

Introduction

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As we put the last hand to this book, Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States. The next day, millions of people walked in women's marches around the world, to protest against misogyny and to proclaim solidarity, sisterhood, and the rights of people of all genders, colour, creed, age, ability, and sexual orientation. In the preceding years, as we were working on the Dutch edition of this textbook, the Dutch university community was startled by a repetition of history: first occupied by students in 1969, the Maagdenhuis, the administrative heart of the University of Amsterdam, was occupied again while the movements *Rethink* and *De Nieuwe Universiteit* (The New University) advocated for the democratization of higher education. Education, they claimed, was too much dominated by the mantra of neoliberalism and the corresponding ideals of the market economy.

It is against this turbulent background that the authors, editors, and editorial assistants of this book sought to develop a teaching method in a field that has arisen from the same call for democratization and from the same loyalty to other than neoliberal ways of thinking. From its very beginnings in the 1970s and 1980s, gender studies has advocated and brought into practice the democratization of education. Room was made for the production of knowledges from other than the hitherto dominant historical and cultural perspectives and a start was made to include the voices of little-heard groups into the curriculum of the scientific fields of history, politics, and culture. To implement social and intellectual changes, however, is a different process than participating in marches or occupying a university's administration building. Implementing new structures and new knowledge perspectives takes time and continuous efforts in the development of conceptual and methodological frameworks.

Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture: A Comprehensive Guide to Gender Studies is the third in a series of cultural gender studies textbooks in which Dutch gender studies practitioners give a comprehensive overview of the latest developments in the field by using the method of figuration. In these books, we constantly work on the premise that telling new stories is really innovative only when content and form are explicitly related; that *what* and *how* are always inseparably connected in the production of feminist knowledge. These books have been made in close collaboration with their users: teachers and students of gender studies in Utrecht, Nijmegen, Leiden, Amsterdam and Maastricht. Each new book builds on the experiences of students, whose evaluations, comments, and recommendations were used in revising our texts.

This book is the result of a specifically close collaboration between the Gender Studies programmes from Utrecht University and Radboud University. Both programmes offer a broad introduction to the gender studies course in which the principles

of the discipline are taught. Every year, we train hundreds of students at Dutch universities to become critical and gender-sensitive scholars able to reflect on the role of gender in the formation of knowledge, culture, and identity, and to formulate a theoretically informed judgment on the role of gender in relation to the arts, culture, and the media.

These critical and feminist-literate students and teachers are thus both users and co-creators of our textbooks. The present edition is particularly indebted to the comments from the students who took the course 'Gender in Media, Art and Culture' at Utrecht University in 2014 and 2015, as well as to their seminar teachers. They gave detailed reports of their reading and user experiences of the earlier books and provided us with ideas on what could be done differently and better in the new editions. To all of them we are immensely grateful. Eva Midden, Domitilla Olivieri, Marielle Smith, Milica Trakilovic, Isis Germano and Guido Jansen in particular have provided valuable input for revising the present volume. Student assistants Svenja Engels and Julia Stern have not only provided us with advice and assistance; they have continuously reminded us what it means to be involved in a democratic education process. Their sensitivity to gender inclusivity and their relentless creativity in finding solutions to the articulation of identity positions which language sometimes has not yet provided, kept us sharp and inspired. Thus, our intergenerational collaboration was a source of great pleasure and of mutual teaching and learning.

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Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture: A Comprehensive Guide to Gender Studies is intended as an introduction to cultural gender studies. This textbook is aimed at students from different disciplines within the broad field of the arts and cultural studies. Gender studies is a relatively young branch on the tree of knowledge, which has come to fruition in close coordination with social movements such as feminism and the civil rights movement. In the 1980s, this young new discipline acquired an abiding place within the academy. Cultural gender studies focuses on writing unwritten, forgotten or erased histories from a feminist, post-, and decolonial perspective as well as on the analysis of processes of inclusion and exclusion in media, art, and culture and the effect of dominant power and meaning regimes.

Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture: A Comprehensive Guide to Gender Studies is the updated and substantially augmented successor of *Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture* (edited by Rosemarie Buikema and Iris van der Tuin, 2007), which, in turn, succeeded the volume *Women's Studies and Culture: A Feminist Introduction* (edited by Rosemarie Buikema and Anneke Smelik, 1993). Whereas the first two books resulted directly from teaching that was given at Utrecht University, for the present book cooperation has been sought from colleagues across the Netherlands.

Roughly 40 years ago scholars in the Netherlands were first appointed to develop what was then called women's studies. Since then, women's and gender studies curricula have

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been developed, chairs have been established and dissertations have been supervised, completed and successfully defended. In the area of research, gender studies scholars in the Netherlands work closely with each other in the context of the Netherlands Research School of Gender Studies (NOG). This thoroughly revised and expanded gender studies textbook reflects the current and wide field of cultural gender studies in the Netherlands. *Women's Studies and Culture: A Feminist Introduction* was published in 1993, shortly after the establishment of the first women's studies programmes in the Netherlands. It first of all mapped out the foundational results of women's studies research in as much as it explained how women's studies has evolved into an independent academic field of study.

One important part of this sketched development was the equality–difference–deconstruction discussion that still shapes feminist research and activism today. Briefly, the discussion focused on the following key questions:

- Should women's studies focus rather on inserting women in a male-dominated canon or is its legitimacy to be found in the aim to precisely change that canon and thereby also the patriarchal structure of the historiography of our cultures?
- Should women's studies inquire into the meaning of femininity and masculinity as they function within patriarchal institutions or should it rather focus on the design of an affirmative theory of difference whereby individuals are regarded as singular effects of geopolitical circumstances?
- How do we create spaces within academic women's and gender studies for questions of race/ethnicity, sexuality, class, age as part of the critical reflection on patriarchal structures, rather than as secondary additions within and for our feminist research design?

In response to these critical questions about the research field, in the last decades of the twentieth century the discipline was forced not only to analyze the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in culture and society, but also to look into its own implicit practices of inclusion and exclusion, and to examine how the differences within and alongside the categories of woman and man (think of black, white, straight, gay, cis, intersex, transgender, old, young, religious, secular, poor, rich, etc.) determine the meaning and effects of the concept of gender. The discipline was faced with the need to consider the implications of the normativity of these binary categories in general. To say it more concretely: not everyone identifies as male or female. Thus, gender studies gradually came to replace women's studies, to dispel the misconception that women's studies dealt with issues pertinent only to women and to emphasize that men and other gender identities and identifications are also addressed in gender studies research.

These more recent developments in gender studies have been the starting point for this book and the revisions of and additions to the 2009 edition of *Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture*. Both the work of our male colleagues in the Netherlands and the contribution of masculinity and queer studies are more emphatically part of the present guide to gender studies (see for example the chapters written by Leurs, Plate, Quinan, Steinbock and van den Hengel). Also, the role of religion, technology and capital in the feminist debate is further explored in a number of new contributions (Hoofd, Leurs and Midden). The chapter on feminist knowledge production is now more focused on the political dimension of situated knowledges (Thiele) and a chapter on documentary (Olivieri) has been added to the chapters on visual culture. The remaining chapters,

which formed the core of the 2009 edition, have been updated with topical examples and additional references.

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Gender studies acts as an umbrella under which research is grouped that aims at the identification and analysis of power relations that make up our world. The differences between and within categories such as men and women are always to be included, so that the presence of genders that evade binary categories can be achieved. Often, gender is understood as the sociocultural counterpart to sexual difference. Gender studies indeed took to heart Simone de Beauvoir's (2010 [1949]) social constructivist insight that one is not born a woman (or a man), but that we are made so in a society which is characterized by patriarchal gender relations, that is, a society in which men and male connotated symbols dominate. In gender studies research the rigid patriarchal relations are critically examined; we are committed not to get bogged down in any biologically deterministic view of 'men' and 'women' – views that currently again receive much attention (think of popular scientific studies that claim we *are* our hormones and/or our brains). Thus we agree with Joan Scott, who puts this question of 'gender' in the following manner:

Gender is, I would argue, the study of the vexed relationship (around sexuality) between the normative and the psychic, the attempt at once to collectivize fantasy and to use it for some political or social end, whether that end is nation-building or family structure. In the process, it is gender that produces meanings for sex and sexual difference, not sex that determines the meanings of gender.

(Scott 2010: 14)

In the vast majority of cultures, it is nevertheless still the case that masculinity – from concrete persons of the male gender to symbols associated with men and manhood – is valued higher than the female gender or other positions. Thus, as Sandra Harding already argued in 1986, feminists must theorize gender, conceiving of it as 'an analytic category within which humans think about and organize their social activity rather than as a natural consequence of sex difference, or even merely as a social variable assigned to individual people in different ways from culture to culture' (Harding 1986: 18).

The power of definition, i.e. the power to define who and what counts and who and what does not, what is a major and what is a minor cultural or political issue, is still predominantly in the hands of men. For as long as women are excluded from this power of definition, from the ability to innovate and change, we need feminist and gender-sensitive cultural analyses and critiques. Because of the many dimensions involved in gender, researchers in gender studies require the knowledge and insights from diverse academic disciplines. Only that way is the complexity of core gender studies issues sufficiently addressed. Gender studies is therefore necessarily interdisciplinary.

The issues that are studied in this book as well as the tools and theories developed within gender studies in general contribute increasingly to the interdisciplinary potential of this discipline. The work by Gloria Anzaldúa, discussed in chapter 5 of this book, provides the apt metaphor of a bridge builder for this interdisciplinary function of gender studies: 'Bridges are thresholds to other realities, archetypal, primal symbols of shifting consciousness. They are passageways, conduits, and connectors that connote transitioning, crossing borders, and changing perspectives' (Anzaldúa and Keating 2002: 243).

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Gender studies does analytical work, tracking power relationships on an individual, institutional, national, and geopolitical scale. Yet, it also makes recommendations to effect social change. Gender studies is interested in statistics and charts that reveal in which cases women, men, and trans* people are equal or unequal to one another in order to inspire policy work, but it also does research on feminist utopias and other (re)presentations of possible worlds. These investigations are subsumed under the term ‘gender’, because it is a theoretical and multi-layered concept that requires its practitioners to be competent and located in more than one scholarly or scientific discipline. Conversely, various research fields within humanities and the social sciences have been inspired by the transformative and innovative insights of feminist scholarship, culture, and politics in the last decades. By making what seems obvious once more unfamiliar to us and in that sense ‘non-obvious’, many academic insights appear in new light, allowing for the imagining of new scenarios for the reality of the plurality of lived experiences. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, third-generation gender studies practitioners often pose the question: What can gender studies mean for science and society? Thus, the emphasis has shifted from defining the paradigm of the discipline to the question of how to implement and disseminate the knowledges produced within the discipline.

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This new textbook both revisits the history of feminist theory and it re-canonizes feminist thought. The book as a whole, then, is not only a reflection on academic engagement and innovation; it is also itself part of the process, by modelling an engaged scholarship dedicated to strive for a more open and inclusive world that also gives an account of its processes of knowledge production. The transformations that cultural gender studies have brought about we here describe as a process in which what was and is becomes revised, inverted and rearranged. We think of innovation and change within the academy not as the result of breaking with received academic, scholarly, and scientific traditions, but as the *reflection* on the perpetual movement of traditions in the knowledge factory called ‘university’.

Complex contemporary phenomena such as digitization, globalization, neoliberalism, and ‘fundamentalism’ raise new social and cultural questions. In this textbook we illuminate in particular the issue of how we can hold onto the feminist agenda of equality and justice for all, the neoliberal discussions of emancipation and diversity notwithstanding. In the twenty-first century, achievements of twentieth-century feminism are also in danger. The agendas of global neoliberalism (Fraser 2009), using the language of the market and of the individual as a brand, supplant the initial feminist vocabulary of solidarity and social equality. Existing answers to existing questions are therefore interrogated in this book, while priorities in culture studies also shift under the influence of sociocultural and geopolitical developments and changes within the academy. As cultural studies change, so does the role of cultural gender studies. *Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture: A Comprehensive Guide to Gender Studies* places developments in gender studies within an academic and a social context. It offers insights into specific developments in cultural-scientific disciplines that incorporated gender-sensitive research lenses.

Constituting a new phase in the discipline, this textbook is also a form of documentation. The different ways of writing the history of women’s and gender studies are categorized, documented, and addressed. For this, we take our cue from the idea of a present that is as it were ‘in conversation’ with previous versions of the past. The trails

of the past serve to delineate the paths for the future. The process of reconstruction and constitution, of retelling and looking ahead, is illustrated in each chapter of this book by a core central figure, an icon of feminist debate and/or of a specific feminist fight or struggle. These figures serve as a prism of gender studies research in dealing with stories by and about heroes and heroines that have been circulating for some time in traditional disciplines dedicated to the study of culture. In other words, the story of each core figure has dwelt in different contexts, all the time changing ever so slightly. In the chapters, the genealogy of those stories is traced and retold. Both well-known and lesser-known histories are put on the map again as the authors engage in debate with and about fellow scientists and scholars.

Although the diverse chapters of this book present and discuss different stories, debates, and disciplines, the basic structure for each chapter is the same. Each chapter opens with the story of the core figure, and then details how the figure's struggles have been interpreted at different times and in different places. The chapters begin with a micro-narrative (the story of the core figure) and work towards a macro-narrative: a debate (Part I) or the development of gender studies research within a particular discipline (Part II). Each chapter thus documents and interprets transformations of a specific narrative about its core figure. In Part I, these exemplary case histories lead to a discussion of a number of central debates in Gender Studies. In Part II, those narratives serve to illustrate how various disciplines in humanities and the social sciences have related to gender studies. Part III brings together the lines of thought that emerged from the previous two parts and further explores the potential of gender studies research in referring to one last woman warrior.

Obviously, narratives about women, men, tomboys, cyborgs, and trans* people do not necessarily yield a gender-sensitive inquiry. In this textbook, we mean to show that while choosing a gendered protagonist for research offers an opportunity for feminist analysis, the choice for a female or trans* subject does not necessarily warrant feminist outcomes. The first step in doing gender studies research usually consists of making present identities that have been forgotten or that were inadequately represented. Yet, even such an approach might lead to gender-insensitive and/or sexist analyses. To exemplify the potential of gender-sensitive analyses, each chapter demonstrates that it is all about *what kind of questions* are being put to the story of the core figure, icon, hero or heroine, as well as *what kind of gender theories* are being used.

The pedagogical mission of the book manifests itself in the approach to the thematic choices, the questions for further study, and a glossary designed to also provide conceptual clarity to the readers of this book. The questions at the end of each chapter are intended to stimulate the teaching environment in which we hope this book will be taken up. They instigate further study and thus strengthen the impact of the material offered in each chapter. But they are also invitations to the readers to formulate their own research questions that deserve further investigation. With this book, we hope to once more train a new generation of gender studies practitioners in relentless curiosity and continual feminist inquisitiveness.