Feminist Love Studies—Editors' Introduction

ANN FERGUSON AND MARGARET E. TOYE

Founding Feminist Love Studies

As the co-editors of this special issue, we are excited to feature new feminist scholarship in the recently claimed area of "feminist love studies" and thus to be involved in one of the first publications to foreground this new area of study. The authors in this volume are informed by a range of feminist and philosophical perspectives, and many stress an interdisciplinary approach for thinking about love and feminism.

In the introduction to *Love: A Question for Feminism in the Twenty-First Century*, co-editors Ann Ferguson and Anna Jónasdóttir identify the field of "Love Studies" as a "new, expanding field of academic scholarship" (Jónasdóttir and Ferguson 2014, 1) that has been growing since the 1990s across many disciplines and fields. Love, in many quarters, they note, is increasingly being taken as a serious area of study on its own terms, rather than just in relation to connected concepts such as "care" or "sexual desire" (2). It is also significant that love within this new field of study is being considered as an important ethical, social, and/or political force.

As we shall discuss below, in 2013, along with six other international scholars, we formed the initial core membership of the Feminist Love Studies Network. We believe that a distinctive *feminist* love studies questions the continual tendency within both traditional examinations of love and this new turn in contemporary love studies to take male, patriarchal, and heterosexist assumptions and models as the norm. *Feminist* love studies stresses the importance of developing alternate models and illuminates the contributions of feminist authors, including by reclaiming feminist historical work. Furthermore, a distinctive feminist *love studies* calls the feminist community's attention to the growing area of love studies, and the significance of its focus on the positive and productive aspects of love—love conceived as a possible important creative force, connecting energy or capacity—while not abandoning earlier feminist theory's tendency to focus on harmful aspects of patriarchal, heterosexist, and colonial concepts of care and love.

Love has played an important role in feminist thinking throughout its history, from the early thought of Mary Wollstonecraft, Emma Goldman, Alexandra Kollontai, Clara Zetkin, and Simone de Beauvoir to the work of a range of philosophers and political thinkers since then. These include the important radical criticisms of

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the role that love has played in maintaining patriarchal relations, such as those of Shulamith Firestone, Ti-Grace Atkinson, and Catherine MacKinnon, of Marxist feminists Nancy Hartsock and Silvia Federici, and of psychoanalytic feminists Nancy Chodorow, Juliet Mitchell, and Jessica Benjamin. Starting in the late 1970s and continuing through the 1980s, a number of feminists increasingly began to think about love in more productive ways. Those informed by psychoanalysis and deconstruction, like Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, black feminists Audre Lorde, the Combahee River Collective, and bell hooks, and Latina feminists Chela Sandoval, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Cherríe Moraga were among those who produced foundational thinking about love as a productive force in feminist theory. Feminist philosophers who provided a basis for current positive understandings of love include but are not limited to: Alison Jaggar (emotion and knowledge) (Jaggar 1989), Sandra Bartky (emotional labor) (Bartky 1990), and Ann Ferguson (sex/affective energy and sex/affective production) (Ferguson 1991), while those working in areas such as care and solidarity, like Eva Kittay, Sara Ruddick, Virginia Held, Joan Tronto, and Sally Scholz, can be considered to have been contributing to feminist love studies in a broader sense.

A feminist philosophical focus on love will not be a new one for readers of *Hypatia*. Although a number of the disciplines surveyed by Jónasdóttir are only recently taking love as a serious area of study (Jónasdóttir 2014), both philosophy and feminist philosophy have always done so. Further, articles on love appear throughout *Hypatia*'s history, and in 2002, *Hypatia* published the special issue "Feminist Philosophies of Love and Work." Since 2002, *Hypatia* has published a steady stream of articles on love, including on how philosophers such as Kierkegaard and Kant help our thinking in this area, and the importance of feminist philosophers of love, including Irigaray, Kristeva, Iris Marion Young, and Kittay.

That there are growing numbers of feminist theorists working on issues relating to love is clear not only from the overwhelming number of submissions we received for this issue (forty-six articles, three musings, and more than fifteen book-review proposals), but also in terms of the sheer number of books and journal articles recently published related to the field, including in *Hypatia* and in the books reviewed for this special issue accessible at Hypatia Reviews Online. A sense of some of the recent work in the field can be found in references in both *Love* (Jónasdóttir and Ferguson 2014) and in this volume, but there are more every day and in areas that address twenty-first-century issues. For example, Lori Gruen, Anca Gheaus, Kathy Rudy, and Donna Haraway are among those who have been rethinking love relations with animals in terms of empathy and companionship. Haraway, Frances Bartowski, Mel Chen, and others are asking questions about affective kinship relations that extend among species, including with machines and nonhuman elements, and Kelly Oliver's proposal to extend Arendt's "love of world" into "terraphilia," or "love of earth" (Oliver 2015), challenges us to think about our relationship to the environment in new ways. Important rethinking of emotion, and love in particular, is going on within affect studies by authors such as Lauren Berlant, Teresa Brennan, Eve Sedgwick, and Sara Ahmed, while work within feminist new materialism by Rosi Braidotti, Karen

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Barad, Jane Bennett, and others holds promise for future considerations of rethinking this thing called love.

A Love Story by Ann

As a philosopher and a feminist activist in the 1970s, I wrote about heterosexual love and male domination and developed my own socialist, feminist, multi-systems theory of the intersections among capitalism, patriarchy, and racism (Ferguson 1991). My introduction to feminist love studies really started in 2006 when I met Anna Jónasdóttir at a panel on love and feminism at the Historical Materialism conference in London. I had read her book *Why Women Are Oppressed* (1994) in Spanish translation when I was on sabbatical in Barcelona in 1999. I thought, "Oh, I want to meet this woman; her theory that men exploit women's loving energy (love power) is a lot like my theory of sex/affective energy and the affective economy." When I got back to the US, I looked up her book in English translation and went to the London conference to meet her. When we met, we really hit it off.

Anna invited me to come to Sweden in 2008 to be a scholar in residence at GEXcel,[1] Örebro University, along with a number of other international scholars, on the theme of Gender, Sexuality, and Social Change. That spring, the scholars at these GEXcel events were interested in intersectional interpretations that connected race, class, gender, and sexuality in creative ways. For example, Kimberlé Crenshaw talked about race and gender in the US elections; Eudine Barriteau from Barbados was also there, comparing Audre Lorde's notion of erotic power (Lorde 1984) with Jónasdóttir's notion of love power as a part of her larger research project. (Barriteau has recently published her edited collection on that topic, *Love and Power* [Barriteau 2014].)

I went back again to Sweden in 2010 for several months to join other research fellows working on and attending the GEXcel conference "Love as a Problem for Feminism in the Twenty-First Century." Jónasdóttir asked me to co-edit a book of selected papers from the conference, and *Love: A Question for Feminism in the Twenty-First Century*, was published by Routledge in 2014. It was exciting to work with the authors, most of whom I had met; spending close time with their papers as an editor really made the point clear to me that an interconnected set of feminist researchers on love studies was growing. Two recent papers of mine, "Alienation in Romantic Love" (in submission) and "Love as a Political Force" (forthcoming), would not have been written but for the new enthusiasm surrounding feminist love studies.

Margaret's Tales of Love

My research on feminist theories of love developed out of my career concentration in feminist ethics. In my doctoral thesis "Cyborg Revolutions: Towards a Postfeminist Ethics with Angela Carter, Michel Foucault, Luce Irigaray and Donna Haraway" (Toye 2002), I observed that many feminist poststructuralist theorists' and

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postmodern writers' thinking about alternative economies of ethics, politics, consumption, and representation were articulating an alternative economy of love as a way of rethinking these other economies. I expanded this observation in "Towards a Poethics of Love: Poststructuralist Feminist Ethics and Literary Creation" (Toye 2010). One observation I made there was that the uncomfortable or surprised emotions evoked by the topic of love studies are themselves worthy of research. Another was that many who take up the study of love do so at the level of both "form" and "content," or what I discuss as "love as a methodology." I named a "poethics of love" as one such research practice in which many feminist writers engage when they examine love in terms of the linked concerns of politics, ethics, aesthetics, and issues of embodiment.

One story that a number of researchers on love recount is the feeling, when they turn to this research, that they are doing so in isolation. It was, therefore, with elation that I came across the call for and attended the 2010 "Love as a Problem for Feminism" conference that Ann mentions above and discovered that others were asking similar questions. In one of the seminars, three of us connected in terms of overlapping interests in love and the aesthetic, and one of the participants, Barbara Alfano, invited Asma Abbas (a contributor to this special issue) and me to join her in a follow-up lecture series called "Explorations of Love Lecture Series" at Bennington College, Vermont, in 2011. I began to expand my focus to consider the relationship between feminist love scholarship and the growing body of work around feminist affect theory. I then joined Jonathan Allan in organizing the seminar "Love and Affect" at the Association for Comparative Literature Studies meeting in Toronto in 2013. My paper on this subject, "Love as Affective Energy: Where 'Feminist Love Studies' Meets 'Feminist Affect Theory,'" is included in the book submission *Feminism and the Power of Love* (Toye forthcoming).

Margaret and Ann Meet and Become Co-editors

In October 2013, funded by GEXcel, Anna Jónasdóttir (Sweden) and Lena Gunnarsson (Sweden) invited scholars working in love studies from a variety of disciplines and parts of the world to discuss their work on love since the 2010 conference and to see if there might be any possibilities of working together. In addition to us —Ann Ferguson (US) and Margaret Toye (Canada)—we were joined by Adriana García Andrade (Mexico) and Silvia Stoller (Austria). Kathy Jones (US) and Eudine Barriteau (Barbados) were included but unable to attend. We emerged with a shared commitment to give the area of love studies and feminism more visibility with a few initial projects. Most of our core members have contributed papers to the book collection presently, *Feminism and the Power of Love*, co-edited by Adriana García Andrade, Lena Gunnarsson, and Anna Jónasdóttir. Margaret asked Ann if she would like to join with her in the special issue project; Ann inquired about whether *Hypatia* might be interested in the topic for a special issue, we submitted a proposal that was accepted, and the open call for papers was spread far and wide. Olga Sabido joined

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Adriana García Andrade in organizing an international conference in Mexico City in September 2015 that some of us attended, "Amor, experiencia sensible y feminismo/Love, sensible experience, and feminism."

Our group founded the Feminist Love Studies International Network in 2015. Since then, our core membership has expanded to include Olga Sabido (Mexico), Renata Grossi (Australia), and Justyna Szachowicz-Sempruch (Poland). The GEXcel institute at Örebro University hosts both the listserv for our extended membership, moderated by Lena Gunnarsson, and our webpage https://www.oru.se/english/research/research-teams/rt/?rdb=g254, which contains links to our Facebook group.

Feminist Philosophy and "Feminist Love Studies in the Twenty-First Century"

Whereas traditional philosophy might parcel out concerns into the separate areas of ontology, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and politics, a mark of feminist thought is that so many of these separate areas are inevitably linked. Indeed, most of the authors in this issue touch on two or more and in some cases, all of them. We are not able to cover all of the insights and themes the authors address in this short space, but we hope that the descriptions we offer provide a few ways of thinking about them and initiate further conversations.

Traditional philosophical inquiries into ontological questions, the most basic being "what *is* love?," include inquiries such as whether love is a property of the mind or the body, whether bodily love is connected with spiritual love, and if divine love is the same as human love. Much of Western thought organizes these different loves into hierarchies, including gendered hierarchies. Feminist love studies, including the essays in this special issue, address many of these ontological issues but they often do so in a way that takes apart not just the hierarchies but the categories themselves. Sometimes the traditional Greek divisions of *eros*, *agape*, *philia*, and *storge* are widened to include new kinds of love, and sometimes this rethinking radically changes not just how we think about what love is, but ourselves, and our worlds.

Many of our authors help us to rethink what love is by deconstructing binary oppositions assumed in traditional philosophies of love. For instance, in this issue, Patricia Grosse and Lindsay Stewart break down traditional oppositions between sexual love and spiritual or sacred love. Grosse offers a feminist reinterpretation of Augustine on concupiscent (sexual desire) versus sacred love. She suggests that Augustine's texts, and his relationships with women, provide at once a gendered understanding of love as bodily, but also a rethinking of its nongendered aspects. In Grosse's revisionist reading, Augustine does not set up a theological division between a divine and perfect intellectual love and a worldly and depraved bodily desire. Augustine, she argues, views the body as beautiful, God-made, and as naturally lovable as it is loving, and she suggests that it provides feminist thinkers ways of considering love in all of its forms as natural, although not perfect.

In a different context, Stewart builds on Angela Davis's work on black women's blues as involving a spiritual practice of freedom, as well as Lorde's erotic that refuses

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the distinction between spiritual and bodily joy. Stewart argues that in hoodoo love rituals—the spiritual tradition in which black women's blues is rooted—sexual love takes on supernatural powers, and sexual pleasure is elevated to spiritual heights. It is this cosmology, rooted in these spiritual love rituals, Stewart argues, that gives the blues its transformative powers.

A number of authors in the issue foreground this transformational nature of love. In their view, love has the capacity to change people and societies, and moreover, what love *is* seems to be constantly changing. This concept of love *as* transformation has radical implications for the study of love in relation to subjectivity. Indeed, many feminist theorists of love articulate a relational ontology that embeds ethics within their models of subjectivity: love places us in relationship, both parties are transformed through their interactions in the experience of love, and subjectivity is revealed as necessarily relational, and mutually dependent. Many of the authors in this issue raise problems with our current models of ethics and subjectivity, especially one rooted in a dialectical model based on conflict.

For instance, Federica Gregoratto is concerned with violence in romantic love relationships: when men harm the women with whom they have declared themselves to be passionately in love. Just as Kathy Jones tries to come to terms with the specific situation in which one of her women's studies students was killed by her partner (Jones 2000), Gregoratto turns her attention to situations that escalate to what she calls "romantic femicide" (135). She uses the terms "M" and "W" and "A" and "B" in order to underline her point that the object of her critique is a *gender binary system*. It is this system, together with a certain understanding of subjectivity based on dependency rather than on interdependence, that informs "M"s understanding of love. This systemic structure prevents those in "M" positions from accepting their partners as independent and autonomous subjects, which then leads to self-defeating attempts to maintain it, resulting in them harming, and in extreme cases, eliminating those in the "W" position.

Tatjana Takševa's essay examines the problems with an understanding of love rooted in this dialectical model by examining our concepts of "mother love" and love as ambivalence in the mother/child relationship. Importantly, unlike traditional philosophical approaches that consider this kind of love in idealistic and universal terms, Takševa situates her argument in the very particular context of Bosnian women who have had children after being violently raped as a practice of war. Grounding her analysis in recent feminist thinking on maternal ambivalence, she theorizes ambivalence from the mother's perspective and in a way that does not frame the mother/child relationship as inevitably conflicted. Only after analyzing this situation does she suggest normalizing maternal ambivalence more generally as a way of redefining mother love so that it is empowering both to mothers and their children.

A number of authors looking for other models of subjectivity, ethics, and the dialectic have turned to the important rethinking of ethics and love that Irigaray provides. In a crucial departure from the focus of much traditional philosophy on love as unity, Irigaray grounds her ethics of love in a concept of love as *difference*, and more

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specifically, *sexual difference* (Irigaray 1984). Further, rather than locating love as something that discrete individuals experience, she suggests thinking about love as that which exists in the space between subjects, through the concept of "the interval" (Irigaray 1996).[2]

Laura Roberts's essay emphasizes the importance of this contribution to feminist love studies, suggesting that the radicalness of this theory of the interval can be better understood if considered as a challenge to the Hegelian dialectical master/slave relationship through her rereading of Diotima.[3] Instead of framing the relationship between subjects in terms of struggle between a master and a slave and ending in the sacrifice of one of them, Irigaray's concept of love as the interval, Roberts stresses, maintains a passage between the two subjects, such that each side is preserved. The interval provides us with a radically different concept of love as well as a negative concept of subjectivity, that is, a subject who realizes "I am not all." Roberts underlines the importance of the negative in Irigaray's rethinking of the Hegelian dialectic for the boundary/limit that it provides and that is necessary for conceptualizing an autonomous feminine subjectivity, which allows two subjects to be and become in a nonsacrificial relation.

Megan Burke's article, which rethinks many of the debates in traditional love studies, considers love as a creative opening and intervenes in discussions about true love/false love and authentic love/inauthentic love. Burke argues that whereas Beauvoir's work on this topic maintains the oppositions, Merleau-Ponty's later work helps us to take them apart by suggesting a conception of love that intertwines reality and the imaginary rather than opposing them, in what he calls the "imaginareal." Building on this concept and drawing on a Proustian idea of love as a creative and inventive force that does not represent but imagines being, Burke suggests conceiving love as "a hollow" that provides us not with a theory of lack and emptiness but rather a concept of openness that creates space and time for play or variation. Drawing on queer affect theory of Ahmed, Berlant, and Jose Muñoz, Burke argues not just for a queer concept of love but also theorizes both love and queerness in a way so as to imply they are synonymous: both are about openness to change and they provide spaces to disrupt and defy convention.

Questions about love's relationship to reality and how the realm of the aesthetic, including language, mediates that relationship are central themes in both traditional philosophy and contemporary feminist love studies. Poststructuralist feminism has much to offer this debate because of its emphasis on both the discursive nature of love—love exists in its representation, discourse, the symbolic—and the sublime nature of love—love conceived as pre- or not yet symbolic. For example, Roberts emphasizes the importance of Irigaray's need to create a new language in order to express her concept of a new loving ethical subjectivity, and Margaret McLaren's book review of Gayatri Spivak's *Planetary Loves* indicates that "the practice of translation" and the encounter with the other share a feature with love: that it is always imperfect and contains an excess that defies capture. However, recent publications from other schools of thought are not satisfied with this approach and suggest that this question of love's relationship to "the real" be approached differently. Such

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approaches include Gunnarsson's "feminist-realist" account of love based in Bhaskar's critical realism (Gunnarsson 2014), and Kolosova's *Cut of the Real*, reviewed by David Peña-Guzmán for this special issue, which places feminist poststructuralism, including on love, in dialogue with structural realism and object-oriented analysis.

In feminist love studies, epistemological questions about love are connected to representational and ethical issues around research practice and methodology; for example, when are knowledge projects about the projections of one's own desires, and when does one's love of knowledge end up inadvertently destroying the other, the object of one's investigation? A range of feminist theories respond to such challenges by questioning the binary opposition between knowledge and ignorance.

As Roberts explains in this issue, Irigaray's concept of love as the interval provides an intermediary between ignorance and knowledge, which gives feminist philosophy and feminist love studies a different context for what it means to think. Meanwhile, Mariana Ortega discusses the influential concept of arrogant versus loving perception (Ortega 2006), which has been an important distinction employed by Marilyn Frye, Maria Lugones, and E. V. Spelman, and central to Christine Koggel's musing in this issue. However, Ortega combines these terms in the concept of "loving, knowing, ignorance" to criticize when white feminists produce ignorance about women of color at the same time that they proclaim to have both knowledge about and loving perception toward them. In "(Love is) the Ability of Not Knowing," Dawn Rae Davis calls for yet a different response. Drawing on Spivak's use of Derrida's concept of "the secret," Davis argues for the decolonial practice of what she calls "not knowing," which is different from ignorance. She suggests that, because of the links between the colonial project and practices of loving benevolence and Western knowledge projects, it is necessary to make "a new commitment by which the ability of *not knowing* reconstitutes the *will to know* so that a feminist beholding of the Other woman is a witnessing of the *impossibility* of her appearance in the context of anything demarcated as knowability" (Davis 2002, 155).

Being willing to read, and being open and attentive to the other through rereadings is an important theme in feminist love studies. In her article on black feminist foremother Anna Julia Cooper, Vivian May underlines an important ethical and epistemological point about how to interpret past feminist thinkers who write about love. May argues that Cooper ought to be read within the historical context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when women, and particularly African-American women, were not taken seriously as thinkers. If we read Cooper's work as a series of performances in relation to different discourses and contexts of power of the time (for example, in the context of white male thinkers, white female thinkers, and African-American male thinkers), May indicates that we will then appreciate how her various articulations of love may shift in order to be effective because they take into account different audiences. Interpreting Cooper with a methodology of love allows us to understand her meaning in its appropriate contexts, and provides a feminist lesson for how to take into account our own bias as intersectional observers from another historical age.

In "Love and Knowledge," Jaggar underlines how emotion, including love, has been excluded in Western philosophy as a form of knowledge, as have the gendered bodies

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that have been associated with these qualities (Jaggar 1989). Feminist love studies has, therefore, needed to address both *who* gets to produce knowledge about love and also *how* love should be studied; that is, part of its project is to consider the kinds of forms, genres, and methods that are adequate for studying love, especially in relation to assumptions about rationality, objectivity, and scientific knowledge. One recent example that takes on both the *who* and the *how* is underlined in Kim TallBear's review of Angela Willey's *Undoing Monogamy* (2016). Willey provides a way of rethinking both monogamy and nonmonogamy in human and nonhuman relations by seeing sex within an array of other loves, including "creative expression, vigorous activity, and falling in love with one's work." Going beyond a critique of how traditional science studies monogamy, Willey offers us "dreams of a dyke science" in which she encourages us to make our own sciences organized under different structures and logics.

The genre of the musing was attractive to a number of our authors, allowing them to move from a universal academic voice to the specific personal experiences of love, which ground their larger claims. Koggel, whose work has focused on feminist moral philosophy, relational ontology, and memory, uses the musing to enter into the autobiographical mode. She reflects on the personal loss of both her mother and feminist philosopher colleague Sue Campbell to cancer. In coming to terms with the loss of both of these figures in her life, she draws on and keeps alive Campbell's work, which links love and memory together and which exhorts us to remember well so as to both know and love well. In a parallel example, Gunnarsson uses the genre of the musing in order to reflect on what she feels is the taboo nature of the personal in academic writing. Her musing helps to explain a part of her book that is often misunderstood by discussing the particular revelation she had in her personal relationship that informed the book (Gunnarsson 2014).

Abbas's musing is the most experimental of the submissions to the special issue. She foregrounds epistemology in the title of her piece "Love Studio" where she directly engages questions of love, knowledge, and methodology in her declaration that in her piece, "love is not an object of study for me, but a series of propositions and objections" (201). Abbas both expands feminist standpoint theory and undermines Marx's statement about unrequited love in her ontological and epistemological question as to whether there are "forms of love specific to those who are marginal to, or written out of, the loves that usually bind body, state, society, ideology … from the standpoint not of the unloved but of the unrequited" (202).

Other authors who also bring long-standing feminist methodologies together with the study of love raise the question of what would count as an adequate methodology of love. For example, Caroline Ureña suggests that a cornerstone of feminist methodology, Sandoval's methodology of the oppressed, is better understood as a methodology of love in the postmodern world. Building on Franz Fanon and Roland Barthes, Ureña develops the concept of decolonial love, which she sees as imagining a "third way" outside of colonial binary thinking. Ureña's own methodology includes considering literature as a genre that represents love in important ways, and in this essay she discusses, among a number of theorists, Gabriel García Márquez's *Of Love and Other Demons*.

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Just as political questions are at the center of feminist analyses, so too the political implications of love are at the heart of feminist love studies, and the essays in this special issue are no exception: love and its relation to power is a common theme.

Many feminist thinkers have questioned the traditional distinction between ethics, understood as obligations and norms in personal relations, and politics, which involves norms and power relations in group, community, and national decision-making practices. Some feminist ethicists have challenged the devaluation of caregiving and women's role in the traditional gender division of labor, arguing that this work is necessary for human thriving and should no longer be thought of as an ethical duty assigned primarily to women or to be disproportionately relegated to people of color. A number of these ethicists argue that care guides women's moral decisions, in part because of women's skills in mothering, whereas men develop an ethics of justice because of their orientation to the public sphere where generalizable principles of justice are applied to group interactions. Montserrat Moreno-Marimón and Genoveva Sastre connect biologist Lynn Margulis's work on cooperation in life systems to their empirical work on ethics of care versus justice in gendered conflicts in heterosexual love (Moreno-Marimón and Sastre 2010). Others focus on developing distinctive principles of justice based on criticizing the injustices of racial, class, gender, and sexual oppression, as well as models of justice that do not take into account household or personal relations.

In this issue, Sara Cantillon and Kathleen Lynch argue, however, that not enough attention in either mainstream or feminist treatments of justice has been placed on love as a relation distinguishable from care. They claim that because of their primacy and inalienability, love matters should be considered a fourth dimension that should be added to Nancy Fraser's three other dimensions of social justice: redistribution, recognition, and representation. The authors argue that although all love relations imply caregiving, love is primary, in the sense of being irreplaceable, whereas many kinds of care can be commodified. They suggest that a feminist theory of social justice should demand affective equality in all three areas key to human affective interactions: the primary relations of love, the secondary relations of care, and the tertiary relations of solidarity.

Marxist political theorists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have contributed in important ways to contemporary love studies. Their influential analysis of twenty-first-century global capitalism maintains that the affective labor of intellectuals working as teams on knowledge-production and the unpaid work of care and love are examples of a kind of oppositional energy of love that can come together when diverse multitudes meet face to face to create a counter bio-power that challenges such social domination (Hardt and Negri 2005). However, a number of feminist thinkers, including in the volume *Love*, question their romanticization of "love of the multitude," which does not take into account male domination, heterosexism, or intergroup dynamics (Jónasdóttir and Ferguson 2014); Berlant's engagement with Hardt about love and politics, which includes questions relevant for feminist love studies, is meanwhile staged as an ethical dialogue (Berlant 2011).

Some feminists have focused on the importance of rethinking love and politics as at once a transformative force and one involving social practices. From this point of view, "love power" can be seen as a potential force or energy that is exercised either

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by exploitative or empowering practices (Jónasdóttir 1994; García Andrade, Gunnarsson, and Jónasdóttir forthcoming). bell hooks also emphasizes love as practice. She criticizes a narcissistic politics of greed linked to capitalist consumerism and forwards a politics and ethics of love based on mutual respect, integrity, and responsibility (hooks 2000).

Another important feminist tradition has been to think of love as a source of solidarity for a particular oppressed group. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s US civil rights movement headed by Martin Luther King and Ella Baker, activists, both white and African-American, thought of themselves as part of a "beloved community" and aimed at a concept of social justice based in love and equality for all humans. Solidarity so conceived is not just an intellectual commitment but also a collective affective performance that allows us to understand the importance of bodily practices. For example, the group-singing characteristic of the US black civil rights movement and many trade union and other public demonstrations transmits a sense of empowerment to every member of the group. In social movements where people exchange affective energy face to face and body to body, people are transformed in a particular way during the process. Such transformational politics continues more recently in the "Arab Spring" occupations in the Mideast and the US, the US Black Lives Matter movement, and climate justice movements around the world.

Furthering this line of thought in this issue, Allison Weir suggests a performative way to look at the uses of love as resistance. She argues that public rituals of dance and celebration throughout human history have created a group love bonding (she calls this collective love), which often has enacted a collective freedom that resists dominant powers. Weir argues that rational debate of the sort Hannah Arendt characterized as politics is not enough to create the collective love needed for political resistance. As an example, she cites the recent public dance rituals of the "Idle No More" Canadian and US indigenous environmental group against the corporate fossil fuel industry. Weir's concentration on collective love clearly expands a political notion of love beyond traditional philosophical distinctions. Weir's approach challenges us to rethink subjectivity as not just an individual but also as a group phenomenon in which humans transform themselves by collective love rituals. She also widens the understanding of what love and politics are by allowing us to think of shared festivals, dance, and music as political acts of resistance.

Lindsey Stewart also focuses on practices of collective love as a politics of liberation. As discussed, Stewart builds on the work of Audre Lorde and Angela Davis and provides an analysis of freedom that involves a personal and group process of struggle. Black women blues singers and their audiences experience a "spiritual joy" in affective practices of bodily freedom that help undo the harms inflicted by centuries of slavery and racial oppression in the US. Gaining its transformative power from spiritual hoodoo love rituals, the blues is experienced as having "life-'*fixing*' status" (110).

May, Ureña, and Abbas join Weir and Stewart in asking questions about loving in the contexts of slavery, Jim Crow, colonization, and neocolonization, and suggest various political implications of resisting practices rooted in love. Ureña focuses on the need for worldwide transformation that the traumatic wound of colonialism has

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created. She argues that in the colonial context, healing should not be about an erasure of past wounds. Instead she underscores the ethical dimension involved in a healing that is necessarily an ongoing practice, viewing love as a political technology, that is, "a body of knowledges, arts, practices, and procedures for re-forming the self and the world" (Sandoval, cited in Urena, 89.).

Meanwhile, Gunnarsson's musing raises interesting questions about the relationship between personal and political change. Drawing on what she has learned from Buddhist teachings, she suggests that perhaps we cannot change the world, but we can change our response to our situation. Further, she indicates, "If we really want change, we need to become better at disentangling the moral issue of who is to blame, of who *should* change, from what will *actually* effectuate change" (191).* She notes that "letting go" can be a deeply transformative act with healing power.

It is impossible to summarize Abbas's musing because its performative nature resists translation into other terms. Suffice it to say, Abbas's "invitation," or "love studio," is in dialogue with and engages in turning much of traditional love studies on its head in evocative, powerful prose. Starting with the story of the 2013 killing of Sabeen Mahmud who organized a rally "Let Love Happen" in response to Pakistan's "Say No to Valentine's Day," Abbas asks and performs important questions about love in relation to the political and the aesthetic, drawing on, among other things, Rancière's "poetics of politics."

This introduction foregrounds only some of the ways that this special issue contributes to the newly claimed area of feminist love studies: readers will find other productive ways of tracing connections among the articles. Many of the articles in the issue acknowledge the crucial foundational work of black feminist scholars, and a number of contributions examine non-Western contexts and nonheterosexual, noncouple love, but more work needs to be done from critical race, transnational, diasporic, indigenous, and queer perspectives, and more investigations of love across languages would be welcome. Twenty-first-century feminist love studies also needs to include more thinking about love in relation to nonhumans, including animals, other species, the environment, abstract concepts, inanimate objects, technology, and its relationship to other emotions. The work being produced by theorists described as feminist new materialists and feminist affect theorists would be beneficial for this field to take into account.

We hope you find the essays in this issue to be as thought-provoking as we did. The issue would not have been possible without the hard work of the authors, the reviewers, and everyone at *Hypatia* who produced the issue, especially Sally Scholz, Katherine Kurtz, Miranda Pilipchuk, and Shelley Wilcox.

*[Correction added on January 05, 2017, after first online publication: the quotation, "If we really want to change, we need to become better at disentangling who is to blame, of who should change, from what will actually effect change" was changed to "If we really want change, we need to become better at disentangling the moral issue of who is to blame, of who *should* change, from what will *actually* effectuate change".]

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Notes

1. In 2009, as a result of a five-year research grant collaboration between the Universities of Örebro and Linköping, GEXcel, "The Centre of Gender Excellence" was formed. In 2013, GEXcel became "The International Collegium for Advanced Transdisciplinary Gender Studies."

2. For a recent investigation of how Irigaray's "interval" corresponds to Deleuze's "interstice" and a challenge to Irigaray's concepts of love in her later work that evacuate the inherent violence in love that was present in her earlier concepts and methods, see Godart 2016.

3. See Clements 2015 for another recent analysis of Diotima and love.

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