance, involving emotional and expressive means of production. This very baroque staging of urbanity for spectacular performance and empiricism is perhaps the best antithesis to both modernist functionalism and the reactionary new urbanism and regionalism that is evident in attractive city ideals today. It is perhaps the best a way to instead indulge in the ambivalence and tensions of postmodern urban life.

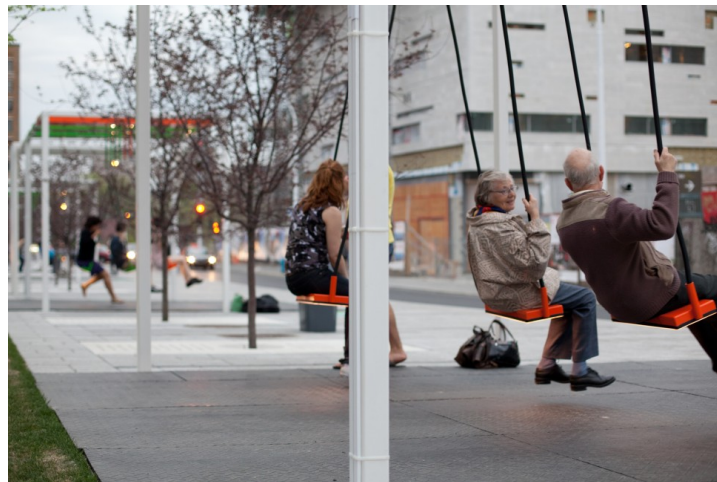


Figure 22: 21 Balançoires (21 Swings), Daily tous les jours, urban installation, Montreal, 2014

When in motion, each swing triggers different notes, and when used all together, the swings create a musical composition in which certain melodies emerge only through cooperation. () Cooperation emerges when the behaviour of each individual depends on the decisions of the rest of the group: it's a game where, from the start, you need to adjust to the actions of others. The result is a giant collective instrument that stimulates ownership of the space, bringing together people of all ages and backgrounds, and creating a place for playing and hanging out in the middle of the city center.

(Tous les jours 2017)

## 7 A review of some recurrent themes in the application of feminist theory to urbanism

### 7.1 Feminism as a way of looking and women a category of analysis

How can these ideas of the value and application of feminist paradigms for urban theory be taken further? The previous selection and discussion, have pointed to some interpretations of feminist theory and methodology that may be both relevant, useful and inspiring to urbanist issues and discourses. A brief return to Woolf's musing about the meaning of "women and fiction" serves to introduce some elaborations on the issue:

The title women and fiction might mean, and you may have meant it to mean, women and what they are like; or it might mean women and the fiction that they write; or it might mean women and the fiction that is written about them; or it might mean that somehow all three are inextricably mixed together and you want me to consider them in that light. But when I began to consider the subject in this last way, which seemed the most interesting, I soon saw that it had one fatal drawback. I should never be able to come to a conclusion.

(Woolf 2002, 5)

Likewise an approach to urbanism that involves feminist theory might be about women and their societal role and situation, either in a historical context or in contemporary societies. This represents an alternative epistemological approach - building new and different knowledge. This entails alternative approaches to the relevant research material or the issues at hand - an alternative methodology. It might also influence the ways in which we go about conceptualising what the urban *is* - an ontological application. Or it may be about actively searching out overlooked female theoreticians and practitioners, historically and present - and rewriting history following the idea of a parallel herstory. Or it might mean, as Woolf concedes, that all are "inextricably mixed" and must be considered in relation to each other (Woolf 2002, 5). From a postmodern feminist perspective, conceding to "only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold" (Woolf 2002, 5) is perhaps the main, overall lesson that feminism teaches all social and humanist academic activity.

Although feminists still find it relevant to address the particular case of women as a structural group, feminist theory today also envelope the cause of other categories of gender - of man and masculinity, trans- and multigender, as well as being a driving force in the research of gendering as a phenomenon in itself. This links feminism not exclusively to the cause of one social group, but to acts of difference and social othering in itself. In the contexts of a global, multicultural, postcolonial world - a sceptical and normative approach, where existing knowledge and values are questioned are valid. The feminist critique offers tools for both description and interpretation, as well as inspiration for possible, alternative ideals of social relations, based on difference without inequality. The sociopolitical agency and the method of challenging dominant hegemonies, by looking through the eyes of the other, makes feminism an apt approach to contemporary issues of diversity and democracy. In terms of the urban scope, the field of feminism may provide inspiration for theory, methodology, history and policymaking, covering the fields of politics, academic work, planning, architecture and design.

We now turn to an in-depth review of five related and recurrent themes in this thesis: women as an analytical category, Neo-Marxist-inspired urban discourses on the right to the city, normative discourses on just and fair cities, the convergence of feminist and public health issues and lastly the discussion of democracy in the heterogeneous and diverse contemporary



urban reality. There is no scope for a thorough investigation of these themes within the confines and aims of this work, but it may be nevertheless be useful to take the discussion of these returning issues one step further, in order to evaluate the research potential of these themes. We start by looking at a contemporary Norwegian case that use women – or rather girls - as “a useful category of analysis” (Scott 1986) to critique the gendered values and the lack of competence behind public policy and investments in urban activity space for children and youngsters.

## **7.2 “Girls do not consider public urban spaces their own, but rather think of themselves as visitors there.” (Rishaug 2015)(my translation, 2017)**

There is ample empirical evidence from several Norwegian and Swedish research projects, many urban arenas for physical activity for children and the young are predominantly used by boys. Within public health programmes that aim at inspiring more physical activity in youngsters, large part of the funds are spent on investments in various types of ball courts, as well as skating ramps. Statistics and empiric research demonstrate, that these types of urban activity arenas have far greater appeal to boys of all ages than girls. A continuation of an un-reflexive policy of increased numbers of football pitches and the like, will encourage physical activity and provide social arenas for boys, but will have far less effect on public health and urban attractiveness for girls. The Landscape Architect student Vigdis S. Rishaug set out to address the issue in a Landscape Architecture Master Thesis, resulting in a design manual to encourage improved gender awareness in urban design. The master study also appeals to increased gender awareness in public funding for public space.

Rishaug looked at existing theory and statistics, and did empirical research in order to better understand the gender dynamics of physical and social activity for the age group. As a means of analysis she employed three concepts: *passage* is the qualities one may experience in moving through an urban landscape, say on a bike or on foot. *Destination* stands for the functional content of a space that motivates people to go there. *Attraction* is the experienced positive qualities of that space that served to encourage prolonged stay there. Rishaug found that masculine and feminine cultural preferences differed significantly, although there were also many overlaps. The majority of boys preferred competition-driven, rule-bound, team-game activities, taking place at a homogenous, not necessarily local, specialised arena, often related to ball games. Typically masculine activities were connected to functional *destinations*. The majority of girls valued local access, the social aspects of physical activity, greenery, flexibility of use, personal safety, the presence of others and good connections to soft infrastructure. Feminine preference was connected to *attractiveness* and *passage*. In simple words, boys displayed a dominating pattern of meeting a group of same age friends in order to play ball. Girls spent a little time on multiples scenes of various activities, in smaller social groups, most often on their way to some other place (Aspelund 2015; Rishaug 2015). Rishaug drew the conclusion that lack of gender awareness is likely to reproduce a pattern where boys are more physical active than girls, counteracting the aim of the public health public policy. This knowledge should induce us to think of urban spaces less as a *product* and more as a *process*. This is a notion Butler’s performativity theory would support (my comment). Rishaug does not aim at gender essentialism, but advocates increased sensitivity to gender as a means to aid policy and design so as to promote physical activity for all. She advocates a broader policy, where funding is relocated from investment in new ball-courts to a focus on the qualities of soft thoroughfares, as well as the financial support of organised activity events, which attract girls. In addition she promotes a more varied design approach, which caters to multiple and more flexible use and activities.

Rishaug’s project demonstrates the application of gender as a “useful category of analysis” as Wallace Scott put it (Scott 1986), covering both analysis, research, theoretical conceptualisation, practical application and policy. Using women as a category of

investigation may be particularly useful in the light of the multicultural urban reality. Differences within the group of women will increase with increasing social inequity, and so is a valid research area for contemporary urbanism (Massey 1994; Gieseeking mfl. 2014). In addition gender based research methods that look at women or men as analytical categories, may also be useful to address particular gender issues, such as access to public space. Urban projects in neighbourhoods where the majority come from highly gendered cultures, find that gender may have been a useful approach in projects dealing with urban policy and public space projects. An example come from the urban regeneration projects in Groruddalen, Oslo, where there was not initially a gender theoretical perspective, but where the experience in the field indicated that it may be a useful future approach, according to Project Coordinator Elisabeth Sem Christensen in the *Plankontoret* for Groruddalssatsingen, Oslo Municipality (unstructured telephone interview, October 2015). Whereas many girls in the Groruddalen neighbourhood were the subjects of strict social policing, boys were reversely free from control. The library proved to be a public scene that allowed young women to venture into public space unattended, and thus libraries formed the focus of projects to create social meeting places for young women. Likewise out-door public exercise space proved to be attractive to young men, forming the focus of projects related to them as a group.

Feminist tradition of looking at actual women's lives empirically, is obviously applicable for other social groups as well. It affects planning and design policy on an individual level and on a societal level. A higher level of sensitivity to difference in urban design gives increased choice and attraction for all users of public space, creating meeting places and encouraging social encounter. On a societal level, new knowledge on the dynamics of difference, and the hidden values that may underlie ideals for urban space as well as urban policy, may contribute to more egalitarian ideals and more effective policies. In this particular case it also promotes more effective use of public funds.



Figure 23: Verdensparken, Groruddalen, Oslo, photo Tomasz Majewski, 2016

Inclusive public space in regeneration projects in Groruddalen, offering art, play, activity and meeting in a "World Park" developed by Oslo Municipality in cooperation with artists and a multicultural, local community

This case demonstrates, that even in the relatively egalitarian societies of Norway and Sweden, with strong law enforcement of gender equality and longstanding gender egalitarian traditions, a gender approach can reveal hidden dynamics of othering and inequality, as well as incompetent and inefficient urban policy. Whereas conspicuous difference categories are

more easily addressed epistemologically and politically, this sort of undisclosed structural power asymmetry that we are unaware of constitutes what Bourdieu describes as a “androcentric unconscious” (Bourdieu 2001; Acker 2016), which is hard to detect and defeat. Deeply ingrained, subconscious “masculine domination”, exerts what he calls a “symbolic violence” that show remarkable academic and political slipperiness and resilience to change. To address this form of social inequality, we must analyse the social institutions and representations that naturalise it to us, and contribute to our unwitting reproduction of status quo (Bourdieu 2001). Drawing attention to gender difference systems in this case, also served to disclose a more general sociocultural and socioeconomic tension and conflict about the use of public space and public funds, that are valid also for other categories of difference, such as age, cultural background, economic class/ resources. The feminist paradigm challenges the validity, competence and normative legitimacy of ideals of universality and attractiveness that underpin urban policy in Norway as in places today. A postmodern feminist critique would argue the impossibility of looking at any one issue from any one perspective, as part and parcel of our present globalised and multicultural context. Revealing open and hidden power relations that may favour some users of public space and disadvantage others is particularly relevant in the context of a privatised and market driven environmental production. Present day regimes of neoliberalist urbanisation tend to target certain social groups, and actively exclude others, often on the basis of spending power (Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015). Feminist principles of scepticism and self-awareness are applicable to expose and counteract these dynamics in policy, research and in urban design.

### **7.3 Feminism and Neo-Marxist-inspired normative discourse on the right to the city**

Feminism’s political agenda of social reform, positions it within the field of normative discourses on the urban, as has been touched upon several times. (Neo-)Marxists and feminists share a common critique of structural socioeconomic inequality, the exploitation of some social groups by others and the dangers to socio(economic) sustainability that this poses. But whereas Marxists regard material factors as the primary axis of oppression, relying on a revolution of the capitalist regime for reform, feminists regard gender as the primary axis of inequality. Moderate feminism also does not advocate revolution, but accepts existing capitalist regimes as an inevitable context. They nevertheless accept that capitalism serve to worsen the conditions for those already worst off, and emphasise the necessity to mind and address the coinciding and reinforcing effects of gender and material unequal distribution and oppression. Issues of just city and right to the city are supported in particular by Neo-Marxist theoreticians. Geographer David Harvey conceptualises the close link between capitalism and urbanisation, whereby market forces dominate the processes of shaping our (urban) environments. Strategic land investment are utilised as means of retaining surplus capital, making urban development an attractive field of action for capitalist entrepreneurship. (Harvey 2008; Harvey 2009). Harvey and feminists would share in the claim that these processes and the resulting urban landscape, is undemocratic and unjust, and instead aim for (re)distribution and circulation of power. This would, in the least, involve establishing policies that actively counterbalance the accumulation of power through the production of urban space. It would also involve more effectual participatory processes, where stakeholders are in the position to actually influence the results, not merely be informed, as is often felt to be the case (Susan S. Fainstein 2011; Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015). Lastly it would involve formulating policies and ideals for a more inclusive public space in the city, in particular when it comes to prime urban resources like attractive recreation spaces and public infrastructure. In the context of Norway, a Neo-Marxist feminist approach to just city and right to the city discourses, could also involve challenging existing politics of tax reliefs on home ownership, that contribute to unjust outcomes for those that do not have the means to own their homes or make investments in real estate. The access to a healthy home, a fair share in the economic returns of increased land value from public urban investment, as well as

equal access to public infrastructure for all, would then be on the agenda for analysis and reform.

With intersectionality theory in mind, a feminist inspired urbanism would address both gender and economic/ material inequality, and acknowledge the need for shifting alliances with different social groups, depending on the actual and local research circumstance. Even if gender theory forms the fundament for alternative urbanist approaches, looking through the eyes of other categories of difference, is just as relevant to build a more complex and nuanced understanding of historic or contemporary urban processes. Centre periphery theory supports a notion that market driven urbanisation may serve to produce constantly changing constellations of centrality and peripherality. Present strategies of multi-nucleus, urban growth, tend to focus primarily on the challenges that this poses to a position of increased centrality, as in compact, attractive city and smart city strategies of dense nucleus derived growth. This may serve to obfuscate the challenges the model poses for the intensified of new peripheries that it may cause. It may therefore also be insufficiently sensitive to resulting issues of spatial exclusion, sociospatial segregation and increased sociospatial liminality of the periphery. The centre(s) of nodal and compact city development receives a major share of research attention, public policy deliberation and public investment, whereas new or intensified peripherality is a less obvious concern (Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015; Lefebvre 2000; Harvey 2013). An almost exclusive focus on the centre(s) could contribute to cloud just as relevant sociospatial issues to do with peripherality and marginality (Ellefsen 2013; Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015; Hofstad 2017).



Figure 24: Tagus Linear Park, Portugal, Topiaris, 2013  
Attempts at creating inclusive, flexible and multifunctional public space in a 14h regenerated industrial area now providing recreation opportunities by the riverside.

The objective was to rethink urban public space within a complex universe of urban, industrial, agricultural and natural landscape. The park combines a multifunctional area, FISHERMEN'S BEACH, set by the riverside within a former sand deposit, and 6 km of PEDESTRIAN TRAILS along roads, streams and drainage ditches. A 700m long raised wooden path connects to a Bird Observatory built from old pallets. The FISHERMEN'S BEACH combines diverse and complementary equipment intended for environmental education, leisure and informal sports: fishing platforms and shelters, picnic areas, a volleyball court, a playground with recycled tires, as well as platforms for sunbathing creating an interesting and unique Playscape. The name was inspired by the fishermen, who were sceptical at the beginning, but soon realised that the renovated space kept the sense of place that had attracted them to it in the past.

(Topiaris 2013)

#### 7.4 Feminism and public health issues in relation to planning and urban issues

Taking this notion further into the realm of the psychosocial and the area of public health, draw our attention to issues of socioeconomic deprivation, exclusion, increased isolation, issues of alienation and loneliness, lack of social network and capital, that are issues relating to urban peripherality and marginality («Regjeringen: 'Folkehelse'» 2013; Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015; Hofstad 2017; «Samfunnsutvikling for god folkehelse – Rapport om status og råd for videreutvikling av folkehelsearbeidet i Norge» 2017a). We know from public health research that these issues are on the rise in relation to urban environments, affecting the health and thriving of individuals as well as overall issues of public health and social sustainability. Structural processes of othering along several axes is a public health issue, endangering social sustainability and with socioeconomic implications. Today's broad concept of what health entails, does not merely encompass the absence of illness, but the thriving of individuals beyond that of being physically healthy. Health follows social status (Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015; «Samfunnsutvikling for god folkehelse – Rapport om status og råd for videreutvikling av folkehelsearbeidet i Norge» 2017b). The Public Health Act is explicit on the need to address social inequality as a measure of improving public health:

The aim of this law is to contribute to a societal development that promotes public health, here under levelling of social difference in health. Public health work will promote health, thriving, and good social and environmental matters in the interest of the population...

(Helse- og omsorgsdepartementet 2016) (my translation, 2017)

Public health research and policy has shifted the focus from curing illness and improving health care to up-front strategies of prevention of ill health and promotion of health and well-being. Addressing the social relations and social inequality of the city is central to public policy, as cities today are divided also along health. This makes spatial planning the most pertinent and effective strategy, rather than policies within the public health sector, which deal with the *effects* of bad health. («Regjeringen: 'Folkehelse'» 2013; «Helsedirektoratet 'Folkehelseloven'» 2017; Hofstad 2017; PLAN 2015). Feminist and difference theory attention to social inequality and the actual experience of individuals in their everyday lives, make the convergence with public health in term of urban issues evident. The body of epistemology and methodology on social inequality and the effects on the individual as well as the social sustainability on the whole, makes it relevant to ideals of healthier cities and urban environments due to increased social equality. Public health policy might therefore be a field in which a feminist inspired urbanism may be particularly applicable and welcome, gaining broad political and public support, and advantages of mutual interdisciplinary inspiration and benefit.

#### 7.5 Feminism and the just city theory of Susan Fainstain

Many right to the city and just city theoreticians alike, assume that democratic processes will lead to democratic results, in the sense that they are more just and fair. In accordance this, much debate on fairness and justness emphasise the importance of participatory and democratic process, as a means to produce a more democratic city. This notion is something Susan Fainstain have challenged in her seminal work *The Just City* (Susan S. Fainstain 2011). Democratic process is by definition based on majority, and do not necessarily reflect or protect minority concerns, as the writer Henrik Ibsen reminded us of in *An enemy of the People* (my translation). Fainstain applies this principle to urban ideals and processes, in a theoretical and empirical elaboration of the just city, where she researches three international cases as a source material.



Fainstain's concept of justness is developed in reaction to the contemporary neoliberal, market driven, urban growth described several times above. Economic profit drives urbanisation, sometimes hand in hand with climate goals (although Fainstain does not address this conjunction), and can be at odds with – and trump – social outcomes and social sustainability (Susan S. Fainstein 2011; S. S. Fainstein 2015; Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015). Fainstain is committed to drawing up a more just alternative policy:

Unlike social scientist, philosophers have long concerned themselves with the nature of justice. Since the publication of John Rawles Theory of Justice in 1971, philosophy has returned to the questions of values and governance that were central to it before the ascendancy to logical positivism. The principle theories all posit an inspirational ideal according to which actual social policy can be formulated.

(Susan S. Fainstein 2011, 4)

*The Just City* draws on ethics to formulate a theory of justice that is appropriate for the urban. Fainstain shares with Harvey in accepting that a universal principle of justice is unattainable in a world of cultural and political heterogeneity. Nevertheless is it possible to formulate some principles of right and wrong, which most people would consent to. Fainstain attempts to formulate the principles of a just city along the concepts of *equity*, *diversity* and *democracy*, where equity has privilege. With equity she means a more equal "distribution of both material and non-material benefits derived from public policy" (Susan S. Fainstein 2011, 36). Her emphasis is thus not on the private sector, but on the role of public policy and investments, in light of a dominantly private-initiated urbanisation. Fainstain applies the just city principles to research and evaluate the results in three different re-development programmes: New York, London and Amsterdam. She concludes that the hegemony of communicative planning and policy that assume democratic processes to produce just results, often are faulty. This leads her to formulate guidelines for a public policy that refocus attention from process to actual results, along with principles for a more just urban policy.



Figure 25: Michigan Urban Farming Initiative (MUFI), Detroit, unknown artist, 2015  
Urban farming transform run-down urban space into agrarian oasis, aiming to strengthen cultural, economic and social sustainability in deprived inner city areas of Detroit.

Using agriculture as a platform to promote education, sustainability, and community—while simultaneously reducing socioeconomic disparity—we hope to empower urban communities.

(«MUFI» 2016)

The normative aspect of Fainstain's just city is shared by feminist's call for gender equality on the ground of fairness and justice. The political agenda of restructuring the institutions that reproduce accumulated power, is also a common ground with (Neo-)Marxism, as mentioned. Moderate feminists, like Fainstain, aim at reform within the system of capitalism and through processes of critique and political effort, rather than revolution. Feminist urbanism along the lines of Fainstain, offer an authoritative ethical fundament upon which to establish legitimacy and principles of procedure. Fainstain's methodology for analysis and assessment of social impacts can be applied both to general urban policies as well as particular plans and projects. Whereas social science describe and interpret the world we live in, a feminist urbanism using Fainstain as a platform, would not so much prescribe alternatives, but formulate critical questions and challenge underlying values, hoping to induce moral consciousness and inspire normative policies that give more just results. A Fainstainian feminist urbanism would attempt to influence and inspire the imagination of planners, architects and politicians alike, posing the question of what kind of urbanity we want. In David Harvey's words: "... viewing the contemporary urban crisis as an opportunity to imagine alternatives and to create new possible urban worlds" (Brenner, Marcuse, og Mayer 2011, 59). This notion unites just city theory with feminist tradition of paying attention to the actual lives of women. Feminism is not a quest for truth, but a quest for better life experiences for all (Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, og Cohen 1989) A focus on process involving communicative and collaborative theory and strategies of participation, are important to build self-empowerment, place-entrepreneurship skills and strengthen ideals of democracy. But when it comes to bear, a feminist inspired approach to knowledge and research, policies and reform within the field of urban studies, it is ultimately the resulting urban reality as experienced by all people in the city that matters. This takes us on to the last discussion on feminist inspired urbanism, where city life is conceptualised as an expression of democracy, in the work of Iris Marion Young.

## **7.6 Urbanity as democracy - Young's principles of city life as a normative model of difference without inequality**

Political theorist and feminist Iris Marion Young, is often credited for shifting the idea of Neo-Marxist socialism from ideas of social revolution to theories of difference (Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, og Cohen 1989). Young turns to the city for the development of a normative ideology of difference without exclusion. She proposes cosmopolitan life as a model for contemporary ideals of democracy, that are not based on consensus and assimilation of difference, but allow for the diversity, flux and tensions of contemporary urban societies (Borden, Penner, og Rendell 1999).

Young offers a critique of ideals of *community*, as the alternative to present conditions of inequality and oppression by capitalist, patriarchal society. (Young 1986; Allen og Young 2011) Most often ideals of community, as well as those of liberal individualism, are held up as a mutually opposing dichotomy that also exhausts the opportunities for structuring social relations, she argues. Various models of communitarianism are held up as the only possible substitution for the atomistic, individualised and self-promoting policies of our present social relations under neoliberal policies. Some adherents of communitarianism advocate it as a sense of extended particularism and subjectivity, whereby we are able to incorporate others that we identify with in our sense of self, and form a larger coherent sense of subject together with them. This typically entail notions of family as a subjective group with a common agency on one's own behalf, or a neighbourhood, a political movement, or even a sense of national identity. Alternatively, communitarians advocate the possibility of at least the majority agreeing on a set of ideals, a least common multiple upon which to base a consensus. This involves agreeing on some ethic principles and values that bridge atomic individualism through mutual understanding and respect, and upon which common goals are promoted.



According to Young, all such ideals of community deny the fact, that difference is a fundamental psychosocial phenomenon. At the same time as offers rich opportunities for positive encounter and exchange with the other, it is also fraught with the risk of social tension, conflict and resultant antagonism and demonstrations of aggression and violence. We do not even know our self, as a predictable and stable unity, claim Young. Even less can we know others, or expect them to know us, in the same way as we try to know ourselves. Particularly in today's fluid, global urbanity, direct face-to-face relations as a ground for communitarian ideals of understanding, tolerance, cooperation and solidarity, is not a feasible model for models of democracy. Both communitarianism and liberalism fail to acknowledge actual difference as a constitutive necessity of any urban policy (Allen og Young 2011).

Young suggests the possibilities of conceptualising other models for democratic societies that advocate difference without exclusion and oppression. City life, she argues, is both symbolically and literally a model for social relations based on positive difference. Groups of people live side by side, exchanging and interacting across cultural, political and social divides - and most importantly - that remain stable. Most often we are unknowing and indifferent to the values and life experience of our urban cohabitants, as they are of ours. This is the kind of cosmopolitanism conceptualised by Simmel. A life in proximity of strangers, full of richness and enjoyment, but fraught with tension and pressure (Simmel 1903). Cosmopolitan life historically and now, has not depended on shared values or experiences, identification or community. On the contrary, says Young, urban lifestyles affirm unassimilated difference and celebrates heterogeneity and confrontation without antagonism. City life may indeed serve as a model of a normative alternative policy, replacing notions of both communitarianism and liberal individualism. This is particularly relevant in our postmodern urban condition, where "I am always faced with the experience of myself different from the one I have" (Allen og Young 2011, 231). The concept of immediation, i.e. the idea that it is possible to meet and see each other unhindered by the ignorance created by differences, is not valid in the time space flow of postmodern city life, if it ever was, and also does not acknowledge the effects of asymmetries in existing social relations. "Our social life is structured by vast networks of temporal and spatial mediation among persons, so that nearly everyone is depends on the activity of seen and unseen strangers, who mediate between oneself and one's associates, between oneself and one's objects of desire". (Young 1986, 237) In other words, we all are interdependent, without actually knowing how and with whom - and never meet face-to-face with everyone who's lives our own is intertwined with.

Young proposes a normative ideal of democracy based on cosmopolitanism. By city life she means an idea of social relations which is based on "being close together as strangers" (Allen og Young 2011, 237). City life is a network of relations based on interaction and reciprocity that happen independently of ideas of overarching communality or identification. Though communality does occur, sometimes also based on spatial collectivity, such as in strong, shared ideas of a place or neighbourhood spirit, they are not constitutive, but rather part of city life, Young claims. She conceives of four concepts of city life as a normative model of social relations; *Differentiation without exclusion*, *variety*, *eroticism* and *publicity*. Difference without exclusion is the ideal of living in proximity without antagonism. It is similar to what Chantal Mouffe calls an agonistic model of social relations, whereby difference is recognised, and can also be openly addressed, but not with the aim of consensus. Agonism involves accepting difference and living in peaceful cooperation, without relinquishing the idea of unassimilated difference (Moe 2006; Mouffe 2013). Variety stands for the opportunity to experience different cultures, that come from the interaction of a wide selection of people(s) and cultural difference in physical urban space. It captures the experience of walking down a street in any inner city metropolis without indulging in notions of threat or conflict. The term eroticism captures the attraction of difference and the unexpected, an experience, which is characterised by allure intensified by the risk of confronting the unknown. Cultural tourism captures this notion. All three concepts offer otherness as a constitutive agent of cosmopolitan life, a multitude of particularities to be sampled and enjoyed, and an idea that depends on

difference and is averse to sameness. Lastly, publicity describes the various arenas of encounter, mediation and public activity, including public space and politics. These are arenas where difference is encountered, sometimes enjoyable and sometimes confrontational and challenging. It is where difference is debated, with no aim to assimilation, overarching identification or reaching an overall consensus or identification. This makes the public arenas of the city an important part of the infrastructure of actual democracy.

Young broadens the scope of feminist theory to the widest possible angle that urbanism engages with, that of principles of democracy. She also brings out the transformative and radical potential of both feminist theory and urban theory, in allowing us to believe in the possibility for creating entirely different ideals for societal relations, than the one's we experience in urban life today all over the world: cities of difference and injustice, where social sustainability is in conflict with interests of economic and climatic sustainability. She turns the city turns in on itself, allowing "the infinite number of utterances" (Young 1986) that is cosmopolitan life, to inspire a search for other city ideals - and possible other cities.



Figure 26: St+ Art Delhi, Olek (Agata Oleksian), Delhi 2015, crochet / performance. Artist Olek 'crochet bombs' a homeless women's shelter in New Delhi highlighting issues of urban poverty and inequality and engaging local women in the production of the piece, inspired by traditional female handiwork skills and expression.

"My work changes from place to place. I studied the science of culture. With a miner's work ethic, I long to delve deeper and deeper into my investigations. My art was a development that took me away from industrial, close-minded Silesia, Poland. It has always sought to bring colour and life, energy, and surprise to the living space. My goal is to produce new work and share it with the public. I intend to take advantage of living in NYC with various neighbourhoods and, with my actions, create a feedback to the economic and social reality in our community."

(Olek 2015)

## **8 How may feminist and gender theory contribute to contemporary, Norwegian urban discourses?**

This thesis has been an investigation into the vast and varied field of feminist and gender theory - from the point of view of urban theory. To sum it up, feminism raises the argument, that a gender dichotomy is a fundamental, resilient and mostly undisclosed model for social

relations in most known human societies. The form that gendering takes within traditions of patriarchy, privileges masculinity and disadvantages femininity, creating asymmetrical power relations between the sexes. The social construction of gender builds upon empiric sexual difference, which is magnified and exaggerated, and serves as the fundament upon which two opposing and mutually constitutive genders, that of woman and man, are produced. The constitution of manhood as the primary human state, and the legitimisation of male privilege, is constructed in a process of othering the female condition, making womanhood a secondary and lesser social category. Several other categories of difference also apply to common models of social relations, such as material wealth, ethnicity, race and age. The intersection of these categories, create structural networks of social difference, that affect the identity, ambitions and potential that it is possible to form for any one individual, and that individuals can do little about on their own.

Socially constructed difference and the process of othering, happen through both open and hidden cultural production and representation, including the built environment. In a dialectical process between models of social relations and representation, unsymmetrical, and most often unequal, social relations are being produced and reproduced. Systems of difference are stable and resilient, and continue until sufficiently challenged and overcome. The degree to which opposition and transgressions are tolerated, vary within cultures and according to the dominance and authority of the system. The degrees of social violence that is exercised to maintain existing social power relations range from social ridicule to severe institutionalised punishment. The impetus of othering in all social relations, make difference theory relevant to all humanistic and social sciences. It also makes othering a political and normative issue in democratic societies based on egalitarian values. This includes the field of urbanism and urban policy, spilling over into practical application, such as planning and architecture. In Rebecca West's *Study on Religious Prejudice*, she formulates a fictitious quote from the "hysterical" priest Mr. Chesterton, where he describes Catholicism thus: "Catholicism is not a topic. It is not something one can mention on Tuesday but not on Friday. It is a way of looking at everything there is in the world." (West 1913) A creative and feminist inspired rewriting of West's text would expound the same for gender: It is not only the *particular* concerns of a structural group, but a way of looking at everything there is in the world.

In the world at large, gender difference, as well as other inegalitarian social relations, disadvantage millions of people of primary human needs that other groups are, such as food, shelter, medical care, safety from corporal and psychological danger, exploitation, lack of participation in the public sphere, including the right to vote and access to public institutions and spaces – as opposed to other socially constructed groups. Structural difference pertains to be based on natural difference people and groups and reflect individual ability and agency, whereas in fact it is imposed on designated groups by dominant cultural systems. Accumulating knowledge on othering and social inequality as it plays out in space, and drawing attention to the negative effects for individuals and society as a whole, is a paramount issue for worldwide UN policies of human rights («UN: 'Protect Human Rights'» 2016). Cities are particularly apt areas of research, as they form the basis for pervasive social inequality. Producing alternative ideals of sociospatial relations and promoting urban policies that support reform is therefore a major human rights' issue.

In egalitarian and democratic contexts, such as Norway, research on asymmetrical and unequal sociospatial relations take other forms and involve challenges on a more secondary level if we rely on Maslow's model of human motivation and needs (Maslow 2013). Relatively speaking, it is true to say that it deals less with basic physiological needs and safety issues, although this is also a relevant difference-concern in contemporary Norwegian urbanisation, and more with "higher" and psychological needs, to do with belonging, esteem and self-actualisation (Maslow 2013). In terms of the city and the urban, issues of difference and othering pertain to the need for social recognition by cultural minority and disadvantaged

groups, the need for cultural representation in the urban environment for all groups equally, being allowed to engage in social space through place-making and place-attachment, self realisation in and through urban life and space, political influence on the production of urban policy and the production of actual environments and lastly the actual equal physical access to and use of public space and urban quality. In addition difference theory in the context of Norwegian urbanism, would involve academic and political deconstruction of androcentric knowledge and traditions, disclosing hidden and subtle gendering in academia and in urban policy. And last - but by no means the least – it would involve inspiring alternative ideals of a democratic urban space based on difference without inequality. Cities and public space where the diversity and exoticism of cosmopolitan life can be celebrated, rejuvenated and enjoyed.

Although contemporary Western issues are mainly on a “higher level” (Maslow 2013), it is nevertheless true that increasing socioeconomic difference actualize issues of othering also in social democratic welfare societies. The growth of exclusionary, divided and segregated urban space contribute to destabilise long-term social sustainability, and can unwittingly also result in unfair and inefficient public policies on the urban unless addressed (Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015; Hofstad 2017; Hofstad 2017). This is increasingly relevant in the face of a more multicultural society due to immigration, and a weakened sociodemocratic agenda and toolkit within present neoliberal political regimes of urbanisation. Egalitarian ideals of the welfare state and the public apparatus to ensure access to high quality environment for all citizens have largely been dismantled. Market driven urbanisation contributes to a “politics of difference” (Young 1986; Harvey 2009). Urban processes are mainly conducted by private or semi-private bodies in cooperation with public authorities, with focus on economic sustainability, whereas social issues do not to the same degree have it’s own watchdog. Environmental issues of emission reduction reinforce the focus on density and functionality, and with the support of maximized profit concerns, can be in conflict with, and tend to overrule, actual experienced urban qualities (Hanssen, Hofstad, og Saglie 2015).

The growth of populism and neoconservative politics within the present climate of socioeconomic global instability, mass migrations and increasingly evident and arresting demonstrations of cultural and religious intolerance and antagonism means that a critique of existing models of sociopolitical relations and the cultural representation of these, are pressing issues everywhere. Nowhere are these issues of difference, othering, injustice and inequality more conspicuous, germane and violent, than in the city and in processes of urbanisation. This actualises feminist theory as a source of critique, scepticism and challenge to social difference ideologies. Not least is feminist a source of inspiration and hope for more enduring models of social relations and collective urban life, making it a well-timed and promising field of interdisciplinary reciprocity with the field of urbanism, creating what Barthes call “a new object that belongs to no one” between the two:

Interdisciplinary work, so much discussed these days, is not about confronting already constituted disciplines (none of which, in fact, is willing to let itself go). To do something interdisciplinary it's not enough to choose a "subject" (a theme) and gather around it two or three sciences. Interdisciplinarity consists in creating a new object that belongs to no one.

(Barthes 1992)

What are these “new objects that belong to no one”? Feminism spans across academic theory and practise, politics and the arts. It is an interdisciplinary activity relating to all humanistic and social fields, as is urbanism. So far, we have demonstrated recurrent themes that indicate fields of interdisciplinary potential between feminism and urbanism. This is true for feminist theory as valid and appropriate analytical tools for research and policies directed at particular social categories, such as girls or young women and men from highly gendered cultures. There is also evidence that feminism has an overlap and shared agency of social reform with

normative urban discourse such as *Just City*, *Right to the City*. There is furthermore evidence that feminist theory seems an apt tool to apply within the field of public health, where current up-front strategies emphasise the need for a planning for good health through measures of increased social equality. A feminist inspired urbanism advocating public health is part and parcel of the process of conceptualising ideals of a healthier city and urban environment. Lastly it is evident that Young's advocacy of the city as a normative ideal for democracy intersects with feminisms emphasis on egalitarianism and sociospatial reform.

Beyond this, where are the unexplored interdisciplinary fields between feminism and urbanism that may prove to be most fertile and inspirational? Feminist theoreticians have long occupied themselves with the urban and ideals of the city, both in academic work and in political actionism for reform. It is perhaps due to pass the ball to the court of urbanism. Using feminist concepts as building blocks, we may attempt to form a more active party to the construction of the "new object". Using feminist concepts as building blocks, much in the same way as Pizan, may aid in the construction of more egalitarian and pleasurable ideals of sociospatial relations, substituting present urban regimes with any number of possible urban futures - other cities.

Building on the present work I proposes three new ideals that lend themselves to exploration of what a feminist inspired urbanism would entail:

- The performative city
- The pleasurable city
- The radical city

The performative city is inspired by Butler's notion that we *are* not man or woman - or any other socially constructed category - but *perform* other's and our own notion of ourselves in a dialectical process (J. Butler 2006). It supports Beauvoir's advocacy of radical individual freedom and breaking social conventions. If we were to formulate urban ideals for the performative city, we would conceptualise the urban as a medium through which we encounter ourselves, others, and other's ideas of ourselves without ever meeting, in the true sense of the word. It is reminiscent of Aldous Huxley's words in *Chrome Yellow*: "All people are parallel, but some are more parallel than others" (Huxley og Bradbury 2004). In the performative city we are all parallel. City life is characterized by the proximity of difference without identification or antagonism, as Young proposes. Instead the performative character of city life is seen as a fluid and malleable stream of cultural representation, promoting a variety of life performances, playfulness encouraging ambivalence, transgressive acts and self-actualisation.

The pleasurable city applies the terminology from Architect Jan Gehl. His "*herlighetsverdier*" - pleasurable resources – (my translation) encompass the physical proportion of built space, protection from the weather and positive sensory impressions. I would propose that the pleasurable city is the city of intense sensory and emotional impressions, as opposed to the functionality of modernist space or the sanitized, commercial attractiveness of privatised, commercial public space. Ideals for the pleasurable city would promote exploration and enjoyment through privileging sensory stimulation in richness, materiality, detail, variation, biological diversity and aesthetic quality. It is the fine-grained city of the pedestrian with an inclusive palette of human experiences at hand. The pleasurable city relies on the freedom of individuals to engage in the urban environment. Rather than the packaged programming of stereotyped urban recreation, it relies on the contributions of the user to create place and build attachment.

The radical city encompasses the transformative power of feminism, cutting across social convention and advocating other ideals of being and living. It entails scepticism to the authority of urban categories and traditions, such as public and private, work and home. It

contends historic ideals and institutions and engages in the experimentation and trial, crossing over established urban categories and concepts. It is of the city that supports ideals of evolution and change as constitutive elements of city life, and is expressive of creativity and innovation. Radical city ideals embraces difference, confrontation and conflict through agonistic processes, and lends itself to reformative ideals of increased social equality.



Figure 27: Bordeaux water front steam and fountain square, photo TKM Sinclair, 2016  
Performative, pleasurable and urban space

## 9 End note

Here then was I (call me Mary Beaton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please- it is not a matter of any importance) sitting on the banks of a river a week or two ago in fine October weather, lost in thought. That collar I have spoken of, women and fiction, the need of coming to some conclusion on a subject that raises all sorts of prejudices and passions, bowed my head to the ground. To the right and left bushes of some sort, golden and crimson, glowed with the colour, even it seemed burnt with the heat, of fire. On the further bank the willows wept in perpetual lamentation, their hair about their shoulders. The river reflected whatever it chose of sky and bridge and burning tree, and when the undergraduate had oared his boat through the reflections they closed again, completely, as if he had never been. There one might have sat the clock round lost in thought. Thought - to call it by a prouder name than it deserved - had let its line down into the stream. It swayed, minute after minute, hither and thither among the reflections and the weeds, letting the water lift it and sink it, until - you know the little tug - the sudden conglomeration of an idea at the end of one's line: and then the cautious hauling of it in, and the careful laying of it out? Alas, laid on the grass how small, how insignificant this thought of mine looked; the sort of fish that a good fisherman puts back into the water so that it may grow fatter and be one day worth cooking and eating. I will not trouble you with that thought now, though if you look carefully you may find it for yourselves in the course of what I am going to say.

But however small it was, it had, nevertheless, the mysterious property of its kind - put back into the mind, it became at once very exciting, and important; and as it darted and sank, and flashed hither and thither, set up such a wash and tumult of ideas that it was impossible to sit still. It was thus that I found myself walking with extreme rapidity across a grass plot. Instantly a man's figure rose to intercept me. Nor did I at first understand that the gesticulations of a curious-looking object, in a cut-away coat and evening shirt, were aimed at me. His face expressed horror and indignation. Instinct rather than reason came to my help; he was a Beadle; I was a woman. This was the turf; there was the path. Only the Fellows and Scholars are allowed here; the gravel is the place for me. Such thoughts were the work of a moment. As I regained the path the arms of the Beadle sank, his face assumed its usual repose, and though turf is better walking than gravel, no very great harm was done. The only charge I could bring against the Fellows and Scholars of whatever the college might happen to be was that in protection of their turf, which has been rolled for 300 years in succession, they had sent my little fish into hiding.

(Woolf 2002)



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