

## Abstract

Rita Foss Fridlitzius, *Vetenskap - Feminism - Politik, till en social förståelse av den feministiska forskningen som en differentierad och heterogen helhet* (Dissertation at the Department of Theory of Science and Research, University of Göteborg, 1997), 195 pp. Written in Swedish with an English Summary (*Science - Feminism - Politics: towards a social understanding of feminist research as a differentiated heterogeneous 'whole'*).

Feminist research is interspersed in existing institutions and knowledge landscapes which bear the mark of various hierarchies, both socially and in status differences amongst different types of knowledge producing activities and practices. It is through such linkages that feminist research often derives its legitimation and authority as science. The purpose of the present work is to look behind the identity shaping practices and power- inscribed gender symbolism that goes on in a double movement, inwardly within academe and outwardly. Focus is on institutionalized cultural practices in which the results of truth-making are stabilized.

Feminist research is constantly in flux. Its multiple identities appear through a variety of difference-creating and linking relationships with cognitive, symbolic and social institutionalized dimensions. The combined-focus approach used in this thesis denies scientism's and positivism's would-be apolitical points of departure.

Metaphorical devices are used to interrogate the self-understanding of feminist researchers in their positioning of themselves in the tension between autonomy and privileging. It is shown how Swedish science policy has had a bearing on debates between advocates of different designations of the field - as 'equality research', 'women's studies', 'gender studies' and feminist research', and, further, how re-configurations of concepts like patriarchy, gender and sexuality have constructed order(ing) in knowledge landscapes in different ways.

The 'Science question in feminism' discussion is also re-read in a social epistemological way that draws on science and technology studies (STS) of a moderately constructivist kind.

**Key words:** Feminism, Politics, Science, Epistemology, Gender, Feminist Studies, Situatedness, Symbolism, Science and Society, Metatheory.