

# Summaries

*Rosi Braidotti*

## Feminist Philosophies

In this article Braidotti engages with questions of canon formation in feminist philosophies vis-à-vis the hegemonical philosophical canon. She argues that feminist philosophies originate from the crisis of the hegemonical use of reason and exploit it to the fullest. This means that the issue of what counts as the canonical history of this discipline lies at the heart of critical, and that includes feminist, interventions upon it. In other words, to engage with philosophy in a feminist manner, one has to confront the issue of the history of the discipline in some ways. Braidotti summarizes what could be seen as schools of

feminist philosophies and sketches a new philosophical agenda. In the last thirty years feminist philosophy has moved beyond the premises that mark its beginnings. These are respectively a concern with mere criticism of the established canon on the one hand, and on the other an exaggerated fascination for the over arching theoretical framework that might 'contain' the feminist message. Although the seductive impact of feminist 'philosopher queens' continues to be felt in the making of feminist theory, other and more interdisciplinary discourses are affecting feminist theory today.

*Margo Brouns*

## Who knows the way where

In her contribution, Brouns looks back at the textbook she co-edited ten years ago, the introduction to gender studies *Vrouwenstudies in de jaren negentig* (Women's studies in the nineties, 1995). She reflects on the basic assumptions she and the other editors had at the time and the choices that they made; she compares these with the choices made by earlier textbooks on gender studies, and discusses the possibilities for a new Dutch introductory book on the topic. Her conclusion is that it is unlikely that another textbook would be written, for several reasons. In general, the status of writing textbooks has declined, publishing in Dutch has become less attractive for academics, and, more specifically, the field of

gender studies has changed because the target group has become more diverse. Nevertheless she imagines the directions a future textbook would take. Masculinity, biology and intersectionality would be the central perspectives throughout the whole book; themes like technology and religion would get a more prominent place. The link between gender studies and the history of the women's movement would, in Brouns' opinion, be loosened; she would treat gender as any other category of analysis. Rather than training specialists in gender studies, Brouns would choose to address students in any discipline who want to know something about gender.

*Garjan Sterk*

## Viewing cross sections from the white tower. A reconstruction of the debate on gender and ethnicity

Twenty years ago black feminists in the Netherlands demanded attention for their position in the women movement and its academic component, women's studies. This debate was highly polarized from the beginning. There were women arguing that black women occupy a specific position in society, implying that 'blackness' has a meaning preceding social relations. The focus of their anti-racist struggle was the dismantling of systems of suppression, not just in society but in women studies as well. If women studies would not incorporate the perspectives of black women, it would produce not only limited, but even racist knowledge. Other women argued that the organisation of difference had to be the focus of women studies. Their starting point is that 'blackness' is a social construction and is used to legitimise existing social rela-

tions. They focus on discourses and meaning. Reconstructing the debate on gender and ethnicity by means of the articles on this subject published in this magazine, the conclusions are clear. Within women studies the position of black women in society is studied and analysed to a larger extent since the nineties. And the two opposing groups did get a bit closer, with intersectionality being potentially a theoretical perspective that could bridge the (assumed) gap between discourses and practices.

What is missing in the articles, however, is a reflection within women studies circles on and attention for visibility as an decisive factor in the organisation of difference. Ethnicity is something only black people suffer from. The consequence is that theoretically black women still carry a double burden.

*Jeannette van der Sanden*

## Employment and women's studies: The impact of women's studies training on women's employment in Europe

The increased labour market orientation in higher education makes the question of employment outcomes of studies more and more relevant. This article addresses the question what the impact is of Women's Studies training on the employment possibilities of women in the Netherlands. What options do they see at the labour market, which choices do they make, in what sort of jobs do they end up, and can they apply their knowledge? A second question in the article is whether Women's Studies can help improving the unfavourable position of women at the Dutch labour market. The data gathered in the EU project 'Employment and Women's Studies' show that both past and present Women's Studies students are in general positive about the impact

of their study on their work. Work wise women get their feet on the ground, sometimes this is visible in concrete jobs or careers, but in any way they all can apply their Women's Studies knowledge. The interviewees are happy with the insights they gained, they got tools to hold one's own in the workplace, and are ambitious to achieve something. Women's Studies graduates are alert, hard working women that end up in a wide variety of jobs. A closer look is taken at Women's Studies students' ambitions in general and the academy as a desired field of employment. It is argued that the Women's Studies expertise of graduates gives them the possibility to make changes in the labour market and contribute to improve women's employment situation.