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Affecting Change?

Cultural Politics of Sexuality and «Race»
in Norwegian Education

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor

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Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture



NTNU – Trondheim
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Summary

The point of departure for “Affecting change? Cultural politics of sexuality and ‘race’ in Norwegian education” is the reconfiguration of sexual and racial politics in the Norwegian public sphere over the past decade. Both gender equality and homotolerance was transformed from contested political issues to common values that were seen to positively distinguish Norwegian culture in this process. Furthermore, these issues were increasingly taken up to describe both cultural differences and “cultural conflicts” internationally and in Norway. This development can be traced in curriculum and textbooks from 2006-2010, especially in the discussions of cultural differences in Social Science. Through interrogations of both the discursive interconnections between gender, sexuality, and “race,” and how the issues of sexuality and “race” are tackled in education separately, the dissertation highlights that both education about sexuality and “race” in contemporary Norway can be informed by a postcolonial critique that reveals the persistence of racializing discursive strategies in Norwegian education.

“Affecting Change? Cultural Politics of Sexuality and ‘Race’ in Norwegian education” is an article based dissertation that investigates the cultural configurations of sexuality and “race” in Norwegian education as they appear in textbooks and in classroom interaction. It consists of four articles and an introduction that discusses contextual, methodological, and theoretical issues that were important for the research that the articles present. The articles focus on a) the cultural politics of Norwegian sex education, b) the interplay between sexuality and questions of cultural differences in Social Science textbooks, c) conceptual and affective problems in education about “race” and racism, and d) the impact of affective educational spaces on teaching and learning questions of “difference” in the classroom. The first two articles primarily consist of discussions of existing research and textbook analyses. The latter two are based on classroom observation.

The analysis highlights the persistence of heteronormalizing and racializing conceptual frameworks in education that aims to combat discrimination. Specifically, it argues that the denial of “race” as a relevant concept in Norwegian public discourse and education currently hinders educational efforts to prevent racism among young people. Furthermore, it sheds light on how affective aspects of classroom interaction can strengthen or work against education that reproduces oppressive social norms.

These considerations of the cultural politics of sexuality and “race” in Norwegian education are informed by a theoretical and methodological discussion about affect and cultural analysis. Drawing on both psychosocial perspectives and Deleuzo-Guatarian affect theory, the dissertation explores the persistence of oppressive social structures through a focus on psychosocial aspects of racist interaction, and the potential for social change that can be traced through affect on the level of the situation. In the articles, affective inquiry on both these levels helps highlight both how racism is enacted and thwarted in educational encounters.

Preface

This article based dissertation attests to the various and overlapping political and academic projects I have been involved in over the past few years, as well as a sustained commitment to study the cultural politics of sexuality and “race” in Norwegian education. The articles based on classroom observations, and the insights in my reflections over them, would not have been possible without the contributions of the teachers and students who welcomed me and my colleagues into their classrooms. I am very grateful for everything I learned from sitting in on their everyday experience of schooling. “Elusive sex acts” draws on experiences I have had working with the Norwegian Queer Youth on queer interventions in sex education. Their insights and comments have been very helpful for my thinking on those issues.

“Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders?” was co-authored by Åse Røthing and myself. I’d like to thank her for our longstanding and productive collaboration. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of the following people, who have contributed to texts as well as thoughts on the issues I discuss here.

Thanks to Pam Alldred for inviting me to contribute to the special issue of *Sex Education* that “Elusive Sex Acts: Pleasure and Politics in Norwegian Sex Education” appeared in, and for organizing a panel on the special issue at the 2012 British Educational Research Association (BERA) conference. Thanks also to Mary Louise Rasmussen for particularly insightful comments on the article at that conference. Ellen Mortensen, Gaudencia Mutema, and colleagues the Center for Gender Research at the University of Bergen kindly invited me to speak about my work on affect and multiculturalism in Norway, and gave valuable feedback in the context of the “Affective Displacements” seminar in Bergen in 2012. For challenging me to develop my thoughts on the same topic, thanks to Dorthe Staunæs and the “Affectivities” group in the TheoryNord network, and to the editors of and contributors to the debate on poststructuralism and gender research in *Tidsskrift for kjønnsforskning* from 2010 to 2012. The Network for Feminist Research at the University of Stavanger has been a

place for inspiring dialogue for me over the past few years. Thanks especially to Wencke Mühleisen, Fredrik Langeland and Ingvil Hellstrand for inspiring seminars, meetings, and conversations.

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The Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim has been my base for five years. I am indebted to my colleagues at the Center for Gender Research and the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture for countless rounds of feedback on drafts, and even more numerous illuminating conversations over coffee. Trine Annfelt, Siri Hall Arnøy, Srikrishna Bharathi, Agnes Bolsø, Berit Gullikstad, Ane Møller Gabrielsen, Jan Groven Grande, Anette Hoel, Anja Johansen, Guro Korsnes Kristensen, Merete Lie, Nora Levold, Malin Noem Ravn, Priscilla Ringrose, Kristin Spilker, Elisabeth Stubberud, Jana Sverdljuk, and Siri Øyslebø Sørensen have all contributed to my work in that special everyday way. Rebecca Scherr and Dorthe Trøften have also provided incredibly helpful feedback and support, and prompted me to write better. Valerie Pollock at Orchard Editing has helped with copy-editing over the past few months, and greatly improved parts of this text.

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1 Introduction

This dissertation addresses the cultural politics of “race” and sexuality in Norwegian education at a time when the social articulation of these issues was in transition. The passage of the 2008 Marriage Act, which extended the institution of marriage to gay and lesbian couples, tipped the balance in an ongoing shift in the discursive framework of sexual politics in Norway. Questions of sexuality were part of a “cultural conflict” that was articulated in a struggle between “radicals” and “conservatives” throughout the 1990s. Queer and feminist critiques were commonly voiced against traditional and Christian religious values and politics. Currently, however, sexual politics are more often addressed in a geopolitically informed White/Western versus Muslim/Brown binary. “Cultural conflict” now indexes struggles between “Western” and “non-Western” values and norms. White, Christian conservatives have left the stage of Norwegian cultural politics, as their part as the bigot that threatens sexual freedom now belongs to a Brown-skinned Muslim.

The political shift I outline here can be illustrated by a perplexing and illuminating argument against gay marriage made by the populist right wing Progress Party. In the debate over the Marriage Act on June 11, 2008, MP Ulf Knudsen expressed a newfound concern over alienating Norwegian immigrants and Muslims:

We have to process that we have a significant challenge in this day and age, concerning those who come to Norway from cultures that are distant from us. This particularly concerns Muslims. I will not rule out the possibility that the legal definition of marriage – that is the new definition – will further alienate many with an immigrant background from Norwegian society and contribute to a larger divide between immigrants and ethnic Norwegians. That one over the next 300 to 400 years can expect Muslims to accept marriage between two men, I think is overly optimistic – if not outright naïve.¹

As a representative of a party that opposed the revision of the Marriage Act (which is also the primary proponent of anti-immigration policy in Norway), Knudsen’s newfound concern for Muslims’ opinions about homosexuality was curious. It was as if the issue of his own “intolerance” – or at least

¹ Knudsen, Ulf (Frp). Member of Parliament for Fremskrittspartiet, June 11, 2008, from the parliamentary debate of the gender-neutral Marriage Act passed on that day. See Wencke Mühleisen, Åse Røthing, and Stine H. Bang Svendsen, “Norske seksualiteter – en innledning,” in *Norske Seksualiteter*, ed. Wencke Mühleisen and Åse Røthing (Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag, 2009), 29.

his unwillingness to support lesbian and gay couples' right to marriage – was resolved via a projection onto the Norwegian Muslim population.

Wendy Brown explained that a discourse of tolerance has developed in the West that produces *intolerance* as that which is intolerable, and that intolerance has been selectively applied to non-Westerner in public discourse in the U.S.A.² Randi Gressgård and Christine Jacobsen pointed out that Norwegian media attention to religious condemnation of homosexuality emerged as an example par excellence of such an application of intolerance as specifically relevant for Muslims.³ Their points were further validated by the public moral panic orchestrated against “moral policing” in Oslo’s multicultural suburb of Grønland in 2010.⁴ The alleged “moral policers” were construed as Muslim men who were seen to threaten both White homosexual men and women of color who neither dressed nor acted sufficiently proper. Sindre Bangstad used this debate to exemplify “absolutist secularism” in the Norwegian context. He showed how “moralism” was construed as an indisputably negative faculty of “intolerant” male Muslims, which the Norwegian majority public, including its Brown women and gay men, needed to rise against in a rebellion of sorts.⁵ Indeed, there is little doubt that feminist and lesbian and gay rights agendas are central to anti-Muslim discourses in contemporary Norway, “and that absolutist secularism, with its particular understanding of gender and sexuality, positing Muslims as the embodiment of gendered alterity, feeds on these discourses.”⁶

European queer of color critique has importantly mapped and analyzed “gay imperialism” throughout Western and Northern Europe in recent years. Jin Haritaworn, Tamsila Taqir, and Esra

² Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

³ Randi Gressgård and Christine Jacobsen, "Krevende toleranse. Islam og homoseksualitet," *Tidsskrift for kjønnsforskning* 32, no. 2 (2008).

⁴ Sindre Bangstad, "En norsk sekularisme?," in *Sekularisme - med norske briller*, ed. Sindre Bangstad, Oddbjørn Leirvik, and Ingvill Thorson Plesner (Oslo: Unipub, 2012).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 48–9.

⁶ Sindre Bangstad, "Saba Mahmood and Anthropological Feminism After Virtue." *Theory, Culture & Society* 28, no. 3 (2011): 29. See also Joan Wallach Scott, *The Fantasy of Feminist History*, (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2011).

Erdem noted that “In the current context of Islamophobia, white people are once again able to identify themselves as the global champions of ‘civilization,’ ‘modernity’ and ‘development.’”⁷

Where does this shift in discursive framework of sexual politics and gender politics leave queer and feminist critique in the Nordics? In *Frames of War*, Judith Butler writes that the political articulation of sexuality, religion and “race” that has recently surfaced in northern Europe “places those of us who have conventionally understood ourselves as advocating a progressive sexual politics in a rather serious bind.”⁸ What is understood as a progressive political position, she notes, “relies on a conception of freedom that is understood to emerge through time, and which is temporally progressive in its structure.” The bind we find ourselves in is produced by the fact that this notion of freedom is instrumental to the facilitation of “a political division between sexual politics and the struggles against racism and religious discrimination.”⁹ This political situation compels us to rethink, rephrase and re-act modes of thinking about sexual freedom which are embedded in the project of sexual liberation. It also compels us to strive to re-articulate sexual freedom and anti-racism in ways that combat both racism and homophobia, and refuses to succumb to a logic that privileges one social problem over the other.¹⁰

The work in this dissertation proceeds from the “stuck place” that the problem of a political division between sexual liberation agendas and struggles against racism has produced.¹¹ Even if it is evident that there is no inherent relationship between sexual rights and racism, the political articulation of this connection has made it difficult to negotiate the bind that Butler describes in practice, at least in the Norwegian context. Sex education and civic education are sites where the problem of this division is evident. LGBT tolerance now figures in civic education and indeed also in citizenship tests in several European countries. Governments also seem to increasingly rely on

⁷ Jin Haritaworn, Tamsila Tauqir, and Esra Erdem, “Gay imperialism: gender and sexuality discourse in the “war on terror”,” in *Out of Place: Interrogating Silences in Queerness/Racality*. , ed. A Kuntsman and E Miyake (York: Raw Nerve Books, 2008).

⁸ Judith Butler, *Frames of War. When is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2009), 104.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia. The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

¹¹ Patricia Ann Lather, *Getting Smart. Feminist Research and Pedagogy With/In the Postmodern* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

education to foster national allegiances to prevent “home grown terrorism.”¹² The strengthened discursive links between gender and sexual politics, and post 9/11 geopolitical conflicts also recruits sex education to this discursive cluster.

The political configuration I have described here is only partial, and should not be thought of as linear processes where one articulation of the sexual and “race” simply replaces the other. In cultural studies, “articulation” has emerged as a broadly construed theory and method for the analysis of social orders, which is mindful of the dangers of both essentialism and reductionism.¹³ Specifically, Stuart Hall has noted that “articulation is about the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions.”¹⁴ The particular connection between the cultural politics of sexuality and “race” that I sketched above is such an instance, where different elements, previously configured as “separate” fields of knowledge and politics surfaced as a particular unity. Hall is clear about the student’s task: “You have to ask, under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made?”¹⁵

The politics of time and “development” are an important part of the problems that arises for queer critique and feminism which seeks to also address racism in the political situation I have sketched here. Mathias Danbolt focused on this temporal dimension in his recent work *Touching History*, where he pointed out that it is rather telling that issues of “race” and racialization appear as “new” to feminist and queer politics, when racial politics have been constitutive of sexual politics throughout the modern era. Danbolt suggests that the sense of surprise that can be traced in LGBT movements over the fact that racial politics have entered the center stage of sexual politics attests to the investments in colorblindness in European LGBT and feminist movements.¹⁶

¹² Kalwant Bhopal, “Islam, Education and Inclusion: Towards a Social Justice Agenda?,” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 33, no. 5 (2012).

¹³ Jennifer Daryl Slack, “The Theory and Method of Articulation in Cultural Studies,” in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London & New York: Routledge, 1996).

¹⁴ Hall in *ibid.*, 114.

¹⁵ Hall in *ibid.*

¹⁶ Mathias Danbolt, “Touching History. Art, Performance, and Politics in Queer Times” (University of Bergen, 2013), 355-56.

In the Nordic countries, “colorblindness” rests on a deep cultural denial of the region’s cultural investments in the racial politics of colonialism and the scientific racism in the twentieth century. Working through the conditions for the current articulation of racial and sexual politics in contemporary Norway, I found it was crucial to highlight the continued significance of colonial knowledge formations in this context. As a number of authors have noted, the Nordic countries have figured themselves as innocent in the history of colonialism and racism, despite their ideological and practical contributions to the colonial project.¹⁷ Education in the Nordics attests to this heritage. Studies of both textbooks and teaching over the past decades have shown that key elements of colonial knowledge are perpetuated in descriptions of non-Western people, cultures, and religions despite anti-racist ambitions.¹⁸ In her now seminal research from the 1990s and early 2000s on Norwegian public debate about immigration, Marianne Gullestad noted that the immigrant – Norwegian dichotomy employed gender equality as a marker of “Norwegianness.”¹⁹ The role of sexual politics in the processes of inclusion and exclusion that she described was one of many indications that postcolonial feminist critique is very relevant to contemporary Norwegian society.

The four articles on sexuality and “race” in education that are included here address the conditions for the current social configuration of “race” and sexuality in the Norwegian context from different angles.²⁰ Only one of them, “Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders?” maps the discursive intersection between “cultural difference” and

¹⁷ Suvi Keskinen et al., eds., *Complying with Colonialism : Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Marianne Gullestad, *Plausible Prejudice. Everyday Experiences and Social Images of Nation, Culture and Race* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2006); Erlend Eidsvik, "Colonial Discourse and Ambivalence: Norwegian Participants on the Colonial Arena in South Africa," in *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region. Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities*, ed. Kristín Loftsdóttir and Lars Jensen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

¹⁸ Mai Palmberg, "Afrika i skolböckarna - gamla fördomar och nya," (Stockholm: Framtid för Afrika - SIDA, 1986); ———, "The Nordic Colonial Mind," in *Complying with Colonialism. Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*, ed. Suvi Keskinen, et al. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Lars laird Eriksen, "Learning to be a Norwegian. A Case study of Identity Management in Religious Education in Norway" (University of Warwick, 2010); Kjell Härenstam, "Images of Muslims in Swedish School Textbooks," in *Nordic Identities in Transition - as Reflected in Pedagogic Texts and Cultural Contexts*, ed. Steffan Selander and Bente Aamotsbakken (Oslo: Novus Press, 2009).

¹⁹ Marianne Gullestad, *Det norske sett med nye øyne. Kritisk analyse av norsk innvandringsdebatt.* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2002).

²⁰ Considerations of aspects of this particular political situation can also be found in the following in texts which could not be included here due to formal concerns: Wencke Mühleisen, Åse Røthing, and Stine H. Bang Svendsen, "Norwegian Sexualities: Assimilation and Exclusion in Norwegian Immigration Policy," *Sexualities* 15, no. 2 (2012); ———, "Norske seksualiteter - en innledning," in *Norske seksualiteter*, ed. Wencke Mühleisen and Åse Røthing (Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag, 2009); Åse Røthing and Stine H. Bang Svendsen, "Homotolerance and Heterosexuality as Norwegian Values," *Journal of LGBT Youth* 7, no. 2 (2010).

sexuality as it appears in textbooks. The others grapple with its elements, as they appear in textbooks, teaching, and classroom interaction. The first, "Elusive Sex Acts. Pleasure and Politics in Norwegian Sex Education" considers how sexuality is conceptualized in sex education specifically. The third, "Learning Racism in the Absence of 'Race'" discusses how racial politics surface in the classroom. The fourth article asks how education can foster affective spaces where social divisions are challenged rather than reinforced.

The significance of the colonial knowledge formations that emerges through the analyses in the articles, particularly "Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders?" is the primary reason why I shift from an emphasis on "ethnic borders" in that article, to a focus on racialization and racial formations in the following two. Colonial knowledge formations do not primarily produce "ethnic boundaries," but racial formations on a different scale. White Europeans do not share a language or a culture, but they share the privilege of counting as "native" in mainland European social orders which continue to constitute their citizens of color as affective "foreigners" to varying degrees.²¹ "Race" remains in inverted commas throughout the text, however, to remind of the shifting and performative nature of racial divisions.

The articles address Norwegian basic education as a key site for production of national public culture. Comprehensive schooling has been a crucial facet of nation building in modern times.²² Education systems thus tend to reflect the power structures of national cultures, and reflect its defining values. They are institutions that are crucial for the production and reproduction of dominant ideologies.²³ Norman Fairclough pointed out that social institutions provide useful sites for studying discourse because they tend to represent an intermediate level of social structuring: Placed

²¹ Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others. Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*, Kindle ed. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

²² Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton University Press, 2007); Gerd Baumann, "Introduction: Nation-state, School and Civil Enculturation," in *Civil Enculturation. Nation-state, School and Ethnic Difference in the Netherlands, Britain, Germany and France.*, ed. Werner Schifffauer, et al. (London: Berghahn Books, 2004); Debbie Epstein and Richard Johnson, *Schooling Sexualities* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1998).

²³ Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. (Notes towards an investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, ed. Louis Althusser (London: Monthly Review Press, 2001).

between the level of larger social formations and specific social actions, the social institution is a Janus face that continuously negotiates both levels.²⁴

In her influential account of the headscarf controversies in French schooling, Joan Scott explained that the particular role of French education in establishing a secular state made it prone to become the battlefield on which the future of a multicultural France would be fought.²⁵ In the Nordic context, the public school system is the social institution in which national social democratic welfare projects are most clearly expressed.²⁶ In Norway 97% of children attend public schools, and the notion that all children, regardless of socioeconomic background, should mix and receive the same education is still highly valued. Nevertheless, schooling for equality does not prevent education from reproducing power inequalities in the existing social order. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, Dorthe Staunæs has noted that Danish basic education veils social structures of power and dominance through an ideology of sameness.²⁷ This is also the case in Norway, where the ideological project for schooling has been to produce “unity” across differences, in order to foster a socially integrated and robust social democratic society.²⁸ This ideological project does not prevent schooling from functioning as a social sorting mechanism, however; differences between social groups and classes are perpetuated through schooling despite its ambitions of integration to various degrees. This is the case for social divisions based on gender and sexuality as well as class and “race.”²⁹

Power relations that produce minorities and majorities are in focus here. Avtar Brah has importantly pointed out that minority-majority relations always mask a power relation. She warned that the “numerical referent of this dichotomy encourages a literal reading, reducing the problem of power relations to one of numbers, with the result that the repeated circulation of the discourse has

²⁴ Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis. The Critical Study of Language* (Harlow: Longman, 1995), 37.

²⁵ Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*.

²⁶ Alfred Oftedal Telhaug, Odd Asbjørn Mediås, and Petter Aasen, "The Nordic Model in Education: Education as Part of the Political System in the Last 50 Years," *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 50, no. 3 (2006).

²⁷ Dorthe Staunæs, *Køn, etnicitet, og skoleliv* (Fredriksberg: Forlaget Samfundslitteratur, 2004), 31.

²⁸ Hilde Lidén, "Underforstått likhet. Skolens håndtering av forskjeller i et flerkulturelt samfunn.," in *Likhetens paradokser*, ed. Marianne E. Lien, Hilde Lidén, and Halvard Vike (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2001).

²⁹ See *ibid.*, but also Jette Kofoed, *Midt i normalen : om minoriteter og den nationale idé*, vol. b. 24 (København: Danmarks Lærerhøjskole, 1994); Bolette Moldenhawer, *En bedre fremtid : skolens betydning for etniske minoriteter* (København: Hans Reitzels Forl., 2001).

the effect of naturalizing rather than challenging the power differential.”³⁰ Brah suggested that it is more fruitful to think through a multi-axial and performative conception of power, through which it is possible to highlight how a group can be constituted as a minority, but also part of a majority along another dimension. In this light, minority/majority relations are never stable, and the constant re-formation of minoritized and majoritized social groups has to be studied in process. The terms “ethnic minority” and “sexual minority” are commonly used as if they were descriptive, when they are in fact comparative; they indicate difference from a norm. These social categories can be made and unmade in the everyday. A person can forget her “difference” for months on end, until suddenly someone or something makes it matter. Or she can be reminded of it every day until she feels there is nothing but color, nothing but gender, nothing but sexual orientation, to her.

“Race” and sexuality are knowledge formations which have different, yet interlinked, social histories. This dissertation departs from queer studies in sex education, and uses key insights from that field to study education about racism in civic education. Processes of exclusion and inclusion in educational encounters are key issues when “race” and sexuality are raised as topics. A general interest in minoritizing and majoritizing processes is one reason for studying ethnic and racial issues and sexuality in concert. The issues the topics raise are often seen to intersect by scholars in cultural studies of education.³¹

The articles here focus particularly on sex education and civic education. These are areas in education where contentious social issues are tackled head on, or avoided at cost. The affective investment among students and teachers in the topics at hand are often very high, and the potential for teachers to fall short of students’ expectations when addressing sexuality, national identity or “race” is significant. The tensions often found in the classroom when these issues are up for discussion are not dampened by most teachers’ lack of training in both sex education and

³⁰ Avtar Brah, *Carthographies of Diaspora* (London: Francis & Taylor, 1996), 187-89.

³¹ See Kevin K. Kumashiro, *Troubling Education: Queer Activism and Antioppressive Education* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2002); Debbie Epstein, *Changing Classroom Cultures: Anti-racism, Politics and Schools* (Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books, 1993); ———, ed. *Challenging Lesbian and Gay Inequalities in Education* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1994); Epstein and Johnson, *Schooling Sexualities*; Staunæs, *Køn, etnicitet, og skoleliv*; Åse Røthing and Stine H. Bang Svendsen, *Seksualitet i skolen. Perspektiver på undervisning*. (Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag, 2009); Ingunn Marie Eriksen, “Young Norwegians: Belonging and Becoming in a Multiethnic High School” (University of Oslo, 2012).

intercultural perspectives. For students who are developing minority identities, civic education and sex education present the risk of feeling stereotyped by curriculum or teaching, or suffering a classroom discussion about whether it is “ok to be gay,” or whether “immigrants are a threat to national cohesion.” I approached these questions from the perspective of the potentially minoritized student by applying analytic sensitivity to majoritizing and minoritizing processes.

The first two articles included here rely primarily on discourse analysis, and consider the implications of the textual frames that sexuality and “race” are understood within. The latter two rely on affective inquiry into classroom spaces. This methodological shift reflects epistemological questions that I have worked with concerning “affect” as a concept that could challenge and supplement discourse and discourse analysis, which I discuss in depth later in this introduction.

The introduction includes presentations of the four articles that make out the core of the dissertation. Furthermore, it explains the methodological considerations that are relevant to them, and the maps the research literature and discussions that they are implicitly and explicitly in dialogue with. In section four I also explain the conceptual choices I made in the articles regarding both sexuality and “race.” These considerations are followed by a theoretical discussion about affect, and the engagement with the affective turn that informs the dissertation. The introduction is concluded in the section “Arbitrary closures and reparative readings,” which also ties in with the articles that follow.

2 Presentation of the articles

The four articles that make out the bulk of this dissertation have been written with attention to the larger issues I have presented above, but also with their own specific research agendas and audiences in mind. They have been shaped by review processes and journal requirements as well as my overarching interests, and are included in the style and form that their respective publication channels require. Nevertheless, they all represent analyses that inform the question of how sexuality and “race” is configured in Norwegian basic education, and what the cultural significance of these configurations is. I have chosen to present them in an order that reflects my learning process, which in this case departed from queer critiques of sex education.

2.1 Elusive Sex Acts. Pleasure and Politics in Norwegian Sex

Education³²

The first article discusses the content and politics of Norwegian sex education. It argues that neither Norwegian feminism nor gay and sexual liberation politics, both very successful political endeavors in the Nordic context, have been able to challenge the heteronormative conceptual organization of comprehensive sexuality education in Norway. The article was written for a special issue on political obstacles to good-quality sex education in the journal *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning*.³³ It draws on the book *Seksualitet i skolen. Perspektiver på Undervisning*,³⁴ and uses text analyses presented there to further explain and theorize conceptual and political issues concerning gender and sexual orientation in Norwegian sex education. Specifically, it addresses how connotations between sex and coitus are at the core of a discursive formation of the sexual, in which both women’s sexual pleasure and non-reproductive sex practices are rendered obscure. It argues that “tolerance pedagogy,” which has been promoted by the lesbian and gay liberation movement, has

³² Published as Stine H. Bang Svendsen, “Elusive Sex Acts. Pleasure and Politics in Norwegian Sex Education,” *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning* 12 no. 4 (2012).

³³ Pam Alldred, ed. *Obstacles to Good-Quality Sex Education* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2012).

³⁴ Røthing and Svendsen, *Seksualitet i skolen. Perspektiver på undervisning*.

configured homosexuality as political question regarding laws and civil rights, without giving young people the social and sexual competences needed to engage in safer same sex relations. As Åse Røthing and I have also pointed out elsewhere, the constitution of a minority that needs to be tolerated in education does not effectively prevent homophobia in contemporary Norwegian schools.³⁵

In “Elusive sex acts,” queerness is figured as semi-detached from gay and lesbian politics. While acknowledging the concept’s historical links to homosexuality, the article pursues a perspective on “queer sex” which is in line with Sara Ahmed’s phenomenological account of queerness as a way of life. Here, the point is that queerness is oriented in different directions than the heteronormative. I also draw on Gayle Rubin’s foundational discussion of the outsides of normative sexuality that transcend identity politics.³⁶ I argue that young people’s sex acts are often queerly placed, as they cannot be confined to the sanctioned space of the private home. Teenage sex is also often outdoors, public, rushed and much less “safe” than concerned adults like to imagine.³⁷ I discuss them as “queer” sex acts because they elicit some of the affective discomfort traditionally associated with gay men’s “public” sex acts.³⁸ This take on queerness as affective and situational does not displace queerness as gender identity and sexual identity out of tune with the heteronormative, however. Theorizing “queer” in this way makes it possible to analytically combine Gayle Rubin’s insights about the “charmed circle” of sanctioned sexual practice, and the connections between sexuality and gender mapped by other queer theorists, notably Judith Butler.³⁹

In the article, I build on existing critiques of tolerance pedagogy as a project that leaves heteronormativity intact. Adding to this, I address how gender is normalized in a heteronormative

³⁵ ———, “Homotolerance and Heterosexuality as Norwegian Values.”; ———, *Seksualitet i skolen. Perspektiver på undervisning*. See also Åse Røthing, “Homotolerance and Heteronormativity in Norwegian Classrooms,” *Gender and Education* 20, no. 3 (2008).

³⁶ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006); Gayle S. Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality,” in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993).

³⁷ Julia Hirst, “Researching Young People’s Sexuality and Learning About sex: Experience, Need, and Sex and Relationship Education,” *Culture, Health & Sexuality: An International Journal for Research, Intervention and Care* 6, no. 2 (2004).

³⁸ Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, “Sex in Public,” *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 2 (1998).

³⁹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

frame through tolerance pedagogy about homosexuality. Drawing on Eve Sedgwick's seminal article "How to bring our kids up gay," I discuss her concern that the denaturalization of sexuality brought about by lesbian and gay liberation also has the effect of *renaturalizing* gender.⁴⁰ Children who are subjected to homophobic bullying commonly suffer it because of their lack of ability to play the boy properly, not because of their sexual orientation.⁴¹ Hence, tolerance of homosexuality that does not deal with heteronormative gender performance is not likely to properly address the problem. The connections between gender performance and sexual orientation in Judith Butler's heterosexual matrix are very important for dealing with homophobic bullying among children. Still, gender identity and performance is absent from the education that has combating homophobia as a goal.

The issues outlined here are presented in the article as challenges to good-quality sex education in the Norwegian context. The last part of the article addresses possible ways to intervene in current sex education practice. I address two examples: one that builds on existing practice to improve it, and one that challenges existing practice through subversion. The first intervention is taken from a competence raising project for teachers involved in sexuality education in the region where I live and work. Here, the municipality and later the county has collaborated with civil society organizations that also provide sex education services to schools, to compile a set of pedagogic resources for teachers. Furthermore, most "youth stage" (13-16) teachers have received instruction in use of the texts and methods in the compilation during a two hour session at the minimum.⁴² This initiative provides tools for teachers who have mostly never received any instruction on to how to teach sex education, and may thus help improve quality. The other intervention I discuss is provided by the Norwegian Queer Youth, whose education program RESTART is designed to challenge heteronormativity and other norms they perceive as oppressive. Here, the subversive potential of sexual practice and pleasure is utilized to challenge established notions about what is a "good" and

⁴⁰ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "How to Bring our Kids up Gay," in *Fear of a Queer Planet. Queer Politics and Social Theory*, ed. Michael Warner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

⁴¹ Mary Jane Kehily, *Sexuality, Gender and Schooling. Shifting Agendas in Social Learning* (London & New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁴² See Trondheim-kommune and LLH-Trøndelag, *Undervisning om seksualitet. Undervisningsopplegg for lærere og helsepersonell i grunnskole og videregående skole* (Trondheim: Trondheim kommune, 2010).

“safe” way to instruct youth about sexuality. In the article, I suggest a dual strategy to address political challenges to sex education. On the one hand, the Norwegian comprehensive sex education model can be improved by increasing hours and offering teacher training in sex education curriculum and pedagogy. On the other hand, the contribution of civil society organizations can offer content and pedagogies that challenges dominating norms in the existing social order, such as heteronormativity.

The process of “assimilation through heteronormalization” that gay and lesbian identities and couple formations have undergone in the Norwegian context in recent years is a theme that runs through the article.⁴³ The article concludes that the Norwegian political consensus about a free and equal sexual culture sketched in the introduction has not seemed able to bear a sexual competence focus in schools. Further implications of the way in which gender equality and gay and lesbian identities have been normalized (and nationalized), and the consequences this has had for education, are taken up in the second article.

2.2 Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders?⁴⁴

In this article Åse Røthing and I discuss how sexuality is linked to national identity, ethnicity, and cultural diversity in Norwegian textbooks for thirteen to sixteen-year-olds. In 2006, the revision of the national curriculum resulted in a new learning requirement. From that point onwards students should learn to “discuss the relation between love and sexuality in light of cultural norms” in social science.⁴⁵ The new social science textbooks, eight in total, that were made available from 2006-2008 all addressed this requirement.

Our method for these analyses was an adaptation of critical discourse analysis where we focused on the discursive context that was invoked when sexuality, ethnicity or nationhood was addressed,

⁴³ Mühleisen, Røthing, and Svendsen, “Norwegian Sexualities: Assimilation and Exclusion in Norwegian Immigration Policy.”

⁴⁴ Published as Åse Røthing and Stine H. Bang Svendsen, “Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders?,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 11 (2011).

⁴⁵ Kunnskapsdepartementet, “Kunnskapsløftet,” (Utdanningsdirektoratet www.udir.no, 2006). Our translation

the use of including and excluding markers such as the inclusive “we,” and the location of cultural norms “here in Norway” or “in other parts of the world.” Furthermore, we mapped what classification schemes the texts drew upon, and how they related to each other. This made it possible to identify connotations between i.e. the use of “Western,” “Norwegian,” and “Nordic,” and significantly also between “non-Western” and “Muslim.”

While the connection between sexuality and cultural norms was made in all the books in religion and social science, this was not the case with the biology books, which used a different discursive framework to address sexuality, as discussed in article one. Two issues were invariably raised in conjunction with sexual norms in social science: arranged marriages and attitudes towards homosexuality. They also attempted to pin down “Norwegian” or “Western” sexual norms, and contrasted them with sexual norms in “other” or “non-Western” cultures, but also with the Norwegian past. We focused specifically on articulations of “Norwegian”/“Western” sexual norms and “non-Western”/“Muslim” norms in the textbooks.

We singled out four topics for further discussion from the analyses. The first was depictions of a “free and equal” Norwegian and Western sexual culture. We theorize these texts and images in terms of “culturalization,”⁴⁶ arguing that they selectively construe Norwegian sexual culture as inherently “free and equal,” while failing to address other aspects, such as men’s violence against women and the strong regulatory aspects of Norwegian sexual politics.

The second topic is the depiction of sexual norms in “other cultures.” Here, we address how the texts produce a dichotomy between “ethnic Norwegian” and “Western” sexual norms on the one hand, and “non-Western” or “Muslim” sexual norms on the other. Norwegian/Western and non-Western/Muslim are terms that are used interchangeably in ways that produce conflation between them. Furthermore, it is notoriously difficult to pin down which geographical locations, cultures or nations that are invoked in the texts in question. These discursive strategies can be understood as

⁴⁶ Uma Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures. Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim. America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Doubleday, 2004).

“Orientalist,” if read in light of Edward Said’s account of colonial discursive strategies.⁴⁷ We argue that Norway through its conflation with Western is cast as Occident, while it employs an Orientalist textual framework in which the reader is compelled to rely on accumulated notions and associations about the abstract Orient to make sense of the text. The location of the “Other” that is produced in this text is missing to the extent that “other cultures” are defined by what they are not.

Third, the discussions about sexuality in these textbooks rely on a teleological modernity narrative of sexual freedom, where “development” is figured as a move from sexual repression to liberation. The custom of arranged marriage serves as an example through which Norway in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is compared with the marriage practices of Muslim families in contemporary Norway. In postcolonial feminist critique, this discursive strategy is criticized for producing the notion that non-Western women are “always, already oppressed.”⁴⁸ Through the teleological modernity narrative, time maps onto space in a way that figures difference from the Western ideal as a sign of backwardness.⁴⁹

Fourth, the textbooks rely on LGBT politics to produce an image of “Norwegian sexuality” and its “Other.” Through this depiction, gay and lesbian identities and couples are naturalized as part of national sexual culture, rather than queered. We argue that queerness is symbolically displaced from the White queer couple to the non-Western “Other” in the textbooks. This analysis is informed by scholarship on issues concerning “homonationalism,” which describes processes of inclusion of lesbian and gay subjects that are “contingent upon the segregation and disqualification of racial and sexual others in the national imaginary.”⁵⁰

Finally, we conclude that social science textbooks used in Norwegian schools discuss cultural norms and sexuality in ways that could be seen to distribute access to Norwegian cultural citizenship along ethnic lines. Through a process of depoliticization and culturalization, gender equality and

⁴⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003).

⁴⁸ Oyeronke Oyewumi, “Conceptualizing Gender: The Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies,” *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies*, no. 2 (1997).

⁴⁹ Said, *Orientalism*.

⁵⁰ Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages. Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 2.

homotolerance have become naturalized as facets of the Norwegian nationhood, and thus no longer issues in need of critical political attention. In this process intolerance has “become a code word not only for bigotry or investments in Whiteness, but for a fundamentalism associated with the non-west, with barbarism and anti-western violence,” in accordance with Wendy Brown’s critique of the discourse of tolerance.⁵¹ The textbooks we have analyzed put issues of gender and sexuality at the center of the construction of Norwegian nationhood in ways that highlight ethnic borders in Norwegian social imaginaries. The racial dimension of these lines of inclusion and exclusion are the focus of the next article.

2.3 Learning Racism in the Absence of “Race”⁵²

This article explores tensions between denials of “race” as a relevant concept in contemporary Norwegian education on the one hand, and the production of racial effects through processes of inclusion and exclusion in educational encounters on the other. The analysis is based on classroom observations in an Oslo middle school where 75 percent of the students had migrant parents, while the vast majority of the teachers were White ethnic Norwegian. In the article I do a close analysis of a session which addressed cultural diversity, immigration and racism. The analysis is attentive to how racism and ethnicity is conceptualized by the teacher and the students, and to affective intensity in the classroom. I discuss how lack of clarity about the contemporary and local significance of “race” and racism produced apprehension among the students. Drawing on psychoanalytic theories of racism, I address how the topic of racism raised anxieties which were in turn circulated and projected in interactions between students, and between the teacher and the students.

The article departs from the insight that the current Norwegian social formations include discourses about nationhood that perform ethnic borders, such as those addressed in article two. Here, however, the focus is on the racializing effects of naturalized discursive strategies of inclusion

⁵¹ Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion. Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 16.

⁵² The article has been published as “Learning racism in the absence of ‘race’” in *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, Online First 28 October 2013: <http://ejw.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/10/24/1350506813507717>

and exclusion in contemporary Norway. Drawing on recent postcolonial scholarship on the Nordic countries, the introduction relates how the Nordics have construed themselves as innocent of colonialism, and as "good" nations that support peace processes campaign against global inequality.⁵³ This backdrop informs the denials of "race" and "racism" as relevant terms in these countries. I follow Fatima El-Tayeb's suggestion that the theoretical assemblage needed to theorize "race" in contemporary Europe needs to include perspectives that fundamentally confront rather than confirm European exceptionalisms.⁵⁴ This includes critical race theory, which can help expose what El-Tayeb calls "political racelessness." I use these perspectives to trace the discursive production of "race" as an effect of discussions about immigration and racism in an educational encounter where the relevance of this term is also vehemently denied.

My analysis shows that throughout the session I analyzed there was a sense of confusion present about what racism amounts to. On the one hand, several students used racism in its "new" meaning,⁵⁵ as pointing to the differential treatment of non-White "foreigners." The teacher, however, seemed to reserve the term for biological racism, but was not able to explain how racism seemed to be very much alive, while the theory of human races is declared long dead. Starting out with the topic of "cultural conflict," moving to arguments for and against immigration, and finally moving on to race and racism, the teacher unwittingly enacted a web of inclusion and exclusion in relation to Norwegian nationhood based on ethnic and cultural markers that both he and the students were caught up in. In the analysis I trace the student group's resistance against construing cultural differences and immigration as inherently problematic. I also trace the students' attempts to renegotiate the lines of exclusion and inclusion through discussions about who in the class are

⁵³ Gullestad, *Plausible prejudice. Everyday Experiences and Social Images of Nation, Culture and Race*; Keskinen et al., *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*; Lars Jensen and Kristín Loftsdóttir, eds., *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region : Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Tobias Hübinette and Catrin Lundström, "Sweden after the Recent Election: The Double-Binding Power of Swedish Whiteness through the Mourning of the Loss of "Old Sweden" and the Passing of "Good Sweden"," *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 19, no. 1 (2011).

⁵⁴ Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others. Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*, Kindle ed. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

⁵⁵ Martin Barker, *The New Racism. Conservatives and the Ideology of the Tribe* (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1981).

"immigrants" and "black," which results in a collective effort to cast "Somalis" as problem immigrants.

In addition to the discursive project of tracing "race" conceptually in the educational encounter at hand, I analyze the affective aspects of this interaction. The concept of affect that is invoked here is based in psychoanalysis, and the interaction is analyzed in light of Franz Fanon's psychopolitics of racism and Melanie Klein's concepts of splitting and projection. These concepts are linked to Klein's "paranoid position" in which the subject splits off unwanted aspects of the self, and identifies them with another object. In the process where the students tried to renegotiate the lines of inclusion and exclusion in Norwegian nationhood, I suggest that they incorporated the racializing logic the teacher presented, while projecting the negative affect it landed them with onto Somalis.

The joint discursive and affective analysis of this educational encounter around cultural conflict, immigration and racism shows how anti-racism in education, and the denial of the continued production of racial lines of inclusion and exclusion in contemporary Norway, can result in learning dynamics that strengthen local racisms. The denial of racial exclusion, and the insistence on cultural and ethnic conflict as "natural," left both teacher and students ill equipped to tackle the anxiety and bad feeling that the topic of "race" produced in the classroom. Rather than illuminate the issue of racism, the session staged logics of exclusion that had racializing effects. The affective interaction in the session amounted to racist bullying. The article concludes that racial denial allows racism to flourish, because contemporary and local racial conceptions are left unaddressed. The article paints a bleak picture of Norwegian civic education about race and racism, which made it important for me to also flesh out how racialization can be challenged in educational encounters. This is the focus of the fourth article.

2.4 Promising Failures: Teaching “Difference” in Civic Education⁵⁶

The fourth article focuses on how categories of difference are produced through the social organization of power in education, and how they can be reconfigured or undone through educational encounters. It explores this larger problem through an affective analysis of two classroom spaces in a multicultural school setting where concerns over discipline and teacher authority circulate. Drawing on both critical pedagogy and Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology, I consider how these different affective spaces address and produce ethnic and racial difference in contrasting ways. Furthermore, I connect negotiations of difference to the social organization of power in the school to highlight how teachers’ and students’ identities and social positioning emerge as performative effects of social struggles in the everyday. Based on the insights this analysis yields, I discuss the relation between the risk of failing as a teacher in a neoliberal education culture and the facilitation of educational processes of “becoming” beyond reinscription of the existing social order.

Deleuzo-Guattarian studies of education have fruitfully applied the concept of “becoming” as a “de-individualizing move” where a learner or teacher can “differentiate” and “become something other than she was – something new” in Catherine Camden Pratt’s words.⁵⁷ Here, Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction between “difference” and “differentiation” explains how “becoming” anew is a process that runs against arresting logic of categorical differences. I also use a complementary theoretical frame to approach these issues, namely feminist and anti-racist critiques. These perspectives address the tendency of such theories of becoming towards construing “a specific kind of subjectivity; a subjectivity that can move, that is unfettered and has the privilege of fluidity and transformability.”⁵⁸

The empirical analyses focus on two educational spaces which I have called “Tom’s classroom” and “Ayla and Caroline’s classroom.” In Tom’s classroom the affective dynamics in the student-

⁵⁶ The article is in the review process in an academic journal.

⁵⁷ Catherine Camden Pratt, “Relationality and the Art of Becoming,” in *Pedagogical Encounters*, ed. Bronwyn Davies, et al. (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 53.

⁵⁸ Sara Ahmed, *Difference that Matter. Feminist Theory and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 78.

teacher encounters show how affective intensity can be reduced to a minimum, with little potential for "becoming." In my analysis of this classroom space I suggest that the lack of interaction in the class may result partly from affective dynamics, and partly from the teacher's attempts at engaging with the students within the logics of categorical difference. I suggest that his questions unwittingly prompt non-White students with migrant parents to identify as racialized "others," and that the students' reluctance to engage with him may have stemmed both from lack of understanding of the majoritarian view that he purported of cultural difference as inherently problematic, or also possibly from resistance towards being construed as racialized subjects.

I suggest that the affective and discursive processes in Tom's classroom can be fruitfully contrasted with a different affective space in the same school, that of Caroline and Ayla's classroom. From this space, I relate my sense of chaos from my initial encounter with what I experienced as a very noisy and unruly class. I also include narratives of the teachers' careful efforts to forge relational responsibility, which they hoped could inspire a better learning environment in the class. Finally, I show how the knowledge production involved in the project on "identity" here, which students in both classes had engaged in, differed from that in Tom's classroom. I explain the affective space in Caroline and Ayla's class in terms of the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of becoming where intensity both breaks down the "striated" structures of schooling, and produced processes in which students and teachers could "become differentiated." I note that while the same issues concerning cultural difference, racism, and immigration are on the agenda in Caroline and Ayla's class, the affective dynamics of the class seemed to continually frustrate the relevance of categorical difference. The resulting becomings are as relevant for teachers as for students.

In the concluding discussion I tie these analyses to issues of difference in multicultural education. Drawing on bell hooks' observations that what White professors judge to be a good and safe learning environment is often deemed unsafe by students of color, I suggest that the organization of power in schooling is a crucial facet of education about race and racism. The analyses suggest that the failure to effectively involve the students in discussions, in Toms' case, and to

properly wield teacher authority, in Caroline and Ayla's case, were positive contributions to the students' strategies for challenging and subverting potentially racializing curriculum. The article concludes that teachers who want to foster critical pedagogies have to be open to the risk of being figured as a failure in a neoliberal education culture, because the organization of power in the school mirrors that of the social orders they want to challenge. To put it simply, the White teacher should not remain comfortable and safe in his or her position as a teacher, when engaging students of color in education about race and racism. On the contrary, White teachers must rely on students' abilities to resist learning that subjects them to processes of racialization, and their willingness to oppose the hierarchical structures of schooling. The "chaotic" educational spaces this yields can feel unsafe for participants guarded by privilege, especially teachers. As an educator, participating in processes of becoming through engagement with difference requires giving up the "master's house" as a source of support, following Audre Lorde.⁵⁹ In educational institutions, where neoliberal regimes for control and accountability are in place, practices that can amount to a "practice of freedom" can also be found in the failure to teach and resistance towards learning.

⁵⁹ Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider. Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984).

3 Material, methods and the practice of cultural analysis

This dissertation is positioned within the interdisciplinary fields of gender studies and cultural studies. Both gender studies and cultural studies are “post-disciplines” which have emerged through and by critique of established disciplinary canons and methodologies.⁶⁰ They are fields that engage in *critical* studies of the social, which aim to produce knowledge that can contribute to social change.⁶¹ The “political-intellectual work” these fields aspire to stretches across established academic disciplines. Neither object of study, theoretical perspectives nor methodology follows from the field itself.⁶² In my discussion here, I present how I have selected material for the analyses I have done in the articles, and discuss methodological considerations around these choices. I hope to show how the various materials included in the analysis are suited to shed light on the wider cultural field of Norwegian society, as well as on civic education and sex education in this context. In the process, I hope to show how a practice of cultural analysis that is based in the humanities can produce important knowledge about questions of race, gender and sexuality in education.

Mieke Bal has made a valuable contribution towards unpacking the research practice of critical interdisciplinary work in the humanities, through describing the practice of cultural analysis. Her primary point is that “interdisciplinarity in the humanities [...] must seek its heuristic and methodological basis in concepts rather than methods.”⁶³ In this practice, the answer to “how did you learn this?” lies in the conceptual cluster that is used to explore meanings and potential in the material at hand, which she calls the “object of study.” The analyses in the four articles here have been guided by four overarching concepts that seemed like they could shed light on the material they address: queer, postcoloniality, race, affect. I will elaborate on these concepts and their significance for my analysis below, but for now focus on the selection of material and the methods I have used in the analyses.

⁶⁰ Kari Jegerstedt, “Hva var poststrukturalismen - og har den utspilt sin rolle?,” *Tidsskrift for kjønnsforskning* 34, no. 4 (2012). Lawrence Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010).

⁶¹ Wencke Mühleisen and Jørgen Lorentzen, eds., *Kjønnsforskning: en grunnbok* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2006), 18.

⁶² Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense* 2.

⁶³ Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities. A Rough Guide*, Kindle ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 5.

Pedagogic texts and data stories from educational encounters are materials that have allowed me to question how the field of education practically and discursively approaches cultural knowledge about sexuality and "race" in contemporary Norway. When choosing these types of materials, my interest was specifically in the discursive and ideological meanings and effects of sexuality and ethnic difference in Norwegian society. Education was presented as an arena where these questions could be investigated through Åse Røthing's project about Norwegianness and schooling at the "Cultural Complexity in the New Norway" program, where I worked for a time as a research assistant in 2007/2008. Having originally designed my PhD study around political discourse, I rewrote it to investigate the education context to match my investments in that field. I also started analyzing textbooks for basic education at this time, and was taken with the potential that discourse analysis of textbooks had for the articulation of frames of understanding in society.

In the first section below, I discuss the material and methods for the textbook analyses reflected in articles one and two. In the second section I present the method of affective inquiry with which I approached the classroom observations that are presented in articles three and four. The considerations of how my own knowledge and social positioning have influenced the analyses are in different ways relevant for both the methodological approaches presented in both section 3.1 and 3.2, however.

3.1 Critical discourse analysis of pedagogic texts

Norman Fairclough has noted that institutions provide particularly good sites for investigating the relationship between social orders, discourses and social practices, because they explicitly mediate between these levels: "Placed between the level of larger social formations and specific social actions, the social institution is a Janus face that continuously negotiates both levels."⁶⁴ Education has a special position among such institutions as schools are specifically vested with the responsibility of exerting the ideological power in our current social order. As Althusser put it,

⁶⁴ Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis. The Critical Study of Language*, 37.

schools have a dominant role in the formation of citizenry in modern states to the extent that it makes sense to call the current "State apparatus" an "educational ideological apparatus."⁶⁵ Although I have revised my position on the relationship between ideology and educational practice since, the Marxist theoretical basis which is evident in both Althusser's and Fairclough's writing about social institutions, ideology and education, were very important for my interest in working with pedagogical texts to address how sexuality and ethnicity as fields of knowledge were surfacing in Norwegian society.

Textbooks seemed particularly interesting for investigating how questions of ethnicity, gender and sexuality were surfacing at the time because new books were being written to accommodate the new National Curriculum (2006) for Norwegian basic education.⁶⁶ The textbooks in religion, social science, biology and Norwegian published in the wake of the revised curriculum represented fresh interpretations of both social issues regarding ethnicity and sexuality and new curriculum requirements. In social science, there was a new curriculum requirement that was of specific interest because it addressed the intersection between culture and sexuality: Students were required to learn to "discuss the relationship between love and sexuality in the light of cultural norms."⁶⁷ As the analyses in "Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders?" show, this particular link was seized upon by textbooks authors, who produced particularly rich text for analysis in relation to this topic.

The analyses in "Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders?" are based on a critical discourse analysis⁶⁸ of textbooks with significant market shares that were published from 2006 to 2008 in social science and religion for ages 13-16. The article is also informed by analyses of the biology textbooks published in the same timeframe, also conducted by critical discourse analysis (CDA) principles, which are summarized in "Elusive Sex Acts." This analytic

⁶⁵ Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. (Notes towards an investigation)," 103. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁶ The curriculum for Religion and Ethics was not revised until 2008, however. Nevertheless, the textbooks written between 2006 and 2008 for this subject are still in use.

⁶⁷ Kunnskapsdepartementet, "Kunnskapsløftet."

⁶⁸ Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis. The Critical Study of Language*.

effort also went towards the book Åse Røthing and I co-authored on sex education in 2009.⁶⁹ In total, 25 textbooks were analyzed. For the analyses here however, the focus was on what these textbooks could help me articulate about the ways sexuality, ethnicity and "race" come to matter in contemporary Norwegian public culture. I chose not to continue to analyze books that were published in subsequent years because the original material was sufficient for the analysis, and because it seemed more fruitful to pursue questions that required a different type of material.

The list in Figure 1 shows the social science and religion text books that we analyzed for "Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders?"

<p>Berner, Elisabeth S., and Trond Borge. <i>Monitor 1. Samfunnskunnskap. Grunnbok</i>. Oslo: Cappelen, 2006.</p> <p>Berner, Elisabeth S., Trond Borge, and Trude H. Olsen. <i>Monitor 2. Samfunnskunnskap. Grunnbok</i>. Oslo: Cappelen, 2007.</p> <p>Helland, Tarjei. <i>Makt Og Menneske. Samfunnsfag 9</i>. Oslo: Damm Grunnskole, 2007.</p> <p>Helland, Tarjei, and Tone Aarre. <i>Makt Og Menneske. Samfunnsfag 8</i>. Oslo: Damm Grunnskole, 2006.</p> <p>Henriksen, Alexander. <i>Zoom. Samfunnskunnskap 8.-10</i>. Oslo: Gyldendal Undervisning, 2008.</p> <p>Holth, Gunnar, and Hilde Deschington. <i>Horisonter 8 Grunnbok</i>. Oslo: Gyldendal Undervisning, 2006.</p> <p>Holth, Gunnar, Kjell Arne Kallevik, and Marie von der Lippe. <i>Horisonter 9 Grunnbok</i>. Oslo: Gyldendal Undervisning, 2007.</p> <p>Strand, Mary M., and Torill Strand. <i>Underveis. Samfunnsfag 8.-10</i>. Oslo: Gyldendal, 2007.</p> <p>Wiik, Pål, and Ragnhild Bakke Waale. <i>Under Samme Himmel 1, Under Samme Himmel 1-3</i>. Oslo: Cappelen, 2006.</p> <p>———. <i>Under Samme Himmel 2, Under Samme Himmel 1-3</i>. Oslo: Cappelen, 2006.</p> <p>———. <i>Under Samme Himmel 3, Under Samme Himmel 1-3</i>. Oslo: Cappelen, 2007.</p>
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Figure 1: Textbooks analyzed in "Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders?"

I analyzed the textbooks with attention to vocabulary, grammar and textual structures, in line with the key principles of CDA. CDA offers a wide range of tools that are especially useful for investigating how texts invoke aspects of the social order, naturalize or question knowledges, and distribute agency.⁷⁰ In the initial reading, I also considered what specific research questions it seemed useful to engage the texts more closely with, and came up with a list of guiding questions for the specific analysis. The questions in italics are taken directly from Fairclough's practical guide to

⁶⁹ Røthing and Svendsen, *Seksualitet i skolen. Perspektiver på undervisning*.

⁷⁰ Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 2nd ed. (Hallow: Longman, 2001), 91-116.

CDA,⁷¹ while the others, which are my adaptations, are more general and require more subject knowledge to answer:

- *What classification schemes are used?*
- *How are the pronouns "we" and "you" used in the text?*
- *How is agency allocated?*
- *Are there ideologically contested words or phrases?*
- *What knowledges do the texts take for granted?*
- *How are metaphors and comparisons used in the text?*
- *Are there intertextual relations between the texts, between the texts and public discourse, or between the texts and ideological statements?*
- *Are there ideologically significant meaning relations between words (synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy)?*
- *Which topical connections are made, and which logics do they follow?*
- *Are there positive and negative value judgments?*
- *Does the text presume particular subject positions? If so, which?*

While linguistic features can reveal that a text uses and relies on power relations to make sense, it is necessary to also have knowledge about the ways in which certain topics are ideologically contested. In CDA, the analyst has to know what is "ideologically significant" to be able to effectively show how a text draws on certain power relations. The knowledge about the world we bring to the analysis also becomes part of the method. A *critical* discourse analysis relies on concepts and theories to be able to explain how the text relates to the social order. When I ask "what knowledges does the text take for granted" I rely on my knowledge of how the topic at hand could be conceptualized otherwise to answer the question. The research process also rests on my ability to expand the available knowledge regimes through conceptual work.

Intertextuality is crucial in the analytic process. Working with the analyses in "Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders?" it was clear to me quite early in the process that there was some affinity to colonial imagination in the text, but it was not until I compared the logics and linguistic strategies with those critiqued in Edward Said's work on Orientalist discourse that I realized the extent to which these textbooks reenacted colonial knowledge practices.⁷² This illustrates part of what it means to use a concept, in this case "postcoloniality" to explore a material. That there are intertextual relations between texts does not

⁷¹ Ibid., 92-93.

⁷² Said, *Orientalism*.

mean that they are or mean the same, however. It only means that they draw on the same knowledges to seem probable, and that these knowledges in turn are produced as legitimate through their use.

The analyst's subject position also matters in text analysis because it is so important to recognize what knowledges one is able to put to work in the interpretation. In my work with these textbooks I actively drew on my experience of being positioned as minoritarian object, rather than majoritarian subject, of educational discourses. This made reading the textbooks an intensely affective experience. Headings like "It's not easy to be a homosexual youth!" and questions for reflection such as "what do you think of women who wear a hijab?" seemed shockingly majoritarian to me. Having developed a queer perspective on sex education through years of activism, I found I was acutely aware of minoritizing phrases and textual structures. The anger I felt towards educational practices that took the liberty to speak "about the other" as if "we" were not present fuelled my initial critiques of the texts.⁷³ I used this knowledge to identify similar processes along other axes of difference, specifically "race."

Being White was significant for this analytic effort, though, because I found I came up against my own majoritarian knowledge. I use the term "majoritarian" here in the Deleuzo-Guattarian sense where it points to the privilege of placing difference with the Other.⁷⁴ As Avtar Brah has importantly pointed out, minority/majority relations always mask and naturalize a power relation. I am enough of a standpoint theorist to think that investigating power relations from a majoritarian or minoritarian position tends to produce different knowledges. The difference lies in in the reminders of everyday life. Living as a White queer woman, I know that my awareness of heteronormativity and gender inequality is different from my awareness of White privilege. The latter is no less important to me, but it requires more conscious effort to approach racial privilege with analytic clarity. In this work, I rely on the experience-based and affectively informed analyses of race and racism from Black feminist authors such as Avtar Brah, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Sarah Ahmed and

⁷³ Kumashiro, *Troubling Education: Queer Activism and Antioppressive Education*.

⁷⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2004; reprint, 2011).

Gail Lewis especially, but also on contemporary queer of color critique that continues the Black feminist standpoint tradition.⁷⁵

The discourse analytic framework I have outlined here has been important for my research practice at the outset of my PhD project, and for the shape that my cultural analytic approach has taken since. It was important to me to question negotiations of difference in education from another vantage point as well, however. As instructive pedagogic texts can be about the ideological underpinnings of education, they are not very well suited to evaluate the work of such discourses on the level of social action. The "turn to affect" in gender and cultural studies, which has been a preoccupation for me since the outset of this project, had made me very curious about how I could investigate questions of difference beyond discursive frameworks. As the articles here attest to, that does not mean that I wanted to dispose of my education in text analysis and the insights it could also yield in a classroom setting. Rather, I was intrigued by the possibilities of a methodological exploration of cultural analysis with affect as a guiding concept.

3.2 Situational analysis and affective inquiry

As much as I appreciate discourse analytic practice, I was drawn to the study of social action because of the surprises it might yield, and the hope for the future that may lie in those surprises. To paraphrase the Gramscian insight that Stuart Hall has made famous in cultural studies, I felt like the textbook analyses catered more to the pessimism of my intellect than to the optimism of my will.⁷⁶ Balancing these two sources of knowledge about the potential of the present for the future is a foundational ambition for cultural studies. Lawrence Grossberg has summarized it as follows:

Gramsci distinguished between pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will; Ricoeur between hermeneutics of suspicion and faith, and Sedgwick between a paranoid and a reparative politics. Critical work, at its best, works - analytically, theoretically, and imaginatively - in the gap between the failed present and the impossible future, but there is no guarantee, no dialectical logic, which connects the two.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ See Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black. Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

⁷⁶ See for example Zoe Williams, "The Saturday Interview: Stuart Hall," *The Guardian and Observer*, February 11, 2012.

⁷⁷ Lawrence Grossberg, *Cultural studies in the future tense* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010), 94.

The textbook analyses presented here are indeed critical, but they are not primarily hopeful or reparative; nor do they instill much faith in the future. Seeing what kind of material I could generate from classroom observation was one way to find my way to the gap, or in between place, from where I could find inroads to the "impossible future" that Grossberg mentions.

In the spring of 2008, I got the chance to join Åse Røthing on a fieldwork she was doing in an Oslo middle school. She had negotiated access to do classroom observations in the school for myself, herself and her research assistant at the time, Arnfinn Midtbøen, for a period of two months. The overall focus of the observations was to investigate constructions of "Norwegianness" in Norwegian schooling, with attention to ethnicity, gender and sexuality. For Røthing, this was part of a larger empirical study about gender, sexuality and ethnicity in Norwegian schools, where she also interviewed teachers.⁷⁸ For me, it was an opportunity to see how I could approach the everyday production and negotiation of social categories of difference through affective interaction. We spent six weeks in the school, observing teaching and classroom interaction in four student groups of approximately 25 students, in which 10 different teachers were involved in the subjects we observed. We did our observations on year 8 where students are mostly 14 years old. In this school 75 percent of the students had parents who had migrated to Norway, but they themselves were mostly born in the country. The vast majority of the teachers, however, were White ethnic Norwegians.

Students were informed by teachers and us about the study in the classroom. Their parents were informed by the school through a letter. We presented our interest in questions of ethnicity and nationhood at a planning meeting in the teaching group for year eight, and the teachers kindly agreed to cooperate with us. During our time in the school we mostly did separate observations, and focused on lessons in Social Science, Norwegian, English, and Religion and Ethics. These were the subjects where questions of nationhood and identity were most likely to be addressed. Furthermore,

⁷⁸ See Åse Røthing, "Concepts of Gender Equality in Norwegian Textbooks and Classrooms. Depoliticization, Racialized Exclusion and Heteronormative Stereotypes," in *Education for Social Justice, Equity and Diversity: An Honorary Volume for Professor Anne-Lise Arnesen*, ed. Torill Strand and Merethe Roos (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2012).

I spent more time in one class that interested me because it was presented as particularly troublesome and noisy. My interest in affect suggested that I might find educational encounters in that class particularly intense, and thus productive. We did not participate in the lessons, but would sometimes help students in their work if they asked a very straightforward question, or help teachers if they asked for facts on issues they presumed we were knowledgeable about. We conversed with teachers in the staffroom, but not about our observations. After we finished the observations, we held a presentation for all the teachers in the school about addressing minority issues in education based on textbook analysis and our work on sex education. The teachers seemed to appreciate that we could offer some knowledge tools in exchange for their cooperation, without presenting any judgments of their work. The students and teachers in this school were used to having additional adults in the classroom for observation purposes, and did not seem especially nervous about our presence. That being said, it took us few days to realize that an intense preoccupation with homosexuality in the students' banter in the first couple of days could be chalked down to their introduction to new more or less obviously queer bodies in the form of visiting researchers. If this attention to homosexuality had persisted, it would have been an interesting point of departure for analyses of how sexuality was construed in these students' interactions. Given that it subsided so rapidly however, it did not seem significant for the overall project to pursue it.

As observation study was new to me, I experimented with different methods to generate interesting data for my purposes, especially in the first couple of weeks. I took observation notes in the classroom all along, however. During breaks and after the school day I would write out "data stories" or narrative vignettes of what I had experienced in situations that made a particular impression on me.⁷⁹ I also wrote transcripts of significant dialogues on the computer, securing anonymity in the digital material as I went along.

My interest was initially in how the discourses about ethnicity and sexuality I was identifying in textbooks were negotiated by teachers and students in an ethnically diverse education setting. As

⁷⁹ Patricia Ann Lather, *Getting Smart. Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 123.

the articles from material generated during these observations attest to however, I found my agenda was quickly altered because of the intriguing potential of affective aspects of classroom interaction. My observation notes shifted from a focus on the linguistic and ideological in the interaction to affective and physical aspects. Drawing on facets of situational analysis I tried to generate situational maps that included spatial, discursive and interactive aspects, focusing on the intra-action of these components.⁸⁰ Initially I only worked with affect through writing affective data stories. However, it also seemed fruitful to factor affect into the situational mapping. The result of this exploration of methods during the observations was data in the form of observation notes from the classroom that included fragments of all my interests, situational maps that included space, discourses and affects, and data stories which were written to convey my affective impression of the situations. This mixed method approach produced rich accounts of my experiences that made me certain that the six weeks I spent in this Oslo school provided enough situational data to fuel analytic efforts beyond the time I had to do my PhD.

In “Learning Racism in the Absence of ‘Race’” and “Promising Failures: Teaching ‘Difference’ in Civic Education” I focus on the role of affect in my methodological approach, as it is crucial for the insights the articles convey. I have called the methodological and analytical approach I have used *affective inquiry*. Affective inquiry focuses attention on intensities, collective moods, expressions of feeling and affective interaction in the experience of a situation. I have tried to represent these aspects of the educational encounters in the generation of data, through situational maps and data stories as mentioned.

Affective inquiry is both a method with which I have studied educational encounters, and a conceptual base for interpretation of the data that was produced through those encounters. As a conceptually based form of inquiry, it rests on ontological and epistemological ideas. Just as discourse analysis is accompanied by the concept of discourse and discourse theory, affective inquiry is accompanied by affect theory. Although I will return to the turn to affect in the theoretical

⁸⁰ Adele E. Clarke, *Situational Analysis : Grounded Theory after the Postmodern Turn* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2005).

discussions to come, affective inquiry as a method also needs to be explained in terms of its theoretical basis. In the light of my previous experience with discourse analysis, it also makes sense to contrast "affect" with "discourse." Under the heading "Wrong Turns," Margaret Wetherell dryly pointed out that "for many people working in cultural studies it sometimes seems that what is most interesting about affect is that it is *not* discourse," referencing some of the authors I was reading around the time of my observations, notably Eve Sedgwick and Brian Massumi. Affect interested me because it gave me a conceptual key to materials that were not linguistically ordered. Having learnt cultural analysis through studying literature, films and public discourse, this door opener to other material was indeed very exciting. While I agree with Wetherell's point that "human affect is inextricably linked with meaning-making," I do not think that the significance of affect as a methodological concept that is distinctly different from discourse should be undermined.⁸¹

Adding affect to the methods and theory mix constituted a different material, or object in Mieke Bal's terms, and opened a different field for questioning. Bal notes that

The *field* of cultural analysis is not delimited, because the traditional delimitations must be suspended; by selecting an object, you *question* a field. Nor are its *methods* sitting in a toolbox waiting to be applied; they, too, are part of the exploration. You don't apply one method; you conduct a meeting between several, a meeting in which the object participates, so that, together, object and methods can become a new, not firmly delineated, field.⁸²

What is being studied, the field, is something that surfaces in the process of analysis. The practice of cultural analysis that I have outlined my take on here is an analytic effort that results in the ability to re-articulate the cultural field we study in ways that highlight possibilities for social change.

For re-articulation to be possible, it is necessary to practice critique, however. Critique is not about judgment, as Michel Foucault has clarified, but rather about the suspension of judgment.⁸³ Butler notes that "the primary task of critique will not be to evaluate whether its objects —social conditions, practices, forms of knowledge, power, and discourse—are good or bad, valued highly or demeaned, but to bring into relief the very framework of evaluation itself and approaching the

⁸¹ Margaret Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion. A New Social Science Understanding* (London: SAGE, 2012), 19. This is understandable, though, as her focus is the uses of affect in social science practice.

⁸² Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities. A rough guide*, 4. Emphasis in original.

⁸³ Michel Foucault, "What is critique?," in *The Politics of Truth*, ed. M. Foucault (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).

issues that are at the limits of the epistemological frameworks in question.”⁸⁴ The methodological considerations I have written about here have been accompanied by efforts to become aware of and question the knowledge foundations of my own work. These critical considerations are in focus in the next two sections.

⁸⁴ Judith Butler, "What is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue," in *European institute for progressive cultural policies*, ed. European institute for progressive cultural policies (<http://eipcp.net/transversal/0806/butler/en2001>).

4 Conceptual and political travels from queer to “race”

The research background that I relate to in the discussion below brings out political and theoretical issues in and between the articles that have been important to how my work has developed. They have also been topics of discussion in the fields of queer, gender, and cultural studies that have influenced my work, and that of others. As noted above, the practice of critique requires that we are able to “bring into relief the very framework of evaluation itself.”⁸⁵ This means that cultural analysis involves questioning one’s own evaluations and analysis, but also questioning the theoretical presumptions they rest on. This practice of theoretically informed auto-critique also suggests that the researcher’s standpoint points to her taken for granted knowledges as well as her social positioning. In this discussion, I present existing research that the articles are implicitly and explicitly in dialogue with. The discussion reflects my starting point in queer activism and gender studies, and the orientation of my interest towards issues of “race” and racism that many in that field have shared in recent years. The discussion highlights the significance of postcolonial theory to my project, which also ties sexuality and “race” together in a shared overarching knowledge formation. I furthermore clarify my reasons for choosing to approach the issues at hand through the concept of “race,” even if this is rather uncommon in Norwegian studies on “ethnic” majority/minority relations. Combined with the theoretical discussion above, this account of how I have engaged with research and politics concerning the cultural politics of “race” and sexuality in contemporary Norwegian education highlights how the articles speak to a research conversation on the cultural politics of sexuality and “race” locally and internationally.

4.1 Queer foundations

“Elusive Sex Acts” builds on my longstanding academic and activist engagement with queer theory and practice. I learned queer theory and the basics of poststructural feminism from the feminist and LGBT movements in the early 2000s, before I was taught it in the academy. Throughout my teenage

⁸⁵ Judith Butler, “What is Critique? An Essay on Foucault’s Virtue”

and student years, I engaged in the LGBT movement's contributions to Norwegian sex education, first as what bell hooks would call a "native informant"⁸⁶ that offered young people stories about what it means to be lesbian or gay, and later as a member of activist communities that developed queer pedagogical strategies.

Queer theory became significant for queer activism in Norway around the year 2000, with rumors from abroad and a special issue of the Norwegian journal for women's studies.⁸⁷ Judith Butler's theory of gender performance in *Gender Trouble* quickly became a guide for younger activists' understanding of both gender and sexual identity in the LGBT movement.⁸⁸ We read that "gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*."⁸⁹ LGBT youth activism provided the experiential knowledge base that made it painfully clear that straight gender performance and identities do not somehow flow "naturally" out of the male or female body, but are the result of a grueling personal and cultural effort. Seeing gender as an effect of performance resonated with our experiences, and strengthened our ability to see potential for social change by and through subversion. Furthermore, the concept of the "heterosexual matrix," which explains how relations between sex, gender, and sexual desire are co-constituted, were powerful for our own attempts to understand and combat both homophobia and transphobia.⁹⁰ From there, it was a short step to mistrusting gay and lesbian identity categories, which provided the comforts of intelligibility within heteronormativity, but at the cost of marginalization.

Heteronormativity was a concept that articulated the social work involved in producing straight gender and sexuality as self-evidently natural, and the ways in which this social production affected our lives. The queer insistence on the imbrication of sexuality in material, political, and economic

⁸⁶ bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress. Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁸⁷ Turid Markussen and Axel Nissen, eds., *Skeive perspektiver på kjønn. Tidsskrift for kjønnsforskning 3–4* (Oslo: KILDEN, 2000). This issue included contributions from several scholars in Norwegian gender studies, which had started doing queer research in the 1990s, including Agnes Bolsø, Heidi Eng, and Wencke Mühleisen.

⁸⁸ Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

structures, summarized in the concept of “family,” was very important to our understanding of this concept. So was the crucial relationship between “family” and reproduction. I see these foundational connections as still radical in critiques of heteronormativity, despite the flatness with which the term has been used in recent years to merely describe heterosexual lifestyles. Eve Sedgwick’s list of things that should line up with each other in a perfect family clarifies these aspects of the concept:

- a surname
- a circuit of blood relations
- a system of companionship and succor
- a building
- an economic unit of earning and taxation
- a prime site of economic and cultural consumption
- a mechanism for accumulating material goods over several generations
- a daily routine
- a unit in a community of worship
- a site of patriotic formation

The list is not stable, but points to the connections that the concept of heteronormativity seeks to describe. It clarifies how “family” ties the sexual to economic and material structures, and to questions of ethnicity and nationhood. Sedgwick noted that the most productive way to approach these components that add up to “family” is not to let too many of them align at any given point, even if we, at different times, pursue them as individual projects. The task is to disarticulate and disengage them from one another.⁹¹

Clearly, what Sedgwick suggested is a way of thinking about life, rather than objects of cultural analysis. This lived quality of queer theory is one reason why the concept “queer” resists clear-cut explanations, and quite literally begs one to acquire a feel for it. When revising “Elusive Sex Acts,” I found that I had taken this concept for granted in my first draft. Asked by reviewers to define it, I found I needed to approach it in experiential terms. I drew on Sara Ahmed’s phenomenological work on queer living as a matter of orientation in relation to objects and social relations, and the sense of being out of line, or misaligned, with these norms.⁹² While keeping the link to same sex practices that it is historically rooted in, I also wanted to highlight the significance of unsanctioned sex practice

⁹¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (London: Routledge, 1994). See also Debbie Epstein and Richard Johnson, *Schooling Sexualities* (Buckingham and Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press, 1998), 35.

⁹² Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

that Gayle Rubin's work focuses on.⁹³ Rubin was concerned with how the line was drawn between acceptable and unacceptable sexual practices along a range of different dimensions, including gender. Her framework suggested that the polyamorous heterosexual could be just as 'queer' as the monogamous homosexual, only along a different dimension.

These aspects of queer theorizing open the concept to sexual practices and contexts other than those associated with LGBT people, and highlight the ordinariness of feeling queer about one's relationship to heteronormativity. Indeed, from this perspective, it is possible to approach queerness in the everyday of messy gender and sexual practices that, in some sense, render "most people queer," as Agnes Bolsø pointed out.⁹⁴ These perspectives guided my inquiry in "Elusive Sex Acts," as they did other researchers and activists working on sex education in both Norway and Sweden in recent years.

4.2 Sex education

The research on sex education in both Norway and Sweden that I drew on in "Elusive Sex Acts" was informed by activist initiatives over the last decade. The RESTART program that I discuss as a queer intervention in sex education was developed by the Norwegian Queer Youth, inspired by and based on the Swedish program *BRYT! (BREAK!)*, which presented methods for norm-critical pedagogy. In the Swedish context, Janne Bromseth and Hanna Wildow mapped how schools address gender and sexuality.⁹⁵ They found that heteronormative presumptions underpin this work in ways that only inspire "equality" to the extent that it does not challenge the basic ideas of binary gender difference and privileged heterosexuality.⁹⁶ Building on this and other reports of LGBT issues in schools, as well as existing research on both sex education and the everyday of gender and sexuality in schooling,

⁹³ Gayle S. Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993).

⁹⁴ Agnes Bolsø, *Folk flest er skeive* (Oslo: Manifest Forlag, 2010).

⁹⁵ Janne Bromseth and Hanna Wildow, "Man kan ju inte läsa om bögar i nån historiebok. Skolors förändringsarbete med fokus på jämställdhet, genus och sexualitet," (Stockholm: Friends, 2007).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Swedish gender researchers were able to build a knowledge base for anti-oppressive pedagogy, which was very useful for sex education.⁹⁷

In Norway, there was only Åse Røthing's postdoctoral work and a few smaller studies to build on at the time.⁹⁸ When I joined Røthing's research project at the University of Oslo in 2007 as a research assistant, she invited me to co-author a book she was planning on Norwegian sex education based on her existing research. The plan for the book was expanded to also include insights from our textbook analyses, and my experience from pedagogical and activist work through the LGBT and feminist movements. We also took on a smaller study for Trondheim Municipality that mapped Norway's existing sex education as part of a project for combating sexual harassment in schools.⁹⁹ Our book, *Seksualitet i skolen. Perspektiver på undervisning* (2009), was adapted to the Swedish context by Maria Bäckman, to complement the literature available to students there.¹⁰⁰

Queer-feminist critique and pedagogical innovations in sex education in the Norwegian and Swedish contexts has also been informed by the international literature on youth, sexuality, and education that has emerged since the late 1990s. This includes Debbie Epstein's foundational work on gender, sexuality, and race in education, particularly *Schooling Sexualities*, in which she (with Richard Johnson) outlined a cultural studies approach to questions of sexuality in schools.¹⁰¹

Furthermore, a substantial amount of research on the cultural aspects of sexuality and education

⁹⁷ Lovise Brade et al., *I normens öga. Metoder för normbrytande undervisning* (Stockholm: Friends, 2008); Janne Bromseth and Frida Darj, eds., *Normkritisk pedagogik. Makt, lärande och strategier för förändring* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitetstryck, 2010); Lena Martinsson and Eva Reimers, eds., *Skola i normer* (Malmö: Gleerup, 2008); Lena Martinsson et al., *Norms at Work: Challenging Homophobia and Heteronormativity*, (Stockholm: RFSL, 2007).

⁹⁸ Hilde Møllhausen, "Seksualitet på ungdomsskolen. En kvalitativ studie av unge jenters opplevelse av undervisning som omhandler seksualitet" (Universitetet i Oslo, 2005); Åse Røthing, "Gode intensjoner, problematiske konsekvenser. Undervisning om homofili på ungdomsskolen," *Norsk Pedagogisk Tidsskrift* 91, no. 6 (2007); Åse Røthing, "Homonegativisme og homofobi i klasserommet. Marginaliserte maskuliniteter, disiplinerende jenter og rådville lærere," *Tidsskrift for ungdomsforskning* 7, no. 1 (2007); Åse Røthing, "Homotolerance and Heteronormativity in Norwegian Classrooms," *Gender and Education* 20, no. 3 (2008); Åse Røthing, "Kjønn og seksualitet i grunnskolens læreplaner. Historisk tilbakeblikk og aktuelle utfordringer," *Norsk Pedagogisk Tidsskrift*, no. 5 (2004).

⁹⁹ Åse Røthing and Stine H. Bang Svendsen, "Undervisning om seksualitet ved ungdomsskolene i Trondheim kommune," (Trondheim: Trondheim Kommune, 2008); Trondheim-kommune and LLH-Trøndelag, *Undervisning om seksualitet. Undervisningsopplegg for lærere og helsepersonell i grunnskole og videregående skole* (Trondheim: Trondheim kommune, 2010).

¹⁰⁰ Åse Røthing and Stine H. Bang Svendsen, *Seksualitet i skolen. Perspektiver på undervisning*. (Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag, 2009); Åse Røthing and Stine H. Bang Svendsen, *Sex och samlevnad. Perspektiv på undervisning* (Studentlitteratur, 2011).

¹⁰¹ Epstein and Johnson, *Schooling Sexualities*. See also Debbie Epstein, Sarah O'Flynn, and David Telford, *Silenced Sexualities in Schools and Universities* (Stoke-on-Trent and Sterling, VA: Trentham Books, 2003); Debbie Epstein, ed. *Challenging Lesbian and Gay Inequalities in Education* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1994).

has emerged from Australia and New Zealand.¹⁰² The importance of seeing sexuality as a discourse of power, following Foucault, was crucial to the research on sex education I engaged with for “Elusive Sex Acts.” This is an important point, as it raises the myth of sexuality as somehow inherently liberal and progressive. Foucault wrote that:

We must not think that by saying yes to sex, one says no to power; on the contrary, one tracks along the course laid out by the general deployment of sexuality. It is the agency of sex that we must break away from, if we aim— through a tactical reversal of the various mechanisms of sexuality— to counter the grips of power with the claims of bodies, pleasures, and knowledges, in their multiplicity and their possibility of resistance. The rallying point for the counterattack against the deployment of sexuality ought not to be sex-desire, but bodies and pleasures.¹⁰³

“Elusive Sex Acts” was written along this logic of bodies and pleasures as potential sites for the subversion of the regulating power of sexuality, and builds on work that raises the potential of these perspectives for sex education.¹⁰⁴ It also approaches the predicament that the subversive agenda of queer critique is not easy to align with the normative purposes of schooling.¹⁰⁵ Yet, as Louisa Allen and Moira Carmody argued in their contribution to the special issue of *Sex Education* (which “Elusive Sex Acts” also appeared in), it is precisely the point that pleasure resists being taught that produces the potential of pleasure in the Foucauldian sense.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Louisa Allen, *Sexual Subjects. Young People, Sexuality and Education* (Hound Mills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Mary Louise Rasmussen, *Becoming Subjects: A Study of Sexualities and Secondary Schooling* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Moira Carmody, *Sex and Ethics: Young People and Ethical Sex* (Sydney: Macmillan Australia, 2008); Kerry H. Robinson and Criss Jones-Diaz, *Diversity and Difference in Early Childhood Education: Issues for Theory and Practice* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2006).

¹⁰³ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, Kindle ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 2099–103.

¹⁰⁴ See also Michelle Fine, “Sexuality, Schooling, and Adolescent Females: The Missing Discourse of Desire,” *Harvard Educational Review* 58, no. 1 (1988); Michelle Fine and Sara McClelland, “Sexuality Education and Desire: Still Missing After All These Years,” *Harvard Educational Review* 76, no. 3 (2006). Roger Ingham, “‘We didn’t cover that at school’: Education Against Pleasure or Education For Pleasure?,” *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning* 5, no. 4 (2005); Pam Alldred and Miriam E. David, *Get Real About Sex. The Politics and Practice of Sex Education* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2007).

¹⁰⁵ See William Pinar, ed. *Queer Theory in Education* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

¹⁰⁶ Louisa Allen and Moira Carmody, “Pleasure has no passport’: Re-Visiting the Potential of Pleasure in Sexuality Education,” *Sex Education* 12, no. 4 (2012).

4.3 *Queer attachments to the nation?*

In “Elusive Sex Acts,” I argue for a strategic use of the will to reform sex education in the Norwegian context, and I push forward civil society initiatives that go beyond the mandate of schooling in their approaches to sex and pleasure. Towards the end of the article, I point out the following:

At this point, when Nordic societies are touting their sexual freedom as a defining characteristic of their nations and culture, it would be a good time to test the content of that freedom through a sex education agenda that is explicit about sexual practices and sexual pleasure.¹⁰⁷

The effect of this strategy may be, as the article clearly illustrates, to expose the fact that the “sexual freedom” of the Nordics is indeed a specific kind of sexual regulation, in which the state intervention in what is elsewhere deemed the private sphere can be seen as one of the “hallmark[s] of the Norwegian welfare state.”¹⁰⁸ While this is a valid project, in itself, the quote above points to a potential alignment between this queer project and current national projects, which presents some theoretical and political problems that need to be considered.

Mary Louise Rasmussen addresses this issue pointedly in her contribution to the special issue of *Sex Education*. In her article, she expresses concern over the “health-morality” binary, through which moral agendas are positioned against a scientifically framed health agenda.¹⁰⁹ She worries that this binary downplays the significance of moral and religious concerns in young people’s decision-making. Drawing on Joan Scott, Rasmussen puts forward a concern that “progressive” sex education scholars’ eagerness to help young people has created a situation in which “more autonomous and liberated sexual subjects (...) perpetuates a narrative, about the superiority of secularism to religion – as if the two categories were in internal opposition rather than mutually interdependent.”¹¹⁰ In “Elusive Sex Acts,” I point out that the Nordic notion of sexual freedom is inherently

¹⁰⁷ Stine H. Bang Svendsen, “Elusive Sex Acts. Pleasure and Politics in Norwegian Sex Education,” *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning* 12 no. 4 (2012): 407.

¹⁰⁸ Kari Melby, Anna-Birte Ravn, and Christina Carlsson Wetterberg, “A Nordic Model of Gender Equality? Introduction,” in *Gender Equality and Welfare Politics in Scandinavia. The Limits of Political Ambition?*, ed. Kari Melby, Anna-Birte Ravn, and Christina Carlsson Wetterberg (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2009), 20. See also Mühleisen, Røthing, and Svendsen, “Norske seksualiteter - en innledning.”

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., Fine, “Sexuality, Schooling, and Adolescent Females: The Missing Discourse of Desire”; Fine and McClelland, “Sexuality Education and Desire: Still Missing After All These Years.”

¹¹⁰ Mary Louise Rasmussen, “Pleasure/Desire, Sexularism and Sexuality Education,” *Sex Education* 12, no. 4 (2012): 478. See also Joan Wallach Scott, *The Fantasy of Feminist History*, Kindle ed. (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2011).

heteronormative, drawing on Janet Jakobsen's work, and that it should be understood in terms of its connections to Lutheran Protestant secularism.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, I think Rasmussen's critique is important to its argument, for two reasons. The first is that the argument has a stake in an orientation towards transgression, which, despite Foucault's point that sexuality is not silenced but rather obsessively articulated, seems to stick to queer projects of sexual liberation. Foucault suggested that the idea of repressed sexuality is maintained partly due to the pleasure people take in transgressing the imagined "taboo" of sex:

we are conscious of defying established power, our tone of voice shows that we know we are being subversive, and we ardently conjure away the present and appeal to the future, whose day will be hastened by the contribution we believe we are making. Something that smacks of revolt, of promised freedom, of the coming age of a different law, slips easily into this discourse on sexual oppression.¹¹²

Queer theory and activism have no inherent defense against this slippage. I think the pleasure associated with the transgression of sexual norms contributes to the production of what Jasbir Puar called "queer exceptionalism," which "posits queerness as an exemplary or liberatory site devoid of nationalist impulses."¹¹³ "Queer exceptionalism" renders the queer subject inherently "progressive," and is one of the reasons why LGBT rights agendas have been recruited (alongside feminism) by Western nation states to fight out the "cultural conflict" of the war on terror. Queer exceptionalism is thus related to the second concern, which is the geopolitical context in which questions of sexuality are currently interpreted, and is addressed in the article "Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders?" As this political development surfaced in Europe with great force, any queer illusion of an inherent subversiveness in the transgression of sexual taboos was irrevocably lost.

The straightening of lesbian and gay identities, which I also address in "Elusive Sex Acts," is important with regard to the question of homonationalism. While "queer attachments" to

¹¹¹ Svendsen, "Elusive Sex Acts. Pleasure and Politics in Norwegian Sex Education," 405. See also Janet R. Jakobsen, "Sex+Freedom=Regulation. Why?," *Social Text* 23, no. 84–85 (2005).

¹¹² Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*, 95–98.

¹¹³ Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages. Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 173. Rasmussen also references this concept in her critique.

subversiveness may prevent us from seeing the complicity with postcolonial knowledge regimes about sexuality, and may indeed make us hang on to outmoded rhetorical strategies, the problem of colonial complicity is not especially “queer,” as such. On the contrary, it is the newly developed intensity of White, Western homosexuals’ attachments to the state that have made homonationalism such a pressing political issue for queer research and activism in Europe.

The concept of “race” I outline below shows conceptual affinities between ethnic and racial studies and queer studies. The last decade has seen scholarship using queer theory to dislocate questions of “ethnicity” and “race” from kinship imaginings. This has involved emphasis on the racialization of concepts of “home” and “family,” and on the heteroimagery of concepts of the “ethnic group” and “race.” Gayatri Gopinath’s combination queer and diaspora research brought out this effect. She argued that this combination of concepts “points to those desires, practices and subjectivities that are rendered impossible and unimaginable within conventional diasporic and nationalist narratives,” and asked us to approach the concept of “home” as a communal space “outside a logic of blood, purity, and patrilinear descent.”¹¹⁴ Gopinath also asked us to focus on the racial and ethnic investments in heteronormativity.

Queer of color critique has taken on the job of disarticulating the various connections that make the family a site for ethnic, racial, and national formation. It focuses on the ways in which “racist practice articulates itself generally as gender and sexual regulation, and that gender and sexual differences variegate racial formations.”¹¹⁵ As an activist (and academic) project, it has been particularly important due to its ability to unpack how some racial, sexual, and class formations deviate from nationalisms, while others align with them. Acknowledging the significance of standpoint, in extension of women of color feminism,¹¹⁶ queer of color critique proceeds from

¹¹⁴ Gayatri Gopinath, “Bollywood Spectacles: Queer Diasporic Critique in the Aftermath of 9/11,” *Social Text* 23, no. 84–85 (2005): 158.

¹¹⁵ Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black. Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 3. Chandan Reddy, “Home, Houses, Nonidentity: ‘Paris is Burning,’” in *Burning Down the House: Recycling Domesticity*, ed. Rosemary Marangoly George (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 356–57.

¹¹⁶ Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black. Toward a Queer of Color Critique*: 4. The “outsider within” as a source of knowledge is particularly important for Black feminism’s take on standpoint epistemology. See Patricia Hill Collins, “Learning from the

cultures and lives where the components of heteronormativity do not line up, and characterizes social formations from there.

Proceeding from Sedgwick's list in my account of heteronormativity above, and elaborating on issues of class, race, and nationhood, queer of color critique extends the queer project beyond the context of gay and lesbian subculture it was originally seen to belong to. This extension has been urgent, as the White contingent of what was previously known as "queer" culture has become increasingly able to make the components of the "perfect family" line up in their own lives, due to both rights and tolerance across a number of contexts. Lining up with the family project (if only in parts), or not doing so, is a highly affective phenomenon, which Sara Ahmed addressed in depth.¹¹⁷ She described "being aligned" as the ability to take pleasure from society's "happy objects":

I have suggested that happiness is attributed to certain objects that circulate as social goods. When we feel pleasure from such objects, we are aligned. We become alienated, out of line with an affective community – when we do not feel pleasure from proximity to objects that are attributed as being good.¹¹⁸

In the introductory pages, I indicated that the 2008 Norwegian Marriage Act required some processing; it also involved processing for those of us who supported the law and stood to gain from it, in terms of both the increased social recognition of gay and lesbian lives, and the protections and privileges of marriage, including the state's provision of assisted reproduction rights. Some of what needed to be processed was the change in social positioning for formerly "queer" people, in a legal, moral, and material sense. As the equality principle became naturalized, Norwegian homosexuals became practically "normal" and indeed majoritarian in line with ambitions of large proportions of the gay and lesbian liberation movement.

4.4 Nordic colonial complicity and postcolonial critique

In the social science textbooks analyzed in "Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders," sexuality is addressed in a framework that establishes binaries between

Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

¹¹⁷ See Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*; Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*.

¹¹⁸ Ahmed, "Multiculturalism and the Promise of Happiness," *New Formations*, no. 63 (2008): 128.

sexual liberation and oppression, between gender equality and patriarchal hierarchy, between secularism and religious extremism, and, finally, between the West and the “rest.”¹¹⁹ The binary of sexual liberation and oppression in the textbooks works according to the politics of time, or “chronopolitics,” that Johannes Fabian described. The depictions we analyze show that Fabian’s 1983 critique of the conceptual politics of time in the field of anthropology are sadly timely. Here, difference registers as distance – in time and in space.¹²⁰ The bigger the difference, the further from “civilization” and “development” the “Other” is seen to be. Freedom emerges as an inherent quality of the “here and now” in the textbooks, and they render lack thereof as an equally inherent quality of the “then and there.” As we show in our analyses, these oppositions map on to each other, and produce an overarching opposition between the “here and now” and the “then and there” that emerges as an organizing principle in the discursive structures of the texts analyzed.¹²¹ As such, they form the self-referencing conceptual frame that we describe, in which confluences of time and space in a teleological narrative of modernity actualize the history of both colonialism and imperialism as they work in the frame of the current post-9/11 world order.¹²² As noted in the introduction, this postcolonial critique of the temporal and spatial politics of Norwegian social science textbooks represents both a key finding and a point of departure for the dissertation. This basic insight occurred at a time where a number of scholars in Norwegian gender research were directing their attention to the significance of postcolonial feminist critique to Norwegian cultural politics.

That gender equality is becoming a marker of Norwegianness was noted in 2002 by anthropologist Marianne Gullestad, whose work remains the clearest application of postcolonial

¹¹⁹ Scott, *The Fantasy of Feminist History*: 1142.

¹²⁰ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other. How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 16.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Åse Røthing and Stine H. Bang Svendsen, “Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders?” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 11 (2011). The argument here is informed by Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003) and Oyeronke Oyewumi, “Conceptualizing Gender: The Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies,” *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies*, no. 2 (1997), but also contemporary critiques such as Jin Haritaworn, “Loyal Repetitions of the Nation: Gay Assimilation and the ‘War on Terror,’” *Darkmatter Journal*, no. 3 (2008); Butler, *Frames of War. When is Life Grievable?*; Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Puar, *Terrist Assemblages. Homonationalism in Queer Times*; Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire*.

theory in Norwegian society.¹²³ Her observation of Norwegian immigration debate was confirmed in other areas of society by Norwegian gender researchers, anthropologists, and sociologists in the following years. In her study of transnational marriages between Norwegian men and Russian women, Anne-Britt Flemmen explained how gender equality was seen as a qualification for an acceptably “Norwegian marriage.”¹²⁴ Research among ethnic minority Norwegians also revealed a tendency towards comparison between the lived life realities of the minority as compared with an idealized notion of the Norwegian gender-equal couple, when it comes to marriage practices.¹²⁵ Guro Korsnes Kristensen found that, while Norwegians take pride in the high fertility rate among Norwegian women, high birth rates among ethnic minority women are considered threatening to female independence.¹²⁶ In 2009 and 2010, two edited books emerged from Norwegian gender researchers on the intersections of gender, sexuality, and nationhood.¹²⁷ These contributions highlight how gender equality, in particular, is activated in processes of inclusions and exclusions in Norwegian nationhood that map on to ethnic groups and indeed “racial” formations.

Postcolonial critique has been important for developing these accounts of the interactions of gender equality, sexual liberation, and nationalism in the Norwegian context. In conceptual terms, these studies do not move far beyond the nation, however. Through reading and discussing contributions in this corner of Norwegian gender studies, and later by considering them in light of international and theoretical contributions, I have come to think that the focus on specifically “Norwegian” culture in some of these studies perpetuated a form of conceptual nationalism. By focusing on the nation and national culture, we may not have been able to clarify just how these discourses about “Norwegianness” were in fact colonial and racist discourses, naturalized by

¹²³ Marianne Gullestad, *Det norske sett med nye øyne. Kritisk analyse av norsk innvandringsdebatt*. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2002).

¹²⁴ Anne Britt Flemmen, “Russiske kvinner i Nord-Norske aviser: minoritets – og majoritetskonstruksjoner,” *Tidsskrift for kjønnsforskning* 1 (2007).

¹²⁵ Anja Bredal, *Vi er jo en familie. Arrangerte ekteskap, autonomi og fellesskap blant unge norsk-asiater* (Oslo: Unipax, 2006).

¹²⁶ Guro Korsnes Kristensen, *Familieplanlegging – bak tallene. Fortellinger om reproduksjon i det flerkulturelle Norge* (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2011).

¹²⁷ Anne-Jorunn Berg, Anne Britt Flemmen, and Berit Gullikstad, eds., *Likestilte norskheter. Om kjønn og etnisitet*. (Trondheim: Tapir, 2010); Mühleisen and Røthing, *Norske seksualiteter*.

nationalism.¹²⁸ That being said, the work on “Norwegian” sexualities and gender equality has been an important stepping stone for building my own and other’s understandings of “race” and postcoloniality in the Norwegian context.

Suvi Keskinen and colleagues suggested that the intersection between gender, sexuality, “race,” and nationalism in the Nordic countries should be understood in light of the colonial complicity that is evident in history and the present, but remains unacknowledged. Despite national self-images of “innocence” in relation to both colonialism and historical racism, people in Nordic countries contributed both ideologically and practically to the colonization of Africa.¹²⁹ Refusing Nordic exceptionalism by critiquing ideological and practical complicity with colonialism helps reveal connections between Nordic sexual, gendered, and other nationalism and colonial ideology. The emerging scholarship on racial formations in the Nordic context that I address below follows from these insights of postcolonial critique. Moving from a focus on “ethnic minorities” to “race” or racialization in the Nordic context mirrors the insights that postcolonial feminism and postcolonial critique has offered. The concept of colonial complicity has been particularly useful. It highlights that both activist and academic traditions, including queer theory and feminism, are imbricated in colonial knowledge formations by virtue of being formed in social imaginaries informed by colonial ideology. This point was particularly clearly put by postcolonial feminist authors Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Oyeronke Oyewumi.

Mohanty argued, in her now seminal essay “Under Western Eyes,” that the notion of “woman” as a unified category presupposes a male-female binary as the primary organizing principle of the social, which inscribes Western patriarchy as the organizing principle of traditional feminist thought.¹³⁰ The implication of this premise is that other principles of social organization, be they age,

¹²⁸ I am particularly grateful to Suvi Keskinen for pointing out that this problem was evident in my own work.

¹²⁹ Erlend Eidsvik, “Colonial Discourse and Ambivalence: Norwegian Participants on the Colonial Arena in South Africa,” in *Whiteness' and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region. Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities*, ed. Kristin Loftsdóttir and Lars Jensen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Marianne Gullestad, *Plausible Prejudice. Everyday Experiences and Social Images of Nation, Culture and Race* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2006); Marianne Gullestad, *Misjonsbilder. Bidrag til norsk selvforståelse* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2007).

¹³⁰ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” *Feminist Review*, no. 30 (1988).

kinship, class, ethnicity, religion, or law, are presumed to be manifestations of male power, through which women are bereaved of agency. As Oyewumi further specified, this universalization of the male-female power binary conceptually hinders theorization of societies in which gender categories have taken a more plural form as anything but “oppressive of women.” The effect of this universalization is that difference from the Western gender order is interpreted as *a priori* oppressive, rendering the non-Western woman “always, already oppressed.” Implicit in the universalist category of “woman,” Oyewumi argued, is the role of “wife” and “daughter” and “patriarchal husband” – all components of the nuclear family.¹³¹

In “Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: constructing and controlling Ethnic Borders,” we show that the critique Mohanty and Oyewumi directs towards the colonial underpinnings of feminist theory also applies to lesbian and gay liberation projects as they are represented in social science textbooks. The concept of “homonationalism” was coined by Puar to describe how the nation-state has been rapidly transformed from a burden to a promise for White gays and lesbians in the United States (her focus), as well as in several European countries.¹³² She defined homonationalism as “historical and contemporaneous production of and emergent normativity, homonormativity, ties the recognition of homosexual subject, both legally and representationally, to the national and transnational political agendas of U.S. imperialism.”¹³³ Lisa Duggan furthermore described “the new homonormativity” that Puar saw as constitutive of homonationalism as:

a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption.¹³⁴

These concepts attempt to grasp the relationship between certain forms of sexual politics and the state that has been ongoing in Northern Europe as well as in North America over the past decade. Political strategies and discourses that relate to homonationalism have been critiqued and

¹³¹ Oyewumi, “Conceptualizing Gender: The Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies”: 2.

¹³² Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages. Homonationalism in Queer Times*.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹³⁴ Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 50.

analyzed by queer studies scholars, particularly in queer of color critique, across European, North American, and Israeli contexts.¹³⁵ The ease with which LGBT agendas have been recruited in local nationalisms in the Nordic context has been addressed in depth by Michael Nebeling Petersen (his focus is on Denmark).¹³⁶ In Norway, the issue was crucial in the anthology *Norske Seksualiteter* (2009).¹³⁷ The anthology's collaborative work encourages readers to consider the implications of Norwegian state feminism, as well as its parallel in the relationship between the lesbian and gay movement and the state, in light of queer and postcolonial critique.

Readers can conclude that homonormative lifestyles have not only been included in the national notion of good and proper family life, but have become a defining feature of it.¹³⁸ The ways in which the "new homonormativity" is attempting to further deliver on its promise can currently be illustrated by the political efforts of large proportions of the gay constituency to fight legal barriers to gay couples' opportunities to purchase surrogacy from less economically fortunate women.¹³⁹ As we also note in "Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders," "queerness" is displaced from the gay subject as homonormativity is installed as constitutive of the heteronormative sexual culture. There, we point out that the examples of sexual norms as practices that emerge as "queer" in textbooks are those that appear as inassimilable due to their presumed cultural difference.

The processes of inclusion and exclusion that gender and sexual politics play their parts in, could only with difficulty be figured as conflicts between "ethnic groups". As my analyses in the articles show, a wide range of ethnic groups are conflated under the categories of "immigrant" or "Muslim" through prevalent discursive strategies that attempt to address cultural difference. As noted in the introductory pages, the significance of postcolonial critique to contemporary Norwegian society is a

¹³⁵ For an overview, see Jin Haritaworn, "Women's Rights, Gay Rights and Anti-Muslim Racism in Europe: Introduction," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 19, no. 1 (2012).

¹³⁶ Petersen, Michael Nebeling. ""...med et regnbueflag i hånden": Fortællinger om homoseksuelle inklusioner og homonationalisme." *Lambda Nordica* 16, no. 1 (2011): 41-68.

¹³⁷ Wencke Mühleisen and Åse Røthing, eds., *Norske seksualiteter* (Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag, 2009).

¹³⁸ Mühleisen, Røthing, and Svendsen, "Norske seksualiteter – en innledning." See also Mühleisen, Røthing, and Svendsen, "Norwegian Sexualities: Assimilation and Exclusion in Norwegian Immigration Policy," *Sexualities* 15, no. 2 (2012).

¹³⁹ For an overview and analysis of the concurrent Norwegian surrogacy debate, see Unn Conradi, "Offerposisjonens paradoks – Offentlig debatt om surrogati," *Tidsskrift for samfunnsforskning*, no. 01 (2013).

primary reason why I shift from the concept of “ethnicity” to “race” in my analyses of processes that produce differences and hierarchies between certain groups of people. The question of “race” in Europe is nested in this same postcolonial knowledge formation. However, gender and “race” have significantly different conceptual histories in the twentieth century. “Race” has been “denaturalized,” so to speak, through the discrediting of scientific efforts to determine human races.¹⁴⁰ For this reason, there is no straightforward way of approaching Norwegian civic education with the concept of “race,” as I do in “Learning Racism in the Absence of “Race”” and “Promising Failures”. In the following, I will clarify how this conceptual choice relates to Norwegian and Nordic research in ethnic and racial issues.

4.5 “Race” as conceptual intervention

The concept of “race” I rely on in the articles has been developed in European and American racial and ethnic studies.¹⁴¹ In my approach to social action in classrooms in the third and fourth articles, the concept of “race” is understood as a *performative effect* of racism, racialization, and racial practices.¹⁴² Henry Giroux furthermore explained the performance of “race” and class in an experiential and autobiographical manner that focuses on practice:

In my white working-class neighborhood, race and class were performative categories defined in terms of events, actions, and the outcomes of struggles we engaged in as we watched, listened, and fought with kids whose histories, languages, styles, and identities appeared foreign and hostile to us. Race and class were not merely nouns we used to narrate ourselves, they were verbs that governed how we interacted and performed in the midst of “others,” whether they were middle-class kids or Black youths.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ For an account of the relationship between science and “race,” see Sandra Harding, “Science, Race, Culture, Empire,” in *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies*, ed. David Theo Goldberg and John Solomos (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

¹⁴¹ David Theo Goldberg, *The Threat of Race. Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*, Kindle ed. (Oxford and Malden: Blackwell, 2009); Alana Lentin, “Europe and the Silence About Race,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 11, no. 4 (2008); Philomena Essed and Sandra Trienekens, “‘Who wants to feel White?’ Race, Dutch Culture and Contested Identities,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31, no. 1 (2008); Zeus Leonardo, “The Souls of White Folk: Critical Pedagogy, Whiteness Studies, and Globalization Discourse,” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 5, no. 1 (2002).

¹⁴² For work on race and performativity, see E. Patrick Johnson, “Race, Ethnicity, and Performance – A Special Issue of *Text and Performance Quarterly*,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (2003); Leonardo, “The Souls of White Folk: Critical Pedagogy, Whiteness Studies, and Globalization Discourse”; David Gillborn*, “Education Policy as an Act of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory and Education Reform,” *Journal of Education Policy* 20, no. 4 (2005).

¹⁴³ Henry A. Giroux, “Critical Pedagogy as Performative Practice: Memories of Whiteness,” in *Sociology of Education: Emerging Perspectives*, ed. Carlos Alberto Torres and Theodore R. Mitchell (New York: SUNY Press, 1998), 147.

My intent is not to generalize the specific experience of the segregated community in which Giroux relates that he learned “Whiteness,” but rather to describe how social categories such as “race” are defined in terms of everyday struggles and practices. In these “race struggles,” the content and significance of “racial” as well as other identity categories are forged and undone. The affective aspects of these processes are my focus in the second and third articles included here.

Some scholars prefer to speak only of racism and racialization because, in contemporary societies, “race” is essentially an empty signifier that only points to a historical scientific fiction. Yet, it is exactly the emptiness of “race” that I find productive when exploring the affective life of racism. As Alana Lentin pointed out, “race” is a “chameleonic concept” that takes on new shapes and forms in different cultural and historical contexts.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, it has this chameleonic ability precisely because it means and explains so little. In reference to racism and psychoanalysis, Michael Rustin wrote that racial categorizations provide an “ideal container” for psychotic thought, because “the arbitrariness and baselessness of racial categories, their embodiment of a pure spirit of otherness are an advantage if one ‘wants to think’ (...) or is compelled to think in a psychotic way.” He continued: “There is nothing, in reality, to think about; no real external object (...) to impede the free flow of projected feelings, or the projective identifications of different and unwanted parts of the self.”¹⁴⁵

By taking up the term “race” in the Norwegian context, I argue that the concepts that are usually used to explain prejudice and discrimination against the “Others” of Norwegian public culture do not sufficiently describe or explain the overuse of “ethnicity,” “culture,” and “religion” as conceptual approaches to group distinction and hierarchization. Similarly, I emphasize that the avoidance of “race” is important for the conflation between racist and non-racist ethnic group relations in contemporary Norway. One effect of this conflation is that the significance of racism in Norwegian

¹⁴⁴ Lentin, “Europe and the Silence About Race.”

¹⁴⁵ Michael Rustin, *The Good Society and the Inner World. Psychoanalysis, Politics and Culture* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 62.

society is underplayed. This is a serious problem, and I illustrate its social implications in “Learning Racism in the Absence of ‘Race’.”

4.6 Ethnicity and “race”

As David Goldberg and others have argued, the concept of race was “willed away” in Europe after the Holocaust. “Race” was debunked because the fiction of “human races” was scientifically and politically discredited. It was also inextricably linked to “racism,” a concept that was used from the 1930s onwards to describe “the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group is destined to congenital superiority.”¹⁴⁶ Currently, the concept of “race” retains both these connections; it ties current issues to a history that most Europeans would rather forget, but refuses to stay dormant because of the continued relevance of racism as a social problem. In “Learning Racism in the Absence of ‘Race’,” I explore the problems that racial denial presents in contemporary Norwegian schooling, where racism and the racialization of social groups continue to play a role despite the official denial of “race”. These choices are made against a backdrop where “race” rarely figures, however.

Both public and research discourse about migration and cultural diversity in the Norwegian context largely prefer “ethnicity” to “race” as a conceptual base for understanding issues of distinction and hierarchization between groups of people. This is not surprising, as, following World War II, ethnicity replaced “race” in both everyday and academic usage in Europe.¹⁴⁷ Ethnicity was increasingly picked up to describe both what was formerly known as “race” and distinct ethnic groups that were not specifically marked by “race” relations.

Norwegian anthropology is central in research on migration and cultural diversity in this context, and is highly indebted to Fredrik Barth’s conceptualization of ethnicity. Barth’s most generative contribution in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969) is the distinction between the “ethnic

¹⁴⁶ Ruth Benedict, *Race and Racism*, new ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), 97.

¹⁴⁷ Werner Sollors, “Ethnicity and Race,” in *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies*, ed. David Theo Goldberg and John Solomos (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

boundary” and the “cultural stuff”: “The critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes the *ethnic boundary* that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses.”¹⁴⁸ Sociologist Anders Vassenden suggested this distinction amounted to a “Barthian turn” in anthropology, which “directed attention from the study of ethnic groups through their ‘culture’, away from ‘the Herderian canon in anthropology’ (...), to the study of relational organisation of groups (i.e. boundaries between groups and the categories people employ in self- and other-identification).”¹⁴⁹ This is an important distinction, which also works to discourage research efforts that contribute to the “culturalization” of political attitudes.

The emphasis on ethnic boundaries in Barth’s framework is also important for the role that “ethnicity” plays in Norwegian research as a concept that almost fully eclipses “race”; however, it is rarely used to describe local affairs. In his widely read introduction to *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Norwegian anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen points out that, while he concluded in the first two editions of his book (1994, 2002) that “‘race’ could simply be seen as a form of ethnicity; a subset of ethnic variation where the physical appearance of different groups and categories is brought to bear on intergroup relations,” he later came “to believe in the utility of keeping the two concepts apart.”¹⁵⁰ One of the reasons he lists for coming to this conclusion is “the fact that discrimination based on presumed inborn and immutable characteristics (race) tends to be stronger and more inflexible than ethnic discrimination which is not based on ‘racial’ differences” because the visibility prevents assimilation as a strategy for acceptance. Furthermore, he notes that “members of a ‘race’ do not have to have specific shared cultural characteristics in order to be subjected to the same treatment by others.”¹⁵¹ However, his acknowledgement that “race” is an important aspect of some processes of group distinction and hierarchization has not inspired a great interest in describing “racial” social formations in the Norwegian context.

¹⁴⁸ Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969), 15.

¹⁴⁹ Anders Vassenden, “Untangling the different components of Norwegianness*,” *Nations and Nationalism* 16, no. 4 (2010): 738.

¹⁵⁰ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 3rd ed. (Pluto Press, 2010).

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

4.7 “Race” and religion

Scholars have also demonstrated that a “cultural stuff” component – namely religion – is highly significant to current Norwegian social formations and should be seen as a contributing factor to their “racial” components. Mette Andersson and the aforementioned Vassenden documented that the “Muslimification of racism” that Philomena Essed and Sandra Trienekens traced in the Netherlands is relevant also in the Norwegian context.¹⁵² Their study of White and non-White religious people in the inner-city Oslo suburb Grønland shows that Islamic faith is racialized, in the sense that brown-skinned people are presumed to be Muslim, and Muslims are presumed to be brown-skinned.

A number of scholars argue that, in contemporary Europe, religion is more often invoked as a marker of difference than of ethnicity.¹⁵³ However, granted that religion is “racialized” to the extent that a brown-skinned person is presumed to be a Muslim, it is hard to separate Islamophobia from racism. This is not, as such, a “new” situation. The history of racism is entwined with the demonization of non-Christian religions in Europe. Specifically, the histories of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in Europe have been constitutive of our conception of racism. Nasar Meer pointed out that “the word *race* in Sebastian de Covarrubias’s infamous sixteenth-century dictionary was in fact synonymous with the words ‘blood’ and ‘religion’.” Furthermore, Meer argued that “there is ample evidence that religious culture and biology are deemed as co-constitutive of racial ideology prior to its articulation in Atlantic slavery and Enlightenment-informed colonial encounters, even prior to the *Reconquista*.”¹⁵⁴ Meer made these points to underline why it is crucial to study “race” and racism as constitutive of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, and vice versa: insisting on separation facilitates

¹⁵² Anders Vassenden and Mette Andersson, “Whiteness, Non-Whiteness and ‘Faith Information Control’: Religion Among Young People in Grønland, Oslo,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 4 (2010); Essed and Trienekens, “‘Who wants to feel White?’ Race, Dutch Culture and Contested Identities,” 62.

¹⁵³ See Essed and Trienekens, “‘Who wants to feel White?’ Race, Dutch Culture and Contested Identities,” but also Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim. America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Doubleday, 2004).

¹⁵⁴ Nasar Meer, “Racialization and Religion: Race, Culture and Difference in the Study of Antisemitism and Islamophobia,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, no. 3 (2012).

research agendas that leave out important parts of the issue, whether the focus is on “religion” or “race.”

That Islamophobia, racism, and the experience of being a first generation Norwegian are interwoven in contemporary Norway is evident in Christine Jacobsen’s work on identity formation and political mobilization among young Norwegian Muslims, and in Mette Andersson’s extensive studies of identity questions among first generation Norwegians.¹⁵⁵ Both Jacobsen and Andersson have suggested that young people understand their social positioning in a post-9/11 geopolitical context, where experiences of racism and Islamophobia seem to inspire emergent political and trans-national consciousness.¹⁵⁶ In a recent collaborative book by Jacobsen, Mette Anderson, Viggo Vestel, and Jon Rogstad, they argue that “critical events” expose aspects of racism and Islamophobia, nationally and internationally. These critical events serve as rallying points for first generation Norwegians’ articulation of an alternative social formation that cuts across ethnic divisions.¹⁵⁷

Although Islamic religious identity seems to have a particularly important role in the production of a trans-national youth of color consciousness, religion seems to be “racialized” also among minority young people of color with other religions. Lars Laird Iversen’s research on religious identity in inner-city Oslo schools suggests that the connections between religious identity and race discussed specifically in relation to Islam here also concerns Hindu, Christian, Buddhist and otherwise identified students. He noted that all religious identity (including Christianity) was discussed openly in explicit relation to ethnic group belonging for minority ethnic students. For White Norwegian students on the other hand, religion was considered as a private and personal matter, not to be openly addressed.¹⁵⁸ This suggests that there is a “racialization of (public) religion”

¹⁵⁵ Christine M. Jacobsen, *Tilhørighetens mange former: unge muslimer i Norge* (Oslo: Unipax, 2002); Christine M. Jacobsen and Mette Andersson, “Gaza in Oslo’: Social Imaginaries in the Political Engagement of Norwegian Minority Youth,” *Ethnicities* 12, no. 6 (2012).

¹⁵⁶ Christine M. Jacobsen and Mette Andersson, “Gaza in Oslo’: Social Imaginaries in the Political Engagement of Norwegian Minority Youth.”

¹⁵⁷ Mette Andersson et al., *Kritiske hendelser – nye stemmer* (Oslo: Univeristetsforlaget, 2012). See also Mette Andersson, “The Social Imaginary of First Generation Europeans,” *Social Identities* 16, no. 1 (2010).

¹⁵⁸ Lars Laird Iversen, “Når religion blir identitet,” *Kirke og Kultur*, no. 3 (2012).

that includes Christianity at work in Norwegian multi-ethnic schools. Iversen's analysis points to connections between "race" and religious identity that produce "public religion" as something that Norwegians of color have. An effect of this division between "private" and "public" religion is that White Norwegian Christians can remain "secular" despite their religious identity, while Norwegians of color appear "non-secular" because they are seen to wear their religion on their sleeve. This point adds to the significance analyzing "race" and religion as constitutive of one another in the contemporary Norwegian context. In the public realm, religion has become a racial matter.

4.8 "Race" and affective citizenship in Norway

A recent effort to account for ethnic relations in contemporary Norway that is useful for highlighting the conceptual differences I am concerned with here is Anders Vassenden's work on the different strands of "Norwegianness." Vassenden used Barth's distinction in his own argument for a conception of "Norwegianness" in which citizenship, cultural stuff, ethnicity, and "Whiteness"/"non-Whiteness" are kept apart. Each of these components of Norwegianness was used by his White informants in multi-ethnic neighborhoods to distinguish between various forms of belonging to the category "Norwegian." These distinctions seem sensible, albeit a tad too neat. In a classroom discussion I observed about who is "Norwegian," many of these distinctions were utilized by students, and the teacher facilitated a critical evaluation of them:

Teacher: Now I am going to perform a statement that sometimes comes from politicians, particularly from one party. They think that the multicultural society only leads to trouble, and that only Norwegians should be here.
Student: So they are against kebab?
Teacher: Who is Norwegian today?
Student: Everyone who goes to school?
Student: Everyone who works?
Student: Everyone with a Norwegian passport.
Teacher: Yes. So who is it these politicians want out of the country.
Student: The minority people.
Teacher: Yes, that's true.
Student: If Zubair comes to Norway and makes a lot of trouble is he evicted then?

This classroom dialogue illustrates that the question of citizenship formed a baseline definition of who is "Norwegian" that this class could agree on, which was troubled by the information about

some politicians – “particularly from one party” (meaning the right-wing anti-immigration Progress Party), who seem to define Norwegianity differently. Here, the active distinction is a minority-majority distinction, in which culture, ethnicity, and “race” in Vassenden’s framework are collapsed. In “Learning Racism in the Absence of ‘Race,’” I further illustrate how the components of “Norwegianity,” which were skillfully negotiated by Vassenden’s adult White informants, are collapsed in a shifting and muddled struggle over inclusion and exclusion, where teachers and students struggle to sidestep the significance of “race.” “Race” factors into Vassenden’s framework, but is not named as such. It is alluded to by the Whiteness/non-Whiteness binary, of which he adds that it partly overlaps with ethnicity. Furthermore, he underlines that “With regard to fluidity, elasticity, and stability, these oppositions have different logics. ‘The cultural stuff’ (2), is more fluid and elastic than ‘the ethnic boundary’ (3) and also Whiteness/non-Whiteness (4). Citizenship (1) is the most clear-cut and unambiguous.”¹⁵⁹

Citizenship is indeed clear cut in a legal sense, but not necessarily in an experiential sense. Following the conversation about who is “Norwegian,” described above, a student raised her hand to raise a concern about “eviction” from the country. She told a story about a boy she knew, whose parents were from the same country as hers were, and who had been “returned” to his parents’ country of origin, though he had never been there previously. The girl was clearly concerned, and expressed fear that this could also happen to her, or to other children in the class. The teacher took her concern very seriously, and tried to explain to her that no one could take her citizenship away from her. Yet, the story about the other boy seemed to pull this into doubt. After all, he was also born in Norway. My sense of the situation was that, despite the teacher’s best efforts, the students were not fully reassured of their own security in relation to Norwegian immigration authorities. “Race,” “ethnicity,” and “cultural stuff” can pull citizenship into doubt, and this happens in the felt reality of the child who fears eviction, and in the imagination of a racist.¹⁶⁰ These factors cannot *legally* suspend citizenship, but they can bring about the effect of alienation of certain people or

¹⁵⁹ Vassenden, “Untangling the Different Components of Norwegianity*”: 749.

¹⁶⁰ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

groups of people. On the level of affective citizenship, then, all components of “Norwegianness” are elastic and interwoven.¹⁶¹

What I take from this example is that the factors in Vassenden’s framework are not only co-dependent in ways that can make one suspend the significance of the others, as he suggests, but also that they can be combined in ways that produce something that is not reducible to these building blocks. The framework seems to omit the factor that ties these strings together in their various cacophonies: power. The significance of racist social structures and the psychosocial and affective aspects of racism are two main reasons why more Nordic scholars are employing “race” to address racism in this context.

4.9 Critical studies of “race” in the Nordic context

In recent years, interest in critical “race” research in the Nordic context has increased. This can be seen as a result of the increased interest in both postcolonial theory and the significance of colonialism in the Nordics. Recent Nordic research projects on colonialism and the Nordics have combined historical research on the Nordic countries and people’s contributions to the colonial project, and the significance of colonial ideology, including race theory and racism, to cultural formations in this context. The collections *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region* and *Colonial Complicity: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region* have been particularly important for developing this interdisciplinary effort to approach Nordic racial formations in their historical and contemporary expressions.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ For discussions of affective citizenship, see Anne-Marie Fortier, *Multicultural Horizons. Diversity and the Limits of the Civil Nation* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Anne-Marie Fortier, “Proximity by Design? Affective Citizenship and the Management of Unease,” *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 1 (2010); Michalinos Zembylas, “Affect, Citizenship, Politics: Implications for Education,” *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 17, no. 3 (2009).

¹⁶² Suvi Keskinen et al., eds., *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Kristin Loftsdóttir and Lars Jensen, eds., *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012). See also Rikke Andreassen, “Representations of Sexuality and Race at Danish Exhibitions of ‘Exotic’ People at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 20, no. 2 (2011).

The significance of “race” to questions of belonging in the Nordic context has been demonstrated with clarity in the field of critical adoption studies.¹⁶³ This field has been particularly important for isolating racialization from ethnic group, religious, and cultural discrimination. Tobias Hübinette and Carina Tigervall showed how the significance of racial denial in the Swedish context can be traced in trans-racial adoptees and their adoptive parents’ negotiations of racism:

a common pattern in the texts is that when adoptive parents talk about racism, they often turn the question to instead being an issue about the child’s national, ethnic and cultural origin, and a subject of having or not having contact with their “roots”. (...) This pattern is so common that it can almost not be questioned, unless we realise that the situation of being subjected to racist jokes, for instance, really has no connection to a person’s origin. The racist joke comes from the outside, from a racist structure, while a person’s origin and her attitude to it is something else, and really not the same thing as being subjected to racialisation practices in the society.¹⁶⁴

Through stories of adoptees and their adoptive parents, Hübinette and Tigervall clarified that the racism their informants experienced was not about origin or culture, but appearance. Furthermore, the racialization they were subjected to was impressed upon them from the outside as a disciplining effect of a racist structure. In these cases, it becomes clear that racialization is an effect of racism, and that racism, indeed, can, if given sufficient structural support, produce racial formations in a society.

On the issue of racial formations in Norway, the late anthropologist Marianne Gullestad’s work was pioneering and has been of paramount significance. In writing “Learning Racism in the Absence of ‘Race’,” I relied on her studies of Norwegian public discourse about immigration, integration, and Whiteness over the past twenty years. Gullestad’s acute attention to power relations in the formation and reformation of social categories is a distinguishing factor of her work. In her analysis of Norwegian public discourse with attention to hegemony, she draws on a Gramscian cultural studies framework, arguing that the hegemonic discourse on nationhood and immigration in Norway

¹⁶³ See Lene Myong Petersen, *Adopteret: fortællinger om transnational og racialiseret tilblivelse* (Aarhus: Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitetsskole, Aarhus Universitet, 2009); Malinda Andersson, "Through the White Gaze: Racialised Markings of (Un)familiar Bodies in Swedish Transnational Adoption Policy," *Graduate Journal of Social Science* 9, no. 1 (2012); Tobias Hübinette and Malinda Andersson, "Between Colourblindness and Ethnicisation: Transnational Adoptees and Race in a Swedish Context," *Adoption & Fostering* 36, no. 3–4 (2012); Yan Zhao, "Negotiating Differences. Transnational adoption, Norwegianness and Identity Work" (Nordland University, 2012).

¹⁶⁴ Tobias Hübinette and Carina Tigervall, "When Racism Becomes Individualised: Experiences of Racialization Among Adult Adoptees and Adoptive Parents of Parents," in *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*, ed. Suvi Keskinen, Diana Mulinari, and Salla Tuori (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2012), 129.

in the 1990s constituted a binary between the categories “Norwegian” and “immigrant.”¹⁶⁵

“Norwegian” is defined by a shifting combination of language (including accent), heredity, and race, and the category “immigrant” is constituted as “Other” along these same lines. My observations show that this binary is still important in education, with consequences for affective citizenship in contemporary Norway. It is also, significantly, manifested as a racialized binary.

In my discussions of “race” in Norwegian education in the article “Learning Racism in the Absence of ‘Race’,” I draw implicitly and explicitly on this body of knowledge. My focus has been on the affective aspects of struggles over ethnic, religious, and cultural difference in the classroom, however. I describe and discuss discursive, pedagogic, and psychosocial encounters in which culture, religion, gender, histories, and coincidences make and unmake racial boundaries in the space of forty-five minutes. These may all be forgotten ten minutes later, but, come the next encounter, they are part of the knowledge base that we approach the world with, consciously, or, more likely, unconsciously. As the methodological discussion above suggests, however, my orientation towards affective “race struggles” in the classroom has been accompanied by theoretical considerations that can be discussed in light of what the “turn to affect” contributes to studies of gender, sexuality, and “race.”

¹⁶⁵ Gullestad, *Det norske sett med nye øyne. Kritisk analyse av norsk innvandringsdebatt*.

5 *Engaging affect: theoretical and epistemological challenges*

*The only theory worth having is that which you have to fight off, not that which you speak with profound fluency – Stuart Hall*¹⁶⁶

The political and theoretical discussions related above have been accompanied by a passionate engagement with the “turn to affect” in gender and cultural studies. Engaging with affect theory, and also with feminist “new materialism” and the “post-humanities,” inspired me to consider (and partly also reconsider) the epistemological presumptions that had followed my focus on discourse theory. In my early engagement with the affective turn, the affective was not at all clear to me. I had the impression, however, that the buzzword “affect” somehow represented an approach to experiences and issues that was not yet formed in discourse, and thus could not be approached through my primary research method, discourse analysis. The affective turn shared this potential with both the “new materialism” and the effort to approach the “posthumanities.”¹⁶⁷ In her widely read polemic against antisocial and antidiscursive affect theory, Clare Hemmings also grouped the affective turn within the larger “ontological turn,” in which focus on the material world and the body is used to modify and challenge poststructuralist epistemologies.¹⁶⁸ In this chapter, I outline key issues in the feminist debate about the ontological turn, to the extent that they relate to the choices I made in my articles. Furthermore, I outline the key contesting affect theories that I engaged with analytically in these articles, and highlight their contributions to my thinking. Finally, I suggest that my lesson from the “turn to affect” is not so much that one must shed old theories for new, but that one must expand one’s conceptual and methodological repertoire beyond what can be incorporated into one’s existing knowledge structures to maintain the ability to describe and analyze unforeseen aspects of the social.

¹⁶⁶ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies,” in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 261–74.

¹⁶⁷ See Cecilia Åsberg, “Läskunnighet bortom humanioras bekvämlighetszoner,” in *Post-humanistiska nyckeltexter*, ed. Cecilia Åsberg, Martin Hultman, and Francis Lee (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2012).

¹⁶⁸ Clare Hemmings, “Invoking Affect. Cultural Theory and the Ontological Turn,” *Cultural Studies* 19, no. 5 (2005).

5.1 *Debunking discourse? Accusations of logocentrism and feminist responses*

I was first introduced to affect through what read as scathing critiques of feminist scholarship. This was not helpful in my engagement with affect, but had a severe impact on my reading.¹⁶⁹ My sympathies were not won when affect (alongside the posthumanities and new materialism) was proclaimed to be forward-thinking in a polemic against “feminism’s anti-biologism.”¹⁷⁰ Nor did I much appreciate the tendencies in this positioning of the affective turn to claim that feminist poststructuralism reduces both the social and the material world to matters of language and signification. Consider Karen Barad’s assessment:

Language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every “thing” – even materiality – is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation.(...) Language matters. Discourse matters. Culture matters. There is an important sense in which the only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter.¹⁷¹

Barad’s complaint was predated in no less exasperated language by Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank. In their 1995 introduction to Silvan Tomkins’ affect theory, Sedgwick and Frank argued that cultural “theory,” at the time, claimed its truths based on a thought process that relied on antibiologism, an astounding faith in language as the pathway to understanding representation, the prevalence of sight as a model for understanding subject/object relations, and the “structuralist reliance on symbolization through bipolar pairing of elements.”¹⁷² Later, Sedgwick expanded this critique and coined the phrase “paranoid reading” based on Paul Ricoeur’s concept of the “hermeneutics of suspicion.”¹⁷³ If suspicion were to become a methodology, she bemoaned, the practices of paranoid

¹⁶⁹ For a critique and analysis of feminist history writing, see Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Lynne Segal, *Why Feminism?* (London: Polity Press, 1999); Lynne Segal, “Identity Troubles: After the Cultural Turn,” in *Social Research After the Cultural Turn*, ed. Sasha Roseneil and Stephen Frosh (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

¹⁷⁰ Sara Ahmed, “Imaginary Prohibitions: Some Preliminary Remarks on the Founding Gestures of the ‘New Materialism,’” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 15, no. 1 (2008).

¹⁷¹ Karen Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 3 (2003): 802.

¹⁷² Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, eds., *Shame and its Sisters. A Silvan Tomkins Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 1.

¹⁷³ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching, Feeling. Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 125.

and critical reading would become identical. For full measure, I add Brian Massumi's pertinent question about the subversive potential of performativity and subject positions:

How does a body perform its way out of a definitional framework that is not only responsible for its very "construction," but seems to prescript every possible signifying and countersignifying move as a selection from a repertoire of possible permutations on a limited set of predetermined terms?¹⁷⁴

Closer to home, Professor and longtime head of the Oslo Center for Gender Studies, Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen, proclaimed her boredom with poststructuralism, arguing that it had become dogmatic theoretical practice, and that attention to lived life beyond language and power would be helpful. I was very invested in these critiques, and my reading of them was correspondingly affective. Sedgwick was spot-on in her essay titled "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think this Essay is About You."¹⁷⁵ Indeed, I took it all in, never doubting for a moment that it was about me. Regardless of the author's intents, it was about me, in a very meaningful sense. It was about the epistemological and methodological tools that grounded my education, and the political perspectives that formed my critical outlook. It was not about the mistakes of Michel Foucault, or those of Judith Butler. It was about the poststructuralist "Theory" that, according to John Schad, has been "busy declining in a university near you" since the latter part of the twentieth century.¹⁷⁶ It was about the everyday work in fields like gender and cultural studies: "the routinizing critical projects of 'applied theory'; theory as a broad project that now spans the humanities and extends into history and anthropology."¹⁷⁷ That is, the work done by those of us who try to address a social situation with poststructuralist epistemological perspectives, who inevitably oversimplify the world at times, and who sometimes let anger at the powers that be get in the way of pointing to things that are already better. After I had written my opinions on the promise of theoretical inventions also inspired by poststructuralism – particularly the psychosocial turn and the turn to affect – the aforementioned Professor Nielsen pointed out that my response to her critique had made her aware of just how foundational poststructuralist feminism has been to my generation

¹⁷⁴ Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 3.

¹⁷⁵ Sedgwick, *Touching, Feeling. Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*.

¹⁷⁶ Michael Payne and John Schad, *Life After Theory* (London: Continuum, 2003).

¹⁷⁷ Sedgwick and Frank, *Shame and its Sisters. A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, 1.

of scholars.¹⁷⁸ She was right. It seemed that I had found the theories I needed to fight off, which could also challenge me to develop the concepts I had come to speak about with fluency.

Nonetheless, engaging “affect” and what I later came to see as a larger “post-discursive turn” in cultural theory made me neither willing, nor able, to shed the insights of poststructural feminism and discourse theory that I had relied on to that point.¹⁷⁹ Claims about feminist research that came from the most ardent proponents of the “ontological turn” seemed willfully wrong, as much as they were obviously right when claiming that cultural theory had become somewhat overly focused on knowledge that could be gleaned from language. A point that has been acknowledged by some critiques of poststructuralism, but that hasn’t made the headlines or abstracts of their texts, is that the issues raised with poststructuralist critique here clearly echo the poststructuralists’ critique of structuralism. The emphasis on ideology and pervasiveness of structure in language is exactly what poststructuralism was initially geared at mending. While these issues may still be present in a lot of gender and cultural studies analyses, by aiming that critique at the theoretical projects of poststructuralism, they miss the target.

Another feature of the above critiques of feminist poststructuralism is that attention to the body is figured as a novelty. As both Sara Ahmed and Clare Hemmings have pointed out, this view finds consensus only through a selective reading, in which particularly embodied traditions in cultural theory, such as feminist standpoint theory, Black feminism, and postcolonial theory, are left out.¹⁸⁰ It is rather more helpful to see current engagements with affect as continuations of critical feminist perspectives, as Anu Koivunen suggested. Koivunen identified four main traditions that the “turn to affect” draws on: a) critiques of the Cartesian subject; b) the embodied nature of the subject; c) critiques of social constructionist approaches to the subject, signification and the social, and histories; and d) critiques of emotion cultures. These traditions attest to the fact that the “turn to

¹⁷⁸ See Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen, "Totalteorier og andre teorier," *Tidsskrift for kønnsforskning* 34, no. 3 (2010); Stine H. Bang Svendsen, "Vendinger etter poststrukturalismen," *Tidsskrift for kønnsforskning* 34, no. 2 (2010).

¹⁷⁹ Stine H. Bang Svendsen, "Affektivitet og postdiskursiv teori," *Tidsskrift for kønnsforskning* 36, no. 3–4 (2012).

¹⁸⁰ Hemmings, "Invoking Affect. Cultural Theory and the Ontological Turn": 558; Ahmed, "Imaginary Prohibitions: Some Preliminary Remarks on the Founding Gestures of the 'New Materialism'."

affect is all but new to feminist theory, but rather firmly rooted in feminist investigations of the social and the subject at least since the 1980s.”¹⁸¹ Koivunen asked, “What, if not about work with affects, is the long history of feminist engagement with psychoanalysis?” Furthermore, she underlined notes that “a turn to affect can be detected both against and within the poststructuralist, social constructionist theories of subject and power.”¹⁸² In this light, one can question (as Koivunen did), whether the affective turn has any new value. The most favored example of poststructuralism’s anti-body/material sentiment, queer theory, is a case in point. This theoretical tradition, from de Lauretis to Butler and Sedgwick, is marked by a rigorous engagement with psychoanalytic thought, as well as discourse theory and Foucauldian understandings of power.¹⁸³

In sum, denouncing “poststructuralism” for affect or the “new-materialism” amounts to a partial reading of feminist theory’s history that is not helpful for the field or for the purpose of cultural analysis. On the contrary, the feminist history of engagement with affect in different forms is a source of knowledge that can be rediscovered by students such as myself, who have been intrigued by affect to approach new aspects of the social. This being said, the effort to de-center discourse in cultural analysis that turning to affect has contributed to has been important for the development of both established and new methodologies and theories.

5.2 Approaching the singularity of affect

Affect is “a philosophical tool that helps to build perspectives,” David R. Cole noted.¹⁸⁴ The “turn to affect” in cultural studies attests to the variety of theoretical perspectives that affect may contribute to.¹⁸⁵ Affect has figured in theories about the cultural significance of the human body’s response

¹⁸¹ Anu Koivunen, “An Affective Turn? Reimagining the Subject in Feminist Theory,” in *Working with Affect in Feminist Readings. Disturbing Differences*, ed. Marianne Liljeström and Susanna Paasonen (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 11, 22.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸³ Segal, *Why feminism?*

¹⁸⁴ David R. Cole, “The Actions of Affect in Deleuze: Others Using Language and the Language that We Make...” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 43, no. 6 (2011): 550.

¹⁸⁵ Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean O’Malley Halley, eds., *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

systems, as well as in conceptualizations of the social as an ongoing process of change.¹⁸⁶ With the affective turn, the role of affect in the longstanding theoretical projects of psychoanalytic, Marxist and feminist cultural theory has also been highlighted.¹⁸⁷ In the articles included here, primarily Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology, psychosocial perspectives on affect, and Black feminist approaches are explicitly explored. As already noted, there are analytically significant conflicts between these perspectives, despite the fact that they all share a concept of affect. The key issue in the complaints about affect theory as part of the “ontological turn,” as I discussed above, is the question of whether affect is “singular,” in the sense that it works in a different register from language, social structures, and feelings. My first encounter with “singular” affect was through Eve Sedgwick’s work on the affect theory of psychologist Silvan Tomkins (1911–1991). The relatively significant position these theories have had in the field and to my thinking make them worth mentioning here, even if they are not brought forward in the articles.

Sedgwick was interested in Tomkins’ work on the affect system’s singularity in relation to other bodily mechanisms, and in relation to social structures. Tomkins observed that the links we often assume between an affective response and a given event are learned, not innate, responses. In the following quote, he relates his surprise over this discovery:

I almost fell out of my chair in surprise and excitement when I suddenly realized that the panic of one who experiences the suffocation of interruption of his vital air supply has nothing to do with the anoxic drive signal per se [since gradual loss of oxygen, even when fatal, produces no panic]. A human being can be, and often is, terrified of anything under the sun. It was a short step to see that excitement has nothing to do with sexuality and hunger, and that the apparent urgency of the drive system was borrowed from its co-assembly with appropriate affects as necessary amplifiers.¹⁸⁸

There is simply no given cause for an affective response; we are free to distribute our affective investments in a myriad of places. One person may be soothed by silence, another terrified. Some

¹⁸⁶ Sedgwick and Frank, *Shame and its Sisters. A Silvan Tomkins Reader*; Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*.

¹⁸⁷ Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Stephen Frosh, *Feelings* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011); Gail A. Lewis, “In the Absence of Truth at Least Not a Lie: Journeys Toward Self, Other and Relatedness,” *Psychology of Women Section Review* 14, no. 1 (2012).

¹⁸⁸ Silvan Samuel Tomkins, “The Quest for Primary Motives. Biography and Autobiography of an Idea,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 41, no. 2 (1981): 309. See also Sedgwick and Frank, *Shame and its Sisters. A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, 8.

people find the first snowfall elating, while others anticipate a severe winter depression. The object of affective investment is arbitrary. A drive in Freud's sense, such as hunger, has a given universal solution – food – and its felt immediacy lessens with eating.¹⁸⁹ No such luck with affects. Indeed, they can produce a desperate sense of deprivation, even if the cause is the loss of love, which induces grief, to which there is no remedy readily available. Joy does not bring an end to enjoyment; nor does sadness alleviate grief. On the contrary, affects loop and are self-reinforcing.

Tomkins's work (and Sedgwick's thinking around it) offered me a way to think about the body, and how affective responses interfere with it in the social settings I was interested in. It taught me the key point that it is always difficult to specify the exact reasons for affective responses, even if some responses are common in a culture. I tried to use Tomkins's theories to suggest that teachers' investment in being good teachers produced quite visible shame responses when they felt that they had failed in teaching about diversity and racism. Drawing on Elspeth Probyn's highly generative work on shame, in which she couples Tomkins's insights about the affect system with a Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology, I also tried to suggest that shame could be a transformative power that could motivate these teachers to act differently.¹⁹⁰ After presenting these analyses to colleagues, however, I thought better of it.¹⁹¹ Lynne Segal pointed out that disavowal is the more likely response to shame in the classroom than is critical self-assessment and change, and was right. My analyses were too hopeful, and not well enough founded. As both the methodological reflections above and the articles here show, I had more luck tracing affect both through psychoanalytic theory and as a matter of intensity that could be traced in social situations.

For the purpose of situational analysis, Deleuzo-Guattarian affect can be conceptualized as a situational matter, in which the individual may take part but never fully embody. In the notes to his translation of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, Brian Massumi comments

¹⁸⁹ Sedgwick and Frank, *Shame and its Sisters. A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, 63.

¹⁹⁰ Elspeth Probyn, *Blush. Faces of Shame* (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). For an intriguing collection that draws on a similar theoretical constellation in the Nordic context, see Maja Bissenbakker Fredriksen, "Styr Dine Følelser! En Affektiv Vending," *Varia* 2012, no. 9 (2012).

¹⁹¹ Thanks to Lynne Segal and the "Affective Displacements" seminar at the University of Bergen in May 2012 for helping me re-assess those analyses.

that affect in the Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology is a prepersonal matter of intensity that implies the heightening or reduction of potential in any given body.¹⁹² Deleuze and Guattari argued that “affect is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel.”¹⁹³ Clearly, they were not writing about the bodily affect system that Tomkins was concerned with, but a different, albeit related, phenomenon.

In *Parables of the Virtual* (2002), Massumi distinguishes between affect and emotion, following Deleuze and Guattari. This distinction serves to underline the contrast between affective intensity and individual feeling states. It also establishes a contrast to cognition. Emotions are experiences that we can make sense of, find a name for, and possibly relate to others, while affect denotes intensities that elude our recognition and understanding. However, emotions are not irrelevant to affect. Affect is “captured” and “closed” when experiences are formed and “qualified” as cognition or feelings. Massumi writes that “emotion is the most intense (most contracted) expression of that capture – and of the fact that something has always and again escaped.”¹⁹⁴ It follows from this definition that affect as intensity can be captured by a number of different actions, words or emotions (though always just partly), and in various ways. Affect has no inherent meaning or direction; it takes both the directions that the situation presents, but also the directions that are not available to consciousness. Massumi argues that discussion between the two “foundationalisms” of the human as a free agent and as a determination of social forces should be replaced by centering the in-between as the ontological place of relation (Massumi 2002a).

This “place of relation” includes relations between bodies of humans, ideas, and institutions, and it follows from this focus on the in-between that being affected and affecting other bodies is a process of displacement through which we can never fully know ourselves. It also follows that affecting and being affected is an ontological matter. Massumi hovers close to, but does not really

¹⁹² Massumi, Brian, “Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgements,” in *A Thousand Plateaus*, ed. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (New York and London: Continuum, 2004), xvii.

¹⁹³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2004; reprint, 2011), 265.

¹⁹⁴ Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, 35.

commit to, analyses of the social world. In *Parables of the Virtual*, he presents a number of analogies for social issues. The parable he uses to illustrate “The Political Economy of Belonging and the Logic of Relation” is a soccer game. Through an exploration of the logics of the game, he suggests that the field of the social is not determined by the rules of the game or the individual player. These are not even conditions. The condition is the field – the open patch of grass, the goalposts. “The goals polarize the field between them.” The ball is the subject matter. The field is a field of potential, due to the tension between the goals. The players are not even subjects of the game, for the subject is the ball. He writes that:

The players, in the heat of the game, are drawn out of themselves. Any player who is conscious of himself as he kicks, misses. Self-consciousness is a negative condition of the play. The players’ reflective sense of themselves as subjects is a source of interference that must be minimized for the play to channel smoothly. When a player readies a kick, she is not looking at the ball so much as she is looking past it.(...) Potential sensed, the player plays her field directly. Potential is the space of play – or would be, were it a space. It is a modification of a space.¹⁹⁵

It is in this modified space that we become, as we come to belong to the events we take part in. In playing out the field of potential, without self-conscious inhibition, we come to belong to new modes of being. This is the mode of belonging that Elspeth Probyn explores in *Outside Belonging*, as a surface matter rather than a matter of rootedness.¹⁹⁶ It requires that we are willing to remain beside ourselves in affective action, so that our selves do not get in the way of the becoming:

belonging is a dynamic, corporeal “abstraction”; the “drawing off” (transductive conversion) of the corporeal into its dynamism (yielding the event). Belonging is unmediated, and under way, never already-constituted. It is the openness of bodies to each other and to what they are not – the incorporeality of the event.¹⁹⁷

In “Promising Failures,” I draw these ideas about “becomings” as aspects of events in the classroom that produce modifications in the “rules” of the common space. I analyze these situations through Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, rather than Massumi’s adaptation of these terms, because I felt that Massumi’s parables would take too much attention away from the situations I wanted to shed light on.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 74.

¹⁹⁶ Elspeth Probyn, *Outside Belongings* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

¹⁹⁷ Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, 76.

The belonging component of Massumi's parable was important for my understanding of the relationship between "becoming" and "belonging." The affective interactions I trace in "Promising Failures" illustrate that belonging is necessarily an effect of becoming. Expecting the other to belong, one has to commit one's self to the process of coming together. This is a simple, but no less crucial, point, which has been too often overlooked in studies of "ethnic minority" subjects. Coming to belong involves displacement for all involved bodies. It requires one to go out of the way to meet the other, and this is true for majoritarian as well as minoritarian subjects.

Homi Bhabha addressed this point beautifully with a quote from Horkheimer: "Always and ever differently the bridge escorts the lingering and hastening ways of men to and fro, so they may get to other banks.(...) The bridge *gathers* as a passage that crosses."¹⁹⁸ That the process reads poetically, here, shouldn't lead us to believe that it is always pleasant. Nor should it make us think that people rush to the bridge. On the contrary, there are all too few moments of the kind that Massumi describes in *Parables of the Virtual*, even in the average soccer game. In ordinary, everyday interaction, as well as in some exceptional interactions, people are nowhere near the available bridges of becoming/belonging. This problem prompted me to search less hopeful affect theories, in case they might help me approach the affective aspects of what was going on in the class I analyzed in "Learning Racism in the Absence of 'Race'." For all of affect's potential in intensity, there are also situations in which this potential is "stolen," as Deleuze and Guattari put it, by the use of power. This has been a major concern in the feminist reception of the turn to affect, in which important arguments have been put forth to challenge the Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology.

5.3 Discourse, subjectivity and affect

Hemmings' primary beef with affect in cultural studies (and as it appears in both Sedgwick and Massumi's work) is the notion of affect as autonomous – as distinct from feeling and social

¹⁹⁸ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), 7.

structures.¹⁹⁹ She argued the “autonomy,” or “freedom,” of affect is structured along gendered and ethnic lines: “only for certain subjects can affect be thought of as attaching in an open way; others are so over-associated with affect that they themselves are the object of affective transfer.”²⁰⁰ This point, which Sara Ahmed has written extensively on, is essential for addressing the affective dimensions of racism, sexism, and homophobia.²⁰¹ Deleuzo-Guattarian approaches to difference and the potential for “becoming” have been questioned from feminist and anti-racist quarters for not allowing the subjective experience of oppression enough attention to enable theories of its overcoming. This conflict is particularly important for the concept of “race” in cultural studies. Mapping emergent and hybrid identities and the search for “newness in the world” have been important pursuits among scholars in this field.²⁰² Claire Alexander delivered a scathing critique of the popularity of such endeavors. She did not explicitly reference a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach to questions of race and racism, but her comments are relevant for that framework as well:

the alacrity with which academics – white, black and Asian – have abandoned “black” as a unifying category in the (neo-anthropological) search for new, emergent, previously undiscovered and preferably unimaginable identities is matched only by the haste to discard the empirical analysis of racism in the rush to gain the more fashionable (and morally pure) high ground of theoretical marginality.²⁰³

Here, Alexander suggests that one should be wary of the haste towards “newness” when it comes to “race,” because it seems to be asserted at the expense of accounting for the arresting, and never fashionable, existence of racism and racialization. In a critique of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “becoming,” Sara Ahmed argued that the focus on moving beyond subjectivity “is in itself implicated in the writing of a specific kind of subjectivity; a subjectivity that can move, that is unfettered, and

¹⁹⁹ This was also a concern voiced by Nielsen in the aforementioned discussion in the *Tidsskrift for kønnsforskning*. See Nielsen, “Totalteorier og andre teorier.”

²⁰⁰ Hemmings, “Invoking Affect. Cultural Theory and the Ontological Turn”: 561.

²⁰¹ See Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters. Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (London: Routledge, 2000); Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004); Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

²⁰² Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. See also Hall, Stuart, “New Ethnicities,” in *Stuart Hall. Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); Lawrence Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

²⁰³ Claire Alexander, “Beyond Black: Re-Thinking the Colour/Culture Divide,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, no. 4 (2002): 553.

that has the privilege of fluidity and transformability.”²⁰⁴ Such subjects tend to be White as well as masculine. This critical perspective on “becoming” suggests that we ask whether the potential for “becoming” in education is different for different actors, and what role “race,” gender, and class play in determining a subject’s potential in a process of becoming.

The concerns Ahmed voiced with Deleuze and Guattari’s ontology are very important to the analytic efforts in both “Learning Racism in the Absence of ‘Race’” and “Promising Failures.” However, I hope that the analysis in “Promising Failures” shows that it is possible to make an analysis of “becoming” through affective intensity that does not disregard the acute significance of subject positions or existing power inequalities. I share Ahmed’s concerns, but I also believe there are social interactions that expand the potential of every involved subject, and that these differ from interactions in which the privileged thrive at the expense of the oppressed. I also agree that Deleuze and Guattari’s theoretical framework does not provide the most illuminating perspectives on such arresting and oppressive interaction, and that such social issues might require a different approach.

Ahmed suggested that thinking about power structures and subjectivity makes the distinction between affect and emotion difficult to uphold. She preferred the “messiness of the experiential” to the neat distinction between affect and emotion. It is clearly possible to distinguish the two, in theory, she argued, but, in experiential terms, affect and emotion are “contiguous; they slide into each other, they stick, and cohere, even when they are separated.”²⁰⁵ In her essay “Creating Disturbance” (2010), she addresses these points in relation to the problem of differentiating between affect and emotion in regards to Brian Massumi’s concept of affect:

I would argue that this distinction between affect and emotions under-describes the work of emotions, which involve forms of intensity, bodily orientation and direction that are not simply about “subjective content” or qualification of intensity. Emotions are not after-thoughts but shape how bodies are moved by the worlds they inhabit. I would also argue that the intensities that Massumi describes as affect are “directed” as well as “qualified” or even

²⁰⁴ Sara Ahmed, *Differences that Matter. Feminist Theory and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 78.

²⁰⁵ Ahmed, Sara, “Creating Disturbance: Feminism, Happiness and Affective Differences,” in *Working with Affect in Feminist Readings*, ed. Marianne Liljeström and Susanna Paasonen (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 32. See also Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*: 230–31.

“congealed”: this directedness is not simply about subjects and inferior feeling states but about how things cohere *in a certain way*.²⁰⁶

Ahmed’s own take on affect, which seems to be constituted of a critical constellation of phenomenological, Black feminist, psychoanalytic, and Marxist insights, suggests a model for how things “cohere in a certain way.” The purpose of her theory of “affective economies” is to shed light on the circulation between signs and objects that creates affective value. This circulation, she argues, produces the “very effect of the surfaces and boundaries of bodies and worlds.” The process depends on signification. While affect does not “reside in an object or sign,” she writes, it does reside “in the circulation between objects and signs.”²⁰⁷ Ahmed invokes the model of the capitalist monetary system to illustrate this effect: affective charges are a kind of exchange effect. Specifically, Marx’s notion of surplus value is used to highlight how signs can be affectively charged through circulation: “The value originally advanced, not only remains intact while in circulation, but increases its magnitude, adds to itself a surplus value or is valorized. *And this movement converts it into capital.*”²⁰⁸ Of signs, Ahmed writes that “the more they circulate, the more affective they become, and the more they appear to ‘contain’ affect.”²⁰⁹

As much as I have tried to understand exactly how this process works, I am only able to make a somewhat circular discursively-based determinism of it; words, images, and styles acquire affect through their history of use, and, hence, they give rise to affects when put to use. This is often true, however, and I believe it is at stake in “Learning Racism in the Absence of ‘Race’,” when the teacher brings up and then denies the term *neger* in the classroom. But while this theory does explain how some affectively-charged signs, such as “race,” have an amazing ability to cause strong affective responses when circulated, I was not content with only pointing out this tendency in my analyses.

Ahmed’s work on the cultural politics of emotion and affect was very important for my thinking about the affective life of racism, sexism, and homophobia. Her understanding of affect is a

²⁰⁶ Ahmed, “Creating Disturbance: Feminism, Happiness and Affective Differences,” 32.

²⁰⁷ Sara Ahmed, “Affective Economies,” *Social Text* 22, no. 79 (2004): 120.

²⁰⁸ Karl Marx cited in *ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 121.

theoretical constellation that draws on several sources in cultural theory, which, at its best, formulates how social structures can be truly felt, despite their abstract nature. For all my enthusiasm, however, I was not able to efficiently put Ahmed's theories to work in my analyses in ways that articulated more than a repetition of her original analytic points. The highly generative concept of "affective economies," the "stickiness" of signs, and the notion of "alignment" with social structures enabled me to formulate the beginnings of my analyses, but not to move deeper into the educational encounters I wanted to understand. To more fully explore the "messiness" of the experiential in educational encounters, I turned to the psychosocial and Black feminist perspectives that Ahmed also relied on in her work.

5.4 Psychosocial perspectives

Psychosocial perspectives can highlight the interface between the social and the affective in a way that is attuned to people's history of experience. Analytic approaches informed by psychoanalysis are particularly useful for approaching the affective dimensions of "race" and racism.²¹⁰ Psychosocial theories have been a component of feminist and queer theory for a long time, both in Norway and internationally,²¹¹ but have also seen something of a revival alongside the "turn to affect." Specifically, psychoanalytic perspectives on social and cultural issues have received a boost in attention, as scholars in both the social sciences and the humanities have looked to social theories to approach the psychic dimensions of social phenomena. In recent years, researchers at the Birkbeck Center for Psychosocial Studies and associated scholars in the UK have been crucial for the development of psychosocial perspectives on culture.²¹² From a different angle, Black feminist scholars such as Audre Lorde, bell hooks, and Thandeka have geared attention to the felt dimensions

²¹⁰ Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox, Kindle ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1967); Hook, Derek, "Fanon and the Psychoanalysis of Racism," in *Critical Psychology*, ed. Derek Hook (Landsowne, South Africa: Juta Academic Publishing, 2004); Lewis, "In the Absence of Truth at Least Not a Lie: Journeys toward Self, Other and Relatedness"; Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continents. Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2003).

²¹¹ See Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen, "The Magic Writing-Pad – On Gender and Identity Work," *Young* 4, no. 3 (1996); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Segal, *Why Feminism?*

²¹² Stephen Frosh and Lisa Baraitser, "Psychoanalysis and Psychosocial Studies," *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* 13, no. 4 (2008).

of social structures and the psychic dimensions of gender, sexuality, and race relations.²¹³ Gail Lewis's work on psychosocial perspectives on racism has brought these traditions together in empirical analyses of gendered and racialized interactions in social work.²¹⁴ Recently, she also drew on these traditions to develop a psychosocial approach to racism, particularly inspired by the work of Melanie Klein (1882–1960).²¹⁵ Klein was also a favorite of Sedgwick's, and her theories were foundational for Sedgwick's distinction between "paranoid" and "reparative" reading, which I touched on above and will return to.²¹⁶

The most common understanding of affect in everyday usage relies on the psychoanalytic understanding of affects as immediate sensory experiences, charges or discharges, based in the human drive system.²¹⁷ In psychoanalytic discourse, feelings represent sensory experiences that have undergone a process of sense-making, "whereby bodily responses to events, emotions, affective flows and sudden or elicited memories are perceived and transformed into feeling states."²¹⁸ In this definition, there is a distinction between affect and emotion, but the distinction is different from that of Deleuze and Guattari because, in psychoanalytic discourse, affects are rooted in bodies, not worlds. Here, affect, as well as emotion, is a physical phenomenon, but affects are, importantly, sensory experiences that have not been necessarily transformed into something one can conceive of as a feeling.

The psychoanalytic conception of affect and emotion helped me articulate why the educational encounters I wrote about in "Learning Racism in the Absence of 'Race'" and "Promising Failures" were so important for me to address, and so easy for me to single out as material for close analysis. In his book *After Words* (2002), Stephen Frosh outlines the experience of "ruptures in the ordinary,"

²¹³ Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider. Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984); bell hooks, *Killing Rage* (New York: Holt & Co, 1995); Thandeka, *Learning to be White. Money, Race and God in America* (New York: Continuum, 1999).

²¹⁴ Yasmin Gunaratnam and Gail Lewis, "Racialising Emotional Labour and Emotionalising Racialised Labour: Anger, Fear and Shame in Social Welfare," *Journal of Social Work Practice* 15, no. 2 (2001); Gail Lewis, 'Race', *Gender, Social Welfare: Encounters in a Postcolonial Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

²¹⁵ Lewis, "In the absence of truth at least not a lie: journeys toward self, other and relatedness."

²¹⁶ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Melanie Klein and the Difference Affect Makes," in *The Weather in Proust*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2011).

²¹⁷ Andrè Green, *The Fabric of Affect in the Psychoanalytic Discourse*, trans. Alan Sheridan, Kindle ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 69.

²¹⁸ Frosh, *Feelings*, 21.

which leave us dumbfounded and at a loss for words and explanation. It is possible to make a narrative of these ruptures, but only slowly and painstakingly after the event has passed; he notes: “At the time of experience, the main event was not a discursive, linguistic one which could be transformed into a piece of knowledge.”²¹⁹ Both articles, which draw upon observation material, are products of my attempts to come to grips with events that felt like raw affective experiences that verbal interaction could not fully represent, and that took me a long time to sort through and approach analytically. In “Learning Racism in the Absence of ‘Race’,” I trace what I experienced as a terrible and haunting moment, where things were not as they should have been in the classroom and showed no sign of getting better, to paraphrase Avery Gordon.²²⁰ “Promising Failures” traces a similarly dumbfounding experience, which I spent a lot of time sorting through. However, the experience contained more pleasant surprises.

5.5 *Affective assemblages*

The efforts to account for affect and its conceptual contributions in various theoretical schools that I outlined above made it possible for me to approach the event as an object of study – not as it unfolds in the pages of a novel or as it is condensed in a play, but as it happens in ordinary everyday action with staggering intensity. As Kathleen Stewart points out in her book, *Ordinary Affects*, “the ordinary can turn on you”:

Lodged in habits, conceits, and the loving and deadly contacts of everyday sociality, it can catch you up in something bad. Or good.
Or it can start out as one thing and then flip into something else altogether.
One thing leads to another. An expectation is dashed or fulfilled. An ordinary floating state of things goes sour or takes off into something amazing and good. Either way, things turn out to be not what you thought they were.²²¹

When the ordinary turns on a person, it tends to yield an event. Good or bad, something happens that amounts to surprise; actions, reactions, and inferences belong to one another and produce a

²¹⁹ Frosh, *After Words. The Personal in Gender, Culture and Psychotherapy* (London and New York: Palgrave, 2002), 128.

²²⁰ Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

²²¹ Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 106.

singular and unique event. It is an “arced unfolding” that yields a place in the midst of action, from which one can think and study.²²²

Lawrence Grossberg helpfully pointed out that contemporary discussions about different takes on affect in cultural theory are misleading, because they take different views of the affective as alternatives to one another, when they, in fact, tend to describe the same phenomenon on different levels.²²³ Affect, he argued, exists on three different levels. Firstly, there is affect that defines the realm of the virtual, or potential. This level is highlighted in the Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology. Secondly, there is the “actual as affective,” which points to how bodies affect one another. Black feminist, psychobiological, and psychoanalytic approaches have much to contribute on that level. Thirdly, there is affect as it refers to regimes of expression and social organization.²²⁴ This is the level that Franz Fanon captures in his psychoanalytic conceptualization of race, and the level that Sara Ahmed highlights in her analysis of the cultural politics of emotion.²²⁵

I have presented my engagement with affect in terms of a theoretical struggle, rather than a sensible assemblage of different theoretical levels, because the level of analysis impacts on the way situations are analyzed. The level that is foregrounded influence what the analysis can teach us the most about. Both methodological and theoretical choices in cultural analysis should be settled by the knowledge potential of the material at hand. This requires a broad methodological and theoretical repertoire, but also a critical assessment of the context the analysis speaks to.

²²² Brian Massumi, *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts*, Kindle ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 132–35.

²²³ Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense*, 194.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 194.

²²⁵ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*; Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.

6 Arbitrary closures and reparative readings

The articles that follow this introductory discussion attest to the empirical work and analyses that have helped me learn to articulate the problems and promises of studying sexuality and “race” in the contemporary Norwegian context that I have outlined in this introduction. The articles are concrete, empirical, and conclusive. As much as I value the practice of critique, it should also be accompanied by clear standpoints on social issues of significance. Homi Bhabha has noted that the “arbitrary closure” is necessary for political agency. That does not mean that the knowledge is closed from that point onwards, Stuart Hall has noted, only that that it is necessary to take a stance to effectively influence society.²²⁶ Clearly, it is no less crucial to reassess ones conclusions in light of deepened insight or political changes.

The first article is the most practice oriented of the four. Not only does it analyze existing education practice and politics, it also considers practical interventions. The second and third are more focused on critique of existing education practice, and attempt to flesh out and explain the significance of the current articulation of “race” and sexuality in textbooks, and the social significance of the denial of “race” as a concept. The fourth explores the significance of the organization of power in education, and suggests that the critique of colonial and heteronormative ideology in education, which the other articles are invested in, need to be supplemented.

In hindsight, I see this strategic problem occurring already in the first article, “Elusive Sex Acts.” The article seems inconclusive on the question of whether education for sexual pleasure is at all possible within teacher-led comprehensive sex education. There is a doubt about the efficacy of curricular reform for social change that runs through the article, whilst it simultaneously accounts for efforts to make these changes. Through working with “Promising Failures,” which comes last below, I found that this problem was crucial to my own thinking about education. There more colonial and heterosexist ideological content in education we are weighed down by, the more liberating this insight is: “the problem of education is not ideology, but the social organization of

²²⁶ Hall, “Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies,” 264.

power.”²²⁷ This insight from the empirical analyses mirrors the discussion above concerning the relationship between discourse and affect. The “organization of power” can be seen as a name for the school as a “body without organs” that is constituted by the affects, actions, rules, thoughts and objects. It is exceedingly difficult to determine its exact formation at any given time.

Although I used different theoretical perspectives to bring out the analyses in “Learning Racism in the Absence of ‘Race’” and “Promising Failures,” the latter article was developed in response to the bleak insights of the first. “Promising Failures” can be seen as a reparative reading that responds to both the terrible insights about the perpetuation of racist discourse and the interaction in Norwegian pedagogic texts and classrooms that “Sexuality in Norwegian Textbooks: Constructing and Controlling Ethnic Borders” and “Learning Racism in the Absence of ‘Race’” attest to. It can also be seen as an attempt to come to terms with the limits of ideological reform initiatives in education and elsewhere, which “Elusive Sex Acts” reveals my affective investments in.

Drawing on Melanie Klein’s theoretical framework, Sedgwick addressed the significance of tending to surprises and ruptures in the everyday, even if they are terrible. In her argument against “paranoid reading,” she reminds us of the following:

Because there can be terrible surprises, however, there can also be good ones. Hope, often a fracturing, even a traumatic thing to experience, is among the energies by which the reparatively positioned reader tries to organize the fragments and part-objects she encounters or creates. Because the reader has room to realize that the future may be different from the present, it is also possible for her to entertain such profoundly painful, profoundly relieving, ethically crucial possibilities as that the past, in turn, could have happened differently from the way it actually did.²²⁸

The hope that Sedgwick invokes here is not a naïve, or indeed cruel, optimism.²²⁹ It is the hope that can be nurtured in the depressive position in Melanie Klein’s development psychology, where the subject tries to incorporate the parts of herself that she has split off and rejected, and come to terms with both the good and the bad in herself and in the society in which she resides.

²²⁷ Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. “Capitalism: A Very Special Delirium.” *Chaosophy*. Ed. Sylvere Lothringer. *Autonome/Semiotexte* (1995): 119-50.

²²⁸ Sedgwick, *Touching, Feeling. Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, 146.

²²⁹ See Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*.

I noted above that the learning I had to do write the last article here amounted to an exercise in reparative reading for me. It also required a lot of unlearning. It is a basic insight in critical pedagogy that “learning to become,” to introduce Sharon Todd’s psychoanalytic take on “becoming,” through education is a process that requires dealing with the loss of what one used to know.²³⁰ Todd writes that “in asking students to produce meaningful relationships with texts, ideas or representations, we are not only engaged in a ‘provocation of semiosis,’ but we may be provoking an ontological crisis of sorts.”²³¹ Drawing on Klein, Todd suggests that education needs to take into account the violence experienced by the child through continuously having ones sense of self impinged upon and altered by the Other. The potential for a nonviolent relation, she argues, lies in the teacher’s openness for what is returned to her in the inherently unpredictable encounter between student and curriculum, particularly in those instances where “learning” as such breaks down, and students struggle “to make sense out of and symbolize their relationship to curriculum.”²³²

Todd’s thoughts about ethically responsible teaching are relevant also for research and political practice that wants to point to possibilities for social change. As significant as the conceptual politics of the curriculum are, (or even those of the social order), the struggles over difference and social change I discuss in the articles here reflect that social responsibility is a much more complex project in practice. David Eng has importantly pointed out that to “take responsibility” faced with immense and far reaching violence of racism is “as much an affective as a political affair.”²³³ In “Learning racism without ‘race’” I suggest that it is necessary to for Nordic societies to engage in an admittedly difficult process of unlearning of colorblindness, which might amount to the kind of “ontological crisis” that Todd describes here, to be able deal more effectively with racism. On a different note, Eng notes that the notion of affective “kinship” between struggles against homophobia and racism

²³⁰ Sharon Todd, *Learning from the Other. Levinas, Psychoanalysis, and Ethical Possibilities in Education*, ed. Deborah P. Britzman, *Second Thoughts: New Theoretical Formations* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003). See also Kumashiro, *Troubling Education: Queer Activism and Antioppressive Education*; Lather, *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern*.

²³¹ Todd, *Learning from the Other*, 18.

²³² *Ibid*, 32.

²³³ David Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship. Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 22.

seems a way forward for articulating the affinities that can be found between struggles against homophobia, sexism and racism.²³⁴ This affective move avoids the reduction of the struggle against racism to an analogy of the struggle of sexual liberation or vice versa, while acknowledging that there is such a thing as a felt experience of being subjected to the violence of categorical “difference.”

The perspectives I outline here have been available to me, and latent in my analyses, throughout most of the time I have spent working on the articles below. Learning what these insights amount to for political, educational and academic practice is an affective process that requires time and work, however. There is indeed a difference between knowing and realizing, as Sedgwick noted: “It’s hard to recognize that your whole being, your soul doesn’t move at the speed of your cognition... That it could take you a year to really know something that you intellectually believe in a second.”²³⁵ To also learn “how not to feel ashamed of the amount of time things take, or the recalcitrance of emotional or personal change” is not only personal necessity, but a necessity for approaching the cultural politics of sexuality and “race” in education and elsewhere in an ethically and politically meaningful way.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Maria Russo, “The Reeducation of a Queer Theorist. An Interview with Eve Sedgwick,” in *Salon* (www.salon.com, 1999).

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8 Article one

Elusive sex acts: pleasure and politics in Norwegian sex education

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Abstract

While there is little political opposition towards sex education as such in Norway, recent attempts at reforming the subject reveal underlying heteronormative presumptions that seem resistant to reform. While a focus on homosexuality is included in the national curriculum at all levels of compulsory education, the sexual practices involved in same-sex relations remain conspicuously absent from the education provided. This paper provides an overview of contemporary Norwegian sex education, and discusses its primary shortcoming: the absence of a focus on sex acts other than coitus. The political challenges to good sex education in Norway emerge when this absence of sex acts is addressed by innovative teaching programmes that focus on sexual pleasure. Norwegian political consensus about a free and equal sexual culture does not seem able to embrace the discussion of specific sexual practices in the classroom.

Keywords: sex education; politics; homosexuality; Norway; queer

8.1 Introduction

In Norwegian social science textbooks, Nordic sexual culture is commonly described by using the terms 'free', 'equal' and 'liberal'. One textbook recounts that: 'in Norway and the Nordic countries, we are known for having a free relationship to expressing love. We are likely to be seen as *liberal* or free-minded in relation to [public displays of] affection, family arrangements, sexuality and nudity' (Berner, Borge, and Olsen 2007, 38; Røthing and Svendsen 2009, 123). Against this context, in this paper I discuss how a Norwegian 'national sex public' emerges through sex education in ways that produce silences and injustices that are familiar in queer critiques of sex education across a number of contexts, in spite of its self-perception as exceptionally 'free', equal' and homotolerant. The content and framework of Norwegian sex education present problems that cannot be solved only by improving coverage and quality. Research on sex education in Norway reveals major shortcomings

that attempts at reform informed by both the feminist, and lesbian and gay movements have thus far failed to address. These issues, which will be discussed in further detail, primarily involve the absence of discussion about sexual practices and desire in sex education. This 'problem with sex' can be informed by a queer critique of Norwegian attempts at producing gender equality and LGBT inclusiveness in sex education.

Berlant and Warner argue in their influential essay 'Sex in Public' that the 'national sex public' that is produced in the USA protects 'the zone of heterosexual privacy' through the 'spectacular demonisation of any represented sex' (1998, 550). The zone of privacy has been defined as the home and the family, and sex acts outdoors, or in other 'publics', are demonised. Queer sex acts have been a notorious example of such practices, as has pornography, and prostitution. In the Nordic context, the zone of sexual privacy is similarly constituted by regulations of public, and represented sex. Sweden notably criminalised the purchase of sex in efforts to further restrict prostitution in 1999, and Norway followed suit in 2009. Norway also strictly regulates pornography, through its ban of all public display and distribution of 'offensive' sexual depictions.¹ Nordic sexual liberalism, then, is better understood as a style of regulation of public sexuality that is informed by a liberal understanding of private and public spheres (Mühleisen, Røthing, and Svendsen 2012).

'Queer' is used in this paper with the malleability that is customary in the field of queer theory. When I talk about 'queer youth', I simply mean young people who have sexual practices or identities that cannot be accounted for in a 'straight' narrative about puberty, falling in love, establishing monogamous relationships, and starting a family. By the term straight, I indicate both staying on the path of sanctioned sex practice, and heteronormative presumptions about suitable age, gender and number of sex partners. I am particularly concerned with keeping the term queer open, so that it can name sex 'out of place' or 'out of line' to invoke Ahmed's (2006, 161) discussion of the term, rather than being a synonym for same-sex practices. While acknowledging the link between queer and same-sex practices in both English and Scandinavian usage, I strive to retain the broad understanding of non-normative sex practices described by Rubin (1993), which I believe is also

instructive for understanding a substantial part of heterosexual teenage sex practices as inherently troubling, approaching queer, in their non-normativity. As Hirst (2004, 2008) argues, the spatial context of many young people's sexual practice is ostensibly 'public': parks are described as a place for sex, and the comfort and privacy of the indoors and a bed may not be readily available. Their unsanctioned 'public' sex acts, often rushed and outdoors, emerge as queer sex acts, in the sense that they are out of line and out of place. As Hirst (2008, 407) also notes, the accounts are far removed from the 'romantic' version of sexuality presented in sex and relationship education, which rarely addresses time constraints and the cold as an issue when teaching how to put on a condom. Although adult acceptance of and support for teenage sex are likely to be higher in the Nordic context, the general notion of much teenage sex as queerly placed holds true. This makes queer critique a particularly interesting starting point for discussing political challenges to good sex education.

Melby, Ravn, and Wetterberg (2009, 20) note that state intervention in the family has been a 'hallmark of the Scandinavian welfare state'. Schools have been significant tools in this respect. Nordic basic education was built through firm state control of a unified public school system up until the 1970s, and the curriculum remains standardised through state (national) policy even if local and regional authorities are responsible for the implementation of primary and secondary education (Telhaug, Mediås, and Aasen 2006). The notion that schooling is a state matter, not primarily a family or parent matter, has been, and remains, strong in the Nordic context (Bäckman 2003, 59). For sex education, this means that schools and providers are less concerned with parental reactions than seems to be the case in Anglo-American contexts (Alldred and David 2007, 8).

While the potential for progressive initiatives in sex education that state feminism provides has been used to a certain degree in Sweden (Lennerhed 1994), this has thus far not been the case in Norway. The 1974 curriculum revision in Norway made gender equality within the family, non-gender-normative career choices and awareness of equal pay between men and women issues that should be dealt with in schooling (Røthing 2004). This feminist agenda did not, however, have any

significant consequences for sex education (Røthing and Svendsen 2009). The introduction of homosexuality into the sex education curriculum in the 1990s was similarly oriented towards identity and tolerance. The inclusion of sexual minorities in the sex education curriculum seems so far to have resulted in something more like tolerance education than sex education.

In this context, it may be useful to modify the established idea in research about sex education that sexuality is on the private side and schooling on the public side of the public/private divide (Epstein and Johnson 1998). Sexuality, meaning those forms of knowledge that refer to sex, the systems of power that regulate sex and the way individuals see themselves as sexual subjects (Foucault 1984/2001, 8), can be seen as a public matter to the extent that it is discussed in sex education. The public/private divide between schooling and sexuality is locally constructed and negotiated in ways that make it possible to endorse different issues and attitudes in the 'public' of the school (Warner 2002). There is a strong notion that 'sexuality' should be openly discussed as a public matter in Norwegian schools. This does not mean, however, that discussing sex as practice in education is any less unsettling. While sexuality as a public knowledge system can become part of education, sex as activity seems to be a different matter.

While there is little political opposition towards sex education as such in Norway, recent research reveals that the underlying heteronormative presumptions of the subject are resistant to reform (Røthing and Svendsen 2009). While homosexuality is included in the national curriculum at all levels of compulsory education, the sexual practices involved in same-sex relations remain conspicuously absent from the education provided. In what follows, I provide an overview of contemporary Norwegian sex education, and discuss its primary shortcoming: the absence of sex acts other than coitus. The political challenges to good sex education in Norway emerge when this absence of sex acts is addressed by innovative teaching programmes that focus on sexual pleasure. The political consensus about a free and equal sexual culture does not seem able to tolerate the discussion of specific sexual practices in the classroom. What does this tell us about the particular kind of regulation of sexuality that the 'sexual freedom' of the Nordic context amounts to?

8.2 An overview of Norwegian sex education

Norwegian sex education is provided through cooperation between schools, public health services and civil society. In practice, teachers facilitate sex education periods and sessions where they: (1) teach about the issues; (2) invite school health services to educate students about sexual violence, STIs, contraception and pregnancy; and (3) invite professionals or volunteers from the civil society organisations and foundations such as the medical students' sex education programme (MSO), the gay and lesbian movement, women's shelters, the incest survivors' support group or other sexual health projects. This is typically provided for 13–16-year-olds (Røthing and Svendsen 2008). Sessions tend to be concentrated in a project week in Year 9 or 10 (ages 14–15), where the timetable is collapsed to allow focus on one theme.

Norwegian research on sex education provision is insufficient, and only gives indications about national coverage. However, comparison with much better Finnish data highlights some strengths and weaknesses. Finnish national survey data shows that sex education was taught on average for 17.3 hours over Year 9 in 2006 (Kontula 2010, 378). A small-scale regional survey in Norway indicated that a 'day or more' every school year for Years 8–10 was a common amount of sex education teaching (Røthing and Svendsen 2008). Even if one allows for some under-reporting in these figures because of the tendency for the school health unit and teachers to communicate poorly and underestimate each other's hours, Norwegian teaching hours in sex education are likely to be closer to the Finnish 1996 levels of 9.3 hours over Year 10 (Kontula 2010, 378).

Another significant difference can be found in teacher training. While one-third of teachers who are responsible for sex education in Finland have special training, as do school nurses, few Norwegian teachers have such special qualifications (Kontula 2010). Here, the Norwegian situation is probably closer to the Swedish one, where a survey shows that 92% of teachers say they have little or no preparation for delivering sex education in their training (Sahlström 2006, 11). This situation is somewhat alleviated in Norway by school nurses' role in sex education, and they have sexual health education (delivery) competence (Bartz 2007). Their mandate is to prevent the spread of STIs and

decrease the number of unwanted pregnancies among young people. The school health services also have the overarching goal of nurturing 'sexual self-determination and competence' (Helsedirektoratet 2003, 41).² In a regional youth survey, 55% of students reported that they had received useful information about sexuality from the school health services, while only 25% reported having received such useful information from their teachers (Johansen et al. 2006, 25).

In a European overview of sex education, it is noted that 'coverage and adequacy vary between schools' in Norway, 'mainly because policy is vague and teachers tend to make individual decisions on what is taught' (Parker, Wellings, and Lazarus 2009, 237). The comparison above with the Finnish situation shows that coverage is not only variable, but also insufficient. Efforts to double the teaching hours and to allocate the responsibility for sex education to specific teachers with certification, in addition to school nurses, have had considerable effects on knowledge levels in the student body in Finland (Kontula 2010). This should in itself be enough reason to make similar efforts in Norway.

The Norwegian political consensus sketched in the introduction indicates that a number of common complaints about the content of sex education from feminist and queer perspectives should already have been dealt with. This is partly the case. Students are given necessary information about contraception in relation to heterosexual intercourse, as well as the basics of sexual ethics in a comparatively sex positive model. Teachers begin from the presumption that students will experiment, and that they will have a number of sexual partners, albeit one at a time. Furthermore, teachers and school nurses address issues concerning sexual harassment and sexual assault within a framework where men rather than women are considered responsible for these problems. Girls are provided with free access to the contraceptive pill through the school health services from the age of 16 (the age of consent) (Bartz 2007). They learn about the right to have an abortion, the medical aspects of it and their free access to abortions through public health services. Finally, they are expected and required to respect homosexuals, and are introduced to being gay as an option at an early age (between six and nine years old; see Figure 1).

The national curriculum is by far the most important political tool for changing content in schools. Figure 1 shows an overview of curriculum topics, framed as 'competencies' that are relevant to sex education. This overview shows that a number of social and ethical issues in sex education figure prominently in the Norwegian curriculum. It also shows a heavy insistence on teaching about sexual orientation in various ways. The curricular insistence on education about relationships, ethics and sexual orientation may, however, be undermined by the status quo in teaching, which is that pregnancy, contraception and STIs remain the referents for what is understood as topics in 'sex education' (Møllhausen 2005). Research on Norwegian sex education, then, shows a significant discrepancy between a curriculum that could easily be interpreted as assertive of non-heteronormative sex practices, and education provided within the framework of reproductive

heterosexuality (Røthing and Svendsen 2009).

Figure 1: Sex education in the 2006 Norwegian curriculum

Age	Students should be able to...	Subject
6-9	-talk about the development of the human body from conception to adulthood. -talk about tasks in the family, different family arrangements, including single providers, extended families, families with same sex parents, and families with several sets of parents.	Biology
		Social science
10-12	-explain what happens during puberty, and talk about difference in gender identity and variations in sexual orientation. -talk about ethics in relation to different family arrangements, the relation between the sexes, difference in gender identity, and the relation between generations. -discuss how language can express and create attitudes towards individuals and groups of people. -discuss variations in sexual orientation in relation to love, sexuality and family.	Biology
		Religion and ethics
		Norwegian
		Social science
13-16	-discuss problems in relation to sexuality, difference in sexual orientation, contraception, abortion and STI's. -discuss the relationship between love and sexuality in light of cultural norms. -reflect on ethical questions concerning human relations, family and friends, heterosexuality and homosexuality, youth culture and body culture. -discuss how language can be used for purposes of discrimination and harassment.	Biology
		Social science
		Religion and ethics
		Norwegian

This discrepancy between political ambition and teaching practice can be traced back to the lack of teacher training in sex education. Without any training in how to address sexual practices and desire, teachers fall back on the narrative of reproductive heterosexuality that most feel more

comfortable with. Similarly, teaching tolerance towards homosexuals does not seem to require special knowledge. The result of this situation is sex education which lacks any solid address of sexual practice among young people, in spite of progressive political intent and good intentions on behalf of providers.

8.3 Missing sex acts

Textbooks are written to comply with the curriculum, and can be seen as guiding interpretations of it. In an analysis of the new textbooks that were written after the 2006 curriculum revision, Røthing and Svendsen (2009, 106–18) found that Biology textbooks still communicate within the imaginary of heterosexual reproductive copulation.³ With the reproductive process as a backdrop, erogenous zones and sexual stimulation were described with reference to how coitus could be experienced as ‘pleasurable for both parties’, emphasising how the penis and the vagina walls provided mutual stimulation (Røthing and Svendsen 2009, 109). This heteronormative medical and biological discourse about reproduction and pleasure has received extensive feminist critique (Martin 1991), but this does not seem to have registered with textbook authors in this field.

Pleasure, then, is discussed in the imaginary framework of reproductive utility. When pleasure is addressed in this way, coitus typically becomes the only sex act that is explained clearly and with reference to how erogenous zones are stimulated. This is particularly problematic for education about women’s sexual anatomy. Røthing and Svendsen’s (2009, 106–18) analysis shows how the clitoris as an organ and clitoral stimuli are described in the textbooks in ways that are insufficient at best, and erroneous at worst. The following quote is a telling example of these problematic depictions: ‘The ability to have an orgasm varies, and many girls need an extra stimulation of the clitoris to reach an orgasm’ (Finstad, Kolderup, and Jørgensen 2006, 366, quoted in Røthing and Svendsen 2009, 110). The notion that clitoral stimulation is somehow extra, and that the ability to have an orgasm is a talent a woman may or may not be blessed with, does little to encourage sexual assertiveness and expectations of pleasurable sexual experiences for young women. Those who are

worried about their own ability to stimulate themselves and others to orgasm will get little help from switching textbooks, as they might come upon the one that advises rubbing of the 'skin around the clitoris' (my emphasis) (Hannisdal, Haugan, and Munkvik 2007, 141, quoted in Røthing and Svendsen 2009, 116).

While these formulations can be traced back to good intentions about not nurturing performance anxieties in young women, or not encouraging rubbing directly on the clitoris head, which may be uncomfortable, the information about women's sexual anatomy that can be gleaned from these texts is very limited. Failure to constructively address desire and pleasure in relation to young women's sexuality, then, continues to be a problem in the sex education literature. As Fine (1988) pointed out, this failure to assert agency through knowledge about desire and pleasure in young women effectively puts them at risk for various types of victimisation.

Teacher and sexology advisor Stine Kühle-Hansen addresses these problems in sex education through a critique of the term 'sex' (Kühle-Hansen and Øverland 2011). While the term is on one level meant to cover every kind of sexual stimulation in relation to oneself and others, it is most commonly used as synonymous with coitus. This is not only confusing, the indiscriminate use of this unclear term invokes coitus every time sexual practices are addressed, in a way that privileges this sexual practice over others and creates pressure to do 'it' rather than employ the vast opportunities of available strategies for sexual stimulus (Kühle-Hansen and Øverland 2011). The term 'sex' was introduced to Nordic languages as late as the 1960s from an Anglo-American context burdened with a sexual conservatism foreign to the Nordic countries, she points out. Taking 'sex' out of sex education, and insisting on using specific terms for sexual practices available in Nordic languages, would indeed force providers of sex education to address some of the problems noted above.

'Sex' is still commonly referred to and is defined as heterosexual copulation in the Biology books. This textual practice, of course efficiently relegates same-sex relations from the sphere of the 'sexual' (Myerson et al. 2007; Røthing and Svendsen 2010). Kühle-Hansen's suggestion would also imply that this underlying heteronormative assumption in Norwegian sex education would be made

explicit. As a number of authors have noted, heterosexuality tends to be the implicit and taken-for-granted framework for sex education, with the exception of lessons that deal specifically with homosexuality (Bromseth and Wildow 2007; Epstein, O'Flynn, and Telford 2003; Røthing 2008). An interesting consequence of such a specific address of sex practices that Kühle-Hansen suggests is that it would most likely make the conspicuous avoidance of same-sex practices very visible.

In a 2006 follow-up on Fine's 1988 essay about desire in sex education, Fine and McClelland (2006) point out that empowering education about female desire is 'still missing after all these years' in the American context. To address this problem, as well as problems with heteronormative teaching, they suggest that women should be allowed to develop 'thick desire', defined in the following terms:

We understand that young women's thick desires require a set of publicly funded enabling conditions, in which teen women have opportunities to: (a) develop intellectually, emotionally, economically, and culturally; (b) imagine themselves as sexual beings capable of pleasure and cautious about danger without carrying the undue burden of social, medical, and reproductive consequences; (c) have access to information and health-care resources; (d) be protected from structural and intimate violence and abuse; and (e) rely on a public safety net of resources to support youth, families, and community. (Fine and McClelland 2006, 300–1)

I quote Fine and McClelland at length because I believe it is possible to argue that the many young, white, heterosexual, middle or upper class, able-bodied adolescent women and men in the Nordic context enjoy the mentioned conditions for developing thick desires to a significant degree. The flip side of this situation is that with all the 'publicly funded enabling conditions' Fine and McClelland mention in place, Norway has still not got it right. The exclusions that result from silencing non-reproductive sex acts lead to sex education that does not sufficiently encourage young women and LGBT youth to 'imagine themselves as sexual beings capable of pleasure' (Fine and McClelland 2006, 300).

As Åse Røthing has noted, teaching about homosexuality in Norwegian schools is concerned with communicating tolerance towards the homosexual as Other, and a parallel agenda has been documented in Swedish schools (Bromseth and Wildow 2007; Martinsson et al. 2007; Martinsson and Reimers 2008; Røthing 2008). This style of teaching 'about the Other' naturally privileges the

heterosexual subject in the sense that she herself is left unscrutinised, and vested with the power to tolerate the subordinated Other (Alldred and David 2007; Allen 2005; Epstein and Johnson 1998; Kumashiro 2002). Education policy-makers and teachers who have welcomed this approach are likely to find this critique unfair, as they have pursued a line of action advocated by the gay and lesbian movement over the past decades. In both Norway and Sweden, the gay and lesbian movement has provided schools with programmes in support of tolerance pedagogy, based on coming out stories (Bromseth and Wildow 2007). This agenda explicitly leads attention away from queer sex, and towards matters of sexual identity. It is remarkable how intensely political and desexualised homosexuality is in Norwegian sex education. While students are extensively trained in homotolerance, safer sex in same-sex relations is rarely on the agenda (Røthing and Svendsen 2008).

It has been a basic insight in queer theory that what is understood as a struggle for gay liberation has involved conceptually moving the site of gay sex from the public to the private, from the cruising grounds to the bedroom (Berlant and Warner 1998). In 1974, the Norwegian curriculum required that students should learn about 'sexual expressions out of the ordinary', exemplified by homosexuality and exhibitionism (Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet 1974). While homosexuality has been included as normal, unconventional sex acts are no longer on the Norwegian sex education agenda. In the public sexual sphere that sex education represents, sexual liberation has involved queer sexual practices being absorbed into the general field 'sex', with no further specification. This development is part and parcel of gay and lesbian sexualities' adoption of the institution of marriage, as I will return to.

8.4 The T as haunting object

Another crucial point in the politicisation of homosexuality, and its introduction in sex education as an object of toleration, has been a staunch denial of relations between homosexuality and male femininity and female masculinity. In her 1993 essay 'How to bring our kids up gay', Sedgwick (1993, 72) notes that while it has been necessary for the 'gay movement' to analytically separate gender

and sexuality, this has entailed a 'relative de-emphasis' on the issue of gender non-conforming children. This concern can be traced in sex education, through teachers' concerns that homosexuals who visit schools to address homophobia should not be 'too typical', meaning gender non-conforming (Bromseth and Wildow 2007). Sedgwick (1993, 72) notes that there is a danger, 'that that advance may leave the effeminate boy once more in the position of the haunting object – this time the haunting object of gay thought itself'. The entire issue of gender identity seems to have become such a haunting object phenomenon in the development of gay and lesbian liberation in the Nordic context. The Norwegian curriculum requires teaching about 'difference in gender identity', but this does not seem to imply much more than differences between naturalised male and female identities. While 'denaturalizing object choice', the distinction between gender and sexuality 'radically renaturalizes gender', Sedgwick (1993, 73) argues.⁴

Thus far I have consciously referred to the 'gay and lesbian movement' without any token inclusion of bisexuals and trans people. The reason is that I consider their exclusion from lesbian and gay politics, and hence from queer issues in sex education, constitutive of the agenda for gay and lesbian inclusion and liberation that the movement, and eventually the state, have opted for. The issue with separating out facets of the social to fit a particular political agenda is indeed the inevitable haunting that Sedgwick points to. For the Nordic lesbian and gay movement, the ascendance to inclusion, marriage rights and gender normalcy coincided with the rise of the question of the (B and) T in the movement. By invoking the T in relation to abject haunting, I am not merely implying that issues concerning gender identity haunt the Norwegian sex education agenda, which is based in identity politics. I want to suggest, albeit speculatively, that the straightening out of gay and lesbian identities through politicisation has made them inhospitable, and sometimes uninhabitable, to queer youth. Queer youth do not overall seem comfortable in this gender order with its intact hierarchies between heterosexual and homosexual practices. If the development among young Norwegian queer activists is anything to go by, they increasingly opt for various trans identities to better express their queer subjectivities.

This critique, as well as the one noted above about the desexualisation of homosexuality that has accompanied its inclusion in sex education, echoes the fundamental queer critique of sexual liberation agendas based in identity politics: they essentially provide inclusion through heteronormalisation (Mühleisen and Røthing 2009; Warner 1993). I have already noted that the struggle for civil partnership rights, and later marriage rights, in Norway has been significant for subsequent changes in sex education for sexual minorities. This connection can be further understood by the historical intersection between marriage and sexual liberation that Janet R. Jakobsen maps. In her essay with the thought-provoking title 'Sex þ Freedom ¼ Regulation. Why?', she argues that the notion of sexual freedom in the USA is inextricable from the institution of marriage, and that this cultural tie was forged in the Protestant Reformation (Jakobsen 2005). Religious repression is constitutive of the Enlightenment notion of secular freedom, she notes. In terms of sexual freedom, she argues that Protestantism also made marriage the symbol of sexual freedom, through Calvin and Luther's insistence on the value of marriage and their opposition towards clerical celibacy and monastic institutions (Jakobsen 2005, 292). Nordic societies are more vested in (Lutheran) Protestant secularism than the USA could ever claim to be, sporting near-universal Lutheran state church traditions coupled with record low religiosity (Bartz 2007; Statistics Norway 2010). That sexual freedom for homosexuals should be symbolised by partnership and marriage rights in this light is no strange occurrence. On the contrary, the 'free' and 'liberal' sexual culture that Nordic societies claim amounts to a particularly inclusive heteronormativity, in which gays and lesbians are included in the freedom to marry and procreate (Rydström 2011). This does not, of course, challenge the notion that heteromonogamous family life defines the normative core of this sexual culture.

Granted that sexual politics can change without significantly changing representations of sex in sex education, it is worth looking at initiatives that could possibly change the knowledge production around sexuality that results in this remarkable heteronormative stability. On the basis of current

initiatives in Norwegian sex education, I suggest that this might be possible through education that focuses on sex acts and pleasure, rather than the politics of sexuality.

8.5 The unsettling potential in pleasure

Ingham (2005) has noted that sex and relationship education programmes are almost exclusively evaluated with attention to public health outcomes, and that this renders several other aspects invisible, significantly sexual pleasure. With reference to the significance of masturbation, Ingham (2005, 384) notes that if, 'young people are more able to create pleasure for themselves, they are less dependent on others to produce it for them'. This argument for teaching to give oneself and others sexual pleasure could possibly be listed among sexual health outcomes. A number of scholars who have worked with sexual assault and children underline that children's knowledge about sexual practices and sexual pleasure is crucial to their development of a sexual agency that reduces their chances for being victims of sexual assault (Carmody 2008; Fine and McClelland 2006).

It is possible, particularly in Norway where there is a tradition for education being a 'counter culture' to those of the home and the market (Blum 2010; Kirke-, utdannings og forskningsdepartementet 1997), to develop a rationale for education for sexual pleasure that highlights sexual health and risk reduction benefits. Theoretically, it would be feasible to develop significant support for this standpoint. Some experiences with implementation of such teaching through civil society organisations, however, suggest that this type of sex education may encounter significant resistance.

RESTART is a teaching material in norm critical pedagogy, with emphasis on sexuality (Ungdom 2010). It was developed by Queer Youth Norway, based partly on the Swedish teaching programme BRYT! (RFSL-Ungdom 2009). One exercise in the programme is about the value of 'lube', for everyone. The RESTART instructor encourages everyone to rub their hands together, to feel the friction. Subsequently, they are encouraged to rub the inside of their elbow. Since the skin is thinner, the friction is felt more. The instructor reminds the students that the skin is even thinner on the

genitals. Afterwards, they repeat the procedure with a condom, to show that there is still significant friction. Finally, the procedure is repeated with added lubricant.

The Queer Youth's mission with this exercise has been to promote a focus on knowledge for pleasurable and safer sexual practices, without regard to the genders involved in that practice. However, they have had to suffer significant criticism as a result of this agenda. Both teachers and parts of the 'adult' LGBT movement have expressed concerns about their 'promotion of sex' to young people. Some health professionals, particularly nursing students, have been more specific in their critique: they argue that the 'lube' exercise encourages sex without regard to girls' experience of desire. The introduction of lubricant, they say, makes it possible for young people to have intercourse even if the girl does not want to, because it is no longer necessary for the girl to be wet. Extending this argument, they find it disturbing that young people should 'get used to' added lubricant rather than natural juices, again with reference to the possibility of ignoring female desire. Finally, teaching about 'lube' is critiqued because it is understood as an encouragement to anal penetration.⁵ This latter concern echoes a moral concern about the Swedish agency for sexual education's information folder on 'Practical advice for anal sex' in 2001 (Bolander 2009, 129). Bolander (2009, 105–11) notes in her analysis of Swedish sex education on TV that anal sex typically is associated with risk, especially for young women, and that the practice is associated with pornography, which is also considered less than safe.

These concerns figure the lubricant as a potential technology that can be used by boys and girls themselves to coerce their bodies into intercourse, or sexual practices they may not want to engage in, in spite of their lack of lust. As such, they are analogous to concerns voiced by parts of the women's movement that contraception, when first introduced, was a threat to female sexual self-determination, because it deprived them of the 'excuse' to say no that the risk of pregnancy provided (D'Emilio and Freedman 1988/1997).

However, there are a number of harmful sexual practices young people can engage in when in pursuit of pleasure, with or without lubricant. The issue of the lubricant seems to bring these

potentialities to the forefront among concerned adults. It inevitably begs questions like 'I wonder if I can fit THAT in if I just use "lube" . . . ?'. Such questions are, of course, far beyond what it is considered safe, sensible and appropriate to encourage young people to think about through sex education. Yet, teaching for sexual pleasure, if it is to mean anything substantial at all, has to involve such potentialities. This means living with the fact that 'risk cannot be severed from pleasure' (Fine and McClelland 2006, 326). As Fine and McClelland argue (2006), 'they are nested inside each other' and therefore it is 'naïve to educate for pleasure without attending to risk; but more perverse to imagine that teaching only about risk will transform human behaviour' (326).

Education for sexual pleasure that accepts risk as part of human sexuality challenges investment in what American scholar Lee Edelman (2004) calls 'reproductive futurism' in sex education. Reproductive futurism represents the conservatism of the political, he argues, 'insofar as it works to affirm a structure, to authenticate social order, which it then intends to transmit to the future in the form of its inner Child' (Edelman 2004, 3). The child, he argues, 'remains the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmic beneficiary of every political intervention' (Berlant 1997; Edelman 2004, 3). The figure of the innocent child, and its conservative momentum, is certainly felt in political challenges to sex education. Furthermore, it is very clear in sex education how the purpose of sexuality is wedded to reproductive futurism in education discourse, and the social compulsion to procreation embedded in this notion. As I have shown, Norwegian sex education carries the message of sexuality's purpose in reproductive futurism unwittingly, through textbook authors' failure to sufficiently imagine sex acts that are not linked to the reproductive process. The major political challenges for good sex education lie in this fantasmic image of the innocent child, and the political need for its protection, which is at work even in supposedly progressive attempts at reforming sex education.

Civil society and voluntary organisations' involvement in sex education currently allows for such programmes as RESTART to be taught in schools. Although teachers commonly express disappointment that the LGBT movement is less and less willing to provide tolerance pedagogy, the

tradition of civil society involvement makes it difficult to reject RESTART and other newly developed programmes that challenge reproductive futurism as a basis for sex education. Programmes that inspire change in ways similar to the Queer Youth's RESTART are crucial for innovation in Norwegian sex education.

The shortcomings in Norwegian sex education that can be identified from feminist and queer perspectives are not due to any ill will or explicit disagreement with ideas about equality on behalf of providers. Teachers and health professionals in Norwegian schools can on the whole be assumed to want to provide young women and men with correct, sufficient and equal information about anatomy and sexual pleasure. Some of the challenges I have discussed in this paper, notably the heteronormative underpinnings of sex education and its lack of efficiency in providing sexual agency and self-determination in young people, have also been acknowledged by Norwegian authorities in recent years. In 2009, the Directorate for Knowledge published a new guiding handbook for sex education that explicitly challenges the heteronormative presumption of teaching, and stresses the importance of providing correct information about sexual anatomy (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2009). However, this initiative has limited effects as the Directorate's handbook does not regulate provision of sex education. Whether or not the suggestions are taken into account depends on local circumstances and the preference of the individual teacher. One pilot region has, however, developed a teaching manual with specific methods that is in line with the guidance, and managed to make competence-raising mandatory for all teachers in one county (Trondheim-kommune and LLH-Trøndelag 2010). A strength with this project is that it works through the region and county, which are politically responsible for providing education, rather than the national level, which can only provide guidelines. It is also based on active integration of available civil society-driven programmes, which secures pedagogic innovation and variation. This pilot project represents a possible way forward for Norwegian sex education nationally.

At this point, when Nordic societies are touting their sexual freedom as a defining characteristic of their nations and culture, it would be a good time to test the content of that freedom through a

sex education agenda that is explicit about sexual practices and sexual pleasure. There is no doubt, however, that such initiatives will meet significant political resistance across the political spectrum, similar to the reactions against the RESTART programme. Teenage sex practices are often seen as queer practices, as they are not always as safe, private and comfortable as adults like to imagine. A sex education that provides young people with the knowledge they need to pursue both pleasure and self-determination will have to promote sexual competence as well as caution. As the relatively high chlamydia infection rate among Norwegian youth shows,⁶ added teaching hours and teacher competence are needed to achieve basic protection goals in Norwegian sex education. There is reason to believe that a change in the agenda towards focus on developing thick desires and sexual competence in young people regardless of gender, identity and sexual orientation would promote safer sex practices more efficiently. That seems to imply, however, that sustained heteronormative underpinnings in Norwegian notions of good sex education must be challenged in more fundamental ways than the politics of lesbian and gay rights and feminism have thus far achieved.

8.6 Notes

1. Almindelig borgerlig straffelov av 1902 (Norwegian penal code) chapter 19: Sexual crimes, § 202 on the purchase of sexual services, and § 204 on pornography.

2. Nor: 'seksuell selvbestemmelse og mestring'.

3. This analysis included all books with significant market shares, and all are currently in use in Biology classes for ages 13–16. For more information about this analysis see Røthing and Svendsen (2009).

4. See also Rasmussen (2006), Butler (1993), and Haywood and Ghail (1995).

5. Thanks to RESTART project manager Elisabeth Wilmar for sharing these critiques.

6. The number of reported infections in 2011 was 22,527, of which 70% were under 25. Sixty-two per cent were women. There was, however, a 19% drop in the infection rate among 15–19-year-olds, compared with 2010 (Folkehelseinstituttet 2012).

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9 *Article two*

Sexuality in Norwegian textbooks: constructing and controlling ethnic borders?

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Abstract : In this article we discuss how sexuality is linked to national identity, ethnicity and cultural diversity in Norwegian textbooks for 13-16-year-olds. We show how gender equality and gay rights are mobilized as markers of Norwegianness in pedagogic texts and discuss the significance this has for inclusion in Norwegian nationhood. We address how progressive policies concerning gender and sexuality in Norway have been utilized to define Norwegianness in ethnic terms and argue that the texts we have analysed may produce the effect that tolerance towards homosexuality and support for gender equality as political positions are considered necessary for ethnic minority subjects' acceptance as properly 'integrated' Norwegian citizens. In this way, these texts on sexuality may be seen to both construct and control ethnic borders in Norwegian society.

Keywords: Education; sexuality; gender; Norway; homonationalism; culturalization.

9.1 *Introduction*

In this article we discuss how sexuality is linked to national identity, ethnicity and cultural diversity in Norwegian social science textbooks. We draw on insights from postcolonial feminism and queer theory to investigate how textbooks construct 'Norwegianness' when gender and sexual norms are addressed. How are sexual norms presented in relation to nation and culture in textbooks? What sexual norms are presented as 'Norwegian', through explicit labelling or juxtaposition to allegedly non-Norwegian practices? What appear as non-Norwegian sexual norms and practices? How are borders between Norwegian and non-Norwegian sexualities drawn and to what extent are these borders permeable? We analyse material from textbooks for the 8th, 9th and 10th grades (13 -16) published in 2006-08 and currently in use in Norwegian schools.

Historically, universal schooling and nation-building have gone hand in hand (Epstein and Johnson 1998, p. 21), which is clearly also the case in Norway. Norwegian schools may be said to represent the state, and teaching is supposed to (re)produce and present what are 'Norwegian' culture, values and norms. The vast majority of Norwegian schools are public and all teaching in

Norwegian schools is based on the national curriculum provided by the Department of Education. Though Norway is generally conceptualized as a homogeneous country, 8.9 per cent of the population of 4.6 million were born outside Norway or have parents who were born outside Norway. Half of the nation's immigrant population has migration backgrounds in the global south (Kjelstadli 2008, p. 37). It is primarily descendants who are enrolled in Norwegian schools, however.

The introduction to the national curriculum¹ states that education 'should promote democracy, national identity, and international consciousness' (Kirke- 1997, p. 18). Thus, Norwegian schools should encourage all students to develop a supposedly Norwegian national identity, despite their various cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. That being said, the curriculum clearly states the importance of recognizing and respecting ethnic 'others' as well. Public schools may thus be said to take on two missions at once: they are 'expected to perpetuate a sense of nation-state continuity, but also to integrate non-nationals and first-generation citizens into the democratic project of equalizing chances and access for all' (Baumann 2004, p. 1).

In the 2006 revision of the national curriculum for Norwegian schools, a specific requirement about teaching on culture, gender and sexuality was introduced in social science: by the end of 10th grade, the students should have the competence to 'discuss the relationship between love and sexuality in light of cultural norms' (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006). To meet this curriculum requirement, textbook authors encounter the challenging task of negotiating a problem oriented discourse in public debate concerning the sexual norms and marriage practices of racialized minority groups, while adhering to curriculum requirements which encourage positive attitudes towards gender equality and anti-racism. The narrative tools and discursive resources used in these texts may thus offer insights into how sexuality comes into play in conceptions of cultural difference and influences the construction and control of ethnic borders.

We are particularly concerned with how sexuality informs the production of national imaginary in Norwegian textbooks. National imaginaries are intrinsic to producing what Benedict Anderson (1991) calls 'horizontal comradeship' in nations. Specifically, we are interested in the way sexual

norms function as 'national imagery' in Norwegian social science textbooks. It is necessary to acknowledge, however, that schools deal with representations, and that these representations should not be confused with nation-state realities (Baumann 2004, p. 15). The textbooks we analyse in this article sometimes present glaring discrepancies between how Norwegian society is represented and the facts of the social situation at hand. Our findings suggest that the social science curriculum requirement on love, sexuality and cultural norms has inspired the production of texts about sexuality, religion and culture that rely on and produce culturalized notions about 'Norwegian' and 'Western' as opposed to 'non-Western' sexual norms, through their addressing of marriage customs and attitudes towards homosexuality. While such depictions of discourse are typical of the genre, addressing them critically can show how national particularity or lack thereof could be conceptualized otherwise.

9.2 Gender, sexuality and immigration in Norway

The Norwegian government's plan of action for social inclusion of immigrants and their children covers four areas: employment; childhood; education and language; gender equality and participation (Thorud, Haagensen and Jølstad 2009, p. 46). While all focus areas are relevant for improving women's relative independence, problems concerning gender equality are specified as being about combating forced marriage and female genital mutilation (ibid.). Hence, perceived discriminatory sexual norms in the parts of the immigrant population that could be suspected of these practices have been placed squarely at the centre of Norwegian efforts for social inclusion.

This government policy mirrors a public discourse where debates about immigration and challenges concerned with integrating immigrants from the global south in Norwegian society have been increasingly infused with concern about the practices of arranged (and by proxy: forced) marriage, female genital mutilation, women's subordination and negative attitudes towards same-sex relationships in the immigrant population. In this setting, support for gender equality and sexual liberalism has become a 'marker' of Norwegianness in Norwegian public discourse on integration

and immigration (Gullestad 2002, p. 32, see also Mu"hleisen and Røthing 2009). A tendency towards depicting gender equality as a national characteristic has also been documented in Norwegian gender research (Berg, Flemmen and Gullikstad 2010). Anne Britt Flemmen found, in her study of the coverage of transnational marriages in local newspapers, that a certain style of gender equality in marriage is a key qualification for a 'Norwegian marriage' (Flemmen 2007). Helga Eggebø (2010) notes how similar considerations underpin Norwegian authorities' definitions of valid marriages in relation to marriage immigration. Anja Bredal argues in her dissertation on arranged marriages, autonomy and community among young Asian-Norwegians that the norm of the Norwegian majority serves as the definition for 'a free and equal marriage' (Bredal 2006). A similar tendency is evident in public opinion of immigrant and ethnic Norwegian fertility rates, where high fertility among immigrants is problematized in public discourse with concern for women's autonomy, while ethnic Norwegian women's high fertility rates are endorsed as part of the success story of Norwegian gender equality (Kristensen 2010).

Currently, issues concerning sexual orientation are becoming more significant in discussions about the alleged backwardness of the immigrant population's attitudes in relation to gender and sexuality. While reserved attitudes towards homosexual relationships are not an anomaly in the general population, negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians are considered symptomatic of poor integration when expressed by immigrants and their descendants (Gressgård and Jacobsen 2008; Røthing and Svendsen 2009a). In Norwegian schools, young ethnic Norwegian boys' 'homonegativism' is seen as a sign of immaturity, while similar attitudes among descendants of immigrants are interpreted by teachers as a cultural trait (Røthing 2008).

Lesbian and gay issues and movements have been involved in similar processes in several other national and international contexts (see Massad 2007; Puar 2007; Haritaworn 2008, Haritaworn 2010b; Butler 2009). The diverse national contexts where gender and sexual politics emerge as markers of Western nationhood suggest that there is no direct link between this tendency towards

culturalization of 'liberal' gender and sexual politics and the actual policies in question. Still, local political cultures determine the trajectories of such discourses to a significant degree.

Few countries can make a better case that gender and sexual equality is intrinsic in the national project than Norway. Norway and the other Nordic nations are well ahead in the Global Gender Gap index,² Norway is rated the top nation in which to be a mother by Save the Children³ and it has a gender-neutral marriage policy as well as antidiscrimination measures that specify sexual orientation. Norwegian sexual politics are, however, regulatory in very specific ways.

Norwegian gender equality policy rests on a rights and welfare scheme that is based in the heteronormative nuclear family. The generous parental leave system that also has a set amount of leave for the child's biological father is an example of this (Annfelt 2008). Furthermore, the lack of human resources that the nuclear family provides is compensated for by an extensive public childcare system, which allows women and men to participate in the workforce, in spite of a high fertility rate (Kristensen 2010, p. 72). The Norwegian state is strongly invested in the notion of lasting marriages and cohabitations as a prerequisite for stable parenting, and funds a voluntary couple training course for all parents with a newborn child (Danielsen and Mühleisen 2009). All in all, the regulatory profile in Norwegian sexual politics seems to be marked by inclusion of non-heteronormative gender practices through heteronormalization of these practices (Mühleisen, Røthing and Svendsen forthcoming).

The Nordic state feminist model, where the feminist movement has furthered its agenda in allegiance with the state, is also a workable model for the relationship between the gay and lesbian movement and the state in Norway (Hernes 1987; Bolsø 2008; Berg and Wickman 2010, pp. 92-93). In this context, we suggest that it can be fruitful to see gender equality and, to a certain degree, 'homotolerance' as involved in a process of depoliticization and culturalization in the Norwegian political context. The culturalization of politics is based on the assumption 'that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it and then explains politics as a consequence of that essence' (Mamdani in Brown 2006, p. 20). As American political scientist Wendy Brown argues,

‘depoliticization involves construing inequality, subordination, marginalization, and social conflict, which all require political analysis and political solutions, as personal and individual, on the one hand, and as natural, religious or cultural on the other’ (ibid., p. 15). In the process of depoliticization these problems are construed as ‘dealt with’, and no longer in need of political attention. Our textbook analysis, along with other studies, shows that gender equality tends to be conceptualized in Norwegian schooling as a problem in the past or a problem that is more relevant to other cultures (Røthing 2004; Støren et al. 2010, p. 114).

9.3 *Material and methods*

This article is based on analyses of recently published textbooks for 13-16-year-olds in biology, social science and religion. Textbooks are guided by demands set for Norwegian schooling in the national curriculum and function in practice as guiding interpretations of the curriculum. From the 1970s on government policy required that books did not have discriminating content based on race or gender, and this remains an expectation (Bratholm 2001).

After the 2006 curriculum revision, new textbooks were written in all subjects. We have analysed books that were published and made available in 2006, 2007 and 2008. Our material consists of twenty-five books in total, and the selection includes all works with significant market shares. Our focus in this text is the eight social science textbooks and their addressing of the learning requirement concerning love, sexuality and cultural norms cited above. This analysis is also informed by how related issues were dealt with in biology, where sexuality is primarily addressed, and in religion, where ethical issues are traditionally addressed. We have analysed the books with attention to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, nationhood and culture, with particular attention to sections where these issues intersected.

These analyses were conducted by means of the basic principles of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995, pp. 91-116). We have been interested in positive and negative evaluations of sexual practices and norms, and the connections that have been made between different themes in

textbooks. We have also been looking at use of inclusive 'we' and other expressions that indicate group construction, as well as statements that 'locate' cultural phenomena 'here in Norway' or 'in other parts of the world', to mention two example phrases. Classification schemes that are drawn upon in the texts and how these are used have also been significant. This is particularly important in relation to classifications that tend to be used interchangeably, such as 'Muslim' and 'non-Western'.

Our overall findings indicated that sexual norms and cultural difference were addressed at some point during grade 8 to 10 in all publishers' works in social science and religion. None of the biology books, however, made this connection in their address of sexual norms. In social science all 8th- to 10th-grade works addressed 1) arranged marriage and 2) attitudes towards homosexuality.

Arranged marriage was also invariably addressed in works on religion, and some books addressed attitudes towards homosexuality as well. In religion, however, diversity within religions and similarities between them were generally emphasized, which made the discussions more nuanced than in the social science books. This difference can be traced to the extensive controversy over religious education in Norwegian schools in recent years (see Skeie 2007; Eriksen 2010, pp. 170-96). To avoid favouring some religions over others, controversial issues like religious norms related to gender and sexuality tended not to be addressed in relation to the religions specifically. These issues were rather addressed in relation to ethics in general. When cultural connections were made, however, these tended towards universalization of 'Western' norms in ways similar to those we describe in our close reading of social science texts (see Eriksen 2010: 276-85 for similar findings from classroom observation data).

The books that addressed sexual norms and cultural difference in social science all attempted to characterize 'Norwegian' and/or 'Western' sexual norms. As we will return to, there was significant conflation between these terms, which corresponded with a conflation between 'non-Western' and /or 'Muslim'. Furthermore, while Norway was invariably invoked as the referent for 'Western', the geographical referent for the term 'non-Western' was conspicuously hard to pinpoint in the texts. In

the following we discuss in depth some typical examples of how sexual norms and cultural difference were addressed in the social science textbooks.

9.4 Norwegian sexuality in textbooks

In Norway and Scandinavia, we are known for having a free relationship towards expressing love. We are seen as liberal or free-minded when it comes to expressing love, family formations, sexuality and nudity. (Bernier, Borge and Olsen 2007, p. 38)

Norwegian sexuality is referred to as free-spirited, liberal and voluntary in new textbooks written for social science, as illustrated by the quote above. In other similar passages this is specifically tied to young people's opportunity to have girlfriends and boyfriends and to approval of premarital sexual experiences. Young girls' sexuality is presented as equally important to that of boys. Another example of 'liberal' sexual values that is emphasized is lesbian and gay rights and acceptance of same-sex romantic relationships. Norwegian sexuality is described in positive terms, and as something worth striving for to those who do not already have access to it. Thus, 'Norwegian' sexual norms appear attractive, good and desirable.

There is no doubt that Norwegian youth in general do have a high degree of freedom with regard to their sexuality. It is also safe to assume that sex education in Norwegian schools is open and so-called 'liberal' compared to that in many other countries. However, our analyses imply that, while social science textbooks are clear that gender equality and gay rights are Norwegian values when addressing culture, these values are not as prevalent when biology textbooks address sexuality in general terms. This discrepancy appears, for instance, in the depiction of girls' and boys' sexuality in biology textbooks, where progressive gender politics do not seem to have had significant impact on the depiction of male and female sexuality. The texts are heavily influenced by a notion of heterosexual coupling where the 'active' penis penetrates a 'passive' vagina (cf. Martin 1997). Boys' sexuality is more often linked to pleasure and girls' more often to pain (Røthing and Svendsen 2009b, pp. 106-18). Furthermore, sex is defined as heterosexual penile penetration of a vagina and written about in a way that efficiently relegates same-sex relations from the sphere of the 'sexual'

(Myerson et al. 2007; Røthing and Svendsen 2010). Heterosexuality is the implicit and taken-for-granted framework of all chapters on sexuality with the exception of those passages that deal specifically with homosexuality.

Thus, Norwegian heterosexuality, as it is presented in biology textbooks, does not seem to fit with the notion of 'Norwegian sexuality' as it is portrayed in social science texts on sexuality and culture. This discrepancy indicates a tendency to characterize sexuality as specifically Norwegian when the sexual practices or norms in question coincide with the cultural trademarks of freedom, individual choice and equality. Other sexual practices and attitudes among Norwegians, such as sexual violence, negativity towards homosexuality and male sexual domination, are not culturalized; thus, 'Norwegian culture' does not have to be encumbered with these practices (Narayan 1997, 2000; Oyewumi 1997; Phillips 2007).

The introductory quote claims that the Norwegian sexuality is 'known for' being liberal and equal. It does not say that sexual practices in Norway are always in accordance with this notion, and nor are these positive markers clearly defined. A number of laws and regulations concerning sexuality in Norway can be characterized as 'liberal' only with difficulty. As of 2009, purchase (but not sale) of sexual services is illegal in Norway, a law that mirrors the Swedish ban on such activity from 1999, effectively outlawing prostitution (Straffeloven ch.19, §202a). Laws against pornography outlaw the spreading of all 'offensive' depictions of sexual activity (Straffeloven ch. 19, §194). Furthermore, the state puts significant effort into combating unwanted pregnancies and abortions, especially among young girls.⁴ Sexual 'liberty' thus seems to be envisioned in terms of the policies associated with Nordic feminism. Our analyses imply that the positive terms 'free' and 'liberal' take on a rather specific social-democratic political value in the texts by this use of current Norwegian ideals as their referent.

This selective labelling practice seems to employ sexual norms to place Norway in relation to discourses of modernity and to place Norwegian society in a 'liberal' Western context. These links between sexuality, 'Norwegianness' and 'Norwegian culture' occur, however, only when sexual

norms and practices are compared with those of other countries and 'cultures'. In the next section we will explore some such comparisons.

9.5 Norwegian sexuality and its 'Other'

Marriage out of love is a matter of course in western culture. One gets married because of love to another, and marriage is primarily a relationship between two persons. So called "love marriages" are not as common as we think. Marriage is a kind of agreement between two families in many cultures, rather than a relationship between two persons. (Berner, Borge and Olsen 2007, p. 40)

The national curriculum requests, as mentioned earlier, that students on the secondary level should be able to discuss the relationship between love and sexuality in light of cultural norms (educational goal in social science). Accordingly, textbooks address not only Norwegian sexual norms but also sexual practices and norms in other cultures.

The extract above establishes 'Western' sexual norms as characterized by being unforced and free-spirited. Here, a binary is also constructed, however, between Western sexual norms and those of unspecified other cultures. Marital practices serve to exemplify the difference. All the social science textbooks bring up arranged marriage as a subject of debate in Norway today.⁵ This is, in other words, something that concerns 'the others' but which also exists 'here' among 'us'. Later, however, the quote says that marriages based on love are not 'as common as we think' (Berner, Borge and Olsen 2007, p. 40, italics added). This way a Western 'we' appear who see marriage based on love as the norm. In 'other cultures' and 'other parts of the world' this is not the case, according to the book. This discursive construction of a Western 'here' with certain values which is opposed to a non-Western other that seems continually to shift location, and sometimes also be 'here' in Norway, provides insight into the border constructions that textbook authors engage in.

One textbook writes the following:

In some Muslim families it is the parents who decide who the children should marry. . . . To someone who has grown up in the Western world, it might sound frightening that the parents should decide who one is to share one's life with. (Strand and Strand 2006, p. 56)

This section implies a dichotomy between 'Western' and 'Muslim' marriage practices, as opposed to 'non-Western' in prior examples. As we have mentioned, there is significant conflation between these terms in the texts. In this section, the practice of arranged marriage is not located in 'other parts of the world', but evidently takes place in the Norwegian 'here' through the presence of 'some Muslim families'. This section illustrates how 'Western' tends to map onto 'ethnic Norwegian' in the texts, while 'non-Western' loosely, but not necessarily, implies 'Muslim'.

Norwegian anthropologist Christine Jacobsen points out that '[i]n Norway, Muslims are often cast as representing a unitary "Islamic Culture", assuming a religious homogeneity that overrides cultural and social differences, including those between different ethnic groups, people of rural and urban origin, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, genders and generations' (2005, p. 160). In this subjugation of differences, Islam seems to be rising as a common denominator for the problematic 'other' implied in the term 'cultural difference'. The terms 'immigrant' and 'Muslim' are used interchangeably in public discourse about challenges with immigration and integration, in a way that produces the difference between 'Islamic culture' and 'Norwegian culture' which functions to associate all immigrants from the global south with Islam. In the general introduction to the national curriculum for Norwegian schools, national particularity is conversely summarized in terms of 'Christian and humanist values' (Leirvik 2004).

By using the term 'someone who has grown up in the Western world' the book is actually speaking to most of the students in a class regardless of cultural origin, as most students from Muslim families have been born and raised in Norway. At the same time it is assumed that 'Western' students find arranged marriage frightening. Is this assumption also meant to include Muslim youth? The lack of clarity in this extract can be said to illustrate two concerns in Norwegian public discourse on arranged marriages. First, the presumption that children would be afraid if his or her family was involved in their choice of partner can be read as a formulation of the ethnic Norwegian majority's standpoint; that such family involvement is unethical coercion of children. The narrator presumes fear to be normal, and also assumes that the children in Muslim families would be afraid, if they had

grown up in Norway. This interpretation casts the children as possible 'victims of culture' (Narayan 1997). Second, the text remains open to interpretation on the question of whether descendants of Muslim immigrants adopt 'Western'/'Norwegian' sexual norms and attitudes or not. It could be read as excluding all non-ethnic 'Norwegians' from the inclusive 'we', but also as including the students from Muslim families, but excluding their parents. In both instances, attitudes towards arranged marriage become a way of distinguishing between 'Western' and 'Norwegian' attitudes as opposed to 'Muslim' and foreign ones.

These descriptions of 'Norwegian' sexual norms and the norms of 'other cultures' abroad, as well as of 'Muslim families' in Norway, can be read in the framework of Orientalism. The strategic location of the authors is clearly in a Norway that is cast as Occident, and the strategic formation of the textual references places them within a Orientalist textual framework where the reader has to rely on accumulated knowledge and associations of the Orient to make sense of very illdefined and unclear descriptions of the cultural other (Said 2003, p. 20). Indeed, the other culture is lacking in description to the extent that it is defined by its lack, by what it is not (ibid.). Depictions of Norwegian sexuality like the ones above utilize and 'perform' the dichotomy of the West and its other in a way that serves to culturalize certain sexual norms as 'Norwegian'. By performative, here, we mean that the description produces 'Norwegian sexuality' and 'non-Norwegian sexuality' as an effect of the description (Butler 1990; Yegenoglu 1998; Said 2003, p. 94). The Orientalist legacy the texts employ is further accentuated by their use of time and development narratives, as we will discuss in the following.

9.6 Western modernity and sexual development

The quote about arranged marriages from Strand and Strand above is followed by the comment '[b]ut the custom of arranged marriage was practised in Norway up until 1900' (2006, p. 56). Several of the textbooks discuss the practice of arranged marriage in relation to sexual norms in Norway in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The texts we have analysed draw heavily on conceptions of

modernity in which notions of time and development are crucial. The following text is an example of the narrators' idea of a linear progression of sexual freedom in Norwegian society:

Sexual life has become more free, one often says that we have become more liberal concerning this issue. All the way up until our time many people have thought that it is wrong to sleep with someone out of wedlock. There are still people who think this, but today they do not represent any majority of the population, (Strand and Strand 2006. p. 44)

The notion that premarital sex is wrong is used here as an example of attitudes to sexuality that go against the norms of sexuality in Norway today. The use of the term 'more free', which has positive connotations, tells the reader that this development is for the better. In this narrative, and in other similar text passages about norms connected to sexuality, those norms that are most common in presentday Norway are presented as a natural end point in a linear development.

One book relates two stories of teenage girls who were 'married off' to older men in Norway in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in order to address arranged marriage. 'Both Conradine and Ory⁶ were raised to suppress their desires', the text informs us. 'Women's purpose in life was to get married.' A chastity belt illustrates this text, possibly to underline different standards for male and female sexual behaviour in Western history. Masturbation and female desire have been suppressed, the authors argue, but this is not the case in Norway today. 'Today, girls' sexuality is as important as boys', and masturbation is completely normal for boys and girls' (Berner, Borge and Olsen 2007, p. 41). The protagonists, Conradine and Ory, are young women of the bourgeoisie. The text informs us that Conradine had attended an all-girls school from the ages of 7 to 15, where she had obtained a womanly education, consisting of reading, writing and drawing (ibid., p. 40). Ory and Conradine represent an allegedly archaic version of female respectability. As Beverley Skeggs (1997, pp. 42-43) argues, this female respectability has not been available for working-class women, and certainly not for racialized groups, but it has strong links to Western nation-building projects. In this case, Conradine and Ory help constitute a national past that is based on such exclusions. Arranged marriage, suppression of female desire and sexuality, marriage for economic rather than

romantic reasons, as well as condemnation of masturbation, are lodged securely in the national past through this narrative, and framed in opposition to contemporary Norwegian culture's sexual norms.

This account of Norwegian sexuality is presented in a fashion akin to a teleological modernity narrative where sexual norms develop from backwards restraint and oppression to freedom represented by celebrated free and equal relationships (Oyewumi 1997; Gopinath 2005, p. 161). Nigerian feminist scholar Oyeronke Oyewumi (1997) addresses how Western feminism's failure to imagine gender and power outside the structure of the patriarchal nuclear family is intrinsic to the a priori assumption that women in other gender formations are 'always already oppressed', and more so than Western women in heteronormative gender structures (see also Mohanty 1988). Historians Kari Melby et al. (2006, p. 656) argue that 'the Nordic model of marriage' was marked by the simultaneous introduction of gender equality principles and the nuclear family as the model intimate organization at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the history of gender equality in Norway, female independence and sexual liberty is intertwined with the history of the heterosexual nuclear family as a social institution in ways that make Oyewumi's critique pertinent.

In the narrative about Conradine and Ory, both fear and oppression of women are articulated in relation to the culture in which they were 'married off'. Since the narrative constructs the national past and present as mutually exclusive, the story of their distress does not reflect on contemporary Norwegian culture, but rather offers a possible interpretation of the experiences of young women in families that practise arranged marriages today. The book does not engage critically with the situation of young people in contemporary Norway who practise arranged marriage. Hence, the implication offered in this particular case is that these young people are suffering from women's oppression in a Victorian mould. The Eurocentrism of this narrative strategy contributes to casting people who practise arranged marriage to use Said's (2003) term.

9.7 *Gay champions of Norwegian sexuality*

The current Norwegian acceptance of homosexuals is used as an element in other modernity narratives in textbooks, and also used to exemplify the difference between Norwegian sexual norms and those of 'Muslim' countries:

Up until 1972 it was actually illegal for men to sleep with each other in Norway! . . . Today it is illegal to discriminate on grounds of *sexual orientation*. . . . Compared with other countries, the conditions for homosexuals are still good in Norway. In some countries, especially some Muslim ones, it is lethally dangerous to be homosexual. In Iran people are stoned to death if they have sex with someone of the same gender. (Strand and Strand 2006, p. 45, see also p. 54)

This passage addresses a reader who is presumed to be surprised by the fact that male homosexuality was illegal in Norway as late as in 1972. This is contrasted with the current situation where this type of discrimination is prohibited. Even though homosexuality still is not unproblematic in Norway it almost seems to be so if Norway is compared to certain other countries. Here 'Muslim countries' are used as an example of places that have not quite reached 1972, to employ a sexual development narrative (Gopinath 2005). Iran is presented as one example of how dangerous it can be to be homosexual in a Muslim country, since homosexuals there are said to be stoned to death. The example of stoning as punishment presents Iran as outdated and primitive as opposed to the Western enlightened attitude.

Depictions of homosexuality are also used to contrast sexual norms in different cultures, as is the case in Figure 1. The page shown is the introduction to the topic 'family life in the past and present'. One picture shows two white well-groomed men in their 30s or 40s lying in a park reading a newspaper with a young girl between them. The idea is probably that the reader will interpret the men as homosexuals, since the caption reads: 'In Norway, partnerships between homosexuals are legal.' The right-hand picture shows a Masai man wearing traditional clothes. In the background there is a mud hut and two women. This caption informs us that '[w]ith the Masai, men can have several wives' (Berner, Borge and Olsen 2007, p. 39). In addition, the comparison of the pictures and

the headline 'past and present' indicate the associations between the Norwegian past and the present of 'other cultures' that we discussed above.

Figure 1. Facsimile from social science textbook, introducing the theme love, sexuality and cultural norms



This image is both atypical and interesting for its use of the Masai culture to illustrate other sexual norms than those that are common in Norway. As we have seen thus far, it is primarily Middle Eastern and Asian countries associated with Islam that are vaguely indicated as reference points for 'non-Western' sexual norms in the texts. In this example however, the foreign sexual norms are exemplified by polygamy in the Masai community. 'Muslim' and 'African' sexualities are associated with vastly different stereotypes in Norwegian public discourse. While strict male control

of women's sexuality is associated with 'Muslim' cultures in Norwegian public discourse, African sexual norms have mostly been addressed in the Norwegian public in recent years through the alleged sexual aggressiveness of female prostitutes of Nigerian origin (Skilbrei 2009).

In this image, the homosexuals are cast as both Norwegian and heteronormative, while the Masai culture emerges as the 'queer' case of sexual norms. Following American scholar Jasbir Puar, one could call this a 'Orientalist queerness' (2007, p. 25) where the failure to comply with heteronormativity through polygamy is not interpreted as queer transgression of heteronormativity, but rather as a stage in a feminist developmental history that is before, and hence worse than, heteronormativity. In order to be imagined as liberated within the feminist developmental framework we traced above, one has to reinvent the liberation narrative of Western feminism and embrace the 'gendered family par excellence', the nuclear family (Oyewumi 1997). Incidentally, that is exactly what the lesbian and gay movements in Norway and several other countries have done.

The juxtaposition between Western and Norwegian sexual norms and sexual norms in Muslim or non-Western countries is also evident in Figure 2. Here, a picture of two Dutch women kissing at their wedding is placed opposite a picture of two Iranian boys being hanged, allegedly for homosexual behaviour.⁷ The heading in the text is 'can love be inappropriate?' (Henriksen 2008, pp. 45-46). In the text it is not given that homosexuality is appropriate, as the students are asked to consider 'what they think' about homosexual love, and what their friends would have said if they were gay. The white brides depicted engage in the decidedly heteronormative act of a wedding kiss. Jin Haritaworn suggests that such depictions of gay 'kisses travel as part of an economy where meaning accrues to a narrow range of feelings, ideas and objects, which gain currency, familiarity and intelligibility through their joint circulation' (2010a). In both this and the previous picture of a 'homonormative' couple, to use Lisa Duggan's term (2003), the gay couples emerge as champions of heteronormative sexual freedom, partly due to their juxtaposition to non-Western others.

Figure 2. Are all kinds of love acceptable? Facsimile from social science textbook for 13 to 16 year olds



Source: Henriksen, Alexander 2008. ZOOM. Samfunnskunnskap 8-10. Oslo: Gyldendal Undervisning. pp. 45-46.

Puar coined the term 'homonationalism' to describe processes of 'national recognition and inclusion' of gay and lesbian subjects that are 'contingent upon the segregation and disqualification of racial and sexual others from the national imaginary' (2007, p. 2). Based on a discussion of 'migrant homophobia' in Germany, Haritaworn argues that nationalist discourses on homophobia have a 'dual function: they alienate both migrants and homophobia' (2010b). The Dutch citizenship test that indicated that being at ease with watching two men kiss was an indication of inclusion in Dutch society has become a well-cited example of this (see Butler 2009).

The image of the gay couple cleanses homosexuality of its symbolic queerness in relation to the nation, and in the process it helps establish notions about Norwegian sexual norms that do not correspond with reality. At the time the illustration image of the gay men with the child was published, there was no legal way for homosexual couples to acquire children in Norway. Though the Equal Marriage Act of 2009 secured equal treatment of all couples when applying for adoption and for assisted reproductive technology (ART) through the public health system, the principle of biological kinship as the basis for parenthood has been strengthened through the 2008

Biotechnology Act. Anonymous sperm donation for ART purposes is not legal, as the child's right to know his or her biological kin takes precedence over other concerns (Spilker 2008). Both egg donation and surrogacy are prohibited in Norway. Though Norwegian lesbians are currently partaking in the production of normative Norwegian families to a significant degree, gay men can only do this with difficulty.

9.8 Norwegian Sexuality and Multicultural Citizenship

In this article, we have discussed how gender, sexuality and cultural norms are addressed in social science textbooks in ways that perform gender equality and tolerance towards same-sex relationships as inherent traits in Norwegian culture. The culturalization of politics that is evident in this teaching material on sexuality seems to be contingent on the depoliticization of gender equality and equal rights for same-sex couples in Norway. Wendy Brown (2006) links depoliticization processes, like the one we have argued informs these texts, to tolerance discourse. Furthermore, she notes that there has been an intensified tendency in recent years that 'tolerance has come to belong collectively, rather than selectively to westerners', and that 'intolerance has become a code word not merely for bigotry or investments in whiteness, but for a fundamentalism identified with the non-west, with barbarism and with anti-western violence' (Brown 2006, p. 16).

The culturalization of sexual politics and norms that can be discerned in these textbooks strengthens ideas about sustained and inherent cultural difference, and relies on 'multiculturalist' notions about cultures as identifiable and distinguishable groups. Multiculturalism has become increasingly unpopular in Norway and many other European countries in recent years, however (Phillips 2007). Assimilationist viewpoints have been and remain in the absolute majority position in Norwegian integration debate (Gressgård and Jacobsen 2003). This situation makes the depictions of 'Norwegian' and 'non-Norwegian' sexual norms we discussed in this text particularly problematic. The texts seem to be performing a discourse in which the ethnic minority population is discursively

'attached' to sexual norms that are considered non-Norwegian through the process of selective culturalization of political viewpoints.

Judith Butler notes that 'very often claims to new or radical sexual freedoms are appropriated precisely by that point of view - usually enunciated from within state power - that would try to define Europe and the sphere of modernity as a privileged site where sexual radicalism can and does take place' (2009, p. 102). She furthermore notes a concern 'that a set of cultural norms are being articulated and functioning as preconditions for citizenship' (p. 106). Randi Gressgård and Christine Jacobsen (2008) have argued that demands in Norwegian media that Muslims declare their opposition to penalties for homosexual behaviour function as such a gatekeeper in public debate. Our analyses show that social science textbooks used in Norwegian schools discuss culture and sexuality in ways that could be seen to distribute access to Norwegian cultural citizenship along ethnic lines. The texts we have analysed may produce the problematic effect that tolerance towards homosexuality and support for gender equality as political positions become difficult to inhabit for non-white minority Norwegian students, while they are considered necessary for their acceptance as properly 'integrated' Norwegian citizens. In this way, these pedagogic texts about culture and sexuality may be seen to both construct and control ethnic borders in Norwegian society.

9.9 Notes

1. The subject-specific parts of the curriculum were revised in 2006, but the introduction from 1997 was kept.
2. See Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi (2009).
3. See Save the Children mothers index rankings for 2010: <http://www.savethechildren.org/publications/state-of-the-worlds-mothers-report/SOWM-2010-Index-Rankings.pdf>
4. See the government plan of action against unwanted pregnancies and abortions: http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/hod/aktuelt/nyheter/2010/Handlingsplan-mot-uonskede-svangerskap-og-abort.html?id_601909
5. In some cases, the difference between forced and arranged marriages is explained, but generally these two practices, one legal and one illegal, are described as similar and overlapping in a continuum of parental control.
6. From Amalie Skram's novel *Forrådt* (Betrayed).
7. The picture in question has been widely circulated as a representation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) 'honor killing' in Iran and spurred significant response in some Western LGBT organizations, despite that it being unclear whether the hanging was related to homosexual conduct (see Kim 2005; Puar 2007, pp. i-xi).

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10 Article three

Learning racism in the absence of 'race' ²³⁶

Abstract: How do students learn about racism in the absence of 'race' as a relevant concept for current social divisions? In this article I trace conceptual and affective negotiations of 'race' and racism in a Norwegian middle school classroom. Conceptual confusion about 'race', 'racism' and lines of inclusion and exclusion that surface through the discourse of 'immigration and integration' is rife in this educational setting. Treating 'race' as a 'chameleon-like' concept that continuously adapts to the political situation (Lentin, 2008: 491), I approach dynamics of the educational encounter with a Kleinian psychoanalytic lens which highlights the emotional investments and injuries in racist interaction (Rustin, 1991). Through this analysis I suggest that racism is enacted in the classroom partly as an effect of the denial of 'race' as a current effect of racism, and that the veiled racial binaries of Norwegian ethnonationalism facilitates racist interaction in classroom.

10.1 Introduction

In this article I engage with an educational encounter where people wrestle with conceptual and political issues that are too close to 'race' for comfort; immigration, integration, cultural diversity, and racism. In a diverse urban school environment in Oslo, Norway, people negotiate the paradox between textbook knowledge about 'race' as a fictional, historical and foreign concept, and the fact of many students experience based knowledge of racism as a very present facet of Norwegian society. Conceptual confusion about 'race', 'racism' and lines of inclusion and exclusion that surface through the discourse of 'immigration and integration' is rife in this educational setting. Treating 'race' as a 'chameleon-like' concept that continuously adapts to the political situation (Lentin, 2008: 491), I approach dynamics of the educational encounter with a Kleinian psychoanalytic lens which highlights the emotional investments in, and injuries from racist interaction (Rustin, 1991).

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The material stems from observations in an Oslo middle school in year eight, at which point students are 13 years old. In this school, a vast majority of the teachers, including the one in the example, were White ethnic Norwegian, while approximately 75 % of the students were first generation Norwegians who would regularly refer to themselves as 'foreigners' or as being 'Brown'. The school is an empirical site that offers insight into tensions between 'the fact of hybridity' (Back, 2002) in a number of multicultural Oslo neighbourhoods, and the continued strength of a Norwegian national imaginary invested in Whiteness and monoculturalism (Horst and Pihl, 2010; Pihl, 1998; Eriksen, 2010; Røthing and Svendsen, 2011; Gullestad, 2006b; Biseth, 2011).

In tune with scholarship on the continued manifestations of 'race' as a performative effect of racism in contemporary Europe (Goldberg, 2009; Lentin, 2004; Leonardo, 2002), I suggest that analytic attention to affective dimensions of everyday 'race wrestling' (Pollock, 2006) sheds significant light on how racism produces and reproduces racialized categories in contemporary Norway. In this educational context, students generally labelled any discrimination based on culture, ethnicity, skin colour or religion as 'racism', while teachers reserved this term for severe skin colour discrimination with links to notions of biological races. The students' understanding fit a 'racism without races' in which the 'dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences (...)' (Balibar, 1991: 21). In the material I discuss here, cultural diversity is tied to 'conflict' in a way that indexes the struggles over multiculturalism as a political strategy in Europe (Lentin and Titley, 2011), as well as the geopolitical dividing lines in the post 9/11 world order (Abu El-Haj and Bonet, 2010).

10.2 Racism and Norwegian national imaginary

In the Nordic countries 'race' is not only an issue associated with the past mistakes of colonialism, it is also something that the region figures itself as historically innocent of (Keskinen et al., 2009; Palmberg, 2009; Loftsdóttir and Jensen, 2012). In Norwegian national imaginary the nation is 'good' and innocent of colonialism and racism, as described by Marianne Gullestad:

In popular consciousness people in Norway are historically innocent with regard to slavery, colonisation and racism. Norway is a victim of colonisation (by Denmark) and occupation (by Nazi Germany), and not a colonizer. 'Norway did not have colonies' is a common refrain. People in Norway supported the civil rights movement in the United States, as well as the African National Congress in South Africa. Norway has played an important role in peace negotiations in various regions of the world, such as the Middle East, Guatemala, Sri Lanka and Columbia, and Norway is among the world's nations that give most per head in development aid. In sum, Norway is seen as an innocent, humane, tolerant, anti-racist and peace-loving society that is committed to helping the needy (Gullestad, 2005: 43)

Gullestad articulated a popular self image that emanates positive affect; it feels good about itself. This image disregards the history of Norwegians' participation in colonial culture and commerce as missionaries, seamen, businessmen and explorers, as well as its investments in whiteness (Gullestad, 2005: 43; Eidsvik, 2012). It also ignores the role of the state, including the education system, in the systematic oppression of the indigenous Sami and other national minorities (Jensen, 2005). These aspects of national history are either denied or considered as properly belonging elsewhere. I suggest that there are aspects of 'idealization' in this national self image, in the sense that the good feeling about the nation is partly achieved through externalizing negative aspects (Rustin, 1991: 66).

Gullestad pointed out that the category 'ethnic Norwegian' formed a binary in public discourse with an 'other' marked by migration history and skin colour, commonly labelled 'immigrant' (Gullestad, 2006a). A locally situated and shifting mix of language proficiency (including accents), religion, looks, and family name 'are in many situations regarded as more important for national belonging than citizenship and membership of the political nation', she argued (Gullestad, 2006a: 72). This binary has racializing effects. In a Kleinian psychoanalytic perspective it is possible to see it as a channelling device for negative affect, through which negative aspects of the nation can be projected onto its 'other'.

In this public sphere racism is limited to 'the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group is destined to congenital superiority' (Benedict, 1983: 97). The continued strength of the construction of a White national identity, that is somehow unrelated to issues of racism, has surfaced in repeated controversies over the use of the term

‘Neger’ to describe Black people in Norwegian usage (Gullestad, 2005). The term is etymologically similar to its English sibling ‘negro’, but many Norwegians still argue that it is ‘merely descriptive’. Norwegians of colour who have disagreed and asked for the term to be scrapped have met strong opposition from established language authorities, who have claimed that the term ‘neger’ in Norwegian does not carry the malevolent intent, nor the same history of racist abuse as the English term. The ‘neger’ debate illustrates the extent of externalization of racism as a social problem in Norwegian society.

Building on analyses of the externalization of colonialism and racism across the Nordic region, Suvi Keskinen and colleagues have suggested that the Nordic countries should be seen as ideologically and economically *complicit with colonialism* (Keskinen et al., 2009). This perspective helpfully situates the region in the epistemological context of the European continent. In this light, the Nordic externalization of the history of colonialism and racist ideologies can be understood as a regional variety of the European version of colour-blindness. Fatima El-Tayeb has described the ideology of racelessness in Europe as ‘characterized by the convergence of race and religion as well as the externalization of racialized populations (rather than their relegation to second-class citizen status)’ (El-Tayeb, 2012: 114-116). This ideology is furthermore evident in different national varieties of the ‘prohibition of discourses around racial oppression’ (El-Tayeb, 2012: 114-116).

10.3 Psychosocial perspectives on racism

In her compelling account of her orientation towards psychoanalytic thought, Gail Lewis has noted that it is her ‘deep concern with the experiential, social and political effects’ of the everyday injuries of racism that makes it necessary for her to find ways to account for the psychic life of racism (Lewis, 2012: 35). This emphasis on the felt reality of racism has also been a key facet in the tradition in Black feminist thought, most clearly expressed in the work of Audre Lorde (Lorde, 1984; Thandeka, 1999; Gunaratnam and Lewis, 2001). Psychoanalytic perspectives present tools which help theorize how the hatred of prejudice is formed and transformed in individual subjectivities as well as worlds

of meaning, as illustrated in Frantz Fanon's critical discussions of the 'psychopolitics of racism' (Fanon, 1967; see also Hook, 2011; Khanna, 2003; Rustin, 1991; Kovel, 1995).

Specifically, post-Kleinian approaches to racism provide meaningful explanations for the strength and durability of racist viewpoints, despite their irrational character and fictional basis (Rustin, 1991). Michael Rustin argues that 'virtually no difference is caught in "black" or "white", except those which are effects of something else – culture, nationality, the experience of discrimination or of oppression; the result of hostility to the racial category as such' (Rustin, 1991: 63). This emptiness makes them efficient at transferring 'unwanted states of feeling' (Rustin, 1991: 63). Racist dynamics can be helpfully fleshed out through the interrelated Kleinian concepts of *idealization*, *denigration* and *splitting*. I suggested above that Nordic exceptionalism is partly an effect of an 'idealization' in the sense that it denies negative aspects of its history and culture through assigning them on other regions and people. 'Denigration' of the other, which etymological origin is Latin *denigrare*, to blacken, accompanies idealization, implicitly and explicitly.²³⁷ When bad feelings are disposed of into the other, the self can be seen as only good, Rustin notes (1991: 66).

Splitting is crucial to these processes. In her introduction to Melanie Klein's work, Hanna Segal wrote that 'Melanie Klein saw that little children, under the spur of anxiety, were constantly trying to split their objects and their feelings and trying to retain good feelings and introject good objects, whilst expelling bad objects and projecting bad feelings' (Segal, 1988: locs. 122-124). By introjecting the good, and projecting the bad objects, the subject can create boundaries around the self. Consequently, the other whom the bad objects are projected upon appears to be dangerous, threatening and destructive. Projective identification can result from this through an interactive process where one succeeds in projecting the unwanted parts of the self in a way that makes the other person experience those feelings as belonging to itself (Clarke, 1999: 21).

Splitting, idealization and denigration characterises the 'paranoid position' in Klein's development theory, but is seen as a position also young people and adults move in and out of in

²³⁷ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/denigrate>

different situations. The mechanism can be seen at work in educational encounters where the burden of racial stereotyping is threatening the individual. It can also be seen in national narratives such as the Norwegian case I have described here, where issues of race and racism are externalised along with the migrant populations it attacks (Kovel, 1995).

10.4 Keyword: 'Race'

Conceptualizations of Norwegian nationhood can be traced in both public discourse and textbooks. My initial focus arriving at the Oslo school where I did my observations was how these conceptualizations worked in the educational encounters, and which lines of inclusion and exclusion were performed in the process. We were three researchers present at the school for six weeks, observing four different student groups in which ten different teachers were involved at various times. We split up for observations, shared notes and comments during our time there, yet our analyses have remained separate. During the six weeks of observation all four classes covered aspects of the curriculum concerning 'identity' including family, peer pressure, gender equality, a multicultural society, immigration, racism and prejudice.

It quickly became evident to me that everyday negotiations of racism was a catalyst for other ethical and political issues. Specifically, students discussed regularly whether incidents and statements amounted to 'racism', and whether specific teachers were 'racist'. For me, these negotiations over 'racism' suggested that trying to analytically unpack the concepts of 'race' and 'racism' at work in the school could yield important insights about processes of racialization in contemporary Norwegian society. 'Race' emerged as a keyword in Raymond Williams' sense; mapping its different meanings could shed light on the troublesome negotiations of 'racism' (Williams, 1976).

In the analyses here I approach the meanings and effects of 'race' through a close engagement with an educational encounter. Mica Pollock's suggested that we 'investigate and theorize actors' everyday disputes in their full ethnographic complexity – to analyse moments when youths and

adults (of all “races”) themselves are arguing over how best to understand or navigate their own race issues’ (Pollock, 2006: 85). These moments of ‘race wrestling’ cannot be studied through abstracted discourse alone. If it is indeed the case that ‘race’ is silenced in the cultural context at hand, race wrestling is bound to be expressed in a roundabout language and through affective and emotional interaction.

10.5 Affective inquiry

For the analysis below I have singled out a situation that presented a particularly rich case of ‘race wrestling’. In this session a White male ethnic Norwegian teacher and a mixed student group were struggling to make sense of questions of cultural diversity and racism in contemporary Norwegian society, as well as in their own lives. In terms of diversity the class was typical for the school with mostly Norwegian born students, whose parents were commonly born in Pakistan, Turkey, Norway, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Egypt, Morocco, Iraq, Iran and Somalia. There were also students that were adopted by Norwegian born parents and students with one Norwegian born and one migrant parent.

Affective inquiry is inevitably a subjective method. At the end of each day I wrote narratives of my own experiences in class which conveyed affect, mediated through my feelings about what had happened, and what I could sense from the others in the room. Teresa Brennan has noted that ‘feelings are sensations that have found their right match in words’ (Brennan, 2004: 5). The process of analysis involves finding such matches for affective impressions, which implies that the analysis is underway already during the immediate processing and creation of narratives based on the events that unfolded. Affects are commonly not unique to the individual, even if they are often approached through personal feelings. Brennan has addressed this issue suggesting that the ‘atmosphere’ or the environment literally gets into the individual, even if they have vastly different experiences and psyches (Brennan 2004:1). From a different vantage point, Thomson and colleagues have compared

interpretation of texts from research encounters, finding that most would single out the same excerpts as conveying strong affect (Thomson et al., 2012).

Yet, the 'angle' we approach situations from are also constituted by the experiences and emotional state we enter the room with (Ahmed, 2008). Furthermore, institutional, material and geopolitical positioning and investments also influences our work (Kennedy-Macfoy and Nielsen, 2012). My colleagues and I were White ethnic Norwegian educators. This ethnic and institutional position made the teachers see us as 'colleagues', even if we were outsiders to the school and did not participate in lessons.

In my observation notes from the session I discuss here there is hasty, almost panicked, scribbling from the different conversations that went on, and a messy map of how themes converged and split up again (Clarke, 2005). My attention was geared towards the atmosphere of the room and the affects expressed by actors in the situation, where boys completely dominated the interaction with the teacher as well as cross communication between students. The prolonged drama of the 2 x 45 minute session with no break in between was one in which I did not understand the depth and complexity of what was going on until later, and that made a lasting impression on me.

10.6 'Because we're foreigners': immigration politics in the classroom

Entering this educational encounter, I got the impression that the teacher had prepared for a class about a conflicted topic. I was well aware that he was obliged to teach the students about the 'challenges and opportunities with a multicultural society' according to the Norwegian curriculum, and that cultural conflict was a theme that was listed on the teachers' plan at this time. The teacher entered the classroom resolutely and quickly got ready to teach:

Today's themes are culture clashes and immigration. He wrote the heading "Culture conflict"²³⁸ on the blackboard.

Teacher: I'll try to explain with an example. Why are you sometimes sent out of the library?

Student: Because we are foreigners.

²³⁸ Norwegian: 'Kulturkonflikt'.

Teacher: No, because you wear jackets and hats inside. It's a conflict between youth culture and adult culture. The action of wearing your jacket inside means different things to you and the teacher. That's why some teachers won't let you wear hats too. They think it's rude, even if you don't mean to be rude.

I read his example as an attempt to 'neutralize' a controversial topic. It did not work. Before five minutes had passed, a politically alert student had called him out. His response; 'because we're foreigners', raised political questions regarding inclusion and exclusion in the nation, as well as racism. The example suggested that conflict could be seen as an inevitable and unintentional effect of cultural difference. Yet, there was nothing unintentional about the conflict in the library. The boys in question knew perfectly well which teachers they could irk by keeping their caps on inside, and who they couldn't. Defining this as a cultural conflict, the teacher illustrated that 'cultural conflicts' are determined by unequal power relations.

This is one example of several during these observations in which being 'thrown out of the classroom' figured as an image for being 'thrown out of the country' and vice versa. The scenario related everyday discipline issues in the school to political discourses about immigration control and citizenship. The widespread racist claim that 'immigrants' should be 'thrown out of the country' if they cause trouble seemed to inform some students' interpretations of being 'thrown out of the library', or the classroom. The imagery figured the teachers as representatives of the state who were vested with the power to decide who were safe and welcome, and who were not. These parallels suggested that the risk of 'eviction' in public discourse and racist rebuffs registered affectively as a threat to students who identified as 'foreigners', regardless of their Norwegian citizenship. Knowledge of friends and family in trouble with immigration authorities, as well as media coverage of children of asylum seekers being forcefully sent 'back' to a place they have no knowledge of, accentuated these fears. The bewildered and concerned teachers could only try to reassure the children that they would not be 'sent back' to somewhere they had never been.

10.7 Wrestling with 'race'

Seemingly less surefooted than at the outset, the teacher approached the topic of 'racism'. He had chosen an excerpt from the textbook which he asked a student to read out loud. The text was about race theory, and explained the ideas behind human races and the scientific rejection of these ideas after World War II. There seemed to be puzzled concern and confusion among the students during this loud reading. In the perplexed, yet uneasy, atmosphere the text about race theory had left us with, the teacher asked the students what racism was. 'Differential treatment', one student answered. 'Yes, taken far', the teacher half confirmed. He asked further: 'What is it based on?' 'Neger', a student replied promptly, but as soon as he said it he was reprimanded by the teacher: 'That's wrong, we don't use that word'. Another student suggested 'skin colour'. The teacher affirmed that, and explained further about the views on race found in encyclopaedias from the 1920's. The intent was clearly to convey that racism was based on the misunderstanding that there are human races, as they had just read in the textbook. In his explanation he used the term 'Black', and was instantly corrected aggressively and fearfully by a student who said 'you can't say that!'

The teacher's message was clearly antiracist, in the sense that he opposed racial thinking (Goldberg, 2009). He both wanted to reject the concept of 'race' on scientific and moral grounds, and to teach the students that this concept is dated and wrong. As a consequence, they should not use the word 'neger', which has its origin in biological racial categories. There were some troubling unclaritys in the teacher's message, however. 'Neger' was a historical term, not to be used in the present. Yet, both the students and the teacher knew that it is indeed used in the present in racist discourse. Sometimes without even being understood as racist, other times as part of a claim to innocence of colonial complicity (Gullestad, 2005; Hübinette, 2012). Through denying the relevance of the term in the present, the teacher effectively foreclosed the opportunity to highlight the fantastic nature of both historical and present day racist beliefs. While historical racism could be cast as ridiculous, its present day forms remained unacknowledged, contrary to students' experiences. The teacher's inability to continue his critique of racism into the present day was likely to be

underscored by anxiety of being cast as a racist himself. Rather than allow the students' ideas to come forward, he policed them, and made sure they were not empowered through an ability to critically analyze racist dynamics in the present. Nor was he able to fully reassure their concerns about his own standpoint on the issue.

Nevertheless, the concept that had been confined to history resonated in a troubling way with the felt experience of some students in the class. It would not stay in the history book. After the discussion about 'racism' above, a student in the back intervened: 'Hey, I'm a "neger"'. He was the only student in class who had migrated to Norway as a child, and was from Somalia. The teacher didn't register his intervention, but the student, Hanad, continued to talk about whether he and some others in class were 'neger'. While several students were expressing the feelings about racism that were 'out of place' in contemporary raceless Norway, the Somali boy Hanad took it upon himself to be the body out of place, in Sara Ahmed's terms (Ahmed, 2000). At that point the teacher clearly wanted to sum up and close the topic of 'race'. He asked everyone to write in their notebook that all human beings are of the same race.

David Goldberg argues that the concept of 'race' as such was willed away in Europe after the Holocaust, and 'buried alive' with the memory of its atrocities. Nevertheless, he points out;

As diffuse as they are, racist implications linger, silenced but assumed, always already returned and haunting. Buried, but alive. Odorless traces but suffocating in the wake of their nevertheless denied diffusion (Goldberg, 2009: , loc. 2128-2131)

Characterizing the after-effects of chattel slavery in the U.S., Avery Gordon defined haunting as the 'way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with' (Gordon, 2008: xvi). The 'race wrestling' that the teacher and the students in this class were engaged in illustrate how certain forms of education about racism can amount to an enactment of the burial of 'race'. It is a partial and halting affair, through which the concept is animated in the process of its continuous burial. In the process of its pedagogical denial, 'race' became a haunting presence in this classroom, in the form of anxiety. It had to be dealt with, somehow. As far as the racial drama of this class had already

progressed, it had only just begun. As Gordon has noted, 'haunting' points to the sense of trouble that arises when the social order cracks and exposes feelings and bodies that are out of place, 'and show no sign of leaving' (Gordon, 2008: xvi).

10.8 The affective burden of 'race'

During the instruction that followed what I have discussed so far, several students were keenly watchful of the teacher's language, and would interrupt and protest if there were a slightest chance that his positioning could be interpreted as racist. He was visibly struggling with the intensity in the room. When the teacher wrote 'immigration' on the blackboard, and 'for' and 'against' columns under it, the initial political conflict line between 'immigrants' and 'Norwegians' was activated:

Teacher: So, were going to DISCUSS. That means presenting two sides of an argument. The issue is immigration. What is positive about immigration?

Students (girls as well as boys): More people! More cultures. Less racism. Less prejudice. More food. New friends!

Teacher: That's good. Now, what might be considered negative about immigration?

Students: (silence).

Teacher: Can't you think of anything?

Students: (continued silence).

Teacher: Well... there's transmittable diseases that spread through travel to people who aren't immune, like when the Europeans came to South America. And brain drain. Smart people leaving their countries to earn more other places. And cultural conflict. Disagreements. And sometimes segregation.

Towards the end of this exchange, there were lengthy silences, in which the students resisted the teacher's attempts to discuss negative effects of immigration. While some students seemed genuinely perplexed and simply appeared to remain silent because they did not have an answer to offer, others expressed defiance and contained hostility towards the teacher. In a class where the boys completely dominated verbal interaction that involved the teacher, boys as well as girls participated in this silent yet palpable protest. There seemed to be resistance, with momentum. It was evident in students who tipped back their chairs with arms crossed over their chests and raised eyebrows combined with challenging looks at the teacher. By the time he started supplying answers himself, he had lost the attention of several students, who were engaged in their own conversations about the issues at hand. I was hopeful that there was a 'structure of feeling' (Williams, 1977) at

work here, which could amount to an emergent collective of 'immigrants' who could press back against the teacher verbally (Andersson, 2010). They seemed too young, and too anxious, for this kind of resistance however. Instead, the anxiety was dealt with by enacting the racist dynamics the lesson had presented them with.

In Hanad's corner the conversation revolved around 'race' and who counted as a 'neger'. More students joined him, also discussing among themselves who were 'immigrants'. In a belated response to the teacher's attempt to teach about the problems with segregation, one boy who was also discussing whether he was an 'immigrant' simply stated: 'Somali'. 'Burka' a loudmouth White boy said, instantly, as if it followed naturally from 'Somali'. 'Circumcision!' another White boy added, clearly inspired by the new turn of the conversation. Several boys, both White and identifying as 'Brown', started discussing Somali immigrants loudly among themselves. It went on in discussions between twos and threes, and sometimes erupted in full group comments. The room was buzzing intensely, in spite of the teacher's repeated attempts to stop it. It seemed like the Norwegian born students with migrant parents from other countries tried to rid themselves with the bad feeling the topic had landed them with. The discussions piled up to a co-construction of Somalia as the origin for all social evils associated with 'immigrants'.²³⁹ It took time. After a while, Hanad, the only Somali student in class said 'That's racist' to the students talking about Somalis. Towards the end of the class he angrily stated 'you are all racists!' to everyone around him, and left the room.

'Racism and sexism are grown-up words', Audre Lorde has noted, and 'children perceive them, correctly, as hatred' (1984: 152). Hanad had the word he needed to shout back, and a concept to understand with, and through his anger leave at least some of the hate for the others to deal with. This is a meagre consolation, however, when a lesson intended to raise awareness about racism has resulted in racist bullying.

Rustin notes simply that 'the more negative feeling and anxiety that is having to be processed by children in their social milieu (such as school), the more likely this is to be projected in

²³⁹ Norwegian public discourse on immigration supported this construction of Somalis as 'problem immigrants'. See Fangen K. (2007) Citizenship among young adult Somalis in Norway. *Young* 15: 413-434.

persecutory ways into negatively defined out-groups' (Rustin, 1991: 59). Here, the anxiety that was already palpable in the room was further intensified by the teacher's insistence on engaging his students in recounting the 'negative effects of immigration'. In the process, the majority of the students were yet again subjected to the homogenising effect of racialization (Goldberg, 2009), and denigrated as the source of 'trouble' in the peaceful and benign Norwegian nation. Under the weight of this social projection, unwittingly enacted by the teacher as a representative of the White majority, differently positioned students were inspired to push the negative affect onto others.

The white boys who shouted 'burka' and 'circumcision' to label the Somali seemed to be enjoying the spectacle. The figure of the Somali woman worked particularly well as a 'container category' in this instance (Lewis, 2006). Misogyny as well as racism could be freely expressed, as long as it took this direction, it seemed. It also 'stuck' to the Muslim girls with and without a hijab (Ahmed, 2004), but they were defended by other Muslim boys who shouted in response that 'burka' and circumcision of girls was 'something the Somalis invented'. They were not only defending the girls, however. In Norwegian, the term 'circumcision' currently references female genital mutilation, and has male circumcision as a secondary meaning. The fact that the Muslim boys in class were circumcised was not new to the two boys who seemed to raise this topic as often as they could. The affective intensity the accusation brought about could be understood as a defence against a veiled attempt at emasculating the Muslim boys.

The anxiety that these topics generated informs the power of the bad feeling that was dumped on the Somali boy Hanad in this situation. Rustin writes that

'what is expelled by the group expressing prejudice or hatred, and what has to be borne (or resisted, or got rid of, if that is possible) by their recipients, are powerful doses of bad psychic stuff. Such transactions are more potent, psychologically primitive, and damaging than the mere mental definitions or images that are usually written about in this context' (Rustin, 1991: 68).

The national projection of troublesome facets of the nation onto 'immigrants' caused children who were interpellated by this term to split off and project the hatred towards the most vulnerable group available, in this case the Somalis. For Hanad as well as the other students interpellated by the

term 'immigrant', the situation could be seen to amount to a struggle against projective identification; against seeing himself as the object other his classmates were trying to cast him as. The only protection he had against this assault was his recognition of it as racism, and the anger he could wield to push back at them.

10.9 Conclusion

Thinking with Audre Lorde, one could wish such recognition of racism could have spurred anger against the school and the teacher in the first place, and thus prevent the racist bullying of Hanad (Lorde, 1984). The content of the lesson worked against that, however. Frantz Fanon argued in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) that the colonial influence on education in the Antilles, presenting the foundations of identification with Whiteness, played a significant role in providing the social conditions for the introjection of racist contempt (Fanon, 1967: 147-148).

In the case I have discussed here, the White ethnic Norwegian teacher was not acknowledging the amount of anxiety the ethnic Norwegian/immigrant binary was causing in the student group. The students knew they were not 'ethnic Norwegian' despite their citizenship because they were not 'White'. The significance of Whiteness to national identification has largely been silenced in Norway, but there are signs that first generation Norwegians are increasingly articulating the racial aspects of this line of exclusion. One of Dorthe Trøften's informants from an Oslo school stated: 'I don't feel particularly Norwegian... Because I don't have that skin colour, and then I can never become Norwegian for the Norwegians, quite simply' (Trøften, 2010: 17). Henry Mainsah let the statement 'I could well have said I was Norwegian but nobody would believe me' introduce his work on ethnic minority youth's self representation on social network sites (Mainsah, 2011). Recently, an 8 year old Norwegian born boy who analyzed his own situation in Kari Gellein and Tine Poppe's book on children who live in asylum centres: 'I am Brown. That's why I'm poor. The others in my class are White, and they are rich. Brown is a problem, White is not a problem' (2012). His analysis was also picked up by Norwegian newspapers, and exemplifies a growing representation of critiques of

racism from non-White first generation Norwegians (Hansen and Poppe, 2012; Andersson, 2010; Andersson et al., 2012; Prieur, 2010; Alghasi et al., 2012).

These formulations of racialization – an effect of naturalized lines of exclusion that externalise people of colour while perpetuating an ideology of racelessness (El-Tayeb, 2012) – expose ‘race’ as unacknowledged, albeit haunting, presence in contemporary Norway. The Kleinian psychoanalytic perspective I have applied here allows us to see how children and young people’s everyday racisms links with such larger racial divisions. This perspective also enables us to see what happens when these everyday racisms are allowed to flourish in destructive ways in schools when teachers are in denial of their significance.

For contemporary Norway this example from civic education indicates that perpetuating the notion of a nation that is ‘innocent’ of racism, is continuously making it guilty of racism as an effect. Anti-racism would involve acknowledging ‘race’ as an effect of current racisms (Goldberg, 2009), and coming to terms with the part it plays in Norwegian ethno-nationalism. The critiques against racism that are currently formulated by first generation Norwegians could potentially expose how racialization is allowed to flourish through the denial of ‘race’, also in state institutions.

Changing the dynamics of educational encounters, like the one I have discussed here, would involve that the White majority accept responsibility for the facets of society and oneself that have been projected on the other. Tobias Hübinette and Catrin Lundström have noted about the Swedish situation that this process includes mourning the loss of the nation as it used to be known, and that the difficulty this involves should not be underestimated (Hübinette and Lundström, 2011). The violence that colour-blind antiracism unwittingly purports in the absence of ‘race’ underlines the necessity of this process, however difficult it may be.

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11 Article four

Promising failures: Teaching ‘difference’ in civic education

Abstract: How are categories of difference produced in the social organisation of power in education, and how can they be reconfigured or undone through educational encounters? This article explores this larger problem through an affective analysis of two classroom spaces in a multicultural school setting, where concerns over ‘discipline’ and teacher authority circulate. Drawing on both critical pedagogy and Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology, I consider how these different affective spaces address and produce ethnic and racial ‘difference’ in contrasting ways. Furthermore, I connect negotiations of ‘difference’ to the social organisation of power in the school to highlight how teachers’ and students’ identities and social positioning emerge as performative effects of social struggles in the everyday. Based on the insights this analysis yields, I discuss the relation between the risk of ‘failing’ as a teacher in a neoliberal education culture and the facilitation of educational processes of ‘becoming’, beyond reinscription of the existing social order.

Keywords: affect, becoming, difference, racialisation, education, ideology

11.1 Introduction

How are categories of difference produced in the social organisation of power in education, and how can they be reconfigured or undone through educational encounters? This article explores these questions through an affective analysis of two classroom spaces in a multicultural school setting, where concerns over ‘discipline’ and teacher authority circulated. Drawing on both critical pedagogy and Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology (Deleuze and Guattari 2004; Freire 2010; Giroux 2011; hooks 1994), I consider how these different affective spaces addressed and produced ethnic and racial ‘difference’ in contrasting ways. Furthermore, I connect the negotiations of ‘difference’ to the school’s social organisation of power, to highlight the manner in which teachers’ and students’ identities and social positioning emerged as performative effects of social struggles in the everyday. Based on the insights this analysis yields, I discuss the relationship between risking ‘failure’ as a

teacher in a neoliberal education culture and facilitating educational processes of 'becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004), beyond reinscription of the existing social order.

The questions I pursue here became important to me after I spent six weeks with two other researchers in a multicultural middle school in Oslo, Norway. We observed teaching and student interaction in the spring of year eight, at which point the students were 13 years old. The study was focussed on negotiations of 'race', gender and sexuality in civic education. At the time, the four classes we observed had collapsed the timetable for two weeks to focus on 'identity', including questions of peer pressure, gender identity, commercials and media, life in multicultural society, immigration and racism. My particular focus was the negotiation of 'race' and racism in this school, where 75% of the students were the children of immigrants, but more than 90% of the teachers were White ethnic Norwegians.

The label 'ethnic Norwegian' forms a binary with 'immigrant' in Norwegian public discourse, in that 12% of the Norwegian population is made up of immigrants or children of immigrants. This binary is part of an ethnonationalism, where shifting combinations of Norwegian heredity, language and 'Whiteness' form the constitutive elements of 'Norwegianness' (Gullestad 2006). The 'immigrant' label, conversely, invokes primarily people of colour with immigrant heritage and mother tongues other than Norwegian. While labelling Norwegian-born people 'immigrants' is contested in Norway, it is still common in everyday usage and in a number of national statistics (see, i.e., Texmon 2012). Students whose parents are immigrants often call themselves 'foreigners', rather than 'immigrants', if their parents are immigrants (Ingunn Marie Eriksen 2012). Here, as in other Nordic countries, national imaginings include racial boundaries that go unacknowledged in the public realm, civic education and educational research (Beach and Lunneblad 2011; Dovemark 2012; Gullestad 2005; Hübinette and Lundström 2011; Loftsdóttir and Jensen 2012). Currently, education struggles to acknowledge the 'fact of hybridity' in Norway (Back 2002). This is especially evident in the capital, Oslo, where immigrants and children of immigrants make up 30% of the population of

600,000, and in neighbourhoods such as the one studied here, where ethnic diversity is the norm, rather than the exception.

A principal dilemma of citizenship education is that 'lessons taught in schools about democratic values are contradicted by social practices such as institutional racism and inequality' (Banks 2004, 1). These issues are particularly salient in educational encounters that address social inequalities, specifically. In education about cultural diversity and racism, students are encouraged to become aware of their own position in existing power relations, and may also become mindful of how social inequalities are reflected in schools and other state institutions (Junn 2004). By encouraging students to learn about social structures and their position in them, teachers also confront their own positioning in the same social structures. Their institutional roles align them with the state, and their positions require that they defend its ideological project through fostering integration and social cohesion (Banks 2004). Furthermore, in education about cultural diversity and racism, White ethnic Norwegian teachers occupy positions of privilege in relation to students who understand themselves to be 'foreigners'.

The need for culturally responsive pedagogical practices (Gay 2010) and curriculum reform to challenge monocultural national imaginings (Banks 1997) is urgent for Norwegian civic education, and such changes would help to address some of the issues that arose in the educational spaces I discuss here (Biseth 2009; 2011; Ingunn Marie Eriksen 2012; Lars Laird Eriksen 2010; Horst and Pihl 2010; Lidén 2005; Røthing and Svendsen 2011; Trøften 2010). Through this article, I hope to show that such curricular and strategic pedagogy initiatives must be supplemented by critical assessment of the organisation of power in the classroom, as it relates to the larger social order; this may require teachers to 'fail' in their mission to instruct students on the logics of contemporary society.

My discussion invokes Paulo Freire's ideal of education as the practice of freedom (Freire 2010), but pays particular attention to the poststructuralist insight that power can never be conceived as external to any subject, situation or political project (Foucault 1990; Taylor and Robinson 2009). This involves, following Henry Giroux, an expansion of 'the meaning and theory of pedagogy as part of an

ongoing individual and collective struggle over knowledge, desire, values, social relations, and, most important, modes of political agency' (Giroux 2011, locs. 116–118²⁴⁰). To highlight the acute and personal nature of these struggles in everyday educational encounters, I work with Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of power as the unity between our desires and the economic infrastructure (Deleuze and Guattari 1995). This implies that it is not only our participation in the social order and its institutions that compels educators to reproduce it, but also our affective investments in existing social structures.

11.2 Affect, power and 'becoming'

Questions of power in citizenship education can be fruitfully addressed through an analysis of affective investments and dynamics in educational encounters. Michaelis Zembylas has pointed out that 'understanding citizenship through the lens of emotion (...) can provide educators critical tools for deconstructing the affective meanings embedded in citizenship discourses and the structures of feelings that are produced, reproduced and circulated' (2009, 375). Affective meanings in citizenship discourses can be approached through an assessment of the 'affective economies' they are part of (Ahmed 2004; see also Zembylas 2009). Ahmed's point is that discursive signs accumulate affect through their circulation, and that invoking, for example, the topic of 'immigration', is likely to put certain affective dynamics of fear and aggression into circulation (Ahmed 2004).

Yet, it is not possible to predict the affective dynamics of a situation from the ideological content of the curriculum at hand. Lawrence Grossberg has argued that 'affect is the missing term in an adequate understanding of ideology, for it offers the possibility of a "psychology of belief" which would explain how and why ideologies are sometimes, and only sometimes, effective, and always to varying degrees' (1992, 82–83). In this reasoning, affect points towards the physical aspects of social encounters, where the affective economy that a particular ideology or discourse brings into circulation is only one of many influences on affective interaction. Accounting for affect in this way

²⁴⁰ Kindle locations are used for electronic books without page numbers.

acknowledges a level of experience that is somehow sensed, or even apprehended, but that cannot quite be captured in language or conceptual knowledge (Clough and Halley 2007; Gregg and Seigworth 2010; Koivunen 2010).

Affective aspects of the organisation of power in education can be understood in light of Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between smooth and 'striated' spaces (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, 524). Classrooms can often be figured as 'striated' spaces, which are 'rigidly structured and organized, and which produce particular limited movements and relations between bodies (...)' Smooth spaces, by contrast, are those in which movement is less regulated or controlled, and where bodies can interact – and transform themselves – in endlessly different ways' (Hickey-Moody and Malins 2007, 8; see also Davies 2009, 20–21). The potential for transformation in smooth spaces points towards a relationship between smooth spaces and the event of 'becoming', which has been fruitfully explored in cultural studies of education from a Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective (see, i.e., Cole 2011; 2012; Cole and Masny 2012; Davies et al. 2009; Kofoed and Ringrose 2012; Marble 2012; Zembylas 2007).

The concept of 'becoming' is fundamentally affective, as it supposes that bodies are radically open to their surroundings and can both affect and be affected (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, 300; Gatens 1996, 164). Addressing an education context, Caroline Camden Pratt has described Deleuzo-Guattarian 'becoming' as 'both a de-individualizing move in which the individual is able to escape some of his or her limitations, and a move in which the individual differentiates [*sic*] herself, becomes something other than she was – something new' (Pratt 2009, 53). As suggested in Pratt's description, the Deleuzo-Guattarian distinction between 'difference' and 'differentiation' is useful for an analysis of 'becoming' (Davies 2009). 'Difference' names categorical differences, such as the many qualitatively different and discernible ethnicities, races, genders and so on in a group (Davies 2009, 17; Deleuze 2004, 38–39). 'Differentiation', on the other hand, is what happens in 'becoming', where a given body or entity evolves and surpasses the already determined potential of that body; it is how newness and surprise come into the world (see Deleuze 2004, 280). For education that

engages with race, racism, immigration and identity, such 'becomings' can be said to represent the hope that 'race', gender and country of origin do not have to determine the potential and possibilities of students and teachers, and their interactions.

11.3 Doing affective inquiry

Approaching questions of social difference and power through affect requires attention to shifts in affective intensity in the classroom and collective and individual expressions of feelings, and identification of moods in the room. During these observations, I tried to be mindful of these points, and took observation notes that included affective impressions. To flesh out the affective aspects of the interaction, however, I had to write 'data stories' about how the situations felt to me afterwards (Lather 1991). As affect is not immediately available to consciousness, in my data stories, accounts of affective impressions were translated into feelings. Teresa Brennan has noted that 'feelings are sensations that have found their right match in words' (Brennan 2004, 5). The process of analysis, here, involved finding such matches for affective impressions, which implies that the analysis was already underway during the writing of processed narratives of the events.

While affective inquiry is inevitably subjective, when presented with the same data stories, different people often agree on what counts as an intensely affective situation (Thomson et al. 2012). Brennan has pointed to how we can identify situational moods through this rhetorical question: 'Is there anyone who has not, at least once, walked into a room and "felt the atmosphere"?' (Brennan 2004, 1). Here, she suggests that 'atmosphere' is felt by all persons, despite vastly different experiences and psyches (Brennan 2004, 1). Sara Ahmed has taken issue with this point, however, and suggested that how we 'feel the atmosphere' in a room is nevertheless informed by the experiences we enter the room with (Ahmed 2008). The topic of racism in the classroom raises very different stakes for those who risk becoming subject to racist discrimination than it does for those who do not, even if a certain intensity can be felt by everyone present.

In the two groups of 13-year-old students I discuss here, about two thirds of them had parents who had typically migrated to Norway from Pakistan, Turkey, the Balkans, India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Somalia, Iran, Iraq and Morocco. In the educational encounters I discuss, however, there was a tendency for ethnic differences between students with 'immigrant backgrounds' to be subsumed under the 'ethnic Norwegian'/'immigrant' binary. In line with Ahmed's thoughts, it is possible to see how the experience of being designated to the 'immigrant' category potentially interpellated many of these students as 'out of place' in discussions about immigration and diversity in Norway. It is equally clear, however, that the standpoint of ethnic or racial 'difference' was constituted in a social space that was, in itself, shifting in ways that may have rendered these differences more or less significant.

My colleagues and I gained access to this field through the teachers, and were associated with them by virtue of sameness. As White ethnic Norwegian educators, we could almost 'pass' in the staff room (and the classroom) as teachers, and the teachers seemed to see us as allies. 'Passing' as members of the most privileged group in a social situation can help researchers access a field, but this also puts them in situations where they risk participating in a way that naturalises, rather than exposes, power inequalities, and developing loyalties that prevent critical analyses (Lundström 2010). Critically assessing social orders and situations requires researchers to practice critique as part of the analysis, through which the epistemological frameworks of the analysis must be 'brought into relief', exposing the questions at their limits (Butler 2001). In this case, the practice of critique involved bringing the idea of education as a universal good into question, in order to theorise how our desire as White ethnic Norwegian educators to make space for differently racialised students in 'our' social order reinscribed power inequalities that may as well have been challenged by a rejection of the knowledge system that schooling relies on.

11.4 Approaching power and difference

The two educational spaces I discuss here in depth show how different affective dynamics can tie into issues of difference in Norwegian education. At the time we started observations at this school, Caroline and Ayla's class had become infamous for being exceedingly difficult and noisy. The situation had developed into a crisis, for which the teachers were determined to find a solution. It weighed heavily on them. They felt very much responsible for the situation, and were eager to discuss the problems they encountered. Caroline and Ayla were both young women, and Ayla was also one of the few teachers in the school with an immigrant family background. Together, they had developed a project for bringing the class into some order, and felt that they could use it as a foundation for learning. Caroline told me that she was confident the students were smart kids, but that something had happened to their interaction that had made it nasty and unproductive. The teachers intended to fix this by restoring every student's faith in their abilities, and had a long-term plan to achieve this.

In the space I call 'Tom's classroom', the teacher struggled with engaging his students in dialogue about diversity, immigration and racism. Tom, like many Norwegian educators, took pride in taking part in an education system that successfully fostered democracy and participation.²⁴¹ He struggled with sharing authority, though, which is also one reason why the classroom space appeared to be led by him, primarily, even if other teachers were also involved at times. It would be unfair to see him as a supporter of what Paulo Freire has called the 'banking concept of education', in which students are viewed as containers that can be filled with the teacher's knowledge (Freire 2010, 73). Rather, his concern over his students' lack of involvement in the issues suggests that he saw student experience as crucial for learning (Dewey 1997). After one of several troublesome interactions over the issues of cultural diversity and racism, he expressed his concern. When I followed him back to the staff room after that class he expressed in frustration: 'I don't get it! They

²⁴¹ Norwegian civic education generally achieves high understanding of democratic processes, and high levels of student participation in the classroom are seen to contribute to this relative success. See Schultz, W., J. Ainley, J. Fraillon, D. Kerr, and B. Losito. 2010. *ICCS 2009 international report: Civic knowledge, attitudes and engagement among lower secondary school students in thirty-eight countries*. Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

should care about this! It concerns them!' I begin the analysis of Tom's classroom with a narrative I wrote after sitting in on a session.

11.5 Tom's classroom

It was a Monday, and I was in Tom's class to listen to the students present on the 'identity' project. Some students were missing, and the atmosphere was tense. They were quiet. Tom looked at them, and said, "You are few today... It's not like it's the first time the *absence is present* to put it that way. But you aren't to blame for that, you are here." A student started setting up the computer for presentations. Tom directed his attention to a test result he was going to hand out, and stated, "Then I guess everyone is ready for some 'What did you get?!' But try to keep it brief, so we can move on." One student asked if they would get the English test too. Tom said "This is the Norwegian test. I'm not finished with the English test yet, because there were a couple of football matches yesterday." He continued: "Kiara was stupid enough to start fiddling with some log-on stuff, so she's the first victim" (to present). Kiara did her presentation. When she was finished, Tom asked if someone wanted to volunteer to be next. There was no response. He started a count out, and landed on a boy who said he wasn't finished with his presentation. Tom pointed to another boy, who said the same thing. Evidently, several of them had not done the required work. Tom seemed annoyed. He said "I have made this perfectly clear to you: if you haven't finished by today I will fail you on this project. I told you on Friday that you all would have to present what you got, and that there will be no extension of the deadline. Now, can any of you volunteer so that I don't have to make even more of a fool of myself by pointing to someone who hasn't done it?"

This was the beginning of a two-hour session with presentations on the 'identity' project, which the class had worked on in the two weeks prior. The narrative I wrote of the experience conveys strong negative affect. The students seemed anxious, possibly afraid. From the teacher, I gleaned a sense of defeat at the outset when he pointed out that many students hadn't bothered to show up. His comments about their interest in each other's grades seemed condescending. The jibe about watching football rather than preparing feedback emanated indifference justified by masculinity. Asking the first student to present, he called her stupid and labelled her a 'victim'. It felt threatening. When he couldn't find a new victim after her, he cast himself as suffering from their unwillingness to cooperate. At that point, the situation felt almost dead – as if nothing could ever come of it – like an end point for a downward spiralling event. After a pause of sorts, the students appeared to take responsibility for the situation, and began to talk to each other about the order of their presentations.

The students' presentations were of varying quality; some were wholly unprepared and others were quite good. It was clear, however, that Tom generally wanted the students to reflect more personally on questions of religion, gender, culture and difference. He asked questions about these matters to particular students, notably girls who were first generation Norwegians. After two girls had presented on the topic 'social roles, religion and society', he attempted one such conversation:

Tom: Questions of identity: 'who am I', and so on. About culture, and how your background influences who you are – does it make you different from other people? When you are together with other people who don't share your background or religion – do you feel different? Is it easy to hang out with people who are different?

Student: Umm, yes, I think it is easy to hang out with other people...

Tom: Prejudice – have you heard about that? Have you experienced that here in this neighbourhood?

Student: No, not really.

Despite Tom's efforts, the students did not seem willing to engage personally in the topics at hand. In several such encounters he explicitly asked the students about religion, difference or prejudice, and got similarly brief responses. As the lesson progressed, he tried to ask more clear questions. A pair of girls was pressed on the question of whether anything existed, at all, that was not accepted, and which people might have prejudices against. The girls responded: 'Looks, that's important, and can make people not accept you'. It was not clear to me whether they were referring to skin colour and racism, or standards of beauty for girls and bullying based on that. Tom, however, pressed on about questions of culture by asking: 'Do most people think it's OK that we have a multicultural society in Norway?' Whether he had misinterpreted the girls' response remained in the blue, as the students' perplexed response was only, 'Yeah, that's OK...'

The affective dimensions of these interactions informed the lack of engagement in the classroom. I described the atmosphere at the beginning of the class as 'deadening'. Everyone seemed to pull into their bodies. It felt as if all conversation was fearful and involuntary. How much of the lacking participation could be chalked up to this sense of affective arrest? Had some of the students who claimed not to have prepared actually done so, but not in a way that they could recognise as such in their frozen state? Could they have contributed their own experiences of living

in a multicultural community if the interaction between students and teacher had been more open? Beside the girls' puzzled responses to the teacher's questions, stories of lives and experiences beyond the teacher's established knowledge were just as likely. Given the chance, they could have possibly told another story. However, such possibilities were foreclosed by the affective dynamics of the situation. Only 'safe' imitation of textbook discourse and avoidance of interaction seemed like viable strategies for the students in this space; they all kept strictly to the classroom's striations, allowing no surprises or new perspectives to unfold.

In the interaction between Tom and his students, the striation of the classroom space was reinforced by the logics of categorical difference. The teacher's approach to cultural diversity and racism was self-evidently majoritarian. In this case, it was marked by Whiteness, masculinity, and Norwegian heredity. He addressed his questions about being 'different' to those he saw as possibly knowledgeable about it: girls, and students whom he perceived as ethnic others. While he tried to recruit them into a conversation, the logic of categorical difference locked the students into the position of 'native informants' on issues concerning prejudice based on religious difference and racism (hooks 1994, 44). The teacher's questioning illustrates how difference in the categorical sense proceeded from a majoritarian perspective that placed difference with that which was other to itself (Deleuze 2004). Working with and through such logic, even in resistance to it, required the students to become subjects marked by that otherness. Understandably, they did this only to the extent that it was strictly required of them.

Thinking of 'race' as a performative effect of racial boundaries (Leonardo 2002), it is possible to see this situation as a struggle with the homogenising effect of 'race' (Goldberg 2009). Under the logic of difference that the teacher applied, many students could be racialised as Norwegians of colour, and thus subjects of difference. But their everyday social situation in this diverse school in a multicultural Oslo neighbourhood did not seem to have prepared them for their role in the teacher's approach. The students did not seem to adopt a view of cultural and religious diversity as somehow exceptional and potentially problematic, such as the teacher seemed to expect. Nor did they

respond to the presumption that prejudice and racism were particularly relevant to them. I understood their attitudes to be partly perplexed and partly resistant. They seemed to not be able to understand the part the teacher expected them to portray as subjects of difference, but this lack of comprehension may also have been wilful – an act of resistance against the logics of difference, through which they obstructed the teacher’s attempt to subject them to racialisation (Ahmed 2012).

The experience of racialisation has been helpfully described by Franz Fanon as learning to see one’s self from the perspective of Whiteness (Fanon 1967). Acquiring the White gaze on one’s self, one learns to see one’s self as Black, and to see this Blackness as an object of contempt. Julie E. Maybee has pointed out that the personal costs of seeing one’s self as a potential victim of racist discrimination gives minoritised students a particularly good reason for resisting education about racism; this is also true in cases where education is designed to foster resistance against racial injustice (Maybee 2011). Citizenship education that addresses issues of race and racism tends to draw on power imbalances in the social order and their racialising effects to explain a social problem at hand. There is a good reason for this: it can provide students with critical tools for resisting oppression. But, in many cases, such as that of Tom’s class, such education projects amount to a mere enactment of oppressive social structures, augmented by the White teacher positioning him- or herself as the authority that defines the shape of students of colour’s agency. In such cases, when the teacher wittingly or unwittingly naturalises and perpetuates processes of racialisation, students’ best options can be to opt out or not show up. In Tom’s class, Tom’s relative failure to communicate with his students in the framework he wanted to could be read as a blessing for his students, who, by refusing to learn what they were being taught, were able protect themselves from being enrolled in the oppressive logics of difference that he introduced to them.

The affective aspects of the encounter in Tom’s classroom show how the organisation of power emphatically underscored the power inequalities in the social order that the teacher was trying to address. The class dynamics during the same project work on ‘identity’ in Caroline and Ayla’s class

illustrate how learning about cultural diversity and racism can come about in a different kind of affective space.

11.6 Caroline and Ayla's classroom

Another day at school. I made my way through the hallways thinking that I have to remember this deafening noise. I came to the room, and went in last, my presence acknowledged by the teacher, who briefly named a student who was not present, whose desk I could take for the day. I went to stand at my appointed desk, and wait for class to begin. I was the only one. Everyone else was shouting and wreaking general havoc. The teacher stood in front of class, waiting for them to calm down. She spoke. There was no response, only the roar of twenty-some teenagers who were producing noise in every possible way. Five minutes. She stood silently, demonstratively, at the podium. But the effect was limited to catching the guilty attention of a few students up front. "Calm down!" she shouted, "Stand at your desks!" This caught their attention briefly, but it did not hold – after a few seconds the chaos was complete again. Ten minutes. She singled out parts of the classroom, and talked to them in groups. But when she was finished with one group the one before had forgotten all about it. She took a deep breath, and tried to calm her frustration and assess the situation. Finally, she went around the classroom and spoke intently to every student individually. When she had finished her round, the classroom was calm. Class could begin. Twenty minutes after it supposedly did.

Throughout my experience with Caroline and Ayla's class, there was immense affective intensity in the room. As the narrative above indicates, however, this intensity did not always support the purposes of schooling. Ayla struggled to bring her class to order, and to get anything at all done. The institutional framework for teacher-student interaction was not sufficient to calm the class. Having failed to establish this institutionalised space, the teacher was forced to relate to the students otherwise. In this situation, as in many others, the teacher had to give up on authority and resort to acknowledging every individual and fostering a relationship with each student-as-person. Caroline and Ayla's classroom was an affective space that moved between the striated and the smooth, where they, as teachers, could not always assume to be able to direct the potential of the situation. If imagined to be a power struggle, the institutional hierarchy was sometimes 'smoothed out' – or temporarily smothered – by classroom interactions.

The chaotic tendencies in Ayla and Caroline's class were not highly valued in the school's staff room. There, the value of keeping the classroom space strictly organised by teacher authority was in high regard, and deviation from this norm was largely figured to be the teachers' failure.

Caroline and Ayla were very concerned about the situation, as well, and were spending significant classroom time on improving the class as a community, as in the following situation:

It was a Monday, and the teachers handed out the week plan. After this, they had planned positive feedback exercises among the students. I spent time with several different groups, and listened. When they were finished, Caroline and Ayla engaged them in a discussion about respect and self-esteem. This went rather well, I noted. The class was relatively calm for a little while, and participated in the discussion. When they started to get unfocussed, she stopped, and went on to another exercise she had planned. "Now, Ayla and I have thought about the qualities that each and every one of you have, and we have made a list. Here it is: ..." She addressed every individual student in plenary, and spoke about that student's positive academic and social qualities. The students listened, laughed, and seemed very happy. When they had finished addressing everyone, one student raised her hand. She spoke up: "Now it's our turn to say something about you. Caroline, you try really hard, and always take the time to explain stuff to us. Ayla, you understand how it's really like for us, in the class." The teachers were both clearly touched. In fact, I think everyone was.

The student who spoke was backed by several other students, who expressed consent. It was a moment to cherish, which contrasted strongly to the production of chaos that the class had become so accomplished at. The teachers were working on nurturing a delicate, striated space based on personal relations. The situation smoothed out, and expanded in affective intensity and potential, when one student initiated a return of the favour. It was as if the teachers were given over to the students in the moment that one student acknowledged their responsibility for the teachers as unique others, who 'try really hard', or 'understand what it's really like'. Through these comments, the teachers were acknowledged as the student's allies, despite their everyday struggles. Caroline had proved herself to be on their side through her relentless effort to help them, despite the difficulties they had produced for her. So had Ayla, but she seemed to be more easily recognised as an ally because she knew what it felt like to be cast as the ethnic 'other' in the setting of Norwegian schooling.

Although the problem with disorder and noise in the classroom seemed to be improving, it had taken a lot of instructing time (during the 'identity' project) to do so. When it was time for the class to present on the project, it became clear that this 'problem class' had somehow managed to do some learning through the chaos. One girl had negotiated with the religion teacher and acquired a full 45-minute session for her presentation. She held a presentation about Islam that produced

scores of questions from other students. She answered as best she could, but also encouraged others, whom she thought might have different perspectives on the question, to contribute. The session was noisy and intense, but produced a much more complex body of knowledge than the students' textbooks could offer. Several of the students presented on other topics, such as having a multicultural identity, or the impact of commercials, from points of view that the curriculum did not represent and the textbooks could not back them up on. One boy did a presentation on cultural diversity, in which he emphasised the positive aspects of the concentration of immigrants in geographical communities. Drawing on the experiences of the Tamil Sri-Lankan Diaspora in Norway (Bruland 2011), he argued that sustaining ethnic group relations post migration is crucial for integration in the workplace, and in general. While he also acknowledged that 'segregation' was portrayed as detrimental to integration in his textbooks, he made it clear that, based on the combined information and experiences available to him, there was good reason to view it differently.

During these presentations, I was impressed by the ability this student group had developed to produce knowledge beyond the institution's knowledge frame. There was a risk for the students to become 'native informants', here, as well (hooks 1994), but the way in which they actively formed their own points of departure and demanded space for their perspectives suggested that they were not. Nor were their accounts left unchallenged. The presentations produced a fusion of differently situated knowledges, which represented their process of becoming wiser, as well as becoming otherwise.

In this class it was hard to pin down the significance of categorical 'difference', because knowledge bodies, as well as teacher and student bodies, seemed to shift in ways that made it difficult to pinpoint which differences mattered at all times. It seemed as if categorical 'difference' was frustrated by 'differentiation'. The students engaged with the issues of cultural diversity, controversies over immigration and integration, and questions of racism, but they were not determined by the logics of these debates. Rather than becoming subject to racialising logics, the

students in Caroline and Ayla's class were able to make the issues and discourses they engaged with subjects in need of revision and correction. This did not seem to result from instruction. Rather, it seemed to be an effect of the unstructured intensity that was allowed to exist in this classroom, where the norms and rules of the social order were emphatically shaken on a regular basis. Sometimes for the sake of it – and sometimes for the sake of becoming unforeseeable citizens – producing unforeseeable arguments.

11.7 Becoming, resistance and the organisation of power

The data stories from Tom's and Caroline and Ayla's classrooms suggest that issues of 'difference' are complexly interwoven into the organisation of power in educational encounters. In both affective spaces analysed here, students and teachers were seen to work with and through affect to establish or challenge a social ordering of Norwegian society along the ethnic Norwegian/immigrant binary. In Tom's class, where power inequality was established in a striated affective space, students opted for a negative response to what could be seen as a colonial relation as well as a colonial knowledge formation (Freire 2010).

Through this negative response, the students refused to become 'a knowing subject' in the form that their schooling required (Halberstam 2011, 14). The consequence of this negating strategy was that students failed, many of them literally so, on the project about 'identity'. Judith Halberstam has noted that, in addition to the negative response to colonial knowledge formations, there is the violent response, where one tries to do damage in return, and the homeopathic response, 'within which the knower learns the dominant system better than its advocates and undermines it from within' (Halberstam 2011, 14). Rather than imagining Ayla and Caroline's class as a clear example of the latter, I would suggest that their student group employed a violent strategy to create an intense and chaotic affective space, in which learning to beat the colonial knowledge formation in question could be achieved without succumbing to it.

However, this did not banish the threat of failure from the classroom. In the fractured and sometimes 'smooth' space of Caroline and Ayla's classroom, the teachers shared the fear of failing this project through not having had enough time to properly instruct the students. They were struggling to live up to the norms of their institution because of their problems with wielding its power properly. By opting (by necessity) to risk their own power and authority to help the class learn, they were quite straightforwardly sharing the risk of the sanctions of the institution. They were also put in a situation where they could not, even if they wanted to, become efficient voices for the ideological content of the curriculum. As a result of these various processes, the struggles over the organisation of power in the classroom that were evident in the 'discipline problem' could be seen to break up the alignments between the organisation of power in the classroom and the ideological content of the curriculum, in a way that enabled the students to challenge the institution and ideologies of difference simultaneously.

bell hooks has addressed how difference informs the affective space of multicultural education in ways that challenge established notions of what amounts to a good and safe learning environment. In *Teaching to Transgress*, she noted the following:

Many professors have conveyed to me their feeling that the classroom should be a "safe" place; that usually means that the professor lectures to a group of quiet students who respond only when they are called upon. The experience of professors who educate for critical consciousness indicates that many students, especially students of colour, may not feel at all "safe" in what appears to be a neutral setting. It is the absence of a feeling of safety that often promotes prolonged silence or lack of students' involvement (hooks 1994, 39)

Striated spaces are often conceived of as 'safe': interaction is structured, everyone keeps to their appointed roles, and conversation is predictable. bell hooks has pointed to the fact that the professor's notion of a 'safe' space may not correspond to the students'. My analyses of Caroline and Ayla's class highlights how certain affective spaces, described as 'smooth' as well as 'chaotic', can allow for learning processes that are experienced as less threatening and potentially dangerous to the individual student's sense of self.

11.8 Conclusion

Deleuze and Guattari have pointed out that ‘the problem of education is not an ideological problem, but a problem of the organization of power’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1995). This suggests that the problem of reproducing power relations through education is not merely a question of the ideological content of education, but also of how power relations are produced in the personal and physical interaction in education. Henry Giroux has argued that a core project in critical pedagogy is to address ‘the democratic potential of engaging how experience, knowledge, and power are shaped in the classroom in different and often unequal contexts, and how teacher authority might be mobilized against dominant pedagogical practices as part of the practice of freedom’ (Giroux 2011, locs. 110–111). However, thinking about Caroline and Ayla’s class in relation to Tom’s has made me doubt the potential for mobilising ‘teacher authority’ for the practice of freedom. Rather, I believe it makes sense to emphasise the significance of the educator’s ability to risk his or her commitment to the social order and the school, in order to ally with the students so they can learn to challenge colonial aspects of education through becoming otherwise (see also Todd 2003). This is particularly important if the teacher represents majoritarian social positions in relation to the students. White teachers who insist on ‘discipline’ in relation to student groups of colour when discussing issues of ‘race’ and racism engage in very problematic enactments of the social inequalities they try to address.

However, as the affective aspects of the educational encounters I have discussed here suggest, working against enactments of social inequalities in education cannot be achieved through a teaching style. On the contrary, teachers must rely on students’ abilities to resist learning that subjects them to processes of racialisation, and their willingness to oppose the hierarchical structures of schooling. The ‘chaotic’ educational spaces this yields can feel unsafe for participants guarded by privilege, especially teachers. As an educator, participating in these processes of ‘becoming’ through engagement with difference requires giving up the ‘master’s house’ as a source of support (Lorde 1984). In the institutional spaces of schooling, where neoliberal regimes for

control and accountability are in place, practices that can amount to a 'practice of freedom' (Freire 2010) seem to have a space in the failure to teach and the resistance towards schooling (Halberstam 2011).

In her seminal essay, 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House', Audre Lorde argued that 'difference must not be merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic' (Lorde 1984, 111). In this perspective, the affective intensity that questions of difference give rise to can be seen as 'a necessity for interdependency to become unthreatening' (Lorde 1984, 111). In such instances of intense interdependency, she argued, it is paradoxically possible to find the 'security which enable us to descend into the chaos of knowledge and return with true visions of our future, along with the concomitant power to effect those changes which can bring that future into being' (Lorde 1984, 111–12). Affective intensity in educational encounters can indicate that the stakes are high for many actors in the situation, but also that the potential for differentiation and new becomings is present. In failing to teach 'difference', or in failing to keep the 'discipline', there may be potential for learning to move against the logics of the social order, with all the risks it involves, even for teachers.

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