

Transcript

So welcome everybody to the fifth session of the Post-Kantian European philosophy seminar at Warwick. The first session in this new year. And I'm very happy to welcome and introduce our speaker today, Manon Garcia, who is currently a junior fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows. She's joining us from Cambridge and in July she will become an assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy at Yale University. Manon specializes in political and moral philosophy, feminist philosophy, and the philosophy of economics while also working on questions in 20th century French philosophy, critical theory, and phenomenology. She's the author of a book entitled *On ne naît pas soumise, on le devient*, which was published in French in 2018 and whose English translation, *We are not born submissive: How patriarchy shapes women's lives*, will be published by Princeton University Press I think in March of 2021, so in a few months. Manon has also recently edited a reader of feminist philosophy entitled *Textes clés de philosophie féministe*, key texts of feminist philosophy, which was published by Vrin, I believe last week, so it's very recent. OK and Manon will talk to us today about Beauvoir and *Le deuxième sexe*. So Manon, we are very happy to welcome you. Thanks so much for being with us. The floor is yours.

Thank you very much. Thank you everyone for coming, especially in this very weird time. So thank you Daniele for inviting me. I'm very happy, I was very excited to come to Warwick, but I guess there will be other occasions. So my talk today is entitled masculinity as an impasse. Beauvoir's understanding of men's situation in the second sex. So, um, the central question that the second X aims to address appears on the first page of the introduction. It is what is a woman. This question is ontological, existential and phenomenal logic. But what questions, indeed but a woman, is what it is to live as a woman? And what is the lived experience of a woman in so doing? She's not the first to pay philosophical attention to the category of woman. One could say that who saw in Hegel did before her, but she is the first one to make it a philosophical problem. And indeed the second sex has been seen, and rightly so as the departure point. Feminist philosophy as a proper subfield of philosophy. And as the first philosophical account of women and femininity, his contribution to philosophy has been acknowledged. But. I think that one of its implications has not been discussed in the literature in making the category woman of hole saw fickle problem, Beauvoir actually brings two other objects in the source optical. Well. First, she makes sexual difference an object of philosophical scrutiny. Woman is ontologically defined. Will it relationally by a difference by its difference with man? And more surprisingly, she makes man understood as male human philosophical object as well, and a philosophical problem. One could argue that other philosophers who saw but also Plato and Aristotle's speech in the

symposium, have evolved sexual difference. However, in posing the question, what is woman would work challenges the common tendency to take sexual difference for granted as well as the usual neutrality of the masculine. In so doing, she she turned sexual difference in masculinity into philosophical issues and at least in the binary framework that she adopts. Asking what is woman implies what is properly masculine in a man or what is it that women have as women, and therefore that men do not have. To my knowledge, very little if anything has been said about the philosophical analysis of masculinity brought about by the 2nd text. I have to say that the only thing I've ever read about was written by one of the participants here who is pretty Pamela Lopez who's working on this as well at the moment and so I think we have a lot of things to discuss about this, but. Of course, the fact that the literature has focused on femininity in the second sex is easily explained. The second sexy. So evidently a book on women and femininity that people interested in masculinity haven't seen it as a potential source of interesting analysis. And 2nd, when one reads the second sex as the first book of philosophy devoted to. 1/2 of humanhood, namely woman. There is an understandable reluctance to read the book as a source of analysis of men in a way like. It looks like it would be exactly the masculine thing to do. However, I want to argue that doing so is coherent with the history of critical studies on men and masculinities, which is a subfield of gender studies. The development of this field is indebted to the feminist analysis of womanhood, whose challenge of the universe at its azatian of men's experience as human experiences. Have made clear that masculinity has traditionally be completely concealed as a possible object of study, so so there are actually a lot of talks inside the field of masculinity studies about the fact that they are rendered possible by feminists philosophy and feminist fury as a whole. So this silence on Google contribution to the analysis of masculinity is easily understood. I I take it that it's nonetheless striking. Because it makes her a pioneer of gender studies, not only insofar as she would have been the first one to shed light on the social construction of sex, but also as she would have made masculinity, and now only femininity, a legitimate topic of 1st topical investigation. It's probably useful here to justify my choice of words in this paper. I I use the term masculinity as a descriptive term. Referring to what, if anything, makes men men and not simple human beings. I use this term rather than manhood or masculine identity, for instance. As it has been used in gender studies and specifically in critical studies of masculinity as allowing for instability, tensions and plurality, whereas manhood tends to connote more stable and maybe biologically based approach to gender. Works in this field have shown that masculinity is not only what has been referred to as hegemonic or traditional masculinity, but rather that throughout history, space, social Mures, multiple masculinities are diploid and manifested there. There could be an an I. I won't talk about it in in this talk, but I think that would be an interesting deepening of my topic. There could be a discussion about the masculinities. Uh, of lesbians that

Barack tackles in in her very controversial chapter about lesbian woman. So in the same way that femininity can be understood as a positive value judgment, in the sense that the expression, oh she's a feminine woman, could be used to describe a woman who follows the social norms of femininity. Masculinity can be used as a value judgment to describe real men, whatever his expression may mean. But this is not the same. The meaning in which I will take the term. So I, I will take the term to be scripted. What I want to argue here is first that the second sex can and should be read as one of the first philosophical explorations of masculinity. More specifically, I will show that both proposes to understand masculinity as a situation that is as something historically, socially, and economically defined. That is not impressive. That is not oppressed, but nonetheless an impasse. Showing that men situation lead them to an impact is not only important in itself, but is also crucial for the feminist immense impact period. In agenda. Even though the fear of losing their privileges will make many men oppose women's emancipation. Mumbai, India indirectly, but convincingly argues that patriarchy restrains Mens possibilities to live an authentic and joyful life. They are there for reasons beyond altruism. For Mens take part in the movement of women's emancipation, which is also for men and emancipation from traditional masculinity. So too are you. For this I will first explain argue that there is a positive definition of masculinity in the second text, so that will be my first part. Then I will argue that masculinity, like femininity, is a situation and explain what that means for Beloit and in a in a third part I will show how Black demonstrates that masculinity is an impact because it's a form. A bad fit. So to begin. As a first step, I argue that the second set should be seen as one of the first philosophical explorations of maximum, as many commentators have noted, the two main philosophical innovations of the second set consisted in positing a new question for existential and ontology, which is what is a woman and gendering phenomenological experience? And I want to argue that these two innovations imply making masculinity a topic of philosophical investigation of its own. When Google asks what a woman is, she shows that this question implies that the two questions of what a man is and what a human is have been completed and should not be. Also, showing that phenomenological experiences gendered invites us to consider the possibility that all phenomenology, until then, which was taken as analyzing human experience, may well have been analyzing men's experience. And that's, for instance, one of the ways in which one can read them. The famous pages in in being and nothingness were soft explains. Or illustrates bad faith through the example of the woman who doesn't take her hand away during a date there. They're like commentaries of respect by, by Michelle Loader, who's one of the important analysts of Rush showed that this is a masculine phenomenological analysis and not just a human. Phenomenological analysis So what was it the question of what a woman is by debunking two possible responses responses to the question nominalism which would consist in saying only names separate men from women.

And she says I am quoting her. Certainly woman like man is a human being. But such an assertion is abstract. The fact is that every concrete human being. Is always uniquely situated, so she rejects the idea that there's nothing about. Nothing more than being a human about being a man or being a woman. And, uh, a sort of binary but equal view of sexual difference that would see. Masculinity and femininity as 2 equal poles in a way. She does, right? I'm quoting her the categories masculine and feminine appear as symmetrical in a formal way on town Hall records or identification papers. The relation of the two sexes is not that of two electrical poles. The man represents both the positive and the neuter. To such an extent that in French, UN designates human beings to particular meaning of the word. We in Latin, being accumulated into the general meaning of the word almost. Woman is the negative to such a point that any determination is imputed to her as a limitation without reciprocity. Well, she doesn't. This passage is of tremendous importance and can be read as the beginning of gender studies as well as as well as feminist epistemology. She claims that sexual difference is not a simple neutral difference between A&B, but rather that femininity is understood as a dis distance from the norm that masculinity is masculinity and humanity are assimilated and femininity is defined by contract with them. In saying this will definitely turn sexual difference into a philosophical problem, and hints at the fact that the definition of femininity is a consequence of the social power of men have. But more importantly for us, and to my knowledge, this has not been discussed, and to my knowledge is has not been discussed by the literature on Beloit. She's the first files for it. Identify how mental full power has made masculinity both invisible. An hegemonic masculinity is at the same time positive and neutral it is both do norm of humanity and what cannot be seen or analyzed. And so I think this is this is very important because. It is in a sort of way. She shows how in the same gesture, masculinities both hegemonic and invisible. An insane that she yes she creates feminist epistemologie and she invites to wonder like how knowledge is structured by this. But she also says, well, masculinity is a real question and it's it's been it's been hidden by this process. So, contrary to what the year keep, the sexes could let us imagine defining masculinity comes from a definition of femininity. Masculinity even more elusive than femininity at it is as it is not a question even for men themselves. Let's move on right? It would never occur to a man to write a book on the singular question of males in humanity, so it's because she is a woman that she can ask the question of where a man is, because men themselves. So taken in this fiction of the identification between masculinity and humanity. In a way, it is true, typically Hegelian dialectical movement that the second sex makes masculinity visible because she's been taught by society that when she writes and speaks it is quote woman. She sets herself to test to elucidate what a woman is. And the most obvious answer is in negative, one woman is the other sex, the negative. What is not a man. Therefore she needs to negate this negativity of femininity to make

femininity a positive thing. To give it a positive definition. And in so doing masculinity appears then as the negative of personality as a contrasting tool to reach femininity will be defined. And therefore proposing an existential analysis of femininity will produce a positive account of masculinity. So I think there's a there's really a loop like this where it is true. The negation of masculinity as so neutered and nothing can be said about it that she can then propose a definition of masculinity that is a positive definition that she needs as a contrasting tool to femininity. An example of this movement can be identified on the biological level in the introduction will not show that one of the forms of male power is to make their body disappear when when they managed to turn woman into sheer buddies. I'm quoting her woman has ovaries and a uterus. Such are the particular conditions that lock her in her subjectivity. Some even say she thinks was her hormones. Man vainly forgets that his anatomy also includes hormones and testicles. He grabs his body as a direct and normal link with the world that he believes he apprehends in all objectivity. Whereas he considers woman's body an obstacle or prison burdened by everything that particularizes it. Yet, when she seeks to identify in the biological chapter data chapter, what contributes to the. So, So what? What is the biological ground of femininity? She shows that men, men and women, or males and females, can only I'm quoting. Her can only be defined correlatively. In biology, no power imbalance enables men or males to make themselves future their. What women are not and the other way round. Thanks so in that weight masculinity functions as a contrasting tool. But through this ends up appearing as a as a topic worthy of philosophical investigation. It is by opposition to the masculine experience of coincidence between the needs of the species and the needs of the individuals experienced by men, that Barack and define the biological elimination of woman when she calls her enslave their enslavement to this species. If men can be pure individuals in the sense that the perpetuation of the species does not require that. They go against the demands of their individuality to perpetuation. Of the species requires that woman negate their individuality, so we see here that she needs constantly to think about how it is to have a body. When you're a man in order to understand what it is. Have a buddy. When you're a woman, and so indirectly she talks about what it is to have a buddy when you're a man, whereas this question is usually completely. Silence and and made impossible to tackle by this conflation between masculinity and humanity. And it's the same when she thinks about when she analyzes the ways in which girls education is an education towards admission. She needs to show how boys education is an education towards freedom in order to contrast boys and girls education and make the claim that education is gendered. And that, like the education to femininity, is what an education to masculinity is not. So since the overall binarity of the sexes is proposed, even though one can argue I, I think that. With whom? With the way she takes seriously the problem of Inter sexuation in in the biological data chapter, she's actually less binary than a lot of

her contemporaries, but still like she's overall having a completely like binary understanding of the sexes, but. Because of this binarity, the enterprise of searching for positive definition of femininity. Which means the definition that would not be in terms of what women lack by virtue of being woman, but what they are. Um rises led to to pay attention to the otherwise always elusive masculinity. Once we've said that, however, two sets of issues appear. So first, what is the ontological status of these categories of masculinity and femininity? Is Barack providing an essentially definition of masculinity? Is she saying that being a man is having a certain essence? And also, does it mean that there's only one way of being a man is is like masculinity a destiny, so I think to to respond to this question. It's important to understand that. Um, it's important to understand the concept of situation that bar proposes. Trudy's car had provided proposes an alternative to the position between essentialism and the denial of the existence of sexual difference. So this is my second part where I argue that masculinity like femininity, is a situation being a woman or a man is not having a set essence. Yet being a man and being a woman don't mean the same thing and do not give us what she calls the same grasp on the world. To contact US, situation indeed allows black to acknowledge underwent Halen against South that individuals are not equally free and that they hold a certain place in the world, which is a function of their social and economic position. And on the other hand, that they are not fully determined by this situation. So to understand what masculinity and femininity are indeed, one must hold together 2 levels. The one of the individual who makes choices and behaves in certain ways and one of society. And I I take it, I I I want fully demonstrate it here because of the of the time that I have, that I take it that with the concept of situation that is brought about by Beloit. Is an appropriation of some crucial elements of Heidegger's entology of being time instead of having a surgery and understanding of situation? Dubois has a design understanding a situation in a certain way, so to to summarize my point here. I think so. Heidegger argues first that one cannot think the design of the design as primordially out of the world in which they find it themselves, or at least that abstraction the world in this matter does not can correspond to the way human beings are primordially in the world. This is very important for both was understanding of sexual difference because it implies that sexual difference will have to be thought. Both in its social, any and it's in individual dimension. Every individual arrives in a world in which sexual difference already exists and at the same time every individual by their sheer existence will have an impact on what we understand collectively as sexual difference. Because there is no reality in the in the world outside design who unveiled the world in being in it. Um and so. Also, I I think that we want. Appropriates the idea that the world in which the the design lives is familiar to them. They know how to behave in it, and it does not mean that the design cannot freely act, but it means that every human being is, in a certain way determined by the situation there, in that is by their place in the

world. The individual is determined by the world in which they live, because the world is a significant whole unified by social norms. Um and so. A design is needed to make the world and those norms appear, but it also needs to behave. Like according to those norms, one of the ways of functioning of exams come from the fact that designs using other people's behavior a norm of their action in everyday life. Individuals can act without reflection on the basis of what one does in a given situation. So I'm using the translation of this man's as one. Um so. Of course there can be something problematic in this one insofar as it incites the individuals conform social norms rather than to interrogate the grounds of their action, but the one is also a source of intelligibility. That's what enables us to understand people's behavior. And so I and so today instead, the following the the one that following what one does is not performing bad. Faith is just a form like a sort of normal form of being in the world. But this doesn't mean that design is completely determined by it. By using these norms, and that's what Heidegger develops when he loves the idea of design as a throne possibility so briefly, so it's in Chapter 5 of Division One of being in time and briefly. The idea is that design is always already throwing a world that preexists them. Design has an ontological faculty, the the state of mind. So this English type that is such that design is always already thrown in a mood that precedes them, and that will some extent determine. Um, how they will behave, and so they can master the mood. They can change it, but there there is always already removed and I think. This understanding of designing a strong possible possibility is crucial to understand what was. Definition of femininity and masculinity's situation. What is situation is in a way this state of mind and this mood that you're in that come from a world structured by social norms towards which you still have freedom of action to a certain level to certain to a certain extent. So it doesn't mean that men and women don't have any sort of freedom towards the situation they are in, but it means that. Human beings that are situated that were in a world in which are being always already has a meaning and warm, but that this meaning and is normal products of history and not a fixed nature. So. But well, in designing masculinity and femininity's situation is not proposing an essentialised understanding of masculinity and femininity, but she still argues that they exist. So in a way, she's not adopting a strong constructive social constructionist position, she says. In the current time and civilization, wherein there is something as a man and a woman, and there is something as. Masculine in femininity and the situations are there for the product of history and of power dynamics. And this is the reason why after having established that the history of woman is the history of being under the power of men, but one needs to describe men situation. In order to understand how this situation contributes to death to signing masculinity. So this is my third part. Buer indeed describes masculinity as a situation whose specificity is that its power enables men to inauthentically escape existential ambiguity. Instead of seeing this escape as a simple privilege

men have. She carefully establishes that it places many in an impasse where they constantly fail to get the recognition. The absolute power and the infinite pleasure that they're looking for. Argues that masculinity, or at least traditional masculinity since as well seeing the end, allows for other masculinity that would not be inauthentic, is a form of bad faith. So she could, that's a framework inspired from Hegel, according to which each individual is a subject who wants to be recognized as such by other subjects instead of being seen as a share object. Net contributing factor. For instance, she sees this ambiguity of being both a subject and an object, and and when she calls the tragedy of unhappy consciousness. Ann as being solvable and Ann Nancy Bauer convincingly argues that Barack holds together the heideggerian midline as an ethical or horizon, and the Hegelian fight for recognition in such a way that this sort of agonistic nature of humans could be overcome towards the harmonious midline. So indeed. Boomer, right I'm I'm. It's a pretty long quote but she she writes the conflict can be overcome by the free recognition of each individual in the other, each one positing both itself and the other as objects and as subject in a reciprocal movement. But friendship and generosity, which accomplish this recognition of freedoms concretely are not easy virtues. They're undoubtedly man's highest accomplishment. This is where he is in his truth. But this truth is a struggle, endlessly bigger, endlessly abolished. It demands that man surpassing himself at each instant. Put into other words, man attains an authentically moral attitude when he renounced his being in order to assume his existence. Through this conversion, he also renounces all possessions because possession is a way of searching for being. So I'm I'm skipping a bit. But and but she says she's like is a difficult enterprise whose success is never assured. But he does not like difficulty. She's afraid of danger. She has contradictory aspirations to build life and rest existence and being he knows very well that a restless spirit is the ransom for his development, that his distance from the object is the ransom for his being present himself. But he dreams of Restful, national restlessness, and of an opaque plenitude that his consciousness would nevertheless still inhabit. Disembodied dream is precisely woman. She is the perfect intermediary between nature that is trying to man and appear who is 2 identical to him. So because men have always held all the concrete powers as she says, they have the power to turn a woman into an absolute other in a way that allows them to reap the benefits of reciprocity without paying for its cost. They couldn't reach it in an authentic way through friendship and generosity, but these things are costly and men are afraid of danger. It is therefore easier and less dangerous to pain reciprocity inauthentically through the construction of woman as the other. However, so this flight from authenticity, which is at the root of the construction of femininity as alterity has been widely discussed in in the literature, insofar as it provides an explanation for women's oppression but not in the account it gives of masculinity as an impact except in, uh, hopefully forthcoming paper by Pamela Lopez about

how it could allow us to understand what in cells. Are doing but but she can talk about it if she wants. In the in the community. So when these privileged situation allows men to escape, the cost of generosity and friendship, this bad faith leads them to constitute woman in such a way that condemned men themselves to perpetual in satisfaction. So I'll go a bit faster that I wanted to do that. I think it's important to see that. On a sexual level, already men constitute women as like as cliches that are. In theory, content soluble you can't value virginity and then have sex with women, who by the very fact you have sex with that loser virginity and be happy with the object of your desire. So what what? What shows is that? Women are constructed as everything. The men are not in such a way that they are constructed into being contradictory beings that men can never reach an an indeed within an authentical authentic and and pleasurable way, even even physically, and so more specifically, but shows how in traditional love the sexual abuse that man wants to do, a woman is destroying the very virtues that made her desirable. In the first place, she says the very used man makes up her, destroys her most precious virtues. And what is more, in impressing women in making them submit to men? Men put women in a position where they abdicate in front of them and and that's another thing that is very powerful, is that in in the chapter on the woman in love with shows that. For women, love has to be application towards women, but that is abdicating their quest for transcendence. Women make men responsible for this quest of transcendence, but then are disappointed and disillusioned about the value of the man they chose and and this is the very familiar sight of after everything I did for you. You prefer doing this and that except. Instead of spending time with me and that in a way. Do do do Destiny men shaped for women is such that women are going to not love them the way they would want to be loved. And so true to her analysis of both sexual desires and loved. It's none like early sexual dimension will show that men find themselves in a in an impasse. Traditional masculinity is so out of love. Woman makes woman, makes herself the slave of men, but in change him by making herself his slaves. So traditional masculinity is a privileged position that results from the power men have always had over women and give them a possibility to inauthentically escape the ambiguity of their condition. But when the situation is ambiguously, unambiguously better than the situation of women, it is also positively describe, doesn't it? Impact the flight from authenticity. Commencement to perpetual unsatisfaction and prevents them from being loved authentically by women. And so, to conclude, we can see that through her definition of masculinity. Um, as a situation, a situation that is shaped by the privileges that their powers afford men without that several things. First, she raises the question of men's responsibility in the perpetration of patriarchy and gives it a subtle answer. The concept of situation and her appropriation of the idea of design as a strong possibility. Show that men as individuals are not fully responsible for patriarchy. Men, like women are thrown into a world in which

there are always already meanings and social norms, including patriarchal norms. And if women, when women are constrained by their situation, so are men who are shoes that she. She gives the example of a colonial administrator and she says one can stop being a colonial administrator, but a man cannot stop being a man. Anne Anne. I'm putting her so here he is that guilty in spite of himself and impressed by this fault that he has not committed himself. So in a way she she. Understanding masculinity as a situation. Tempers men's responsibility for women's oppression, yet in designing their flight from ambiguity as bad faith and in very explicitly explaining that women are not in bad faith when they submit to men that they're just doing what is expected of them, and that they are making the most of their situation and an understanding what they have to win in in playing by the rules of social norms. So in defining masculinity as bad faith when femininity is not bad face, she blames masculinity for it's in authenticity. And she presents masculinity as. Morally wrong. Or at, or at least traditional masculinity. And the second thing that she does is that she shows that women's emancipation does not mean. That does not only mean that men lose their privileges, but that there are games for both sexes in in this immense patient, emphasizing the way in which male domination saps given men's freedom, and makes masculinity an impasse without paved the way toward the called. Bration between men and women in order to fight patriarchy. Though she takes into account that men are worried that they have a lot to lose in considering woman, not as the other bed as what she calls a companion. She praises the merits of what she calls Brotherhood between men and women. So of course this term Brotherhood is. A bit problematic, especially in the English words very gendering, but in the bottom we first hear too Hot Daddy Day, which is one of the three concept of the motor of the French Republic. Anne was a core value of the French resistance to Nazi Germany. However, the fact that she would use this word can still be surprising, as it appears she endorses masculine values since the French feminist to Lambda. During the revolution was already showing how this concept of Brotherhood eliminates woman, but nonetheless this is the last sentence of the book. It is within the given world, that is, that it is up to man to make the reign of freedom trials to carry off this Supreme victory. Men and women must, among other things, an beyond their natural differentiation and equal unequivocally. Affirm their Brotherhood, so the concept of situation allows blood to bring light to the possibility of a conquest of this original mid sign through Brotherhood, you conflict of consciousness is and the alterity that comes from it are not inevitable. When we understand the meaning of sexual difference as a historical social norm that can therefore be changed, we open up the possibility of a harmonious relationship between men and women. That is between two fraternal freedoms. Far from falling in the pit of saying men suffer from patriarchy just as much as women do. Well, that's proposing an analysis of traditional masculinity of as an

impairment of men and opened the way for other masculinities authentic and fraternal ones, which would be immense factory for everyone. Thank you.