

Quilting Stories

Essays in Honor of Elżbieta H. Oleksy

Edited by
Marek M. Wojtaszek and Edyta Just

 WYDAWNICTWO
UNIwersytetu
ŁÓDZKIEGO

ŁÓDŹ 2012

Rosi Braidotti
Utrecht University

Complexity against Methodological Nationalism

In thinking about Elżbieta Oleksy's work several crucial key terms come to mind. Interdisciplinarity is almost too obvious, although even here Oleksy has taken serious risks, working for instance with both psychoanalytic theories and more classical political theories. In some ways Oleksy's approach is more trans-disciplinary in its daring combinations, than interdisciplinary in the narrow thematic way. The trans-national aspect of her work, however, is even more prominent. Elżbieta Oleksy is a bridge-builder across many international cultural divides: firstly, she has positioned her research across the trans-Atlantic divide, between American visual and popular culture and Europe. Secondly, she has documented the gaps and missing links across the different sections of the vast and heterogeneous European continent. Oleksy's books and policy-reports demonstrate to what an extent former Eastern and former Western Europe are still facing each other, with so many and often invisible tensions, misunderstandings, and open questions.

Where Elżbieta Oleksy's work is at its strongest for me, however, is in her sustained struggle to establish democracy in former Eastern Europe not only as a formal legal and political system, but also, and perhaps more importantly, as a frame of mind and shared cultural sensibility. Her work on Polish nationalism and the role of real-life mothers, as well as the discursive representations of motherhood, before, during and after Communism, is of capital importance in this respect.

In short, my alliance with this remarkable scholar rests on feminist principles of democracy, cultural participation and a profound commitment to fight against methodological and political nationalism. This is the thesis I will develop in the rest of the essay by outlining my notion of nomadic complexity.

Nomadic Subjects

The nomadic vision of the subject implies a double commitment, on the one hand to both represent and support processes of change and, on the other, to a strong community ethics, that is to say, to a sense of "our" being in *this* together. Our co-presence, that is to say the simultaneity of our being in the world together sets the tune for the ethics of our interaction with both human and non-human others. A collectively distributed consciousness emerges from this—i.e., a transversal form of non-synthetic understanding of the relational

bond that connects us. This places the relation and the notion of complexity at the centre of both the ethics and the epistemic structures and strategies of the subject.

My nomadic vision of a collectively assembled, externally-related and multi-layered subject that often acts against the spirit of the times, breaks from the established view of the European subject of knowledge. Following the critical premises of post-structuralist critiques of humanism by Foucault (1966), Deleuze and Guattari (1972; 1980), Derrida (1991) and Irigaray (1977), nomadic thought questions also the classical vision of the philosophical subject as the quintessential European citizen. 'Europe' stands in this discussion for a tacit consensus about the self-evidence of the universalizing powers of self-reflexive and self-correcting reason. This flattering rendition of philosophical 'European-ness' transforms Europe from a concrete geo-political location and a specifically grounded history into an abstract concept and a normative ideal that can be implemented across space and time, provided the right pre-conditions are met. Europe as the symbol of universal self-consciousness posits itself as the site of origin of reason and self-designates itself as the motor of the world-historical unfolding of the philosophical *ratio*. This titanic sense of entitlement rests structurally on the claim to universality and also on a hierarchical and dialectical vision of Otherness or difference. It also inscribed an entrenched form of methodological nationalism (Beck 2007) at the heart of the accepted vision of science as simultaneously the distillation of rationality and the quintessence of the European culture.

This break also implies the critique of universalism. Social criticism of science, following the insights of feminist (Lloyd 1985; Irigaray 1987; Harding 1991; Haraway 1988), postcolonial (Spivak 1987; 1999) and race theorists (Giroux 2000), takes the universalistic claim of "the knowing subject of science" to task and expose the cluster of vested interests and particularities that actually sustain its claims. A binary logic of self-other opposition is at work in this falsely universalistic model, which results in reducing "difference" to pejoration, disqualification, and exclusion (Braidotti 1991; 1994). Subjectivity is postulated on the basis of sameness, i.e., as coinciding with the dominant image of thought and representation of the subject as a rational essence. Deleuze and Guattari offer the perfect synthesis of this dominant image of the subject as masculine/white/heterosexual/speaking a standard language/property-owning/urbanized. This paradigm equates the subject with rationality, consciousness, moral and cognitive universalism. This vision of the "knowing subject"—or the "Man" of humanism—constructs itself as much by what it includes within the circle of his entitlements as in what it excludes. Otherness is excluded by definition, which makes the others into structural and constitutive elements of the subject, albeit by negation.

Throughout Western philosophy, otherness has been constructed with distressing regularity along intertwined axes of sexualization, racialization and naturalization (Braidotti 2002; 2006). The others—women or sexual minorities, natives, indigenous and non-Europeans, and earth or animal others—have been marginalized, excluded, exploited, and disposed of accordingly. The epistemic and world-historical violence engendered by the claim to universalism and by the oppositional view of consciousness, lies at the heart of the conceptual Euro-centrism that Deleuze and Guattari are attacking.

In so far as rhizomatic subjectivity and nomadic thought challenge the methodological Euro-centrism of epistemology, they also critique the complicity between this discipline of thought and nationalism. It becomes not only feasible but even imperative to question the habit of thought that reiterates the Euro-centric character of philosophy. The question of what is European about Continental philosophy, for instance, can and should be raised as a way of suspending the assimilation of philosophy into a hegemonic vision of European consciousness (Bernasconi and Cook 2003).

In this critical perspective, to stress the situated structure of philosophical discourse—and thus reject universalism—also means to recognize the partial or limited nature of all claims to knowledge. This has both ethical and methodological consequences in that it requires specific forms of accountability for the production of knowledge. The critique of both universalism and of liberal individualism are fundamental starting points to re-think the inter-connection between the self and society in an accountable manner that would actualize the becoming-minor of science.

To apply this to the issue of methodological nationalism: a new agenda needs to be set, which is no longer that of European or Euro-centric universal, rational subjectivity, but rather a radical transformation of it, in a process of rupture from Europe's imperial, fascistic, and undemocratic tendencies. The leading sociologist Ulrich Beck (2007) concurs with these views and even emphasizes the need to go beyond methodological nationalism and develop a genuinely cosmopolitan critical theory that would redefine socially relevant science for the third millennium.

Nomadic thought strikes a more cautious note. If the fundamental question, as Deleuze teaches us, is not about who we are, but rather about what we are capable of becoming, then methodological nationalism must give way to self-criticism and nomadic transformations on the basis of accountability for our complex history. As Balibar (2001) and Bauman (2004) have argued recently, contemporary European subjects of knowledge must meet the ethical obligation to be accountable for their past history and the long shadow it casts on their present-day politics. In a nomadic perspective, the new mission that Europe has to embrace entails the criticism of narrow-minded self-interests, into-

lerance, and xenophobic rejection of otherness. Symbolic of this closure of the European mind is the fate of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers, which bear the brunt of racism in contemporary Europe. Multiple counter-definitions of cosmopolitan values constitute the site of resistance to this mind-set and a forum for ongoing discussion.

This process-oriented vision of the subject is capable of a universalistic reach, though it rejects moral and cognitive universalism. It expresses a grounded, partial form of accountability, based on a strong sense of collectivity and relationality. The fact that "we" are in *this* together results in a renewed claim to community and belonging by singular subjects. This results in a proliferation of locally situated micro-universalist claims, which Genevieve Lloyd calls "a collaborative morality" (Lloyd 1996, 74).

One evident and illuminating example of this alternative approach is the situated neo-humanist cosmopolitanism that has emerged as a powerful ethical claim in the work of postcolonial and race theorists, as well as in feminist theories. Examples are: Paul Gilroy's planetary cosmopolitanism (2000); Avtar Brah's diasporic ethics (1996); Edouard Glissant's politics of relations (1990); Ernesto Laclau's micro-universal claims (1995); Homi Bhabha's 'subaltern secularism' (1994); Vandana Shiva's anti-global neo-humanism (1997); African-American spirituality, as bell hooks (1990) and Cornell West (1994) demonstrate, as well as the rising wave of interest in African humanism or Ubuntu, from Patricia Hill Collins (1991) to Drucilla Cornell (2002).

Thus, the anti-humanism of social and cultural critics within a Western poststructuralist perspective can be read alongside the neo-humanism of contemporary race, postcolonial and non-Western critics. Both these positions, all other differences notwithstanding, produce inclusive alternatives—locations and figurations—that enlarge and go beyond humanist individualism. Without wishing to flatten out structural differences, nor of drawing easy analogies between them, I want to stress the resonances between their efforts and respective political aims and passions. Western post-humanism on the one hand and non-western neo-humanism on the other transpose hybridity, nomadism, diasporas, creolization processes into means of re-grounding claims to connections and alliances among different constituencies. They bring strong evidence to support the claim that methodological nationalism and theoretical Eurocentrism are of hindrance, rather than assistance, in trying to redefine the cosmopolitan and inter-connected nature of the contemporary subject. This alternative vision of the subject combines critical elements, like the rejection of Euro-universalism, with creative elements, like the re-composition of a new ethical sense of pan-humanity. In both cases the transformative element is of crucial importance.

De-familiarization: Toward Anti-Oedipal Science

Transformative projects involve a radical repositioning on the part of the knowing subject, which is neither self-evident, nor free of pain. No process of consciousness-raising ever is. In post-structuralist feminism, the "alternative science project" (Harding 1986) has also been implemented methodologically through the practice of dis-identification from familiar and hence comforting values and identities (De Lauretis 1986; Braidotti 1994).

Dis-identification involves the loss of cherished habits of thought and representation, a move which can also produce fear, sense of insecurity and nostalgia. Change is certainly a painful process, but this does not equate it with suffering, nor does it warrant the politically conservative position that chastises all change as dangerous. The point in stressing the difficulties and pain involved in the quest for transformative processes is rather to raise an awareness of both the complexities involved, the paradoxes that lie in store and to develop a nomadic "ethics of compassion" (Connolly 1999).

Changes that affect one's sense of identity are especially delicate. Given that identifications constitute an inner scaffolding that supports one's sense of identity, shifting our imaginary identifications is not as simple as casting away a used garment. Psychoanalysis taught us that imaginary re-locations are complex and as time-consuming as shedding an old skin. Moreover, changes of this qualitative kind happen more easily at the molecular or subjective level and their translation into a public discourse and shared social experiences is a complex and risk-ridden affair. In a more positive vein, Spinozist feminist political thinkers like Genevieve Lloyd and Moira Gatens (1999) argue that such socially embedded and historically grounded changes are the result of "collective imaginings," i.e., a shared desire for certain transformations to be actualized as a collaborative effort. They are transversal assemblages aimed at the production of affirmative politics and ethical relations.

Let me give you a series of concrete examples of how dis-identifications from dominant models of subject-formation can be productive and creative. First of all, feminist theory is based on a radical dis-engagement from the dominant institutions and representations of femininity and masculinity to enter the process of becoming-minoritarian or of transforming gender. In so doing, feminism combines critique with creation of alternative ways of embodying and experiencing our sexualized selves

Secondly, in race discourse, the awareness of the persistence of racial discrimination and of white privilege has led to serious disruptions of our accepted views of what constitutes a subject. This has resulted on the one hand in the critical re-appraisal of blackness (Gilroy 2000; Hill Collins 1991) and on the other in radical relocations of whiteness (Ware 1992; Griffin and Braidotti 2002).

Specifically, I would like to refer to Edgar Morin's account of how he relinquished Marxist cosmopolitanism to embrace a more 'humble' perspective as a European (Morin 1987). This process includes both positive and negative affects: disappointment with the unfulfilled promises of Marxism is matched by compassion for the uneasy, struggling and marginal position of post-war Europe, squashed between the USA and the USSR. This produces a renewed sense of care and accountability that leads Morin to embrace a post-nationalistic redefinition of Europe as the site of mediation and transformation of its own history, which I discussed above.

All these dis-identifications occur along the axes of becoming-woman (sexualization) and becoming-other (racialization) and hence remain within the confines of anthropomorphism. A more radical shift is needed therefore to break from the latter and develop post-anthropocentric forms of identification. Donna Haraway's work is fundamental in actualizing this shift. Nomadic theory's vital geo-centrism—the love of Zoe—is a parallel effort in the same direction. Becoming-earth or becoming-imperceptible are more radical breaks with the established patterns of thought (naturalization) and introduce a radically imminent planetary dimension. This anthropological exodus, however, is especially difficult emotionally as well as methodologically.

The positive benefits of this dis-identification are epistemological but extend beyond; they include a more adequate cartography of our real-life conditions and hence less pathos-ridden accounts. Becoming free of the *topos* that equates the struggle for identity changes with suffering results in a more adequate level of self-knowledge. It, therefore, clears the grounds for more adequate and sustainable relations to the others who are crucial to the transformative project itself.

On the methodological front, de-Oedipalizing the relationship to the non-human others, becoming-earth is a form of radical pacifism that sets strong ethical requirements upon the philosophical subject. It requires a form of dis-identification from a century-old habit of anthropocentric thought and humanist arrogance, which is likely to test the ability and willingness of the Humanities to question what exactly is "human" about them and to dis-engage the human from banal anthropocentrism. The 'hard' or experimental sciences, of course, have accomplished this move long ago and with relative ease. It may be worth considering the hypothesis therefore that the Humanities' development towards complexity may be hampered by the anthropocentrism that underscores their Euro-centric bias. Nomadic thought, on the other hand, points to rich and complex post-Humanities to come.

De-familiarization is a sobering process by which the knowing subject evolves from the normative vision of the self he or she has become accustomed to. The frame of reference becomes the open-ended, inter-relational, multi-

sexed, and trans-species flows of becoming by interaction with multiple others. A subject thus constituted explodes the boundaries of humanism at skin level.

For example, the Deleuzian unorganic body is de-linked from the codes of phallogocentric functional identity (Deleuze and Guattari 1980). The "body without organs" sings the praise of anomalies. It also introduces a sort of joyful insurrection of the senses, a vitalist and pan-erotic approach to the body. It is recomposed so as to induce creative disjunctions in this system, freeing organs from their indexation to certain prerequisite functions. This also includes the brain, whose function is extended beyond the mind, to encompass multiple other forms of perception, cognition, and affectivity. This calls for a generalized recoding of the normative political anatomy, and its assigned bodily functions, as a way of scrambling the old metaphysical master code and loosening its power over the constitution of subjectivity. It actualizes the embodiment of mind, as well as the "embraiment of the body" (Marks 1998). The subject is recast in the nomadic mode of collective assemblages. The aim of deterritorializing the functionalist norm also supports the process of becoming-animal/woman/minoritarian/nomadic.

Nonhuman others are no longer the signifying system that props up the humans' self-projections and moral aspirations. Nor are they the gatekeepers that trace the liminal positions in between species. They have rather started to function quite literally, in a code system of their own. This neo-literal approach to otherness goes beyond the masters of modernity's insights about the inhuman structures of subjectivity. Both Freud and Darwin connect the human to timelines that stretch across generations and species and yet endure in the embodied and embedded memory of the community. Evolutionary theory acknowledges the cumulated memory of the species and thus installs a timeline that connects us inter-generationally to the pre-human and pre-personal layers of our existence. Whereas psychoanalysis propels the instance of the unconscious into a critique of rationality and logocentrism, evolutionary theory, on the other hand, pushes the line of enquiry outside the frame of anthropocentrism. Pushed even further with nomad theory (Braidotti 2006), the metaphorical dimension of the human interaction with others is replaced by a neo-literal approach based on the vitalist immanence of life.

This deeply 'matter-realist' approach has important ethical implications. In terms of the human-animal interaction, the ego-saturated, oedipal familiarity of the past is replaced by the recognition of a deep bio-egalitarianism, namely that "we" are in *this* together. The bond between "us" is a vital connection based on sharing this territory or environment on terms that are no longer hierarchical or self-evident. They are rather fast evolving and need to be renegotiated accordingly. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's theory of "becoming" expresses this profound and vital interconnection by positing a qualitative shift

of the relationship away from species-ism and toward an ethical appreciation of what bodies (human, animal, others) can do. An ethology of forces emerges as the ethical code that can reconnect humans to non-humans. De-oedipalizing the relationship to non-human others is a method of de-familiarization that expresses a posthuman bodily materialism and lays the grounds for bioegalitarian ethics (Ansell Pearson 1997; 1999).

Decentering Anthro-centrism

As a result of the conceptual shifts introduced by Deleuze and Guattari, the burden of responsibility is placed on the practitioners to develop new tools of analysis for the subtler degrees of differentiation and variations of intensity that characterize the formation of the "knowing" subject. The decentering of anthropocentrism is one of the effects of the scientific advances of today—from bio-genetics to evolutionary theories. This means that the naturalized, animals, or "earth-others"—in fact, the planet as a whole—have ceased to be the boundary-markers of the metaphysical uniqueness of the human subject. As I suggested earlier, scientific inquiry and exploration has been historically an outward-looking enterprise, framed by the dominant human masculine habit of taking for granted free access to and the consumption of the bodies of others. As a mode of relation, negative difference is oedipalized, in that it is both hierarchical, and hence structurally violent, and saturated with projections, identifications, and fantasies. These are centred on the dialectics of fear and desire, which is the trademark of the Western subject's relation to his "others." They are also the expression of his sense of entitlement to knowledge—that systematic "curiosity" that, from Odysseus on, has been the emblem of applied intelligence and scientific enquiry in our culture. Desire and fear are the motor of the scientific quest for knowledge about, and control over, the others.

Scientific disciplines have historically developed specific practices and methods, which also implement the self-styling of the scientist as the rational subject *par excellence*. Foucault teaches us that disciplines of control are coextensive with the making of scientific discourses and institutions. These technologies of control of natural or other forces are both genderized and racialized to a very high degree, and historically they have harped with distressing regularity on the disposable bodies of "others."

The challenge today is how to transform, deterritorialize, or nomadize the human-nonhuman interaction in philosophical practice so as to bypass the metaphysics of substance and its corollary, the dialectics of otherness, secularizing accordingly the concept of human nature and the life that animates it. With Deleuze and Guattari, I would speak of a generic becoming-

minoritarian/animal as a figuration for the humanoid hybrids we are in the process of becoming. It is clear that our science—bio-genetics and informatics—can deal with this post-anthropocentric shift, but can philosophy and the Humanities rise to the occasion?

The answer lies in the ethical underpinnings of the nomadic vision of philosophical thinking. The displacement of anthropocentrism and the recognition of trans-species solidarity are based on the awareness of “our” being in *this* together; that is to say: environmentally based, embodied and embedded, and in symbiosis with each other. Bio-centered egalitarianism is a philosophy of radical immanence and affirmative becoming, which activates a nomadic subject into sustainable processes of transformation. Consequently, becoming-animal/nonhuman is a process of redefinition of one’s sense of attachment and connection to a shared world, a territorial space. It expresses multiple ecologies of belonging, while it enacts the transformation of one’s sensorial and perceptual coordinates in order to acknowledge the collective nature and outward-bound direction of what we call the self. The subject is fully immersed in and immanent to a network of nonhuman (animal, vegetable, viral) relations. My code word for this relentless elemental vitality of Life itself is Zoe. The zoe-centered embodied subject is shot through with relational linkages of the symbiotic, contaminating/viral kinds that interconnect it to a variety of others, starting from the environmental or eco-others. This non-essentialist brand of vitalism reduces the hubris of rational consciousness, which far from being an act of vertical transcendence, is rather recast as a downward push, a grounding exercise. It is an act of unfolding of the self onto the world and the enfolding within of the world.

Affirmative visions

This project requires more visionary power or prophetic energy—qualities which are neither especially in fashion in academic circles, nor highly valued scientifically in these times of commercial globalization. Yet, the call for more vision is emerging from many quarters in critical theory. Feminists have a long and rich genealogy in terms of pleading for increased visionary insight. From the very early days, Joan Kelly (1979) typified feminist theory as a double-edged vision, with a strong critical and equally strong creative function. Faith in the creative powers of the imagination is an integral part of feminists’ appraisal of lived embodied experience and the bodily roots of subjectivity, which would express the complex singularities that feminist women have become. Donna Haraway’s work (1997; 2003) provides the best example of this kind of respect for a dimension where creativity is unimaginable without some visionary fuel.

Prophetic or visionary minds are thinkers of the future. The future as an active object of desire propels us forth and motivates us to be active in the here and now of a continuous present that calls for resistance. The yearning for sustainable futures can construct a livable present. This is not a leap of faith, but an active transposition, a transformation at the in-depth level (Braidotti 2006). A prophetic or visionary dimension is necessary in order to secure an affirmative hold over the present, as the launching pad for sustainable becoming or qualitative transformations. The future is the virtual unfolding of the affirmative aspect of the present which honors our obligations to the generations to come.

The pursuit of practices of hope, rooted in the ordinary micro-practices of everyday life is a simple strategy to hold, sustain and map out sustainable transformations. The motivation for the social construction of hope is grounded in a profound sense of responsibility and accountability. A fundamental gratuitousness and a profound sense of hope is part of it. Hope is a way of dreaming up possible futures; an anticipatory virtue that permeates our lives and activates them. It is a powerful motivating force grounded not only in projects that aim at reconstructing the social imaginary, but also in the political economy of desires, affects, and creativity. Contemporary nomadic practices of subjectivity—both in pedagogy and other areas of thought—work towards a more affirmative approach to critical theory.

Beyond unitary visions of the self and teleological renditions of the processes of subject-formation, a nomadic philosophy can sustain the contemporary subjects in the efforts to synchronize themselves with the changing world in which they try to make a positive difference. Against the established tradition of methodological nationalism, a different image of thought can be activated that rejects Euro-universalism and trusts instead in the powers of diversity. It also enlists affectivity, memory, and the imagination to the crucial task of inventing new figurations and new ways of representing the complex subjects we have become. The key method is an ethics of respect for complexity that produces co-synchronizations of the nomadic selves and thus constitutes communities across multiple locations and generations. Science is socially inscribed and ecologically integrated not along the nationalistic axis but in a rhizomic web of planetary connections that enable "us" to be in *this* together.

References

- Ansell Pearson, Keith. 1997. *Viroid Life: Perspectives on Nietzsche and the Transhuman Condition*. New York: Routledge.

- 1999. *Geminal Life. The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Balibar, Etienne. 2001. *Nous, Citoyens de l'Europe? Les Frontiers, l'Etat, le Peuple*. Paris: Editions de la Decouverte.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 2004. *Europe, an Unfinished Adventure*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beck, Ulrich. 2007. The Cosmopolitan Condition. Why Methodological Nationalism Fails. *Theory, Culture and Society* vol. 24(7/8): 286-290.
- Bernasconi, Robert and Sybol Cook. 2003. *Race and Racism in Continental Philosophy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bhabha, Homi. 2004. *The Location of Culture*. London & New York: Routledge.
- 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Brah, Avtar. 1996. *Cartographies of Diaspora—Contesting Identities*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Braidotti, Rosi. 1991. *Patterns of Dissonance. A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- 1994. *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- 2002. *Metamorphoses. Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*. Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press/Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- 2006. *Transpositions. On Nomadic Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Connolly, William. 1999. *Why am I not a Secularist?* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cornell, Drucilla. No date. *The Ubuntu Project* with Stellenbosch University, www.fehe.org/index.php?id=281.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. 1972. *L'anti-Oedipe. Capitalisme et schizophrénie I*. Paris: Minuit.
- 1980. *Mille plateaux. Capitalisme et schizophrénie II*. Paris: Minuit.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1991. *L'Autre Cap*. Paris; Minuit.
- Foucault, Michel. 1966. *Les Mots et les Choses*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Gatens, Moira and Genevieve Lloyd. 1999. *Collective Imaginings. Spinoza, Past and Present*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Gilroy, Paul. 2000. *Against Race. Imaging Political Culture Beyond the Colour Line*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Glissant, Edouard. 1990. *Poétique de la Relation*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Griffin, Gabriele and Rosi Braidotti. 2002. *Thinking Differently. A Reader in European Women's Studies*. London: Zed Books.
- Haraway, Donna. 1988. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism as a Site of Discourse on the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14(3): 575-599.
- 1997. *Modest Witness*. London and New York: Routledge.

- , 2003. *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People and Significant Otherness*. Chicago: Prickley Paradigm Press.
- Harding, Sandra. 1986. *The Science Question in Feminism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- , 1991. *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- , 1993. *The 'Racial' Economy of Science*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hill Collins, Patricia. 1991. *Black Feminist Thought. Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. London and New York: Routledge.
- hooks, bell. 1990. Postmodern Blackness. In *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics of Empowerment*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Irigaray, Luce. 1977. *Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un*. Paris: Minuit.
- , 1987. *Sexes et Parentés*. Paris: Minuit.
- Kelly, Joan. 1979. The Double-Edged Vision of Feminist Theory. *Feminist Studies* 5(1): 216-227.
- Laclau, Ernesto. 1995. Subjects of Politics, Politics of the Subject. *Differences*, 7(1): 146-164.
- Lauretis, Teresa de. 1986. *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Lloyd, Genevieve. 1985. *The Man of Reason: Male and Female in Western Philosophy*. London: Methuen.
- , 1996. *Spinoza and the Ethics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Morin, Edgar. 1987. *Penser l'Europe*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Shiva, Vandana. 1997. *Biopiracy. The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*. Boston: South End Press.
- Spivak, Gayatri C. 1987. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. London: Methuen.
- Ware, Vron. 1992. *Beyond the Pale. White Women, Racism and History*. London and New York: Verso.
- West, Cornell. 1994. *Prophetic Thought in Postmodern Times*. Monroe, ME.: Common Courage Press.

Edyta Just
University of Łódź

Teaching Gender in Interdisciplinary and Transnational Classrooms

Introduction

European gender studies classrooms are interdisciplinary and frequently transnational in their internal composition. Interdisciplinarity of the gender studies classes is actualized on, so to speak, two main levels. Firstly, this field of study is, simply said, interdisciplinary in itself, "[i]nterdisciplinarity and/or multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity are the most important concepts integral to this field of study" (Waalwijk and Just 2010, 23). The concept of interdisciplinarity indicates "working at the interstices of disciplines, in order to challenge those boundaries as part of extending possible meanings and practices" (Ibid., 23). Secondly, students interested in studying gender usually have different academic backgrounds and experiences what add significantly to the creation of truly interdisciplinary context within which the classes are taught. Therefore, to teach gender means to teach on the crossroads of various disciplines constituted by both the characteristic of gender studies and the differentiated academic backgrounds of students. As mentioned above, the interdisciplinary character of the gender studies classrooms partially results from the diverse academic experiences of students. This means that students attending gender classes come from different disciplines, possess various levels of knowledge in regard to gender and have been exposed to different teaching methods and learning activities. Furthermore, they also have different expectations concerning knowledge and competences they may possibly acquire while studying gender. Beside the interdisciplinary makeup of the gender studies classrooms, they also have transnational character. Gender studies, in the era of present, high mobility of students, equally with other academic disciplines and fields of study, attracts and educates students from diverse geo-political and cultural locations.

The questions, among others, of how to teach gender, prepare gender programmes or lead gender courses have been addressed by scholars interested in development and consolidation of feminist pedagogy (i.e. *The Feminist Classroom* 2001; *Feminist Pedagogy* 2009). What interests me, in particular, is teaching gender in interdisciplinary and transnational classrooms. More pre-