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Love Power in the Rear-View Mirror: Interview with Anna G. Jónasdóttir

Anna G. Jónasdóttir and Lena Gunnarsson 

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Anna G. Jónasdóttir's work on men's exploitation of women's *love power* as a fundamental basis of contemporary patriarchies in formally gender equal societies (1991, 1993, 1994, 2003, 2009, 2011) stands out as a major contribution to feminist theorizations of patriarchy. In her work, Jónasdóttir uses the basic premises of Karl Marx's historical materialist method to conceptualize the mechanisms of women's subordination to men, arguing that struggle over the creative capacity of love forms a fundamental basis of contemporary patriarchies in formally gender equal societies. While feminist scholars in the Marxist tradition have tended to address women's subordination in terms of their specific role in regard to labour and the economy, Jónasdóttir wanted to systematically consider the radical feminist claim about sexuality's central place in patriarchy and explore the uses of the historical materialist method to this end. This resulted in a ground-breaking conceptualization of sociosexuality's productive force as based in people's need, as well as basic capacity, for love. While the material basis of class relations can be found in the exploitation of labour power, Jónasdóttir argues that the specifically patriarchal relations in formally gender equal western societies are founded on men's exploitation of women's love power. Like labour, love is necessary for and productive of the subsistence of societies, and it has its own internal logic distinct from, yet interacting with, labour and the economic sphere.

When Jónasdóttir turned 80 in December 2022, Lena Gunnarsson, Jónasdóttir's former student and colleague, came up with the idea of interviewing her about her work, asking her both to look in the rear-view mirror and reflect on the significance of her work today and how it can be positioned in the contemporary academic setting. In the interview, Jónasdóttir speaks about the long and winding process of developing her theory, about how her concept of love power relates to feminist work centred on the notions of care or labour, and about the contemporary trend towards so called social reproduction feminism in Marxian feminist scholarship and how it differs from her own work. Jónasdóttir and Gunnarsson reflect on the fact that the Jónasdóttirean approach is difficult to fit not only into postmodernist but also post-postmodernist as well as predominant modes of Marx-inspired feminist frameworks. Meanwhile, the relevance of Jónasdóttir's conceptualization of love power is repeatedly indicated by popular references to her work.

LG: You defended your doctoral thesis in political science at Gothenburg University in 1991. It was published in 1994 by a US publisher and translated into Spanish and later into Swedish. It is here that you present your key theoretical contributions, which you subsequently elaborate on in other publications. What is probably your most central contribution is your theory of love power. This theory is innovative and ground-breaking in that it breaks both with Marxist axioms and with prevalent tendencies in feminist theory. Can you tell me about the process of writing the thesis and developing the love power theory?

AGJ: It was a long and winding road, both the process of finding my topic and the writing process itself. When I started my doctoral education in the late 1970s I intended to write a wholly different thesis, about public childcare policy, without any distinctive feminist framing. However, a set of incidental circumstances made me let go of that project and decide to write a theoretical thesis instead. I had started familiarizing myself with the so-called new women's research and around the time that I started my doctoral education I developed a women's studies course together with a doctoral colleague, to be given at what was then Örebro University College. I was also locally involved in some women's politics, we ran a book café in Örebro and things like that. That is why I started going through existing feminist theoretical work and in 1979 I was asked to give a lecture reviewing the field at The Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm—a friend of mine was a doctoral student there. The lecture resulted in a paper that got relatively widely dispersed. I went on to write a more elaborate review of the emerging field of feminist theory, particularly work from the US and England but also from the Nordic countries, not least Norway. Both these texts, that were both Swedish-language, were then published in one and the same volume in the Örebro University Colleges' series of publications (Jónasdóttir, 1984), and it became quite well spread in Sweden and was reprinted several times.

And some time, when I did all this including teaching about the issues, colleagues and other people started asking why I did not write my thesis about these theoretical issues. And I decided to change topics. It was no easy decision, and it was not very easy to figure out what a thesis in political science on these topics could look like. So, it took its time, and I changed supervisors a couple of times.

LG: Your work on the topic up until then had consisted of reviewing existing feminist theories. But I assume that you had already at this stage started to form your own viewpoints about the issues debated by the feminists at the time?

AGJ: Yes! As I worked on my more elaborate review of the field, it got increasingly difficult only to review. I started forming my own opinions and positions. Something that I thought of early on was: What are really the central feminist questions? Many thinkers, inspired by de Beauvoir I assume, seem to take it for given that the female subject: what is a woman?—is *the* central feminist question. While that is of course an important question, for me, as a social scientist, the most important issue rather concerned the social conditions of women, in relation to, or compared to, men's conditions. This attracted me to what I call the third way in second wave feminist theory, outlined by theorists like Juliet Mitchell, Heidi Hartmann, and Alison Jaggar, who wanted to consider the questions posed by radical feminists and try out the Marxist or historical materialist method to this end.

LG: Why was it that you wanted to use the Marxist method?

AGJ: At this time, during the 1970s, virtually all feminist theorists related in one way or another to historical materialism. At this moment I did not have any intention to delve into theories about love. What I wanted was to use Marx's method to investigate the feminist question of what is specific about the oppression of women. The quite lengthy question that I ended up using to delimit my study was, "How come men's power, compared to and over women, persists in contemporary, formally gender equal western societies where women are relatively economically independent from individual men?" This delimitation is really important. My study was not about general issues; the

research question is historically and geopolitically delimited. The way that I then came to seek answers to this question eventually led me to conclude that love, and sexual love in particular, is what the feminist theorists that I related to—the unorthodox historical materialist feminists who wanted to consider the radical feminist questions—have more or less overlooked.

At the same time, my long process of inquiry led me to identify a certain incoherence in Marx and Engels' formulations about the fundamentals of historical materialism, outlined in the preface of Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884/2021) and in Marx and Engels' *The German Ideology* (1845/1970), that almost all Marxist and socialist feminists took as their point of departure. Here, I came to regard the concept of love, as a form of human, sensuous, practical activity in the Marxian sense, as that which could correct such inconsistencies.

LG: Let us get back to this last issue later on. But, regarding embracing the Marxist or historical material method because that was what people did at the time: as I know you, you are not a person who embraces something just because other people do so. What is it about historical materialism that you find useful and plausible?

AGJ: I thought that the way of viewing society and history was important, interesting, and useful, among other things for the feminist questions.

LG: Wherein, according to you, does this Marxist viewpoint on society and history consist?

AGJ: One important thing for me is its rejection of methodological individualism, that fundamentally society does not simply consist of isolated individuals but of various groupings, and of the creative *activities* relating such human groupings in the social process of making and remaking history. Another important thing for me was the notion that people are developmental, needy creatures who are dependent on nature; both the nature outside us and the human nature within ourselves.

But it is not self-evident in what exactly the Marxist method consists, and this is something I needed to sort out in order to pursue my project around the feminist questions. As I outline in detail in a paper that was not published until in 2009 (Jónasdóttir, 2009), I decided to look at what Marx and Engels called the premises of the materialist method, which virtually all feminist theorists working with Marx took as their point of departure. And in my view, all of them, at least what I have read so far, read this famous passage by Marx and Engels incorrectly. Here, Marx and Engels write about a *twofold* production and reproduction: the production and reproduction of the means of existence and the production and reproduction of the human species, of humans (1845/1970). But what feminists have taken from this and what still lives on is the notion that *production* has to do with the means of existence, while the production of people is categorized as *reproduction*. And I contend that this split results in the production of people becoming conceptually subordinated to the production of the means of existence and reduced to, or fixed to, labour. The creative activities in the domain of people-production tend to be understood exclusively as work or labour, or as a matter of reproducing labour power, rather than as something in its own right.

LG: The production of people becomes an epiphenomenon of the other form of production when it is labelled “reproduction”?

AGJ: Yes. By contrast, in this passage by Marx and Engels I see an opening for identifying a distinct form of production and distinct material basis of patriarchy, connected in some way to sexuality. And here a theoretical room for love, rather than labour only, as a productive force and activity is opened up.

LG: When you speak of love in this context, there are other scholars who would ask: Why not label these people-productive activities “care”? Or why not include them in a broad concept of labour or work, as other Marxian feminists have done? For example, Ann Ferguson, who independently from you developed a theoretical framework that is remarkably similar to yours, uses the concept of “sex/affective work” (1989, 1991) to capture productive activities similar to what you mean by love.

AGJ: During a rather long time when I read the works of all the other theorists that I related to, care was the concept widely used and there were a lot of good things done. But is care the best alternative to labour, given radical feminists’ emphasis of sexuality as the parallel to the economy that Marx focused on? If you are to get something out of that parallel, care is not enough; it is not only care that is involved here. And regarding expanding the notion of labour to include sexual love as part of that, I thought that was rather unrealistic.

LG: Then one would be leaving something out.

AGJ: One would be leaving something out, yes. I think it was sometime in the mid-1980s that I came to the insight that the erotic aspect, some form of ecstatic activities, had to be part of it all. And here I ended up conceptualizing sexual love and its creative power as comprised by a dialectic between two components: erotic ecstasy and care.

Regarding extending the uses of the notion of labour, a main argument of mine has been that using the concept of work or labour for all the powers and activities at the basis of patriarchy is limiting. Theoretically, it rules out the possibility to identify any specific basis of contemporary patriarchy different from that of capitalism, which was the ambitious aim of so-called dual systems theory in the first place. Marx singles out the distinctiveness of labour by comparing the activities of an architect and a bee, where the activities of the architect, as opposed to the bee’s, count as labour because they are based on an idea that the architect intentionally seeks to realize. Although labour and love overlap in many respects, as I have written about in several places (Jónasdóttir, 1991, pp. 80–81, 1994, p. 73, 2009, pp. 77–78), it is in this regard that love differs from labour: if you practice love based on an idea about shaping another person in a certain way it becomes something else than love, which is spontaneous in its character.

LG: It cannot be instrumental.

AGJ: Not instrumental, nor intentional, in the way that work is.

LG: You mentioned that at the outset of your theoretical endeavours you did not have any thought of focusing on love. Rather, the concept of love power was a result of a serious and undogmatic theoretical investigation.

AGJ: Right. I had not thought at all about love being important for solving these theoretical problems. At this time love was no central issue in the feminist discussions that interested me. Of course, Shulamith Firestone addressed love in *The dialectic of sex* (1970/2015) and, here in the Nordic region, Suzanne Brøgger wrote *Deliver us from love* (1973/1976). The line of reasoning here was that love is ideologically oppressive of women. I had of course read these works, but I did not find them conceptually important at the outset. Love was rather something that I came to end up with, through a process where I had one eye directed towards radical feminist work on sexuality, which I did not accept straight off, and the other towards the premises of historical materialism.

I would say that if we see love as mainly or only ideologically oppressive, we risk overlooking its positive creative power. It is not either or. Regarding that point I like to recall a quote by the late Australian sociologist Anthony McMahon, one of the pioneers in critical studies of men and masculinities, who engaged with my early work: “I cannot think of a better way of respecting love than to see it as capable of exploitation” (1999, p. 49).

LG: What would you highlight as your most important contribution?

AGJ: One way of answering that question is that I have formulated a well-grounded argument for taking love between adults socio-theoretically seriously, both as an existential human source of power and a transferrable and therefore exploitable formative power. And my argument that fully-fledged sexual love between adults is not either erotic or caring but both. Why is this important? Because it responded to the difficult question that many feminist scholars worked with during the 1970s and early 1980s, the question about the specific material basis of patriarchy—a question they could not answer. They got stuck in work and the economy.

Then, since my work builds on a renovative reading of an important element in the premises of historical materialism, it also opens new possibilities for exploring the uses of the historical materialist “guiding thread” for research, as Marx called it. It opens possibilities for seeing what is useful in Marx’s method in a way that neither rejects its emphasis of work and the economy nor overemphasizes sexuality and love as constitutive of the production of people.

LG: What are your thoughts about your work in relation to other Marxian feminist theory? Some versions of Marx-inspired feminist theoretical frameworks currently have quite a strong foothold, for example social reproduction feminism, Nancy Fraser’s work et cetera.

AGJ: There are two main aspects to consider here. First, we may compare my work with other feminist theorizations of love based in Marxian frameworks. I use Marx’s method as a guiding thread for theorizing sexuality and love as an important explanatory ground of contemporary western patriarchy. There is other feminist work on love which also claims patriarchy to be an important explanatory ground and relates to Marx, but where the love problematique is formulated in a totally different way than I have done. Eva Illouz’s sociocultural love research (Illouz, 2012, 2019) is an outstanding example. As I discuss in one of my papers (Jónasdóttir, 2014), Illouz situates herself in and develops the sociological tradition that, influenced by both Durkheim and Marx, sees sexual love and its romantic image as a problem in the postmodern culture of late capitalism. While I *ended up* concluding that love, and the unequal transfer of love power between women and men, is an answer to how men’s power compared to and over women may be explained (and where this inequality does not at all have to entail pain or unhappiness for those who give more than they get), Illouz focuses on the *misery* of love, changed institutional causes of love pains in modernity, why love hurts, why love ends, and how the

high frequency of interrupted love relations in the era of freedom affects society at large. She mentions patriarchy and inequality between women and men, but the interpretative framework and main explanation is capitalism's ever more expansive commodification of people's emotions. In my view, there are other, more gender-specific things than capitalism's commodifying tendencies that affect the domain of love. But in the paradigm of thinking represented by Illouz there is a tendency to see the influence from capitalism as something that is in sole control over emotional and sexual relationships.

The other aspect of comparison to consider is my way of using Marx by applying his historical materialist method to feminist questions to explain contemporary western patriarchy, compared to other feminist theories that also use Marx but where sexuality and love are reduced either to a form of labour or a form of cultural phenomenon only. An explorative and selective way of using Marx for feminist aims was initiated in different forms by Juliet Mitchell, Heidi Hartmann, and others during the 1960s and 1970s. It is this approach that I have applied and developed, but as far as I can see it has no visible place in today's feminist theory discussions, although many continue to research in its spirit. Most efforts to theoretically develop this so-called dual systems approach ceased during the late 1980s, in the often very tense disputes about the various *intersect*-, *de*- and *post*-isms.

By contrast, the one-sided Marxist feminism from the 1970s, arguing against any form of dual systems thinking and for a "unitary theory" focusing on capitalism, has re-emerged with renewed power during the twenty-first century, with Lise Vogel, Martha Gimenez, Nancy Fraser, and to some extent Frigga Haug as leading figures. But it is the somewhat heterogenous social reproduction feminism that is central in this re-emergence and renewal, through scholars like Silvia Federici, Cinzia Arruzza, and Tithi Bhattacharya, revised editions of the work of Vogel and Gimenez, Nancy Fraser's important contributions, and several special issues in Marxist-oriented journals. Recently, social reproduction theory was represented by the US-based *Monthly Review* as "one of the most remarkable attempts to extend historical materialism in our time" (2018). When I started seriously reviewing this field, I was somewhat overwhelmed by how it has almost taken over Marx-inspired feminist scholarship. It also seems to have taken the male Marxists by storm.

LG: How would you characterize the field of social reproduction feminism?

It addresses women's oppressed position under capitalism, while also highlighting women's significance for capital as producers of labour power. These issues may in part be traced back to the so called domestic labour debate in the 1970s and some of the researchers in this field are primarily interested in politically relevant empirical research about worker women's global conditions, rather than in "new exercises in Marxology", as Federici has put it (2019, p. 56). For others, the emphasis is on theory and claims about theoretically renewing the concept of labour power in Marx through a rereading of *Capital*. Here they aim to show that not only class relations are constitutive of capitalism but also gendered and racialized relations, and all other social inequalities.

It is a categorically unitary or single-system theory that today guides the most ambitious part of social reproduction feminism, referred to as social reproduction theory. This means that it is based on a categorical renunciation of all forms of dual or multi-system theories. The often careless rejection seems to be grounded in an *a priori* acceptance of a unitary theory claiming that all social inequalities in contemporary capitalist societies have "one root"; that, while different in character, they are all "determined" by capitalism, the "single system".

I would say that the absence of *feminist* questions in social reproduction theory, that is, questions directed at the causes of male dominance over women, as Heidi Hartmann (1981) put it, diminishes its value. There is absolutely nothing wrong with the attempts to take up again the issue of women and women's work as central in the reproduction of labour power—on the contrary, even my limited reading of such research makes me convinced that, globally, the importance of women in that context is growing. It is very important research. But there is nothing in this context that makes it necessary to reject all dual or multi-systems approaches. It does not in any way require an all-inclusive unitary

or total theory. I do not think that my way of using Marx necessarily contradicts wholesale how the social reproduction theorists want to renew Marx's concept of labour power. What it does go against is the endeavour of extending the concepts of labour and labour power *in absurdum*.

LG: Just to clarify your stance here: it is a key claim of yours that although capitalism and patriarchy interact, they are also different systems in that they work according to distinct social logics.

AGJ: Yes. It is not all about capitalism. But from the unitary theory perspective, any such attempt to develop a distinctive theory of patriarchy as somehow separable from the political economy is read as a move of placing patriarchy "outside history", as Gimenez (2000, p. 19) has argued.

LG: You do not agree.

AGJ: I definitely do not agree. I claim that love and love power can be seen as historically specific concepts. Not that people got the capacity for love in the eighteenth century or so, but something happens in this regard when people become formally free and equal, a bit similar to how workers became free to sell their labour power in the labour market to meet their needs for subsistence. Similarly, when women become formally free and equal to men, new possibilities for loving open up (see Jónasdóttir, 2018, pp. 19–20).

LG: Could you say something about what a dialogue between social reproduction feminism and your own work could look like?

To take one example, Nancy Fraser makes an interesting argument about "boundary struggles" in capitalist societies, struggles that emerge from crises and contradictions between what she calls the "front" capitalist economy and the non-economic, non-commodified practices "behind", that the capitalist economy is dependent on (Fraser, 2014). Here, I think my analysis of contemporary western patriarchy as intersecting with—or interpenetrating—capitalism could enrich her analysis, although my analysis in this regard is brief and underdeveloped (Jónasdóttir, 2009, pp. 78–79, 2014, pp. 23–25, 2018, pp. 25–26).

LG: What do you think is the cause of this rejection of any break with what you refer to as unitary theory, which socialist feminists sought to break with during the second wave of feminism? In my own experience, this aligns with a tendency in the political left to label any singling out of gender as either liberal feminist or radical feminist.

AGJ: Or essentialist.

LG: You said that social reproduction feminism seems to have "taken the male Marxists by storm". Could there be some connection between the trends you describe and the fact that such thinking makes it easier for feminists to get into the warmth of male-sanctioned Marxism?

AGJ: Yes, perhaps.

LG: Indeed, what makes your theory so innovative is, among other things, that it breaks with Marxist orthodoxy. You go your own way. Would you agree with me that the feminist contributions that we have talked about are guided by a form of Marxist orthodoxy?

AGJ: Yes.

LG: It is, like, more hip to deal with capitalism than with the “soft”, femininely coded issue of love.

AGJ: Yes, yes, it is more hip. It reminds me of an occasion in 1985: I was at a political science conference in Spain, where I presented an early draft of some of my work. I did not yet mention love—I used the notion of care—but I sought to apply the Marxist notion of exploitation to these topics. I was the only woman in the working group and I was told both this and that, that writing about such intimate things is adequate in fiction only and that the concept of exploitation could not be extended in that way. As far as I know, my paper was the only one that was not included in the book resulting from this workshop. I was not even asked to submit a paper for review.

But I do not want to speculate too much about why contemporary historical materialist feminists have chosen this direction. These trends may of course also be politically motivated, the notion that it is the working-class women we ought to care for first and foremost. You see this focus clearly, for example, in a paper by Gimenez’s called “Global capitalism and women: from feminist politics to working class women’s politics” (Gimenez, 2018). It is not only that non-working-class women are left out in this form of analysis, the problem is also that the analysis of working class women’s conditions are reduced or limited to work and class.

It is not surprising that my work is not considered in this line of theorizing and research, since it altogether rejects, and in most cases without serious argumentation, the way of using and developing historical materialism that I represent. This is unfortunate not least since today Marxist male theorists such as Michael Hardt and Antoni Negri, Alan Badiou, Slavoj Žižek, Terry Eagleton, Martin Hägglund and Roy Bhaskar show interest in revitalizing, and taking seriously, love as a socially and politically significant phenomenon. Here it would be welcome if feminists directed their interest in these topics too and turned a critical edge towards such work.

LG: When I myself have worked with your theory, I have felt that it has been difficult to find a forum where it fits. When dealing with historical materialism you want to be part of a historical materialist forum, but it does not fit. And then, of course, the even vaster distance between your work and the poststructuralist trend that began around the time that you defended your thesis in 1991.

AGJ: And it has not become better now, I believe, in the current so-called post-postmodernist era, despite the fact that it involves a so-called new materialist turn and also an affective turn. I think that my work appears almost as foreign to post-postmodernist materialists as it does to poststructuralists, since they are so shaped by, and grew out of, poststructuralism and postmodernism. In this new materialism there is no room for historical materialism. I came across a list of varieties of new materialism and it did not include historical materialism. This kind of theory has such a strong

emphasis on diversity, identity, and culture. Either it tends to focus on the merely physical, or it is about culture being materialistic. So, where the Marxists disapprove of my use of Marx to theorize love, in the affective turn, which is very much linked to the new materialist turn, my way of working with love as a relational practice in the historical materialist sense does not fit either.

LG: Would you say that the theoretical theses you developed about love power already during the 1980s still hold?

AGJ: I think that something that indicates that I was onto something when seeing love as socially and politically relevant is the strongly increasing interest in studying love across disciplines as diverse as sociology, psychology, philosophy, psychoanalysis, anthropology, medicine, and neurology. This emergence of a serious interest in love is remarkable given that in most disciplines, except literature and parts of philosophy, love had been ignored, ridiculed, or actively rejected for decades. But recently a trend towards a renewed interest in love can be seen in many different, even unlikely, disciplines and more commonly, it seems, among non-feminist than feminist scholars. This change was what led me to develop the research theme “Love in our time: A question for feminism” within the GEXcel Centre of Excellence that Örebro University co-hosted, where we gathered a group of international researchers to look closer into love from various feminist perspectives (García-Andrade et al., 2018; Jónasdóttir & Ferguson, 2014).

Regarding the changed view of love in the academy, I think it is telling that when I was to publish my thesis, which had the title *Love power and political interests*, with a US-based publisher I had to accept another title: *Why women are oppressed*. Even if this title is not misleading, I do not think it does justice to the contents in the same way as the original dissertation title. I got no explanation as to why they preferred that title, but I assumed that they probably did not think that “love” was an appropriate word to include in the title of an academic book. This belief of mine got stronger when many years later I investigated the quite radically increased interest in love within the academy, noting an ongoing shift from a widely dispersed reluctance to take love seriously, even to use the word “love” in scholarly titles or texts, to what could be seen as an opposite attitude and sometimes overly expansive use of the word (Jónasdóttir, 2014).

Regarding the continued plausibility of my argument that men tend to exploit women’s love power, I think it is interesting that this idea is often taken up in more popularized forums as something useful for making sense of gendered realities. For example, in a column in Sweden’s major daily, Sonia Hedstrand reflects on the digital feminist activism centred around a Swedish Instagram account called “Mansbebisar” (“Man babies”). She writes about women, from all age and class categories, sharing stories about being treated unjustly in everyday life within contemporary patriarchy, and labels this a sort of digital feminist consciousness raising. Referring to my concept of love power, she claims that “naming and valuing the unpaid emotional work is a way of showing how men exploit women’s love resources” (Hedstrand, 2022).¹ If Hedstrand is right, I would say that my argument still holds. And it is interesting that now and then my work is referred to in Swedish media in this kind of way to make sense of women’s everyday experiences. I remember a very valuable comment I once got from a woman, a non-academic person, who had listened to a talk that I gave to a large audience of different categories of people: “This is the first time ever that I have heard anyone give words to my experience”.

Note

1. Translated from Swedish by Gunnarsson.

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This text is an edited and translated version of an interview made in Swedish by Lena Gunnarsson on 7 February 2023 in Anna G. Jónasdóttir's home in Örebro, Sweden. Alessandro Johansson transcribed the audio recorded interview and Gunnarsson translated and edited the transcription in dialogue with Jónasdóttir.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Anna G. Jónasdóttir is professor emerita in Gender Studies at Örebro University, Sweden. Her research interests are critical analyses and constructive development of ideas in social and political theory, feminist and more generally. In particular, she considers (i) the recent emergence of serious questions and arguments in many academic disciplines about the significance of love as a social and political source of power in our time; and (ii) different understandings of power, especially the question whether/how the plural human powers/capacities fit in theoretically with common views of power.

Lena Gunnarsson is Associate Professor in Gender Studies at Örebro University, Sweden. In her doctoral thesis and subsequent works she engages with Jónasdóttir's theory of love power to further conceptualizations of the relationship between gender, power and love. She has also made interventions in the areas of feminist theory, social theory and philosophy of science, drawing on critical realist philosophy to challenge poststructuralist frameworks. Gunnarsson's recent and current projects cover topics such as sexual consent, sugar dating and involuntary singlehood.

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