

How to Face Reality. Genres of Discourse within Dutch Minorities Research

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Abstract

This chapter gives an overview of developments within Dutch minorities studies from the 1980s onward. Starting from a constructivist view of the performativity of language and the situatedness of all knowledge claims, four genres of discourse are discussed, each using its own rhetorical strategies to make readers ›face reality‹, and each appealing to one particular ethical-political value. The genre of denunciation calls for solidarity, the genre of empowerment promotes the value of diversity, while the report is dedicated to the emancipation of minority groups. In the 1990s, due to emerging critical voices in the public debate and the backlash against (Muslim) immigrants since the ›September 11‹ attacks on the US and the murder of Pim Fortuyn in 2002, these three genres gradually lost credibility because of their presumed ›political correctness‹. This led to the dominance of a fourth genre of discourse, that of new realism, which appeals to the value of individual responsibility. Although the four genres seem to be incompatible, this appears to be the case neither in theory nor in practice. Across what look like unsurpassable boundaries, the Dutch discourse has also produced unexpected alliances between these different genres. The chapter concludes with some self-reflexive remarks on the values and political perspective underlying this analysis itself, ending with a plea for exploring an alternative genre, that of heterogeneity, as most suitable to the ethical-political value of a liberal democracy: a responsiveness to otherness and a commitment to justice and fairness for all.

Introduction

Since the early 1980s, the Netherlands has pursued an active policy to further the integration of ethnic minority groups in Dutch society. Subsequent governments put scientific experts to work to investigate the history, socio-economic position and cultural background of different minority groups – investments which testified to a strong belief in social engineering and the ›makeability‹ of Dutch society. In this paper, I will discern four significant *genres* of discourse within Dutch minorities studies that use different rhetorical strategies to make their

readers ›face reality‹.¹ Among these are the genre of *denunciation* and the genre of *empowerment*. But the dominant genre within Dutch minorities research has been the genre of the *report*. Until the early 1990s, most reports represented migrants as members of a particular minority group, i.e. as individuals who are socially and/or economically deprived because of their traditional culture. *Emancipation* was assumed to be the only way out, and Dutch government could help minorities achieve that aim. A decade ago, however, a new kind of report has come to the fore, in which cultures of minority groups are not so much perceived from the perspective of deprivation, but from the perspective of deviancy. I will argue that this trend in Dutch minorities research shows a remarkable affinity with a fourth genre of discourse, that of *new realism*. Since the 1980s, against the assumed ›political correctness‹ of the genres of denunciation, empowerment and report, new realism has become ever more dominant in Dutch public and political debates on immigration and ethnic minorities. In the course of my argument it will become clear that the different genres are constituted by different political values and frameworks. Although these differences seem to be of a paradigmatic nature, hence predict the incompatibility of the genres, this appears to be the case neither in theory nor in practice. Across what look like unsurpassable boundaries, unexpected, ›monstrous‹ alliances are made.

The theoretical framework of this research project is constituted by a constructivist view of the performativity of language and the inevitable situatedness of all claims to knowledge. For this reason, I will conclude this paper with an attempt to self-reflexivity: if I think it important to lay bare the constitutive values and political perspectives operative in the Dutch discourse on ethnic minorities, what about the values and political perspective underlying my own analysis?

The Performative Power of Language

According to the constructivist view of language, especially our public speech is neither epistemologically nor politically innocent. I will therefore not only focus on the different standpoints taken within the Dutch minorities research, but also on the different genres of discourse, i.e. the different rhetorical strategies which are used to convince readers of the validity of these standpoints. The reason that I use the term ›genre‹ is because I focus on the performative effects of a particular discourse, i.e. not so much on how it describes reality, as on the ways in which it (co)produces that reality. The way in which terms such as ›discourse‹ and ›genre‹ have come to be used, by Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, and by many discourse analysts who adopted their views, is actually quite vague. Thus, ›discourse‹ may refer to one particular unit of text, to a corpus of specific texts, or to everything that is said and written during a particular period and in a particular place. For Foucault, dominant discourse is constitutive of the everyday lives and experiences of modern individuals. Power and knowledge are inextricably inter-

1 See for a more extensive reading of the Dutch discourse on immigrant integration Prins 2004.

twined, and we become autonomous subjects only as a result of our submission to dominant modes of discipline and normalisation (Foucault 1971; 1979; 1980). Consequently, we are not merely in the sovereign position to make use of our language; our language also makes use of us. Every sentence we utter strikes layers of meaning which may have a serious impact on the social-symbolic world in which we live. According to this constructivist view, language is a form of action with which we construct our selves and our world (Shotter 1993). Lyotard distinguishes between different *genres* of discourse: »a genre of discourse imprints a unique finality onto a multiplicity of heterogeneous phrases by linkings that aim to procure the success proper to that genre« (Lyotard 1988, 129). There are stakes tied to the genres of discourse. When these stakes are attained, we talk about success: what we as speakers or as listeners perceive as the intentions of a subject, actually are »tensions exerted by genres upon the addressors and addressees of phrases, upon their referents, upon their senses« (137). Examples of such genres are the genres of seduction, prescription, and persuasion, but Lyotard also talks about the ethical, the tragic, the technical and the erotic genre (136). Sometimes he uses the notion of ›style‹, or the Wittgensteinian concept of ›language games‹ as an equivalent for ›genre‹. And, being the godfather of postmodernism, he puts much emphasis on the heterogeneity or incommensurability of genres of discourse, i.e. on the fact that one genre cannot be reduced to, or translated into another.

The American feminist philosopher Judith Butler has pointed out some striking similarities between such critical (post)structuralist views of language and ›speech act theory‹ as originally elaborated by the British philosopher J.L. Austin (Butler 1997). According to Butler, speech acts such as addressing or naming are paradigmatic for the way in which human individuals are ›subjected‹ through discourse. Like promising, naming and addressing can be seen as acts with so-called illocutionary force: *in* the saying a doing is implied. Thus, *in* expressing a promise, I have made it, and *in* addressing someone, I have assigned her a place in my material-symbolic order. Butler cautions, however, that there is always a difference between *acting* and *acting upon*. The assessment of the actual performative effects of a particular utterance or discourse cannot be made independent of the context in which it takes place. Any speech act can turn out to be infelicitous – because it was not uttered in the appropriate context, or because listeners somehow resisted its appeal. By emphasising this potential gap between saying and doing, between discursive practice and discursive effect, Butler convincingly wards off the frequently voiced accusations against Foucauldian constructivism that it leaves no room for resistance against the ubiquitous power of dominant discourse.

Genres of Discourse

The entire body of Dutch research reports on the socio-economic position and life world of ethnic minority groups, whether scientific or journalistic, can be perceived as practising the *genre of realism*: their aim is to convince readers of the truth of its narratives, i.e. of their faithful representation of the world ›out there‹.

However, when one takes a closer look, it appears that within the Dutch minorities discourse, different forms of realism can be distinguished. Most accounts practise a form of what I call *oppositional realism*, i.e. in their exposition of reality, the inscribed authors, the ›narrators‹ of these stories, wish to contradict prejudice, undermine stereotypes and undo the ignorance of their intended audience. But within this oppositional realism, different rhetorical strategies are used to make readers ›face reality‹, differences which appear to be closely connected to the particular standpoint, the ethical-political framework, from which the narrator perceives and constructs that reality.²

The Genre of Denunciation

Until the mid-1980s, insofar as there existed a public discourse on racism and discrimination in the Netherlands, it mainly originated from left-wing anti-establishment circles. (Neo)marxist action groups and journalists denounced the exploitation of foreign workers or ›guest workers‹ by big industries, and criticised Dutch government for its complicity. Protests against discrimination and racism were also strongly motivated by memories of the persecution and mass murder of Jewish citizens during the second World War. One very prominent actor in the struggle against contemporary fascism, anti-Semitism and racism, was the Anne Frank Foundation.

Within this genre of *denunciation*, politically conscious ›white‹ Dutch act as the better articulated spokespersons for the victims of exploitation and discrimination who are assumed to be not (yet) able to speak or fight for themselves. Sometimes, the stories have a dramatic impact, enforced by rhetorical questions in an accusative mode, such as: »Is it a wonder they go to the wall?« or »He had learned hard, but had he done his utmost in school only to become an unskilled labourer?« (Soetens 1980, 26, 44). These denunciations are brought to the fore by an impersonal, omniscient narrator, who frequently makes use of free indirect speech, a device by which the narrator cites her³ protagonists indirectly, using the third personal singular and past tense: »Against her father, the man [Amina] had hardly known during her youth, she felt a dull, helpless hate. She was sold, rendered the property of someone else.« (Soetens 1980, 11). Thus, the author acts as the spokesperson for the person she portrays: by conveying the humiliating and deteriorating conditions under which foreign guest workers live, while at the same time reminding the reader that these are human subjects, capable of feeling, thinking and resisting what is done to them. Free indirect speech, however, is also known as an effective literary device in cases (novels, stories of fiction) where the narrator wants to give words to emotions and insights which the character is

2 Note that the analysis presented here focuses exclusively at *qualitative, small-scale* studies. For more extensive analyses of the different genres within the Dutch discourse, see Prins 1997; 2004.

3 For ›she‹ and ›her‹ read also ›he‹ and ›his‹. Still, it is no coincidence, not even (only) a matter of feminist partiality, that I have chosen to use the feminine forms here: a remarkable number of researchers and authors on ethnic minorities in the Netherlands are female.

assumed not (yet) able to articulate. Hence, although the protagonists (whether a Moroccan girl married off to a much older cousin, or a guest worker who punishes his daughter for not obeying him) is depicted as the *subject* of particular experiences and feelings, they are first and foremost depicted as *subjected* to them. In a sense, the protagonists are put under the ›narrator's guardianship‹ (Meijer 1996, 157).

Another well-trying narrative strategy within the genre of denunciation is the narrator taking her reader to the netherworld of labour brokers, illegal textile shops, kitchens of starred restaurants, and the insides of oil tankers: trials and tribulations of particular individuals are conveyed in a sober tone, full of details such as the names of people, companies and places, wages, working hours, physical problems, secret contracts and slush money. But the narrator abstains from giving comments, expressions of indignation or direct accusations. The denunciation is expected to work best by merely showing the ›naked facts‹ (see for instance Kagie 1987, Braam 1994).⁴

In any case, within the genre of denunciation, the narrator poses as the more articulate, more knowledgeable and literate spokesperson for the people (s)he portrays. Her role is like that of the plaintiff in a court of justice. Just like the prosecutor, who as a ›professional‹ accuser is more skilled in the juridical language game than her clients, the narrator, as a ›professional‹ knower, is more skilled and articulate in the language game of realistic discourse than the guest workers, illegal residents and other members of ethnic minority groups that she represents. She brings her case before a forum of right-minded citizens, supposedly capable of putting themselves into an impartial position and assess the reliability of the narrator's accounts and those of the people on whose behalf she is speaking. She appeals to the ethical-political value of *solidarity* with those who are less well-off. From the denunciatory perspective, the conflict between the Dutch majority and ethnic minorities, is, in the words of Lyotard, a *litigation* [Fr. *litige*]: a conflict in which the plaintiff and the accused use the same ›idiom‹; their different perspectives are commensurable (Lyotard 1988). By making use of the same genre of discourse, they recognise each other as belonging to the same species, they recognise that, in the end, ›we are all human‹. The harm inflicted by one party upon the other involves no less, but also no more than a *damage* [*dommage*], an injustice which, if brought before an impartial court, can be recognised, repaired, and straightened out.

Initially, the number of countervoices against these denunciatory texts was small, and most of them were immediately put in one box with views from the extreme-right. One of the rare exceptions was Herman Vuijsje, a well-known journalist whose social-democratic sympathies were beyond doubt. In his book *Murdered Innocence* (Vuijsje 1986), he argued that Dutch intellectuals and opinion-makers had become overcautious. They had put a ban on any mention of

⁴ In Germany, the work of Günther Wallraff is exemplary for the genre of denunciation (1977; 1985)

ethnic or racial difference, a taboo he traced back to the guilty conscience regarding the Jews which the Dutch developed since the Second World War, and which in the course of time had been applied to all ethnic minority groups. Vuijsje considered this a dangerous tendency, as it forbade ordinary people to express their not always unjustified feelings of fear or anger, a form of repression which could very well lead to frustration and more virulent forms of racism.⁵

The Genre of Empowerment

One of Vuijsje's targets and most outspoken opponents was Dutch-Surinamese anthropologist Philomena Essed. Her assessment of the Dutch situation was exactly the reverse: when it came to interracial relationships, any suggestion that the Dutch people were a racist people was considered taboo. According to Essed, however, the Netherlands was a country pervaded by (overt and covert forms of) racism (Essed 1990; 1991). Some welcomed her work on everyday racism because it finally managed to break the silence concerning a racism which they experienced on a daily basis. Others criticised it for its vague accusations and unsubstantiated claims. Whatever its scientific merits, Essed's studies were among the first in the Netherlands to give public voice to ethnic minority groups themselves. In that sense, they marked the beginning of a gradually emerging genre of discourse, in which allochthone spokespersons entered the public arena to assert the interests of blacks and migrants, i.e. the genre of *empowerment*.

Contrary to the genre of denunciation, in which the inscribed audience consists of the autochthonous Dutch, the genre of empowerment primarily addresses members of ethnic minority groups themselves. These texts attempt to strengthen readers in their struggle to make it in a society which puts many obstacles in their way, such as distrust, prejudice, discrimination and racism. They do so by portraying exemplary individuals, who figure as living proof that, against all odds, you can, with much hard work, perseverance and faith in your own capacities, ›make it if you try‹. Most protagonists are role models, not only because of their individual success, but also because of their belief in political means such as affirmative action and self-organisation. In other words, these are the stories of pioneers, who have successfully integrated in Dutch society, but did so on their own terms. They have not turned into ›bounties‹, but remained loyal to their own group. Within the genre of denunciation, the narrator is the one who ›knows better‹ than her protagonists. Within the genre of empowerment, the roles are reversed: the protagonist here is the real expert, very capable of speaking for herself, whereas the narrator has receded in the background (most frequently in the role of interviewer) as the modest mediator between the protagonist and her readership. Moreover, while within the genre of denunciation, people's privacy is protected by presenting them as anonymous representatives of their group, the genre of empowerment is all about publicity and visibility: protagonists are pre-

5 For an English translation of Vuijsje's critique of the ›political correct Netherlands‹, see also Vuijsje 2000.

sented under their own name, and many texts are accompanied by their photographic portraits.

Most significantly, empowerment is not only argued for in terms of group interests and equal rights. The value of *diversity* is considered at least as important. Many protagonists criticise the implicit use of monocultural norms for their exclusive effects. They argue for screening selection procedures in schools and at work on their ethnocentric bias, and for openness to cultural and ethnic differences. Diversity is to be embraced out of respect for the other. On the other hand, diversity is also applauded because it makes for enrichment. It is for instance argued that a diverse body of workers will prove to be profitable for a company because it will heighten its efficiency, flexibility and creativity (see Essed and Helwig 1992).

It may be clear that the genre of empowerment contains many denunciatory elements: the protagonists often strike an accusatory tone against ›white‹ Dutch society, they had to fight ›the delusions of superiority and narrow-minded parochialism‹ (E.A. Latham, cited in: van Lippe-Biesterveld 1986, 9), and ›prove themselves twice, perhaps even three times over.‹ (Goudt 1989, 10). But, contrary to the genre of denunciation, within the genre of empowerment the conflict between majority and minorities is not perceived as a litigation, as an injustice that, if brought before an impartial court, can be resolved. With a neologism by Lyotard, the conflict is perceived rather as a *differend* (Fr. *différend*): it is assumed that, as everyone is a party in the conflict, there is no neutral position from which a judgement can be made. Moreover, as one of these parties (the autochthonous majority) is placed in a position of hegemony towards the others (minorities), impartiality is not to be expected anyway. The injustice done is not a mere damage, but a *wrong*, i.e. ›a damage accompanied by the loss of the means to prove the damage‹ (Lyotard 1988, 5). To translate this to everyday racism: the injustice of racism consists of the structural humiliation, discrimination, distrust and negation of blacks by ›whites‹; consequently, ›whites‹ will not take blacks any more seriously if they would attempt to testify to this injustice. This is precisely the reason why, within this genre, it is only the struggle of minorities themselves, their empowerment, which can undo their structural position of inequality.

The aforementioned studies by Philomena Essed constitute a remarkable mixture of denunciation and empowerment. On the one hand, they clearly belong to the genre of denunciation: Essed's interviews with Dutch-Surinamese women in the Netherlands and Afro-American women in the US are to prove the objective existence of everyday racism in these countries, and how it systematically marks the experiences and lives of even these higher-educated black women. On the other hand, by giving voice to their ›subjugated knowledges‹, Essed's studies likewise portray them as courageous individuals, whose stories of anger and resistance might contribute to the empowerment of their black readers. From the perspective of the ›white‹ reader, however, such a mixture of genres generates a paradoxical message. On the one hand, readers are summoned to take seriously the accusations of the all-pervasive racism in Dutch society. They are assumed to be able to take

an impartial position, and judge and consequently repair the injustices done to black people. On the other hand, however, they are told that racism is all-pervasive, hence that all ›whites‹ somehow gain from it, and will show a ›natural‹ reluctance to give up their prejudice and their position as the superior and privileged group. In other words: the conflict between (white) majority and (black) minority is presented by Essed as both a litigation and a differend, as both a conflict to be resolved peacefully because we all belong to the same human ›genre‹ (i.e. share a common language or vocabulary), and as an unresolvable conflict, an unbridgeable gap, between two human ›genres‹, who, due to their radically different positions in society, occupy radically different perspectives (black vs. white, minority vs. majority). A ›white‹ Dutch reader thus receives a paradoxical message, which catches her in a paralysing double bind. Either she accepts the implicit call for solidarity in the genre of denunciation – but then she will be accused of denying her radical partiality as a ›white‹. Or she accepts the implicit call for diversity in the genre of empowerment (the irreducible ›differend‹ between black and white), but then runs the risk of being accused of withholding solidarity, of indifference or denial of responsibility. Consequently, it is by no means clear how the messages of the genres of denunciation and especially that of empowerment should be translated in terms of policy. On the one hand, governmental initiatives to fight racism and discrimination are to be perceived with distrust because of the ›white‹ interests they might protect. Essed for instance denounced Dutch policy measures aimed at preventing ghettoisation and apartheid by forcing ›whites‹ to accept Surinamese or Moroccan neighbours, as a policy of »dispersion [as] a way to undermine resistance to racial oppression« (Essed 1991, 22). On the other hand, a policy of non-interference, which leaves housing to the workings of the free market, was to be approached with just as much distrust, because that would boil down to the encouragement of apartheid and ghettoisation.

Another manifestation of the genre of empowerment could be found in the militant discourse of the Dutch branch of the Arab European League, initiated in 2002 by the Lebanese-Belgian activist Dyab Abou Jahjah who for a short period of time was immensely popular among especially young and well-educated Moroccans. Inspired by the Black Muslim leader Malcolm X, Abou Jahjah combined an angry rhetoric of denunciation concerning racism and discrimination with an equally assertive call for empowerment, in which resistance against cultural assimilation, the preservation of one's religious (i.e. Muslim) identity and the demand for respect were some of the prominent claims (Croonenberg 2002, Gollin and Sommer 2002, Desmet 2003).

The Genre of the Report

For want of a more original term, I have called the next genre – the most dominant genre within the Dutch minorities research – the genre of the report. Most of these studies are carried out at governmental request. They predominantly concentrate on one particular ethnic group (Turks, Moroccans, Hindustani, or Moluccans) or on a particular subgroup, such as Surinamese single mothers, run-away

Turkish youngsters, or Moroccan teenage boys. Some convey a picture of the everyday life and perspectives of one group, while others focus on a specific issue, such as people's position on the labour market, practices of sexuality or practices of birth control. They concentrate on listing the problems these groups face in their integration in society, and conclude with advice for future policy. Inscribed readers are policy-makers, politicians, managers, social workers, teachers – in short: everyone professionally engaged in the integration of minority groups in Dutch society.

In line with the scientific genre, reports are conveyed by an impersonal narrator for whom categorisation is an important means, both to circumscribe the object of research and to structure the ultimate findings. Consequently, in line with the dominant paradigms within sociology and anthropology, the protagonists in these narratives are first and foremost presented as representatives of a particular group. A characteristic which fits in neatly with the long-standing structure of Dutch policy, which until recently basically relied on categorical distinctions between ethnic minorities as target groups of specific policy measures. However, there is a tension within the genre of the report which betrays an internal critique of the performative effects of categorisations. For, apart from the wish to formulate, from a third person impersonal perspective, general and valid conclusions concerning the group studied, there is also a wish to convey a sense of the uniqueness of each individual case, to do justice to the many differences within the group under investigation. This latter wish is often articulated in terms of wishing the objects to ›speak for themselves‹.

Hence, on the one hand, ›reporters‹ merely convey information from a neutral and distanced perspective, on the other hand, they attempt to bring to life particular experiences, personalities and lifeworlds. The genre of the report is thus constituted by an internal tension between a scientific aim on the one hand, and a literary aim on the other. From one perspective, it appeals to the cognitive capacities of the reader, from the other it appeals to capacities such as empathy and imagination. As a consequence, many reports alternate between the impersonal mode of speech, and more personal accounts which are either presented by a first person narrator, or by individual protagonists who thus literally speak ›for themselves‹. Thus, a narrator may tell extensive individual stories, in order to show the heterogeneity within the research population, and remind readers how each case surpasses the boundary of typification: ›Reality appears to be too unruly for sound categories of this kind‹ (De Vries 1987, 16). But that same report may also use individual accounts as examples of certain ›types‹ of individuals, such as the ›modern‹ or the ›traditional‹ Turkish woman. Or, in spite of emphatic statements such as ›in reality, pure types do not exist‹, individual protagonists are presented as exemplars of a particular type (Brouwer et al. 1992, 269). This alternation of styles betrays the ways in which the genre of the report grapples with the relation between the general and the particular, between smooth categorisations and untidy realities, and how it hesitates between describing the problems of individual

protagonists as either generated by social injustices that can be undone, or as the inevitable tragic effects of living ›between two cultures‹.

Despite the purported neutrality of the report vis-à-vis its object of research, and despite the ways in which it gives ample room to the objects of research to ›speak for themselves‹, in the end the author, and inevitably so, is very much present as the authority who, with the help of particular categories and typologies, structures reality. These categories and typologies are not politically innocent. Until quite recently, the ›master‹ dichotomy in most Dutch reports was the dichotomy between traditional and modern cultures or ways of life. Thus, one of the first Dutch studies made a distinction between traditional, transitional and modern Moroccan families (Van den Berg-Eldering 1978), which was adopted in a number of other reports (see for instance Risvanoglu-Bilgin et al. 1986, Mungra 1990). Although the use of the distinction between modern and traditional was quickly criticised for its hierarchical implications, it proved difficult to escape. Thus, a typology of Moroccan families which was meant to replace the dichotomy, relied heavily upon it, insofar as the alternative designations (ambitious, assertive, ambivalent and reluctant) refer to the positive or negative way in which each family related to the values of modern Dutch society (van der Hoek and Kret 1992).

The central value in the genre of the report is emancipation. Reports assume that ethnic minority groups will gradually leave behind their traditional values and ways of life, but that, because of social and economic deprivation, they will not be able to manage that painful process on their own. As a substantial part of fighting the social, economic and cultural deprivation of ethnic minority groups, governmental support is needed to foster their emancipation.

Some reports do manage to abstain from categorisations dependent on the traditional-modern divide. Instead, they focus on the heterogeneity of the group portrayed, whether it consists of Creole lower class youngsters (Sansone 1992), young Moroccan men (Buijs 1993), or ›ethnic‹ schoolboys and -girls (Saharso 1992). They do so by consistently describing reality as experienced by the subjects themselves, i.e. by using their words, their vocabulary. An issue such as successfulness in life is described relative to the criteria that individuals use themselves, or relative to the social status of their own ethnic group, rather than in relation to the standards of modern, middle-class Dutch society. Other studies focus on the way in which not only migrants (›allochthones‹), but also the ›autochthonous‹ Dutch respond to and are affected by the arrival of so many newcomers in society (Hon dius 1999, Mak 2000, Meijer and Buikema 2003–2005). As a consequence these reports pay more systematic attention to experiences of racism and discrimination. The focus is not so much on the extent to which a particular group has not yet succeeded in integrating in Dutch society, but on the various ways in which individual migrants fail or succeed in achieving the goals in life they have set for themselves, and on the variety of circumstances that play a part in that. In these studies, the literary aim of evoking the lifeworld of a particular group, of creating a better understanding for the complicated situation they live in and eliciting sympathy for the ways in which they attempt to deal with it, prevails over the

(strictly) scientific aim of supplying general conclusions and advice for further policy. One significant characteristic of these reports is their refusal to reduce their accounts to stories of deprivation and the gap between modern and traditional culture.

In the last decade, however, several researchers started challenging this refusal to look at culture. In their view it signified the existence of a taboo. According to anthropologist Frank van Gemert, for instance, many well-meaning Dutch researchers were reluctant to make a causal connection between culture and criminality, merely because they did not want to lapse into the pitfalls of *blaming the victim* or affirming stereotypes (Van Gemert 1998, 10–12). Whereas previous studies on juvenile delinquency therefore mainly ›blamed‹ the (social, economic, etc.) environment, in his own study Van Gemert deliberately described the criminal behaviour of Moroccan youngsters not in terms of deviancy, but as behaviour that fits in with their normal, everyday ways of interaction (28). However, in spite of his announced intention to focus on the complex *interaction* between culture and environment, his diagnosis does seem to lapse into the kind of culturalist reductionism Van Gemert wanted to avoid. Thus he finds that Moroccans, especially Berbers from the Rif area, are used to mutual relationships based on jealousy and distrust, relations which stimulate secrecy and trying out how far one can go without getting caught. Up to the age of eighteen, according to Van Gemert, Moroccan boys lack internal norms and a sense of responsibility because their community does not expect them to behave well on their own accord. When they are caught, they will be punished, but not morally reproached. It is only when they become adults that Moroccan men are expected to show more respectable and responsible behaviour.

Most outspoken in breaking the taboo on culture in the Dutch research scene has undoubtedly been another young anthropologist, Marion van San. In her report on the delinquent behaviour of that other infamous Dutch problem group, Antillean youngsters, Van San criticised the tendency within minorities studies to evade the question whether aspects of culture might promote criminal behaviour (Van San 1998). She therefore addressed the issue head-on, by investigating whether some forms of delinquent behaviour by boys from Curaçao might be explained by the greater tolerance within the group for particular offences.⁶ From interviews with delinquent Curaçao boys and their mothers, Van San reconstructed the ›insider‹ perspective on what she called ›instrumental‹ and ›expressive‹ crimes and concluded that, whereas the boys cannot fall back on their cultural background to legitimise an instrumental crime such as stealing, there does exist a shared subculture which legitimises expressive crimes such as stabbing. The most shocking and controversial element of Van San's findings was the justifying, sometimes even encouraging roles she claims that Curaçao mothers play in toler-

6 Van San makes use of the so-called theory of neutralisation, according to which deviant behaviour can be explained away by the person himself or by his significant others with the help of strategies of legitimisation and justification.

ating the criminal behaviour of their sons, especially concerning expressive crimes, where ›honour‹ is at stake. Van San's report met with serious criticisms concerning the negative effects it might have on the public image of Antilleans in Holland. This outburst of political sensitivity, however, must have been peanuts to her compared to the fierce resistance she met when, on request of the Flemish government, she started an investigation into the relationship between ethnicity and criminality in Belgium. When the report was finally published, it was ignored by the intellectual and political establishment, and, to her regret, embraced by the extreme-right party the Flemish Block (De Smedt 2002, Camps 2002).

Rather than perceive the culture of ethnic minority groups in terms of simple, rural traditions that will gradually and self-evidently disappear to be replaced by the more complex, modern ways of life, Van Gemert and Van San assumed that migrants bring with them a deep-seated traditional way of life, a culture of honour and shame which they pass on entirely intact to their children and which is incompatible with the fundamental values of modern Dutch society. In these studies, cultures of minority groups are not so much perceived from the perspective of deprivation, but from the perspective of deviancy. By implication, government is not asked to help members of minority groups with their emancipation, but to press them to take *responsibility*.

New Realism

This latest trend in Dutch minorities research shows affinity with a fourth genre of discourse, which takes us away from the realm of research to the realm of public debate, and from the discourses of oppositional realism to what I will call the genre of *new realism*. Since the 1980s, against the assumed ›political correctness‹ of the genres of denunciation, empowerment and report, new realism has become ever more dominant in Dutch public and political debates on immigration and ethnic minorities. It was radicalised most forcefully by politicians such as the late Pim Fortuyn whose *List Pim Fortuyn* after his murder in May 2002 brought about a political landslide, and the Somali-Dutch Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a member of parliament for the conservative-liberals since January 2003, who regularly stirred up public controversy by castigating adherents to multiculturalism for their political naïveté, and by her provocative statements about the ›true‹ meaning of Islam. Hirsi Ali achieved worldwide coverage and admiration when her short film *Submission I* in November 2004 led to the murder of its director, Theo van Gogh. The victory of the genre of new realism has had serious consequences for both the position of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands, and for what in the earlier days new realists scornfully referred to as the Dutch ›minorities research industry‹.

The National Minorities Debate

One of the first public expressions of new realism came from the then leader of the conservative liberals (VVD), Frits Bolkestein. In 1991, Bolkestein challenged the dominant Dutch discourse, by stating that from now on the integration of minorities should be handled ›with guts‹ (Bolkestein 1991).

Bolkestein's argument was not so much directed against the goal of emancipation itself, as upon the way in which it could be reached. In its eagerness to help, the attitude of the Dutch government had become too lenient and permissive. Bolkestein's supporters spoke of hugging ›to death‹, ›treading on eggs‹ or a ›culture of pitifulness‹. In their view, this urge to help ethnic minority groups emancipate had made them more rather than less dependent on the welfare state, allowing them to withdraw within their own group rather than stimulate integration into the larger society.

The genre of *new realism* has five distinctive features. First, the author presents himself as someone who dares face the facts, who speaks frankly about ›truths‹ which the dominant discourse has supposedly covered up. Thus Bolkestein spoke firmly about the ›guts‹ and ›creativity‹ needed to solve the problem of integration, and how this would leave no room for ›compromise‹, ›taboos‹ or ›disengagement‹. His supporters accordingly praised him for his show of ›civic courage‹, for the ›mature‹, ›civilised‹ and ›plain‹ way in which he had placed this thorny issue on the political agenda.

Secondly, a new realist sets himself up as the spokesperson of the ›ordinary people‹, i.e. the autochthonous population. Thus, in the television programme *Het Capitool*, broadcasted on March 22, 1992, Bolkestein observed that ›below the surface a widespread informal national debate, which was not held in public, was already going on‹ and in an interview in *NRC Handelsblad* on September 12, 1991, he claimed that ›the issue of minorities is a problem incessantly discussed in the pub and in the church‹. Why listen to the *vox populi*? On the one hand, ordinary people deserve to be represented because they are realists *par excellence*: they know from their daily experience what is really going on, especially in the poor neighbourhoods of big cities, and they are not blinded by politically correct ideas. On the other hand, one should take the complaints of the ordinary people seriously, in order to keep their emotions under control and channel them in the right direction. As Bolkestein claimed in *de Volkskrant* on September 5, 1992: ›[S]omeone who ignores the anxiety, nourishes the resentment he intends to combat.‹

A third characteristic of new realism is the suggestion that realism is a characteristic feature of national identity: being Dutch equals being frank, straightforward and realistic. This is particularly manifest in the publications of the aforementioned journalist Herman Vuijsje. In his *Murdered Innocence*, Vuijsje testified to his desire to return to an authentic Dutchness, to the pre-war days when ›our country distinguished itself for its pre-eminently matter-of-fact-like treatment of ethnic difference‹ (Vuijsje 1986, 7).

A fourth feature of new realism is its resistance against the political left. New realists find it is high time to break the power of the progressive elite which for too long has dominated the public realm with its ›politically correct‹ sensibilities regarding fascism, racism and intolerance. This supposedly left-wing censorship of public discourse is also criticised because it is assumed to be accompanied by a relativistic approach to the value of different cultures.

Finally, the discourse of new realism is highly gendered. From the very beginning, when participants in the debate on multiculturalism wanted to prove the practical relevance of the issue at hand, they referred to issues of gender and sexuality, such as the headscarf, arranged or forced marriage, female genital mutilation, honour killing, the cultus of virginity, domestic violence and homophobia. In Bolkestein's initial intervention, for instance, references to the position of women in ›Islamic cultures‹ were quite prominent. When condemning Islam for not living up to the principle of non-discrimination, he stated that the way in which Muslim women were treated ›cast a slur on the reputation of that civilisation‹. And he took issue with cultural relativism, because it would extenuate reprehensible practices such as the custom of *suttee*, female circumcision, and polygamy. For new realists, the equality between men and women is an obvious and uncontested part of Western culture in general and Dutch liberal democracy in particular. But it was only with the rise of the voice Ayaan Hirsi Ali, that the position of Muslim women moved from the margin to the centre of the new realist concern.

A ›Multicultural Drama‹

In January 2000, publicist Paul Scheffer gave an impulse to new realism by castigating his fellow countrymen for closing their eyes to the ›multicultural drama‹ that was developing right under their eyes (Scheffer 2000). Whereas the rates of unemployment, criminality and school drop-out amongst ethnic minorities were extremely high, the Dutch, according to Scheffer, mistakenly held on to their good old strategies of peaceful co-existence through deliberation and compromise. But in doing so, they ignored the fundamental differences between the new situation and the earlier days of pillarised society. Presently, Scheffer argued, there existed fewer sources of solidarity, while Islam, for its refusal to accept the separation between church and state, could not be compared with modernised Christianity; finally, allochthone youngsters were accumulating feelings of frustration and resentment. Teaching Dutch language, culture and history should be taken much more seriously. Only then would allochthone residents acquire a clear view of the basic values of Dutch society.

Scheffer's essay became the intellectual talk of the town. Like Bolkestein's intervention, it was welcomed because of the courageous way in which it challenged the view of the dominant (political as well as academic) elite which, these supporters suggested, had stubbornly refused to face the serious problems of a multicultural society. Scheffer accused politicians of ›looking the other way‹, causing ›a whole nation to lose sight of reality.‹ In this fashion, the rhetorics of Scheffer's article perfectly complied with the genre of new realism. Here, again, was someone

who dared to break taboos. Like a decade earlier, several commentators were pleased that it was finally possible to have a ›frank‹ and ›candid‹ conversation without ›politically correct reflexes‹ taking the upper hand. Scheffer, too, claimed that what happened to ordinary people, the stories told ›below the surface‹, remained unseen and unheard, even though his reference was not so much to the autochthonous population as to the feelings of anger and frustration among allochthone youngsters. Yet Scheffer showed a similar ambivalence as to why these feelings should be taken seriously: on the one hand, these youngsters were frustrated for a legitimate reason, i.e. for remaining stuck at the bottom of the social ladder; on the other, government should do more to prevent these frustrations from turning into social upheaval. Like Vuijsje, Scheffer also recommended the affirmation of Dutch identity as a remedy against the problems of multicultural society, although his ideal Dutchman was not the romanticised ›ordinary‹ man or woman in the street, but the decent and politically knowledgeable citizen, finely aware of the good as well as the bad sides of Dutch identity.

Nevertheless, Scheffer shared with his predecessors an impatience with the supposed cultural relativism of the progressive elite, which in his view had deteriorated into an attitude of moral indifference. Resisting the growing leniency and laxity regarding the execution of laws and regulations (the typically Dutch culture of toleration – *gedogen*), Scheffer emphasised that it was high time to draw clear lines on what people were allowed and not allowed to do. But what irritated him was not so much the toleration of anti-western values and practices (although this surely should be tackled too), but the incomprehensible indifference of left-wing intellectuals to the ever-widening gap between a (mostly autochthonous) majority of the well-off, and (mostly allochthone) minorities which remained stuck in a situation of deprivation. Scheffer's version of new realism, in other words, was more ›politically correct‹ than that of his predecessors – his was new realism with a social face.

Pim Fortuyn and the Turn to Hyper-Realism

When, in the global atmosphere of crisis since September 11, Pim Fortuyn suddenly entered the Dutch scene, his rhetorics showed all the characteristics of the genre of new realism. On September 29, 2000, his face appeared on the cover of the weekly magazine *HP/De Tijd*, his mouth tied up with his necktie, accompanied by the caption: »Are you allowed to say everything you think? Dutch taboos.« And, notwithstanding his aristocratic manners and appearance, Fortuyn prided himself on knowing what was going on in the poor neighbourhoods and fully understanding the concerns of the ›ordinary people‹. But, like the new realists before him, Fortuyn's attitude towards his constituency remained ambiguous. On the one hand, the ordinary Dutchman was a new realist like himself. If people living on welfare illegally take on jobs on the black market, their choice was entirely understandable, for »The poor are not at all the pitiful people the left church wants them to be. Most of them are just like us: emancipated, individualised, independent citizens« (Fortuyn 2001, 105). On the other hand, the Dutch

people were in need of a true leader, someone who, like himself, could act as their father and mother at the same time: »the father as the one who lays down the law, the mother as the binding element of the herd« (*Het fenomeen Fortuyn* 2002, 40). The third element of new realism, the affirmation of national identity, came to the fore both in Fortuyn's insistence on the preservation of national sovereignty against the ever expanding influence of the EU, and in his warnings against the imminent ›islamisation‹ of Dutch society. Finally, his contempt of the progressive elite pervaded almost every aspect of his writings, resulting in his last book in which he wiped the floor with the purple governments (Fortuyn 2002).

But Fortuyn also further radicalised the new realist discourse. Freedom of opinion, even for an imam who deemed homosexuals like himself lower than pigs, was more important than legal protection against discrimination. According to the notorious interview which cost him his leadership of *Leefbaar Nederland*, Holland was a ›full country‹, Islam ›a backward culture‹, and it would be better to abolish »that weird article of the constitution: thou shall't not discriminate« (cited in *Het fenomeen Fortuyn* 2002, 61; 63). Fortuyn assured people that they could rely on him because he was »a man who says what he thinks and does what he says«. In other words: people were asked to put their trust in him more on account of his new realism than on the basis of his actual political program. And so they did, as was evident in the massive outburst of grief and anger after his murder and at his funeral. Without a doubt, one of the main ingredients of Fortuyn's attractiveness had been his ›frank‹ speech on immigrants. His particular style, this odd mixture of aristocratic appearance and tough talk, turned out to be his strongest political weapon (Pels 2003). In his performance of new realism, which initially was about having the guts to speak freely about problems and how they should be solved, was turned into simply having guts, i.e. giving vent to your gut feelings. Fortuyn thus managed to radicalise the genre of new realism to such an extent that it turned into its very opposite, into a kind of hyper-realism. Frankness was no longer practised for the sake of truth, but for its own sake. References to reality and the facts had become mere indicators of the strong personality of the speaker, proof that a ›real leader‹ had entered the stage who dared migrants to take up their own responsibility rather than wait for help.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali and *Submission Part I*

Not without reason, Ayaan Hirsi Ali has regularly been compared with Pim Fortuyn. Like Fortuyn, she sought confrontation, showed the new realist gut to provoke and thereby imperil her life. Hirsi Ali's apostasy from Islam took place in a remarkably short period of time. In her first publication, November 2001, her rhetorics about Islam had still been inclusive: she had wondered why ›we Muslims‹ cannot look at ourselves, only to answer that question with merciless criticism – but it was phrased as self-criticism: »We Muslims have lost sight of the balance between religion and reason« (Hirsi Ali 2002, 42). But already in her first more outspoken feminist essay, she started to distance herself. She no longer spoke as a Muslim, but as someone »with knowledge of and experience with the Islamic

religion« (47). In one of the first television talk-shows she appeared, she referred to herself as a ›secular Muslim‹. Only one evening later, she ›came out‹ as a former Muslim who deemed Islam to be a ›backward culture‹, only to complete her public fall of faith with an interview in the *Trouw* on January 25, 2003, in which she put Mohammed to the pillory as a ›tyrant‹ and a ›perverse man‹. Gender-related issues like female genital mutilation, forced marriages, honour killing and hymen repair, have become part of the Dutch emancipation policies as a direct result of political motions in parliament submitted by Hirsi Ali (see also Hirsi Ali 2004a).

Hirsi Ali's trenchant interventions caused much more commotion than similar statements by Pim Fortuyn had ever done. She was accused of ›fouling her own nest‹, and behaving like ›a bounty‹, and branded as an apostate who washed the dirty linen of an already much stigmatised group in public.

Nothing, however, could make her stop to force both the autochthonous Dutch and Muslim migrants to face the harsh reality of the lives of Muslim women as she perceived it. In the summer of 2004, together with filmmaker Theo van Gogh she made a short movie, *Submission, Part I*. The film, lasting no more than eight minutes and first broadcasted on national Dutch television in August 2004, vehemently denounced the (sexual) violence against Muslim women, suggesting that this violence was legitimised by Islam. Because texts from the Koran were inscribed on the naked skin of the female actresses, the film was extremely blasphemous in the eyes of Muslims. And it soon showed that to some it had indeed exceeded all bounds. On November 2, 2004, Theo van Gogh was brutally slaughtered. His murderer, the 26 year-old Dutch-Moroccan Mohammed Bouali, had knived a letter into Van Gogh's body, which made it clear that his deed was actually meant as a warning to Hirsi Ali. She was forced to go underground for a second time in her short career, whereas Dutch government responded with a series of arrests and stricter measures to fight Muslim terrorism. In January 2005, Hirsi Ali returned at the Dutch political scene: deeply touched by the murder of her friend, but unbroken. She took up her work as a member of parliament again, announced that she was working on a new book (in English) entitled *Shortcut to Enlightenment*, and determined to make a sequel to the first film, now with an anonymous director, to be titled: *Submission, Part II*. Meanwhile, the news of the murder of Van Gogh had put her in the spotlights of the international media (see for instance Caldwell 2005). She received numerous awards in different countries, was celebrated by *Time-Magazine* as one of the 100 most influential people of 2005, and her texts were translated in several languages (Hirsi Ali 2004b; 2006).

›Monstrous‹ Alliances

Each of the four genres discussed above fits in with a particular ideological or political framework. As may have become clear, the genres of *denunciation* and *empowerment* are structured by the critical frameworks of Marxism, feminism, anti-racism and the Black consciousness movement. They build on assumptions regarding deep-seated relations of domination and exploitation, to be changed

through collective strategies of resistance. The central values here are those of *solidarity* and *diversity*, respectively. The political framework sustaining the genre of the *report*, on the other hand, is that of the social-democratic welfare state, according to which the autonomy of individuals is both the starting point and ultimate aim of democratic government, and the state should create the conditions under which individuals are able to develop their personal capacities. Its central value is *emancipation*. In the Netherlands, this line of thought has been mixed with the heritage of the system of religious pillarisation, which led to the conclusion that the best way for a minority group to achieve collective emancipation is a ›strengthening of one's own circle‹ first. Within this perspective, emancipation does not imply assimilation. So long as it does not interfere with their socio-economic integration, ethnic minority groups are allowed to hold on to their own culture or religion. All three genres can be perceived as manifestations of *oppositional realism*: accounts of reality made from a particular standpoint. They are partial insofar as they side with the interests of the minority group at hand. But the genres differ in their interpretation of the kind of marginalisation that minority groups suffer. The genre of denunciation presents them as victims of exploitation – *class* being perceived as the main axis of inequality. Within the genre of empowerment the axis of inequality is *race* or *ethnicity*, and minority groups are presented as subjects of resistance. Finally, the genre of the report looks at minorities through the prism of *culture* and consequently speaks of them in terms of deprivation or deviancy.

Emerging at the end of the 1980s, the genre of *new realism* challenged each of these genres of discourse. The political framework underlying new realism is an odd combination of (neo-)liberalism and communitarianism. According to a (neo-)liberal outlook, the state should perform no more than a minimal function in assuring the basic (civic and political) rights of its citizens, granting them maximum freedom to live their lives in their own way. But these rights are to be balanced by civic duties and virtues. *Responsibility* for one's own (individual) welfare and well-being is therefore one of the most important values of a neo-liberal outlook. From a communitarian perspective, responsibility is likewise of crucial importance, be it that here the emphasis is not primarily on one's own individual welfare, but on the welfare of others (i.e. the members of one's community). Moreover, it is not merely individual citizens who should take up responsibility, it is also ethnic, religious and cultural communities that should take responsibility for the state of the larger political community, the nation. No wonder that current integration and immigration policies are almost entirely geared at teaching newcomers, with the help of compulsory integration courses, how to become good Dutch citizens.

If we take these differences in political outlook into consideration, there seems to exist a gap between the genres of denunciation and empowerment on the one hand and the genres of the report and new realism on the other. While authors of the first two genres assume that what is needed to get a more just society is collective struggle, the latter are convinced that what is needed is individual develop-

ment. An outlook on society as determined by class or other collective struggles seems to be incompatible with the perception of society as the sum of individual activities. One might think that such radically different perspectives consequently lead to different assessments of what is wrong, and to different policy measures to improve the situation. Across such a paradigmatic divide, alliances seem to be unthinkable.

Still, if we take a closer look, we can discern sources for some unexpected, ›monstrous‹ alliances. If we compare the four genres with regard to the question *who* is to do the acting, i.e. who is to struggle or who is to develop, some remarkable agreements come to the fore (see also figure). Thus, new realists criticise the assumptions in the (scientific) reports that the mechanisms of the welfare state and the model of pillarisation should *help* ethnic groups in their process of emancipation. But in doing so, they tacitly subscribe to one of the main points brought forward by the genre of empowerment, namely that members of minority groups have to help themselves to be successful. Of course, the appeal to ›do it yourself!‹ has a different ring when expressed by a new realist or by an advocate of empowerment: in the first case it is a call in an accusatory mode to finally take responsibility and stop expecting help from others, in the latter it is a critical reminder that dominant society will not help you anyway, and an encouragement to rely on your own (individual and collective) power to show them what you're worth. Thus, although politically spoken the practitioners of the genres of empowerment and new realism are each others' adversaries, they share a strong aversion to an overcaring or paternalistic attitude by the Dutch or the Dutch state. One example of such an alliance is a publication by new realist Frits Bolkestein, in which he interviews seven key figures from the Dutch Muslim world. Entirely in accordance with the rules of the genre of empowerment, in this book Bolkestein introduces his protagonists as successful migrants who might function as a role model for others. He offers his interlocutors ample space to talk about the way in which they managed to acquire their present position in society. Although they do not agree with Bolkestein's critical view of Muslim culture, they clearly share his dislike of spokespersons and caretakers (*zaakwaarnemers*), as well as his view of integration as not only a matter of rights, but also of responsibilities (Bolkestein 1997).

On the other hand, there is a no less remarkable affinity between the genres of denunciation and report. Although politically far apart, they agree that ethnic minorities are in need of *support* from the Dutch – be it that representatives of the first genre call for support in struggle, while the second genre insists on the importance of support through education. But they find each other in their firm rejection of both the political indifference of new realists, and the too optimistic confidence of the adherents of empowerment that minority groups can manage on their own.

The Genre of Heterogeneity

The findings of the above analysis can be summarised as follows:

Figure: Genres within the Dutch minorities discourse

What is to be done?	COLLECTIVE STRUGGLE	INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT
GIVE SUPPORT	genre: denunciation <i>value: solidarity</i>	genre: report <i>value: emancipation</i>
DO IT YOURSELF	genre: empowerment <i>value: diversity</i>	genre: new realism <i>value: responsibility</i>

This neatly-arranged schedule should not be understood as a (politically) neutral overview of the variety of genres to be found in the Dutch minorities discourse. For one thing, it distinguishes analytically what empirically does not manifest itself along such clear-cut lines at all. This matrix of four genres should rather be perceived as an analytical tool that might be helpful to analyse similar discourses in other countries, as an instrument to be tested for its usefulness in comparative research projects. For another thing, the schedule does not take account of the differences in political impact between the genres. For instance, it does not account for the long-standing dominance of the genre of the report (in terms of numbers of publications and actual influence on policies), nor of the marginality of the genres of denunciation and empowerment (while Abou Jahjah initially attracted a huge following and received much attention by the media, in 2005 his movement has become just another social and political organisation, whose views can be mainly found on its internet-site www.ael.nl). In other words, my critical remarks on these genres notwithstanding, in the above I have practised a form of discursive ›affirmative action‹ regarding the genres of denunciation and empowerment, while downplaying the considerable influence of the genre of the report.

These remarks touch upon the issue of the normative perspective from which the present research project itself has been undertaken. When taking note of its distinction between different genres, which each promote a particular value and political perspective, a perceptive reader might ask which genre of discourse the analysis itself belongs to. To which extent is it part of, or representative of the Dutch discourse it has studied? Does it first and foremost face its readers with reality (i.e. the reality of the Dutch minorities discourse)? Or has it contributed to the empowerment of a particular group, party or genre? Could it be read as a denunciation of the biased nature or lack of self-reflexivity of the discourses it studied? Or should it, in its urge to divide the (discursive) world into separate categories, be seen as a report which surreptitiously supports the actually ›deprived‹ genres of denunciation and empowerment? If it is essential to lay bare the

values, political ideologies and rhetorical strategies of the discourses studied, why aren't the values, political standpoints and rhetorical moves on which this (re)construction of (discursive) reality itself rests, made more explicit? Does not this analysis commit the ›sin‹ of pseudo-neutrality or crypto-normativity that it implicitly takes issue with?

These questions are at the heart of this project, insofar as it takes seriously the constructivist claim that power and knowledge are intertwined, that all knowledges are situated, and that descriptions of our (social, discursive) world, however objective, if taken seriously will inevitably affect that very same world (Haraway 1991). If claims to knowledge are never innocent, then neither are the claims defended here.

The position from which the analytical framework elaborated in this paper emerges, i.e. the genre implicitly favoured in and through the above analysis, I will call the genre of heterogeneity.⁷ By concentrating on the complexity of (discourses on) interethnic relationships, a focus on heterogeneity implies the attempt to cut across the binary oppositions that play a constitutive role in the four genres I have distinguished so far. Heterogeneity does not support either collective struggle or individual development exclusively. Texts of the genre of heterogeneity (ideally) do not single out victims of oppression, damages to be repaired, arrears to make up, or causes to fight for. Power is rather conceived as a relational and dynamic category, with which individual subjects, members of minorities and majorities, interact in a variety of ways: sometimes they are subdued to forces beyond their reach, sometimes they know how to bend things to their own will, at times they manage to struggle out, at times they exert power over others. Sometimes these accounts even, in an entirely apolitical way, depict human suffering as tragic rather than unjust, associating it with inevitable fate rather than changeable circumstances. Heterogeneous texts distinguish themselves for not being unambiguously on the side of one or other well-defined party, which does not mean that they are not involved with the subject(s) of their investigation. On the contrary, within the genre of heterogeneity, the narrator positions herself constantly, both vis-à-vis her subject-matter and her audience. Only these positions are shifting all the time: the narrator places herself (and henceforth her readers) in a variety of positions, siding then with one, then with another perspective. In doing so, she does not rely upon categorical divisions, such as oppressor versus oppressed, dominant versus marginal, modern versus traditional, or white versus black – let alone good versus bad. Instead, she shows sensitivity to the impurity and inevitable deficiencies of the world as it is. By staging different actors and a multiplicity of voices, she takes account of the complexities and ambiguities of the world described. Her own perspective in these texts is not transparent and univocal either, but split up between different positions. The genre of heterogeneity is a ›non-genre‹, simultaneously situated outside and constitutive of the matrix of discursive genres as elaborated here.

⁷ In the second section, I mentioned some examples of texts that could be perceived as practising the genre of heterogeneity.

To be sure, the performative effects that heterogeneous accounts may produce are not very reassuring. Heterogeneous stories do not offer us certainty in the sense that they confront us with reality as it truly is. They are risky because they are located right in the ›muddle‹ of the complexities and ambiguities which make up the lives of the people portrayed, or, in the case of the current project, the genres depicted. Their authors do not pose as neutral mediators, nor as partisan ventriloquists. They realise themselves to be engaged in non-innocent conversations, without being able to entirely control the effects of their own words, accounts, analyses. But an author who speaks from different perspectives appeals to a variety of understandings within the reader, whose possibly unified views may as a consequence fall apart into an assembly of dispersed positions. The dispersal of the narrator's voice affects her ›authoritative‹ position. It renders it more difficult for a reader to unthinkingly go along with her accounts. S/he might come to realise that clear-cut standpoints cannot be held, that they must make way for more complex and many-sided accounts and for new problems and dilemmas to think through.

The familiar criticism to this approach is that it does not provide readers with a normative standpoint as to how to proceed further and what is to be done. Because it endows each point of view with equal validity, and not offers one last, overall perspective, it leaves its readers empty-handed.

I think such line of criticism is mistaken. It rests on the assumption that normative universalism and a (epistemological or culturally) relativistic outlook are mutually exclusive. I would argue, however, that the genre of heterogeneity fits in precisely with the normative-political framework that lies at the basis of modern Western societies and that is the framework of liberal democracy.⁸ Within the political regime of liberal democracy it is of the utmost importance to have an open eye for, as Seyla Benhabib has phrased it, »the many subtle epistemic and moral negotiations that take place across cultures, within cultures, among individuals, and even within individuals themselves in dealing with discrepancy, ambiguity, discordancy, and conflict« (Benhabib 2002, 31). In that sense, the liberal democratic framework differs from (the stronger forms of) cultural relativism, insofar as the latter starts from assumptions concerning the incommensurability of different cultures, and aims to preserve their (presumed) purity. Within a liberal democracy, on the other hand, it is acknowledged and accepted that the political inclusion of new groups will lead to the hybridisation of the cultural heritage of the groups concerned as well as of the society that includes them. Benhabib emphasises the importance of openness in public deliberations to what she calls »the standpoint of the concrete other«, i.e. to other people's specific needs and interests, to the ways in which ›they‹ truly differ from ›us‹, in order to enlarge »the standpoint of the general other«, i.e. the standpoint from which we

8 Elsewhere, I have given an extensive account of the normative political position underlying my constructivist analysis of the Dutch minorities discourse and my defense of the genre of heterogeneity (Prins 2004, especially chapters 6 and 7).

perceive others as equal bearers of rights and duties (Benhabib 1992, 148–177). The ultimate aim of this responsiveness to otherness is to ensure that our institutions and laws live up to their claims of justice and fairness for all, to their liberal claims of universality. In my opinion, the performative effects of texts of the genre of heterogeneity as envisioned above, would be extremely beneficial in fostering democratic forms of life and in enlarging our normative-political standpoint such that it indeed becomes more inclusive and may justifiably lay claim to universal validity.

Epilogue

The above text stems from the beginning of 2006. How did things in the Netherlands proceed since then?

While her international reputation rose, Hirsi Ali's popularity at home was gradually waning. Her final fall from grace was no less dramatic than her rise to fame had been. She had always wholeheartedly supported the tough policy line of her fellow party member and Minister of Alien Affairs and Integration, Rita Verdonk. She agreed that asylum seekers should not be handled with too much pity – especially Somali refugees, she once emphasised, were prone to fraudulent practices. But Hirsi Ali herself had also committed fraud when applying for asylum back in 1992 – something she always had been quite open about. Nevertheless, when on May 11, 2006, a television documentary by the VARA, entitled *Saint Ayaan*, supposedly ›revealed‹ those facts, Verdonk was quick to declare that, formally speaking, Hirsi Ali had never acquired Dutch citizenship. Although the Minister was soon forced to retrace her steps, in May 2006 Hirsi Ali left the Netherlands to take up a position at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative Washington D.C. think-tank with close ties to the Bush administration (see also Hirsi Ali 2007).

The national elections of November 2006 resulted in the installation of the Balkenende IV Cabinet, a coalition of Labour Party, Christian Democrats, and Christian Union. This government has replaced the individualistic, neoliberal approach of its predecessor with a more communitarian outlook emphasising the importance of social cohesion, civic duties and family values. It launched a *Deltaplan inburgering* (›Deltaplan civic integration‹) focussing on the emancipation of immigrants with the help of better education and equal job opportunities, while conceiving of integration in terms of ›active citizenship‹: the acceptance of the core values of the constitutional state, knowledge of each other's backgrounds, willingness to fight discrimination and participation in communal activities (*Integratienota 2007–2011*, 2007, 7).

Consequently, Dutch policy-makers remain highly interested in studies focusing on the integration and emancipation of immigrants, hence in studies that fall within the genre of the report. Research projects such as those by Van Gemert and Van San, in which culture figures as the main explanatory factor for deviant immigrant behaviour, are far outnumbered by reports focusing on emancipation,

which mostly show that rapid (cultural) changes are taking place within immigrant communities. Thus, a study like *Emancipation of the Second Generation* (Pels and De Gruijter 2006), written at the request of the Ministry of Justice, concludes that young mothers of Moroccan and Turkish descent are actively trying to lead a more autonomous life than their mothers. The authors give several suggestions on how to support these women in their desire to find a balance between care for their family and community on the one hand, and their desire for individual independence on the other.

Some research reports attracted a lot of attention, because they reported about what especially the media present as the most problematic group, that of second-generation Dutch Moroccans. One of these, also commissioned by the Ministry of Justice, *Homegrown Warriors* (Buijs et al. 2006) addresses the issue of Islamic radicalism. The authors point out that the causes of religious radicalisation are multifarious. Feelings of estrangement from their own community, combined with a strong focus on Dutch society make especially Moroccan youngsters sensitive to social-economic deprivation and discrimination and prone to look for a clear alternative in orthodox Islam. In *Kapot Moeilijk* (De Jong 2007), anthropologist Jan Dirk de Jong draws an unembellished image of the hostile attitude and behaviour of delinquent Dutch-Moroccan boys towards representatives of the dominant society. Going against the popular image that their deviant behaviour is due to their cultural (i.e. Moroccan) or religious (i.e. Islamic) background, De Jong argues that the group-dynamical processes among the boys should be understood as a typical case of ›street culture‹, similar to that of other gangs. Hence, in these studies, no one is ›looking the other way‹ and denying the problematic sides of immigrant integration, as the rhetoric of new realism has it.

Within the realm of minority studies and local policy-making the new realist rhetoric has not really taken root. But among the elite of opinion makers (journalists, politicians, columnists) its core ideas have become mainstream.⁹ Thus many welcomed Paul Scheffer's book *The Country of Arrival* (2007) as the long awaited impartial, knowledgeable and hopeful account of the thorny issues of immigration and integration. Scheffer gives a lengthy argumentation for an unprejudiced perspective on the conflicts and frictions caused by recent immigration. His treatment of the perspectives of immigrants and natives, however, is remarkably asymmetrical. On the one hand, immigrants are required to become knowledgeable about the language, culture and history of their new home country, Muslims should learn to deal with criticism and acknowledge that freedom of religion implies the freedom of others, too, and the Dutch political elite should take the large following of populists like Fortuyn as a reason for some serious soul-searching. The Dutch ›ordinary people‹, however, although admittedly inclined to conformity and informal pressure to assimilate, are not urged to change their outlook. Scheffer's ›we‹ thus remains the exclusive ›we‹ of the ›autochthonous‹

⁹ For this discrepancy between local policies and public discourse, see also Prins and Saharso 2008.

Dutch. The leadership of the Labour Party felt much inspired by Scheffer's work, as showed in a first draft of a party memorandum on integration, which demanded that »newcomers, their children and grandchildren make an unconditional choice for the Netherlands«, and claimed that if they wanted to emancipate, they needed to »abandon« where they came from (Partij van de Arbeid 2008).

Also among the larger Dutch public, new realism has gained a firm foothold. This for instance showed from the indignant reactions in September 2007 to a speech held by crown princess Maxima on the occasion of the presentation of a report of the Scientific Council for Government Policy (the WRR) on the issue of (national) identity (WRR 2007). In this speech, published by *NRC Handelsblad* on September 25, 2007, the princess (herself from Argentinian background) related how in her search for Dutch identity she had discovered that »the Netherlands is too many-sided to capture it in one cliché. ›The‹ Dutchman does not exist.« This remark, obviously meant as a compliment, and entirely in the spirit of the WRR report, was taken by many as an insult and as an unacceptable relativisation of Dutch norms and values. And although the elections of 2006 resulted in a progressive majority in parliament and a centre-left government, the winners of the popular vote were the extreme-right Freedom Party (PVV) and the leftist Socialist Party (SP). In line with new realism, both parties know how to tap into fears regarding the undermining Dutch sovereignty and identity. Especially Geert Wilders, the autocratic leader of the Freedom Party, has proven to be an excellent manipulator of xenophobic feelings. When his anti-Islam movie *Fitna* came out in March 2008, it did not induce the radical response from Dutch Muslims that the government feared and Wilders probably hoped for. But it did bring him awards and applause (at home and abroad) by adherents of radical freedom of speech – and ever higher scores for the Freedom Party (up to 20 per cent of the votes) in opinion polls.

Which is all to show that a significant part of the Dutch public still has problems with facing the complexities, multi-layeredness and heterogeneity that according to scientific studies constitutes the reality of Dutch multicultural society today.

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