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**A ‚HAPPY COMMERCE‘
OF THE PASSIONS?
REFLECTIONS ON SMITHEAN SYMPATHY
AS A RESOURCE FOR JUSTICE**

DR. MILLICENT CHURCHER (BERLIN)

MITTWOCH, 24. NOVEMBER 2021

**“SHE HAS KISSED HIM
WITH HER FREEDOM”.
EROS AND SOCIAL
TRANSFORMATION**

DR. FEDERICA GREGORATTO (ST. GALLEN)

A ‚Happy Commerce‘ of the Passions? Reflections on Smithean Sympathy as a Resource for Justice

Dr. Millicent Churcher (Berlin)

Abstract

Adam Smith recognized that if human capacities for imagination and feeling are to support ethical and just societies, they must be harnessed, educated, and refined through individual practice, as well as through the careful design of cultural, economic, and political institutions. This arrangement assists to maintain what Smith refers to as a “happy commerce” of the passions, broadly conceived in terms of the circulation and exchange of passions that reflect and embed relations of mutual respect. This talk outlines Smith’s account of the relationship between fellow-feeling, imagination, virtue, and institutions, and reflects critically on the value of his early modern sentimentalist philosophy for addressing deep-seated forms of injustice in the present.

Zur Person

Dr. Millicent Churcher is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie research fellow at the SFB „Affective Societies“ at Freie Universität Berlin. She completed her PhD and a postdoctoral research fellowship at the University of Sydney. Her book, *Reimagining Sympathy, Recognizing Difference: Insights from Adam Smith*, was published in 2019 with Rowman and Littlefield International. Millicent’s current research interests include contemporary studies of affect and emotion, social imaginaries, and institutions. Her latest research project, ‘Embodied Institutionalism,’ explores how institutions can engage the imaginative and affective capacities of actors in ways that constrain or enable social justice outcomes.

“She has kissed him with her freedom”. Eros and social transformation

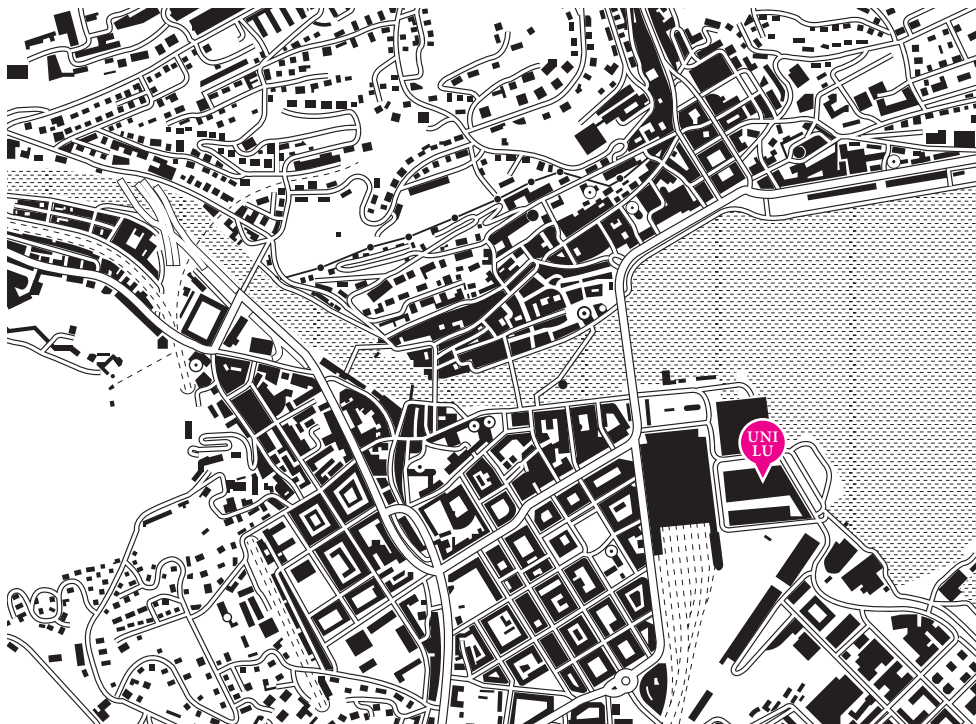
Dr. Federica Gregoratto (St. Gallen)

Abstract

In this talk, I present some of the main theses of my Habilitationsschrift, *Love Troubles. A Social Philosophy of Eros* (2021). The book is an inquiry into one specific form of love, erotic love, and its potential for a critical theory of society. I intend eros as a human relationship or bond that can (but does not always) open up an experience of freedom. In the talk, I articulate, first, the idea of freedom that is at stake in erotic bonds, which corresponds to an intersubjective and social process of (self)knowledge, education and transformation (1). Second, I try to show the socio-political impact of free eros, as a social space, in between private and public spheres, of formation of critical and transformative subjectivities: this is a social, “experimental” space namely, that cultivates and trains cognitive and emotional powers prompting and sustaining change (e.g. critical attentiveness, joy and hope, discontent with the status quo, “negative capabilities”) (2.)

Zur Person

Dr. Federica Gregoratto is postdoc research fellow and lecturer in the philosophy department of St. Gallen University. Before joining the department in September 2015, she earned a PhD in philosophy from Ca' Foscari University, Venice (2012) and was postdoc research fellow at the Cluster of Excellence “Normative Orders” at Goethe University, Frankfurt a.M. (2013-2015). She has published in English, German, Italian and been translated into French and Spanish and Italian on a variety of topics in social and political philosophy, such as the philosophy of love and sex, critical theory (especially Habermas and Adorno), pragmatism (especially Dewey and Addams), recognition and power theories, debt-guilt debates, gender and intersectionalist studies. She is also teaching practical philosophy at the University of Lucerne, and is columnist for the Italian online journal *Le Parole e Le Cose*, where she writes on movies, tv shows, literature, feminism, sexuality and romance. In February 2021 she has submitted her Habilitationsschrift at the University of St. Gallen with the title *Love Troubles. A Social Philosophy of Eros*.



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