
Chapter 2

The prism of gender: feminist epistemologies (1)

Simultaneously with the emergence of postmodernist deconstructions of objectivity and knowledge, epistemology also comes to be beleaguered by feminist philosophers and scientists. At first sight, feminism produces quite a different type of critic. As we will see in this chapter, it primarily take issue with the 'genderized' character of prevailing theories and practices of knowledge, and tries to develop alternative epistemologies which may account for 'better' knowledge practices. However, feminist theory also puts much energy into exploring points of agreement, overlap and divergence between postmodernist and feminist thought. Alas, this exploration has predominantly consisted of a one-way traffic: feminist authors frequently discuss, associate with, or argue against male philosophers, but the honour is rarely returned. Reflections on the relationship between 'feminism' and 'Foucault' are abundant¹, Rorty's work has enjoyed the critical attention of renowned feminist thinkers², whereas Latour's radical constructivism is both criticized and thankfully used by feminist science studies scholars.³ Foucault, on the other hand, has taken very little time to engage in feminist perspectives⁴, and Rorty's references are even more rare.⁵ It is only in the field of science studies that more productive exchanges are recently taking place, where it is gradually becoming self-evident for male researchers to refer to results of feminist science studies, and to enter into discussions with feminist theorists, to associate with some of their insights and argue with others.⁶ This asymmetry between postmodernists and feminists is the main reason for what I regard an unfortunate sequence in my own discussion of contemporary criticisms of epistemology, which puts 'the men' first and 'the ladies' second. The reason for the repetition of this all too familiar order is wholly pragmatic: it is easier to discuss the constructivist points of view to which feminist authors relate, when these views are already explained earlier.

Feminist objections to 'epistemology as usual' are to a great extent of the same vein as the constructivist difficulties discussed in the previous chapter: "[T]he premisses that a general account of knowledge, one that uncovers justificatory standards a priori, is *possible* [...] is precisely the premisses that feminist epistemologists have called into question" (Alcoff and Potter 1993: 1). In this chapter I will take a closer look at feminist interventions in discussions on (scientific) knowledge. In the past decade, different accounts of the differences in feminist epistemologies have been brought to the fore. Thus, Alison Jaggar uses the different political currents within feminism as a mapping device: a feminist liberal approach of knowledge aims at the elimination of bias, traditional Marxist feminism starts from the standpoint of the proletariat, radical feminism counters patriarchal linear ways of reasoning with women's more 'spiral' approach of knowledge, whereas socialist feminism privileges the (politically informed) standpoint of women as the standpoint of the oppressed. (Jaggar 1983: 353-394). Sandra Harding's classification of feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint and feminist postmodernism concentrates on different feminist assessments of truth and objectivity (see Harding 1986a; 1986b).⁷

The present discussion of feminist theories of knowledge takes another angle: in my view each feminist project is inevitably confronted with the *paradox of gender*, typified by Denise Riley as "both

a concentration on and a refusal of the identity of 'women'" (Riley 1988: 1).⁸ In my view, the fact that "[t]he history of feminism is the history of women who have only paradoxes to offer" (Scott 1996: 5), should not lead to vain attempts to resolve these apparent contradictions, but to deal with them in a creative manner. The following two chapters are dedicated to feminist epistemologies which remain more or less faithful to a modernist perspective on knowledge and epistemology. They embody three different strategies for dealing with the paradox of gender. The present chapter especially focuses on the work of Evelyn Fox Keller and Lorraine Code, who both use gender as a prism in order to change prevailing views of knowledge.⁹ According to Keller, the inclusion of women in the male-dominated world of science would ultimately result in a gender free science (see section 2). Code, on the other hand, wishes to draw attention to women's different ways of knowing, resulting in a conception of the epistemic subject in terms of positionality (see section 3). Chapter 3 goes more deeply into the strategy of so-called standpoint thinking, which attempts to do justice to the differences between women, subsequently the proliferation of other marginal positions than those linked up with gender. Underlying these different suggestions for an alternative feminist epistemology are *critical* assessments of epistemology-as-usual. Therefore, I will start my exposition with an overview of these critical assessments. Their shared stone of offence is the *male bias* of dominant epistemological frameworks.

1. Masculine prerogatives

From its beginning, feminist theory has developed an attitude of suspicion regarding the classical epistemological distinction between subject and object. Unlike the constructivist thinkers discussed in the previous chapter, this distrust does not so much arise from internal-philosophical considerations, but from an external-empirical assessment of the epistemic position usually attributed to women. Simone de Beauvoir was the first to phrase it: throughout the history of Western thought men have been defined as subjects, while women were reduced to the status of objects. In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir gave a detailed analysis, substantiated with examples from everyday life as well as from 'high-literature', of the situation of women as objects, condemned to a position of immanence, granted to pose merely as the 'absolute Other' for man. Men unproblematically and constantly identified themselves with the position of the human subject who, condemned to freedom, was driven by his desire for transcendence (Beauvoir 1973). While Beauvoir proceeded from this insight to argue that women likewise should strive for transcendence, thus leaving the subject-object distinction intact, more recent feminist thought questions the distinction itself. But, rather than adopt a sceptical position regarding the potential of 'representation' or 'objectivity' to bridge the gap between subject and object, feminist thinkers put a lot of energy into *redefining* traditional notions of objectivity in order to dispose of their detrimental consequences.

Next to this, feminist scholars formulate sharp criticisms concerning the current notion of the subject. They emphasize that actual, empirical subjects of knowledge are always located in a particular time and space, and that epistemological reflections should take this into account. Far less ambiguous than their constructivist counterparts, who oscillate between discarding the subject altogether or toning down its universalizing pretensions, feminists go for developing accounts of 'situated' subjectivity. As they see it, they simply cannot afford to dispense with the notion of the subject as if it were worthless and redundant, at a moment when women are just coming to be recognized as legitimate and reliable subjects of speech.¹⁰

The first and main difference put to the fore by feminists has of course been *sexual difference*. Many feminist critics pointed out the male bias of modern practices of scientific investigation as well as in the tradition of Western philosophy.

Analyses of explicit sexual and sexuated metaphors in scientific texts show how in the tradition of Western thought the subject of investigation and knowledge was supposed to be male, while the object was endowed with female characteristics. These critical analyses indicate that the ideal of objectivity is often identified with masculinity, while at the same time the object of knowledge, nature, is perceived as a woman. Thus, one of the founding fathers of experimental research, Francis Bacon, made extensive use of sexual imagery in expressing his view of scientific investigation as a way of conquering, dominating and subduing Nature. Metaphors such as 'seduction', 'violation' and 'marriage' are used to describe the best ways to relate to Nature. Carolyn Merchant points out how Bacon's descriptions of scientific method were based on the existing practices of interrogation and torture of (female) witches to have them 'confess' their secret sins (Merchant 1980: 168). According to Genevieve Lloyd, Bacon's perspective built further on long-standing traditions in Western (ancient Greek) philosophy in which man is assumed to rightfully dominate Nature like mind would rightfully dominate matter, and in which reason is consistently perceived as male, while the dark forces of nature, of indefinite and uncontrollable matter, were taken to be female. Lloyd cites Bacon's promise to the young scientist of a fertile relationship with Nature, his bride to be, who will bear him significant offspring: "My dear, dear boy, what I purpose is to unite you with *things themselves* in a chaste, holy and legal wedlock" (Lloyd 1984: 12).

Beside pointing out the use of *explicit* sexual imagery, feminist critics also show how scientific discourse often *implicitly* sustains the masculinity of the subject of knowledge. The negative counterpart of the knowing subject is considered to be a feminine subjectivity, associated with irrationality and immanence. A psychoanalytic reading of the famous Platonic myth, for instance, spells out how the cavern, presented as a place in which people are held captive (i.e. the empirical world), and from which they can only see the shadows of the real world (i.e. the Ideas), represents the womb, the figure of the mother, from whose darkness one has to break loose in order to attain truth, to see things as they really are. Thus, Plato's denial of the constitutive role of materiality boils down to an obliteration of the role of the mother. The realm of Ideas comes to the fore as a masculine, a disembodied realm (Irigaray 1974; Whitford 1991: 105-113). Cartesian rationalism is likewise carefully examined for features of masculinity. It is argued that Descartes' search for certainty, clarity and detachment was motivated by a strong anxiety over the chaotic and uncontrollable effects of bodies and nature. In its instalment of the ontological division between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* it secured the knower complete transcendence, hence control over the body and its deceptive and confusing messages. The ensuing cognitive style, with its emphasis on detachment, autonomy and separation, can be characterized as the masculine 'flight from the feminine': "The Cartesian reconstruction of the world is a defiant gesture of independence from the female cosmos - a gesture that is at the same time compensation for a profound loss" (Bordo 1986: 451). Or, in another elaborate and careful study, Kant's theory of objectivity is shown to be built on an exclusion of sensual and emotional factors. Kantian thought is presented as part of a long ascetic tradition, motivated by commitments to purity and fears of sexuality. As sexuality, moreover, is particularly symbolized by the female body, ultimately the Kantian framework rests on a repudiation of femininity (Schott 1988). From yet another angle, the implicit masculinity of the dominant subject of knowledge is illustrated by the exposition of the centrality of the metaphor of *vision* in Western thought. In a reading of the works of

Plato, Descartes and Newton, Keller and Grontkowski argue that in the course of the history of Western thought, the 'eye of the body' and the 'eye of the mind' gradually got split, such that knowledge got to be viewed more and more as a disembodied activity. The 'maleness' of this view, so they claim, lies in the safeguard thus installed against the latent eroticism, the desire for the female in practices of looking and knowing (Keller & Grontkowski 1983).

Thus, there is a remarkable agreement among feminist critics concerning the masculinity of prevailing views on knowledge. However, what does the notion of masculinity refer to? What does it mean to perceive the celebration of rationality, objectivity, or transcendence as a sign of the 'masculine' fear and denial of the 'feminine'? A variety of interpretations is possible, depending on what particular theory of *gender* or *sexual difference* is used.¹¹

To begin with, gender can be perceived as *ideological*. In her earlier work, Evelyn Fox Keller for instance emphasizes that conceptions of gender, i.e. of femininity and masculinity, are contingent constructions, invented in order to fit concrete human beings into the societal order of a specific culture or historical time - mostly to uphold the value of masculinity, and hence the position of men to the detriment of women. Moreover, "ideologies of gender and science inform each other" (Keller 1985: 8). Science, as it stands now, according to Keller, is ideologically flawed not merely because of the close association between its ideals of objectivity and masculinity, but also because of its *denial* of this connection. Ideology, in Keller's view, is a system of *beliefs* which betrays itself in language, but which also shapes reality in many ways. Therefore: "[T]he fact that the scientific population is, even now, a population that is overwhelmingly male, is itself a consequence rather than a cause of the attribution of masculinity to scientific thought" (Keller 1985: 188).

Other theorists, however, think that the reverse is no less true: *because* science is the activity of men, it got endowed with masculine values. They claim that the ideological dimensions of gender can and should be explained by looking at the interests of a particular social group, i.e. men. From this perspective, ideology contributes to the unequal distribution of power, to relations of domination and repression. Sandra Harding, for instance, points out that undoing these negative effects of the prevailing ideology of gender can not be reached by simply changing ideology. Merely to ascribe more symmetrical meanings and validations to masculinity and femininity will not do the job. For "central to the notion of masculinity is its rejection of everything that is defined by a culture as feminine [...] Gender is an *asymmetrical* category of human thought..." (Harding 1986a: 54-55).

From this perspective, gender is taken as a *system*. Many feminists, following Gayle Rubin's influential article, start from the assumption of the effective workings of a 'political economy of sex', which subjects human beings of the female sex in reducing them to the status of objects of exchange among men. Thus the position of human subjects was reserved for members of the male sex only. 'Gender' here is taken as the cultural construction of particular social roles and positions on the (material) base of the biological, anatomical 'sex' of individuals. This so-called 'sex-gender system' is assumed to exist world-wide and to be all-pervasive.¹² According to Lorraine Code, the veneration of ideal objectivity is a manifestation of this system "that structures all the other inequalities of western social arrangements and informs even those areas of life - such as 'objective' knowledge - that might seem to be gender-free" (Code 1991: 66). Whereas Sandra Harding perceives gender as a category "within which meaning and value are assigned to everything in the world, a way of organizing human social relations" (Harding 1986a: 57).

It is against the background of these assumptions concerning the far-reaching implications of gender that many feminist theorists conclude that "the sex of the knower is epistemologically relevant" (Code 1991: 10). This holds at least in a negative sense: being of the female sex can work as a serious disqualification to count as a legitimate and reliable subject of knowledge. But what are the consequences of this observed epistemological significance of sexual difference for alternative views of knowledge and science? How to proceed from the critical diagnosis of the masculine nature of science and knowledge? Attempts to answer these questions will inevitably lead to paradoxical positions. Clearly, it could not mean that women simply would have to do their best to meet the criteria of objectivity and rationality. Such would suggest not only the possibility, but also the intrinsic value of the *transcendence* of femininity, which would undermine feminists' insistence on the need to upgrade what has hitherto been unrightfully degraded. Clearly, prevailing theories and practices of knowledge need some face-lifts too. But in which direction should these changes go, and how to prevent this strategy to *affirm* femininity in a way that would undermine feminism's rightful suspicion of this category? The foregoing exposition of the different critical assessments of existing theories and practices of knowledge lay the ground for alternative views.

2. Gender free science: Evelyn Fox Keller

As a feminist critic of particularly the natural sciences, Evelyn Fox Keller's initial concern is with the position of women as the excluded subjects from this highly valued domain. As indicated above, Keller sees this exclusion as a consequence of the implicit associations of science with masculinity, i.e. of the 'genderization' of science. In her view, such 'genderization' is a matter of ideological distortion, which affects truth itself (Keller 1985: 87). In her envisioning of alternative approaches, therefore, Keller is first and foremost committed to the practice of science itself. Formulating her hopes for the future, she states: "As we begin to understand the ways in which science itself has been influenced by its unconscious mythology, we can begin to perceive the possibilities for a science not bound by such mythology" (1985: 93).

Keller explicitly objects to feminist critiques which either reject science altogether or opt for a radically different science. Neither does she sympathize with those who want to install a feminine way of doing scientific research. Keller strives for a 'gender free' or a 'human' science. This should not be perceived as "a juxtaposition or complementarity of male and female perspectives, nor is it the substitution for one form of parochiality for another. Rather, it is premised on a transformation of the very categories of male and female, and correspondingly, of mind and nature" (1985: 178).

In her later work, Keller radicalizes her commitment to a gender free science further by presenting her critical feminist work as part of a broader project which takes account of the social character and force of science. Analyses of the occurrence of gendered metaphors are now taken as valuable contributions to more general investigations into language which, through its enforcement of particular cultural norms and values, plays a constitutive role in the production of scientific knowledge. At the end of this section I will go more deeply into Keller's 'linguistic turn', and compare her views with those of the constructivist theorists discussed in the previous chapter. However, in order to understand the differences between these versions of 'pure' constructivism and Keller's recent appropriation of it, it helps to first retrace Keller's feminist starting-points. In the following exposition, I will therefore focus on the way in which

Keller handles the paradox of gender. It will be assessed how Keller manages to draw critical attention to the actual epistemological significance of gender while simultaneously dismissing its significance for 'good' scientific practice. More in particular, it will show how Keller argues that the entrance of female scientists would not only be an improvement for the women involved, but also for the project of science itself.

2.1 *Dynamic autonomy/dynamic objectivity*

In explaining the construction of individual gender identity, many feminist theorists rely on insights from *psychological* theories which concentrate on processes of early socialization. Keller, for instance, explains the power of the 'mythology' of masculinity and science by looking into psychological theories of cognitive development (Piaget) and particular strands of psychoanalytic thought (Freud and Winnicott). These theories show how every child goes through a long and painful process in order to develop a sense of a separate self. To achieve a certain amount of cognitive maturity we must all learn to distinguish between self and other, to become capable of objective thought and perception. This process is a gendered process: the first and most important person from whom the child has to tear itself loose, is the mother.¹³ The mother can be said to be its first 'object' (Keller 1985: 86). But the relationship will remain ambivalent and based on anxiety: the need to distance oneself draws on the fear of becoming engulfed by her, of the disappearance of these very fragile ego-boundaries. The father (figure), on the other hand, represents the outside world, and is therefore perceived as an individuated and differentiated subject - as a person who lives in the 'real' world. Rather than threaten the child's sense of self, he helps to strengthen it. Next to this, the child has to constitute its own gender identity. This boils down to processes of identification with the dominant cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity. On the basis of their common gender, the little boy will identify with his father. This helps him to strengthen his constitution as an autonomous and separate self. He will internalize the ego-ideals of autonomy, independence and rationality his father models. In becoming mature, his separation from the mother will be complete. But the little girl's separation from the mother will never be complete. She will identify with her mother and internalize characteristics associated with femininity, such as dependency and emotionality. The female process of cognitive and emotional growth is more complex, the attitude of a woman to her first 'object', the mother, more ambiguous. Women will therefore experience the boundaries between subject and object as more fluent than men. According to Keller, psychoanalysis thus teaches us that the prevailing images of the objectivity and autonomy of the scientific researcher on the one hand, and the male subject that is the result of these socialization processes on the other hand, are quite a good match.

In outlining new ways of doing science, Keller takes issue with the unquestioned values of the *autonomy* and *objectivity* of the scientific knower. Psychological theories of cognitive and emotional development, according to Keller, use static interpretations of autonomy and objectivity in order to describe processes of personal growth, thus endowing them with the status of norms. In the classical ideal of autonomy as the radical independence from others, the notion of power over oneself is closely connected with power over others, i.e. with domination. Such a rigid sense of autonomy, in Keller's view, is not at all a sign of strength, but rather a sign of weakness. It is motivated by an anxiety to give in to anything external to one's own volition, a fear of a loss of control over the self.

Keller prefers a more dynamic kind of autonomy. A 'really' (i.e. dynamically) autonomous person would show flexibility regarding the supposed boundaries between self and other, between autonomy and dependency, separation and connection. There will always be tensions between these positions, but this does not make them oppositional or mutually exclusive. In arguing for dynamic autonomy, Keller wishes to tackle two issues. On the one hand, she wishes to de-genderize the concept of autonomy: dynamic autonomy cannot be easily associated with either masculinity or femininity. And vice versa: in rejecting the oppositional view of pairs of concepts such as autonomy and dependency, separation and connection, even knowledge and love, Keller hopes to contribute to the deconstruction of the opposition of male versus female. On the other hand, dynamic autonomy would be more adequate in describing how we actually acquire objective knowledge. A rigidly autonomous position has a defensive side which prevents the subject of being really open and receptive to the surrounding world. Whereas a dynamic conception of autonomy refers to "empathic experience - experience that allows for the creative leap between knower and known" (1985: 99).

Simultaneously with this redefinition of autonomy, Keller proposes a conception of dynamic objectivity, which would invalidate the disjunction between love and knowledge. Whereas in her reflections on autonomy Keller refers to the emotional sense of self, in rethinking the notion of objectivity it is the *interaction* between emotional and cognitive experience that is at stake. Thus, dynamic objectivity would aim at "a form of knowledge that grants the world around us its independent integrity but does so in a way that remains cognizant of, indeed relies on, our connectivity with that world" (1985: 117).

We do not abstract from our emotions, but make use of them in order to get a better, a more objective view of the world. If the scientist is an autonomous person in the dynamic sense, these emotions will not be steered by anxiety and defensive impulses, but by receptivity and reciprocity. In his style of knowing he will be far less inclined, as the average scientist still is, to assume an aggressive or adversarial attitude towards his object of study. In the common rhetoric, Keller observes, "science can come to sound as a battlefield" (123), the scientist posing as a courageous warrior or hunter. Keller discerns in these texts a dream of dominion over nature, a dream she wishes to replace with a different vision of 'good' science.

Keller once noted that, if we wish to bring about change, we will have to listen to the 'minority voices' that, albeit 'sotto voce', can be heard throughout the history of modern science "as minor themes made inaudible by a dominant rhetoric" (Keller 1985: 125). One of these voices belonged to the 20th century scientist Barbara McClintock. Keller wrote a book on McClintock's work and life. In order to get a better picture of Keller's ideal scientist, it may be instructive to take a closer look at her intellectual biography of this special female scientist.

2.2 *A woman of genius*

In her book *A Feeling for the Organism* (1983), Keller brings into the limelight one of the 'soft' voices that only after a very long time received recognition. Barbara McClintock was the first woman to win the Nobelprize in medicine and physiology on her own.¹⁴ It is worthwhile reading this account of a successful female scientist against the background of Keller's remarks on the ideals of a gender free science. To what extent is Barbara McClintock Keller's ideal scientist? Can she be seen as the embodiment of the ideals of dynamic autonomy and dynamic objectivity? And: does Keller make a

connection between McClintock's being a woman and her unique way of doing research?

Keller's biography makes clear that McClintock was very much confronted with her being a woman in a man's world. In the thirties and forties in the US, many university and research positions simply were not available to women, although by 1934 McClintock already had built a world reputation (Keller 1983: 73; 81). At the same time, she refused to be a woman in any conventional sense of the word: in her style of living just as much as in her style of work. And she certainly would not explain the methods and results of her scientific research in terms of gender. Neither does Keller. The labels her biographer uses to describe McClintock's unique way of doing research rather refer to McClintock's excentricity: thus she is subsequently typified as a 'recluse' (xiv), 'anomalous', a 'pioneer' and a 'maverick' (17, 84). Being a woman only added to that excentricity. This initial outsider position gave McClintock ample opportunity to develop and cultivate a particular, idiosyncratic style of research. Keller presents McClintock as a loner, who gets so absorbed in her work that she sometimes literally forgets herself, not able to recall even her own name. McClintock, so Keller, longs to be "free of the body" (1983: 36), sets herself the highest standards of accuracy and transparency, and combines a brilliant mind to an incredibly reliable intuition. She is a principled character, persistently following her own norms, witness her own account: "I was just not adjusted, never had been, to being closely associated with anybody, even members of my family..." (quoted in Keller 1983: 34). Note that Keller's picture of McClintock resembles very much the (male!) stereotype of the misunderstood genius, whose sense of autonomy towards the world of social and institutional conventions is quite 'rigid'.

It is only when we come to look at the way McClintock relates to her objects of research that Keller's description of a more dynamic approach becomes applicable. Regarding the maize plants she studies, McClintock develops strong feelings of connectedness: "[A] special kind of sympathetic understanding grew in McClintock [...] until, finally, the objects of her study become subjects in their own right" (200). 'Organism' for McClintock becomes "a code word [...] the name of a living form, of object-as-subject" (200). McClintock is in a true dialogue with nature, according to Keller, and this communicative approach is based on a respect for difference. McClintock considers every maize plant to be an individual with a life of its own. Through careful daily observations she recognizes the traits of every separate plant in the corn field. And when she is unto unravelling one of the mysteries of nature, she is overcome by feelings of wonder and excitement. To Keller, again, these are the characteristics of a unique and brilliant researcher. McClintock's views are put on a par with those of eminent scientists such as Einstein, Bohr, Schrödinger and Oppenheimer. She is even presented as the model of the 'authentic', the 'true' scientist. Her attitude of patience and careful attention is set against the hasty rat-race in modern, large-scale laboratories. McClintock's approach of science would testify to the similarities between the ideal style of scientific research and love: "[R]espect for difference constitutes a claim not only on our interest but on our capacity for empathy - in short on the highest form of love: the love that allows for intimacy without the annihilation of difference" (Keller 1985: 164).

At the end of McClintock's biography, Keller expresses her hope for the future, in which the urge for dominion over the object is replaced by a 'feeling for' the object: "Now, the necessary next step seems to be the reincorporation of the naturalist's approach - an approach that does not press nature with leading questions but dwells patiently in the variety and complexity of organisms" (Keller 1983: 207).

So far, the provisional conclusion can be drawn that Keller's picture of McClintock, when rewritten in terms of Keller's own psychological vocabulary, shows a scientist with a dynamic and open approach of her objects of research, but with quite a rigid sense of autonomy vis-à-vis her self and others. In other

words: McClintock can only partly be presented as the living proof of Keller's theory that a fully dynamic attitude would produce the best science.

Hence, the question about the relevance of McClintock's being a woman for her approach of science is not yet fully answered. In her reflections on gender and science, Keller suggests that McClintock's female position made a crucial difference: "Because she is not a man, in a world of men, her commitment to a gender-free science has been binding; because concepts of gender have so deeply influenced the basic categories of science, that commitment has been transformative" (Keller 1985: 174). However, Keller has difficulty explaining *why* such transformations within science could be expected to occur when women would be truly represented. McClintock is presented as a unique personality, a social as well as a professional outsider, who introduced a totally different way of doing science. But it remains unclear how her being a woman played in a role in this, *more* than that it aggravated her outsider-position. For, being so unique, brilliant and immersed in her work does not distinguish McClintock from other great, male scientists. Her commitment to a gender free science, so it seems, consisted of a strong insistence on the right to live and work according to her own standards, on her entitlement to the same rewards and judgements as her male colleagues, and, most of all, on the *refusal* to be addressed as a gendered subject. Every reminder of her being a woman was a stumbling block to McClintock. This is a perfectly understandable position for female scientists, especially of McClintock's generation, so Keller explains in a later article. Women scientists (and here Keller speaks from personal experience) quickly learn that, within science, to be different, and especially to be feminine, is to be lesser. Women in science are confronted with the dilemma that if they wish to be regarded as equal to their male colleagues, they are expected to be the same, whereas any claim of difference automatically implies inequality, hence exclusion from the realm of science (Keller 1987).

2.3 *The female sex: mystery or feminist prerogative?*

Still, Keller's views do differ from McClintock's position. Her work offers several possible answers to the question why transformations would only occur when women are truly included in the realm of science.

First, according to the psychological theories of early socialization, women and men have a different sense of identity, relating differently to themselves and to the world surrounding them. The changes expected by Keller from women scientists therefore could be due to their inclination to draw less rigid boundaries between themselves and their objects of investigation than their male colleagues usually do. But Keller does not take this route. In spite of her extensive use of explanations of the constitution of gender identity in abstracto in *Reflections on Gender and Science*, she shuns even the slightest suggestion of a possible link between McClintock's caring and loving attitude towards her corn plants, and her socialization as a girl. One explanation Keller gives is that, as a biographer, she wanted to give room to McClintock's account, and not burden it with her own preoccupations with issues of gender and science. But she also finds that "none of the dynamics we think of as key to feminine socialization seem to apply to her" (1987: 42). A peculiar argument, considering that usually socialization is not regarded as something to be 'measured' by the occurrence of factors that might cause it, but rather as the outcome of a process, which then could be traced back to its assumed causes. In other words, the argument might just as well be turned around: if McClintock's way of relating to her maize plants fits the image of a typically female (or feminine) way of relating to the world, apparently she has been socialized

as a female.

Nevertheless, Keller's aversion to explain McClintock's difference in terms of femininity is understandable. As set out earlier, to Keller the masculinity of scientific ideals of knowledge is the core of the problem of 'bad science'. Rigid notions of autonomy and objectivity are perceived as closely connected to male processes of emotional and cognitive development. In proposing a way out of the masculinity of science, however, Keller cannot recur to femininity, as this would merely amount to a new form of genderization. Thus, dynamic autonomy and dynamic objectivity cannot simply be perceived as the feminine opposites of their static counterparts. In her refusal to substantiate her conception of gender free science with reference to (either) gender, Keller remains faithful to the idea that gender is ideological, and that *any* gendered perspective would have a distorting impact on the claims of science.¹⁵

There is a second answer in Keller's work regarding the question of the difference women scientists can make. To clarify this, we need to take a closer look at her perception of the relation between sex and gender. On the one hand, Keller discerns a tendency, among both feminists and nonfeminists, to eliminate any difference between (biological) sex and (culturally constructed) gender, hence to equal the impact of gender to the impact of sex. From this perspective, women are simply and exclusively associated with femininity, men with masculinity. The complicated question of the connection between gender and science in these cases, so Keller, gets reduced to the question whether men and women *think* or *know* differently or not. On the other hand, there are those who state that real-life women and men are in no way bound by prevailing images of femininity and masculinity: gender would be no more than a role or a construction we can play with, irrespective of our biological sex. To avoid these two extremes of either the biological determinism of sex, or the "infinite plasticity" of gender, Keller takes a middle ground stance (Keller 1987: 38). In her view, one's gender is not determined by, but neither is it wholly independent of one's sex: "it means *something* - though, for many individuals, perhaps not a great deal - to identify oneself as being of one sex and not of another" (43). Gender is socially constructed, *but* it is 'carried' by the sex of its participants.

What then might that 'something' of one's sex be? Keller uses an analogy to clarify her position. The distinction between *gender* and *sex*, she suggests, can be seen as a variation on the distinction between *science* and *nature*. Ideologies of gender try to grasp the true meaning of sex just as science tries to grasp the truth of nature. As nature is 'ultimately unrepresentable', so is sex. However: "In truth - perhaps the one truth we actually do know - neither nature nor sex *can* be named out of existence" (Keller 1987: 48). In other words: like nature, sex exists. And women can make a difference within science by virtue of their sex. But what this difference amounts to, remains unrepresentable. Thus Keller avoids the fixation, or essentialization, of female or feminine characteristics. But the unsatisfactory reverse of her approach is that it reinvokes the familiar and much contested image of 'woman' as mystery.

However, the unrepresentability-but-existence of sex, is only part of Keller's answer to the question why women's participation would make a substantial difference. For Keller also suggests a third answer to the question of women's significance for science. That is, she sometimes also suggests that, in order to change, science needs not just 'the other sex' - it needs *particular representatives* of the other sex; it does not just need more women - it needs women with a certain sense of integrity: "[A]ny scientist who is not a man walks a path bounded on one side by inauthenticity and on the other by subversion. Just as surely as inauthenticity is the cost a woman suffers by joining men in misogynist jokes, so it is, equally, the cost

suffered by a woman who identifies with an image of the scientist modeled on the patriarchal husband. Only if she undergoes a radical disidentification from self can she share masculine pleasure in mastering a nature cast in the image of woman as passive, inert, and blind. Her alternative is to attempt a radical redefinition of terms" (Keller 1985: 174-175). Here Keller claims that women's relation to scientific discourse is just as problematic as women's relation to misogynist jokes. At first sight, the analogy sounds convincing - the subversion of masculine science by women seems just as obvious as women's protest when they are made fun of, insulted or belittled. But, in my opinion, this argument is self-evident only from a *feminist* perspective. For, to insist on one's female integrity is not the 'natural' reaction of just any woman. Most women would not explain their feelings of uneasiness or embarrassment - if they *have* or *recognize* such feelings to begin with - as caused by an attack on their integrity as a woman. In my view, only a woman already endowed with a certain degree of feminist consciousness would experience some jokes as misogynist, or typify particular scientific images as patriarchal. Of course, Keller is the first to admit that few female scientists actually use their position as a woman to resist traditional conceptions of science. On the contrary, as Keller observes, particularly female scientists are most reluctant to accept feminist critiques of science.¹⁶ The mind-set of working scientists and feminist critics are so far apart "that a 'feminist scientist' appears today as much a contradiction in terms as a 'woman scientist' once did" (Keller 1992: 21). Keller's tacit equation of female authenticity with a feminist consciousness implies that the desired transformation could only come from *feminist female* scientists. To them, the female sex is not a mystery at all.

Thus, Keller's way of dealing with the feminist paradox of gender gravitates towards the pole which refuses to affirm a particular female identity. But in her argument for the inclusion of women in science, not only for women's but also for science's sake, Keller cannot evade the assumption that what is needed is a feminist affirmation of female identity.¹⁷

2.4 *The recalcitrance of nature*

A gender free science, so Keller, would give room to differences *within* the realm of science: it would give women, but other scientists too, the opportunity to explore alternative questions, methodologies and interpretations, without having to give up their identity as scientists. Keller sees prevailing conceptions of science already changing in this direction. There would be a growing awareness among the community of scientific workers about the value of difference for processes of knowledge construction. This, according to Keller, shows that science is open and flexible enough to incorporate internal critique and instigate changes from within.¹⁸ For that reason she is disappointed to see many feminists take a down-right adversarial attitude toward science. Their proposals for a radically different, a 'feminist' science - mostly equated with a 'feminine' science -, reduce the notion of difference to duality. In Keller's view, these feminist theorists share with their opponents a perception of the world "as ordered by a single source (or axis) of power that is at least in principle commonly available; a world in which duality can be invoked (by either side) to create not so much separation of spheres as an inside and an outside - in other words, as a strategy of exclusion" (Keller 1987: 44). This supposedly single source of power is 'Truth'. Whereas the (scientific) advocates of objectivity claim there is only one truth, and science the only way to get access to it, feminists emphasize that truth is relative to cultural values and interests - a claim that undermines the assumption of science's privileged access to it.

Keller regrets that feminists got mixed up in such a mundane struggle for power. It made them descend to the level of a world view which can only 'count to two', as she phrases it (Keller 1986). Adherents to a feminist science mistakingly assume that the possession of 'Truth' will give women more power. Keller's position regarding truth, however, is much more sceptical: "Precisely because I am so uncertain of its meaning, I use the term [truth] only once, in quotes, to describe not an attribute of theory, nor of science, but rather, something that many (probably most) working scientists believe in" (Keller 1989: 150). What counts is not 'Truth' per se; what counts are those knowledges which are *accepted* as true by a particular scientific community. It is therefore far more important for women to become full members of the scientific community, i.e. to acquire the power to *make* 'truths', than to claim some privileged access to 'Truth'. In other words, although Keller rejects the idea that science or 'truth' would mirror or correspond with 'nature', she certainly is not a sceptic regarding the scientific enterprise itself. She for instance shares the belief of scientists that 'nature does exist' and that it is 'one' (Keller 1987: 46-48). As already became clear in her suggestion that gender relates to sex as science relates to nature, Keller takes a position in-between realism and relativism: although scientific accounts should be perceived as constructions of nature, still these accounts are 'carried' by the independent existence of a recalcitrant nature.¹⁹

Despite this avowed scepticism regarding truth, in her earlier work on gender and science, Keller implicitly relies on the idea that 'better' knowledges give more truthful accounts. The interpretation of gender as ideology, consequently of genderized science as yielding distorted views of reality, made it difficult to tell the difference between her feminist ideal of gender free science and the positivistic standard image of value free science. In *Secrets of Life, Secrets of Death*, Keller distances herself from this earlier confidence in the difference between 'mythlike' and 'myth-free' beliefs (1992: 4). Going through her own 'linguistic turn' made her focus more on the *constitutive* role of language in scientific practice. To Keller, this boils down to a heightened attention to the force or efficacy of language. As linguistic entities, scientific representations do not simply represent reality, or 'nature', as Keller prefers to name it. They are tools for intervening (1992: 73).²⁰

Keller's shift in focus from the problematic of 'gender and science' to the issue of 'language, gender and science' brings with it a subordination of the feminist perspective to the more general recognition of the social character of science. To understand the way language embodies and enforces particular cultural norms and values, is a need that, Keller now finds, "far exceeds the concerns of feminism" (1992: 26). She throws doubt upon the self-evident feminist repudiation of the (supposedly) masculine desire for domination over nature as that which propels forth the scientific enterprise: "they/we have not answered the question just what it is that is wrong with dominating nature" (34). She cautions against too hasty judgements. After all, nature may have been compared to a woman often enough, the point of feminist criticism precisely is that she, or better: it, is in fact *not* a woman. Thus, it would be more appropriate to ask for what ends the language of objectification and domination might be more useful, and what ends are better served with the language of feeling and connectivity.

This, however, also makes clear that Keller's shift from the supposedly more restricted perspective of gender to the broader issue of the constitutive force of language did not change her interest in the *normative* side of science. As she phrases it: force does not only have magnitude, it possesses directionality as well (1992: 75). Keller puts ethical questions regarding human rights and goods at the heart of the agenda of science. Particularly scholars of social studies of science should not restrict themselves to mere descriptions of the *means* with which science manages to attain certain goals.

They should also be interested in the kind of *ends* science is implicitly heading for, and how it could be transformed in order to serve better purposes: "Given our remarkable ingenuity, skill, and imagination, I have no doubt that, with sufficient interest, we could develop representations of natural phenomena adequate to the task of changing the world in different ways - perhaps, as some have hoped, giving us solar energy rather than nuclear power; ecological rather than pathogenic medicine; better rearing rather than better breeding of our offspring" (1992: 92).

Despite her linguistic turn, Keller thus remains faithful to a middle ground stance between realism and relativism. Language, in her view, cannot be said to make reality. Its force, and consequently the force of scientific theories, is dependent on both the subjects who use language, and on its adequacy in relation to the non-linguistic world (1992: 33). "[L]anguage is hardly free. What counts as usable, effective and communicable representation is constrained, on the one hand, by our social, cultural, and disciplinary location, and on the other hand, by the recalcitrance of what I am left, by default, to call 'nature'" (6).

3. What can she know? Lorraine Code

Canadian philosopher Lorraine Code puts the issue of the subject on top of the epistemological agenda. The Kantian question 'What can I know?' therefore is focal to any reflection on knowledge. But whereas the Kantian question is meant to be purely speculative, Code argues for the need to empiricize the notion of the knowing subject. After all, actual knowers are not pure minds, they are real-life persons.²¹ And as one of the not insignificant features of a person is his or her sex, Code alters the question: 'What can *she* know?' (Code 1991)

On the first pages of the book with this title, Code draws attention to the fact that, in epistemology as usual, to thematize the identity of the knowing subject is 'out of order'. It would break with the generally accepted assumption that the validity of a knowledge claim has nothing to do with the character or position of the person who happens to make that claim, but solely concerns the relation between knowledge and the known. In the final essay in her most recent publication, Code follows Lynn Nelson's proposal to reformulate the Kantian question in yet another direction, and ask: 'What can *we* know?' (Code 1995: 225) To Code, Nelson's amendment underlines the fact that individual subjects do not acquire knowledge in splendid isolation, but that knowledge is the achievement of epistemic communities. Hence, inquiries into the conditions of possibility for 'true' knowledge should focus on the constitutive role of scientific and other communities instead of individual knowers. The subject of the initial Kantian question was the 'I' of a transcendental self - no more than a "limiting point of empirical knowledge" (Code 1991: 113). Nevertheless, Code gives Kant credit for making it possible to analyze knowledge as constructed, and henceforth to contextualize "epistemic activity so that the knower, and not just the known, comes under epistemological scrutiny" (114). The focus on the subject, in particular on its constitutive role in the construction of knowledge, gives room to grant epistemological significance to so-called 'subjective' features.

3.1 Positionality

Initially, in her 'pre-feminist' work so to speak, Code argued for the need to make use of the empirical

findings of for instance cognitive psychology to get to know more about the nature of actual knowers (see Code 1987). These findings were to provide the material with which one could elaborate a theory of intellectual virtues. To Code, the central virtue would be epistemic responsibility.²² The responsibility of the knower, in this earlier work, was taken as a responsibility primarily to the 'known', to the object of knowledge. Intellectual goodness would be characterized by a 'realist orientation'.²³ Later, Code criticizes the assumption which tacitly accompanied this perception of epistemic virtue, i.e. of the subject as an "honest, well-meaning, transparently self-conscious epistemic agent, who can make of her or his circumstances what she or he will" (1995: 7). Such a liberal humanistic view not only denies the extent to which actual subjects are constituted by structural circumstances which they cannot rise above at will, it also denies its own alliance with one specific subject position, i.e. the affluent, property owning, Western, white male.²⁴ Hence, taking subjectivity into account implies that one takes account of the particular features of knowers: of "their interests in the inquiry, their emotional involvement and background assumptions, their character;[...] their material, historical, cultural circumstances" (1995: 37). Moreover, it implies that one acknowledge, over and against the humanistic ideals of unity and autonomy, the actual multiplicity, the split and fragmented nature of human subjectivity.

These insights combine feminist critiques of epistemology with postmodern deconstructions of the subject. However, the combination is an uneasy one, both from an epistemological and from a feminist perspective. Code does not opt for a wholesale replacement of the autonomous subject by fragmented subjects, because this would make it impossible to attribute responsibility to actual knowers. She wishes to hold on to some notion of integrity and agency, to a "residual humanistic subjectivity" (1991: 82). Moreover, to make a full switch from a male-identified to a de-gendered, multiple subject passes over a whole body of feminist research which argues for the (repressed) existence of specific feminine or female ways of knowing. As mentioned earlier, Code observes that the sex of the knower matters at least negatively, in the sense that female knowers are more likely to be associated with stereotypes of femininity, the objectivity of their claims to be doubted sooner. At the same time, so Code, it must be acknowledged that being female or male is somehow relevant to the construction of subjectivity. She therefore thinks it worthwhile to assess the value of hitherto distrusted knowledges of women: the sex of the knower is also epistemologically relevant in the positive sense. Code is cautious, however, not to let this re-valuation lead to an unproblematic affirmation or celebration of femininity: the sex of the knower cannot count as evidence, as a new foundation or a means of justification for knowledge claims. We are not allowed to argue that "because she is a woman, she knows" (1991: 7). A feminist perspective is not meant to validate women's knowledges per se.²⁵

Instead, Code opts for an approach of subjectivity which emphasizes *positionality*. The term is adopted from Linda Alcoff, who suggests an interpretation of subjectivity as related to constantly shifting contexts: "[I]t is to analyze, assess, assume accountability for the positions one occupies, while engaging in critical dialogue with, or resistance against, occupants of other positions" (Code 1991: 180). The knowing subject should be seen as "a situated, self-critical, socially produced subjectivity" (82).²⁶ Like the anti-essentialist alternative to the notion of a female subject, the concept of positionality has the advantage of being applicable to a variety of differently located subjects, not only according to gender, but also to class, race, ethnicity. Still, Code's work remains mainly focused on the position of *women* tout court.²⁷

By recognizing that it matters *who* is speaking, the issue of power, of structural asymmetries between different subject positions, is put on the epistemic agenda. The concept of positionality recognizes the

importance of the attribution or denial of epistemic authority, or, as Code quotes Wittgenstein, of the fact that "knowledge is in the end based on acknowledgement" (1995: x). Whether certain findings are accepted as 'knowledge', in practice does not purely depend on the use of evidence, argument, method and the like, but just as much on the assumed credibility of the subject who presents these findings. To illustrate the workings of a double standard along gendered lines, Code gives the example of a Canadian inquiry concerning health care, in which the mostly male doctors were asked in terms of what they *knew*, whereas the question for the mostly female nurses began with: 'Based on your *experience...*' (1991: 222). Elsewhere, she notes that, both in everyday and more official juridical settings, the testimonies of some meet with more incredulity than those of others. This may go, for instance, for accounts of sexual assault by female victims, for children's experiential stories, or for the reports of psychiatric patients.

On the one hand, Code typifies such 'mis-recognitions' as failures to follow the moral-epistemological imperative to try to know people well, i.e. as a failure to treat other persons with respect. Here, the angle of *morality*, and a concomitant appeal to the responsibility of the individual knower, prevails. But Code also strikes a more *political* note in drawing attention to the lack of available narrative structures, or 'rhetorical space' for certain (groups of) people to get their story heard. For instance, critical readings of the confrontation between Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas during the US Senate Hearings in 1991 made it clear that for a black woman who denounces a black man for sexual harassment before an all-white male audience, there is no rhetorical space which could give her testimony credibility. Code makes use of Kimberlé Crenshaw's poignant analysis of the Hill/Thomas case (see Code 1995: 67-68; 75-76). In Crenshaw's view, Hill's testimony as a black woman did not fit into any available narrative structure: neither the familiar 'script' of sexism, as this in particular fits the position of white women, nor the 'script' of racism, as this is modeled according to the experiences of black men. Whereas Thomas' defense could successfully appeal to the politically loaded narrative of a black man being lynched by whites, Hill's testimony was either understood as the unconvincing complaint of a (de-raced) "calculating and careerist" woman, or as the betrayal of a (de-gendered) black person of another black before a white audience (see Crenshaw 1992).²⁸

3.2 Narrativity

Code's main theoretical adversary is the positivist-empiricist orientation that makes up the mainstream of Anglo-American epistemology. From this perspective, knowledge is assumed to take the form of the proposition 'S knows that p', to be verified by checking the empirical data to which it refers. The subject ('S') is taken to be substitutable for any other reliable subject. The emphasis on epistemological norms such as value-neutrality and objectivity springs from a focus on science as paradigmatic for the production of 'true' knowledge. Within this paradigm, all knowledge is modelled according to what is taken to be the most 'basic' form of knowledge acquisition, both systematically and in terms of cognitive development, i.e. the observation of simple everyday objects. According to Code, however, there is at least as much reason to start from everyday knowledges rather than instances of scientific knowledge, and from knowing other people rather than the knowledge of objects. After all, one of the very first knowledge practices a child gets involved in, consists of its responding to and developing relationships with other people. Moreover, because knowing other people is qualitatively different from knowing objects, it involves a more complicated and open process, and offers a richer and more instructive model for knowledge in general. Knowledge of other people, for instance, is always a knowledge of degrees:

one can never claim that one knows a person fully, as s/he is constantly 'on the move', engaged in processes of interaction and change. In line with the concept of positionality, a person's identity is never fixed. Knowing other people is an ongoing and never closed off process of communication and interpretation: it requires a constant revision of one's views, a willingness to learn.²⁹ In general, no set of propositions of the kind 'I know that Alice is clever', no summing up of all possible 'facts' about Alice, can be sufficient to really 'knowing' her - there is always something more to knowing a person than knowing the facts (1995: 47, 52).

More in particular, Code proposes to take *friendship* as the paradigmatic practice for the relation between knower and known. Friendship offers a suitable model, not only because it is a relationship best and most commonly practised by women, as Code suggests, but also because of its potential for mutual empowerment. What is most productive in the model of friendship is that it recognizes that throughout our lives, we are essentially *second persons*. This means that we have become and keep on becoming who we are through our relationships with others.³⁰ The model of friendship emphasizes the importance of mutual trust and regard for the specific concerns of particular people. Another merit of this model lies in its cognitive dimension: friendship *requires* knowledge in order to be sustained. Finally, friends are equals and as such their relationship is not fraught with oppressive aspects. Thus friendship, in Code's view, could be exemplary for re-formulating the relationship between the knowing subject and its object in terms of relatedness, justice, and the responsibility to 'know well' without becoming imperialistic. A hermeneutic approach, in which communication and dialogue are focal, which resists closure, and which preserves the ambiguity of knowledge thus achieved, seems most suitable to this model of friendship.

But how useful is the model of friendship, with its consequent interpretive approach, for understanding the knowledge of inanimate objects? Code admits that one can hardly ask a knower to become friends with a rock, a cell, or a planet; relationships of mutual recognition or empowerment between observer and object are indeed difficult to imagine. Still, so she claims, in the more moderate sense that even physical objects do not remain wholly untouched by the observational process, one could maintain that also in the natural sciences the objects of research are somehow responsive to the knower's activities. Another objection to the application of the model of friendship to the physical sciences may be that, contrary to persons, inanimate objects can at a certain moment be fully known. To this Code replies that the assumption that science can attain full and perfect knowledge, actually is no more than a belief: there is no way to determine whether such knowledge has ever really been achieved. Hence, she sees no reason why this positivist-empiricist standard would be preferable to the hermeneutical idea of knowledge as always provisional and unfinished.³¹

However, these reflections on the physical sciences consist of no more than a couple of passing suggestions about the 'transportability' of the interpretive approach, while "[t]he extent of [its] usefulness for the natural sciences is not yet clear" (1995: 50). On the whole, the main point of reference in Code's theorizing about knowledge are the human and the social sciences.

Moulding the relationship between the knower and the known according to the model of friendship implies that the knower is not allowed to perceive and treat the (person) known as an object. As in a good friendship, respect and understanding for the other's complexity and uniqueness are imperative. Hence, a 'friendly' knower would be cautious about subsuming the individuals known under categories, s/he would refuse to treat them as mere cases, interesting only because of the more general knowledge that can be derived from them. A 'friendly' knower would let the 'object' speak for itself as much as possible. This implies that s/he takes the experiences and perspectives of the 'objects' of

research, their personal stories, seriously. Moreover, to do justice to these first-person accounts, s/he would also mould the knowledge derived from these stories in the form of stories. Code cites Oliver Sacks to indicate what is at stake in privileging the narrative form: "To restore the human subject at the center - the suffering, afflicted, fighting, human subject - we must deepen a case history into a narrative or tale; only then do we have a 'who' as well as a 'what', a real person [...]" (Code 1991: 166). In other words, to Code, the narrative form suits the model of friendship better than the propositional form: whereas the latter can only enumerate the 'facts' known about a person, i.e. can indicate 'what' someone is, the former provides that 'something more' which gives an impression of 'who' a person is.³² The narrative form does more justice to the particularity of individual 'cases'; it enables the knower to take, as Seyla Benhabib would phrase it, the position of the 'concrete other'.³³

However, taking first-person accounts seriously does not imply that one accepts them at face-value. Code rejects the idea of an individual's privileged access to the truth of her own experiences. She warns feminist researchers not to give in to the 'tyranny' of (women's) experience. "Women [...] have to learn about their 'own' experiences" (1995: 116). Knowledge built on experiential stories is the always provisional outcome of processes of interpretation and dialogue. Even more so, Code acknowledges that experiential accounts in themselves are not the purely individual expressions of purely individual feelings: even in our most confessional moments, we make use of already available structures of interpretation, of "received, culturally sanctioned story lines" (1995: 74). The availability of such narrative plots *enables* people to speak out their most personal experiences. However, as indicated earlier, this also implies that if we cannot make our own story fit into any of the available scripts, this, figuratively speaking, deprives us of our voice. The critical readings of the Anita Hill case illustrate this. Due to the absence of a familiar 'script' that could structure her account, to the public at large Hill did not come across as a reliable witness to her own experiences. As Code notes, to change such conditions it will not do for individual story tellers to use better arguments, be more rational, or give more convincing evidence, nor for individual listeners to become more empathic and respectful towards their partners in dialogue. Rather, "[i]t is a matter of working out, collectively, how to produce and circulate new scripts" (1995: 78).

For Code, it is self-evident that every claim about knowledge also holds for the activity of theorizing about knowledge. Epistemological issues could be enlightened by a narrative approach. A 'storied epistemology', as Code names it, would help in revealing the actual, real-life subjects that hide behind the impersonal voice of theorizing. It would show the actual contingency of philosophical outlooks, such as those of positivist-empiricism: it would show their embeddedness in particular historical, cultural and biographical circumstances. Code's elaborate story of a 19th century zoologist's struggle to reconcile his Christian belief in Divine Creation with Darwin's scientifically convincing evolutionary theory, is presented as an example of such a narrative approach which focuses on the character and virtues of a responsible knower (see Code 1987). Thus, a 'storied' epistemology does not go along with the almost sacrosanct distinction between the context of discovery and the context of justification. Whereas personal anecdotes and historical details are usually perceived as wholly irrelevant from an epistemic perspective, Code claims that such features of the context of discovery are just as important for assessing the value and validity of the knowledge concerned, as the rational argumentations and experimental proof that belong to the context of justification. In her view, when we realize that there is no single Archimedean point from which knowledge derives, it is epistemologically relevant to be informed about the location of a knower, no matter whether his or her knowledge counts as experience, as knowledge, or

as theory. A *responsible* theorist will be aware of "the inescapable partiality - hence the impurity - of [his] own point of view" (1995: 231). S/he will therefore prefer telling a good story to an argumentative exposition of his views.³⁴

Code sees her proposal for a 'storied epistemology' not as the announcement of another paradigm switch. That would contradict the anti-universalism inherent to an interpretive approach. Moreover, the rise of one single new paradigm in the present times is unlikely, now that so many different epistemic 'voices' are emerging. Code therefore professes profound scepticism regarding both the possibility and the desirability of a new feminist epistemology. Epistemology, so she suggests, is past its prime.

3.3 *Let's try relativism*

The days of the project of epistemology may be numbered, this does not keep Code from addressing some of the key epistemological issues, such as the problem of the relation between subjectivity and objectivity, or the problem of universalism versus relativism. Initially, Code's focus on the empirical subject of knowledge made her conclude that "there [are] different perspectives upon the same reality [...] all equally worthy of designation as knowledge and/or understanding" (1987: 136). She remained committed to realism. But rather than subscribe to classical correspondence or coherence theories of truth, she argued for a 'normative, perspectival realism': the insight of the relativity of knowledge claims would not keep a responsible knower from trying to find out how things 'really' are, independent of his own interests, preoccupations and desires.³⁵

In the course of Code's work, emphasis shifts from a defense of realism which takes account of the relativity of knowledge claims, to a defense of a mitigated form of relativism which takes notice of the constraints of reality. Thus, Code subscribes to the feminist aim to heighten the epistemic status of ordinary subjects. But she cautions against lapsing into a subjectivist position, a position according to which 'anything goes' (1991: 255). Feminists cannot afford to go that way, because they want to remain able to refer to certain objective realities such as the marginalization of women. Moreover, absolute relativism is an impossible position: "perspectival explanations are constrained by reality" (321). Therefore, Code opts for a middle ground stance, and underlines that epistemological relativism does not entail anti-realism.

In her more recent writings, the defensive mode is replaced by a more affirmative tone. Although still in favour of a mitigated relativism that acknowledges "the intransigence of things and practices" (1995: 181), Code now is more outspoken about the epistemic and moral worth of relativism. She stresses its empowering and emancipatory implications. Due to its persistent distrust of universalism, foundationalism and objectivism, a relativist approach would be sensitive to differences, complexity and ambiguity. Next to that, relativism stresses the relativity of any knowledge claim, because it sees knowledge as a "construct produced by cognitive agents" (105). It acknowledges the need to take subjectivity, and hence the locatedness and partiality of all knowledge, into account. Finally, a relativist take on knowledge is more in agreement with everyday cognitive practices and meetings: much of our daily communication concerns negotiations of disagreements and differences. And even then we rarely succeed in establishing a common ground. Hence, empirically spoken, relativism is not the exception, but the rule: very few insights can be universalized, almost all knowledge is contested, and in need of constant negotiation. Code challenges her readers to engage in a thought experiment which would turn

the familiar positivist-realist assumptions upside down: "[S]uppose we try for a while to run with relativism, to assume that relativism is at least viable, may be true" (1995: 206).

With this affirmation of relativism, Code associates with other feminist critiques of epistemology which in her view share a constructivist outlook on knowledge: "For all of these theorists, knowledge-production is a social practice of embodied, gendered, historically, racially, and culturally located knowers, whose products bear the marks of their makers, and whose stories need, therefore, to be told. The 'constructivism' implicit in the suggestion that knowledge is *made*, not found, is constrained by the intransigence of things and practices that will neither go away, nor lend themselves to just any construction; and by the stubborn conservatism of traditions, institutions, and social structures that resist wilful negation or reconstruction" (1995: 181). It is noteworthy, however, that the only time Code uses the term 'constructivism', it is put between quotation marks. And not without reason. Code's affinity with more radical constructivist views of knowledge is actually quite small. Despite regular references to Foucault's views of knowledge and the power of discourse, her perception of the constructed nature of knowledge stays closer to a modernist Kantian perspective: the subject of knowledge remains center-stage. Whereas according to a postmodernist constructivist view, the subject of knowledge is the *outcome* of, and as such part and parcel of configurations of knowledge and power, Code's version of constructivism points to the significance of the subject of knowledge as the *maker*, as one who puts his/her stamp on the knowledge produced. As outlined in the previous chapter, radical constructivism leads the theorist *away* from the subject. In contrast, Code's Kantian-feminist interpretation of constructivism leads her to *emphasize* the epistemic relevance of the subject.

3.4 *Experiential stories: mistaken or marginalized?*

Code's epistemology is characterized by a double-sided affinity with both modernist and postmodernist strands of thought. As discussed above, this shows in her views of the subject: fragmented, but with a 'residual' core of human integrity; in her interpretation of constructivism: relativism, but with a Kantian view of the subject as origin of discourse; and in her constant attempt to steer a middle course between realism and relativism. Code's mixed focus becomes especially clear in her perception of the role of language in processes of knowledge construction.

On the one hand, Code puts forward the moral-epistemic imperative of taking the objects of research seriously. An empathic knower gives room to the object to 'speak for itself'. From this perspective, language is taken as a means of communication and expression for individual subjects. Language and stories, so it is assumed, reflect the complexities and ambiguities of both the narrating subject and the reality accounted for. On the other hand, Code calls attention to the constitutive effects of discourse. She speaks of rhetorical spaces as the discursive locations which structure and limit the kind of utterances that may count as true or false, that is: which determine whether a certain account gets 'heard' in the first place. It is from this take on language that she adopts Crenshaw's analysis of the Hill/Thomas case in terms of the availability of narrative structures, and claims that even the most private experiential accounts are structured by publicly sanctioned rhetorical tropes.

The conception of language as a means of communication fits the *moral* vocabulary of responsibility and care. Within this vocabulary, the responsibility to 'know well' asks of individual knowers to be empathic listeners, open-minded and self-reflexive story tellers. The failure to do so is both a moral and an epistemic failure: it is to do injustice to the 'known', no matter whether it is of an

animate or an inanimate nature. The conception of language as constitutive of social reality, on the other hand, associates with a more *political* vocabulary of discourse and empowerment. Within this vocabulary, emphasis is on the need for collective discursive interventions, for the building of new 'interpretive communities' (1995: 115) or 'sites for the production of new meanings' (117). The task for responsible epistemic communities is to invent and circulate new narrative structures, so that hitherto excluded, purportedly 'abnormal' accounts can come to count as candidates for truth or falsity.³⁶

Code does not reflect on this fusion of theoretical perspectives in her own discourse. On the contrary, she quite unconcernedly mixes them, for instance when she claims that what is at stake is the 'equal access' of individual knowers to particular, already existing rhetorical spaces (1995: 231). The problem, however, is that the notion of a rhetorical space was initially introduced precisely to explain the futility of the vocabulary of 'access'. Because the structure of the discursive domain in question is such that particular subjects simply are not granted a voice, the only option would be to collectively create new rhetorical spaces. And as Code remarked earlier, such an enterprise "has to occur in largely uncharted territory, where the rules for how to listen, how to hear, how to act are not properly in place" (1995: 78).

Code's double perspective on language as both a medium of communication and a constitutive force, which goes with her wish to seek an equilibrium between epistemological realism and relativism, does yield a problem. As indicated, Code insists that first-person accounts cannot be taken at face-value. They need and deserve to be met with critical scrutiny, in order to prevent the knower to relapse in a position of absolute relativism. In other words: even an interpretative approach which does its utmost to do justice to the perspectives of the persons under investigation, has to reckon with the possibility that they are 'mistaken' or 'distorted' accounts of self. But Code equally insists that subjects sometimes lack the rhetorical space which could make their experiential accounts candidates for being 'true' or 'mistaken' in the first place. These points being taken, the crucial question is: how would it be possible to hear or believe experiential accounts for which the dominant discourse has not yet provided a suitable script? In other words: what means does a responsible knower have to distinguish between 'mistaken' and 'marginalized' accounts of self? Code's analyses do not indicate how we might be able to decide whether a particular account denies obvious constraints of reality, or whether it is an instance of 'subjugated knowledges'. Perhaps Code would reply that answering such a question is up to processes of concrete deliberation and discussion, and that epistemology has no special expertise with which such matters could be decided beforehand. In my view, such a response is unsatisfactory. In such deliberations, in trying to assess whether this is a 'mistaken' or a 'marginalized' account, it is highly probable that we will either fall back on references to a prediscursive reality, or rely on power-sensitive talk and strategic considerations. In other words, such concrete deliberations will leave intact precisely the two epistemological positions which Code tries to reconcile: realism and relativism.

4. The mesmerizing force of gender

In this chapter, I discussed two feminist proposals for new conceptions of knowledge and epistemology. Keller and Code both use gender as a prism for dealing with the paradox that constitutes the heart of the feminist project: the simultaneous acceptance and refusal of gender. This does not imply that they manage to unravel feminism's ever-recurring knot, nor that this would actually be possible. The point of my discussion rather has been to show the richness and complexity of feminist critiques of epistemology-

as-usual, and the significantly different views of knowledge which emerge from the use of gender as a critical prism, compared to the constructivist approaches set forth in chapter 1. Thus, Keller's argument for a gender free science results, on the one hand, in the acknowledgement of the unrepresentability of sex. Keller refuses to pin herself down on any claim concerning the actual difference women's sexual difference might make. At the same time, she invokes the image of a new, a more dynamic subject of knowledge. This alternative subject remarkably approximates what is usually associated with feminine ways of knowing: in touch with and endowed with a 'feeling for' its objects.

While Keller's handling of the paradox starts from the pole of the *refusal* of gender, Code starts by *emphasizing* the sex of the knower. Women's ways of knowing, so Code, suggest friendship as the most suitable model for the relation between knower and known. The model of friendship engenders an empirization of the knowing subject, a focus on dialogue and specificity, a recognition of the fragmented nature of subjectivity, and the call to be accountable for the positions one occupies.

In my view, Keller and Code make good examples of the way the perspective of gender can be turned to account in epistemological reflection. They show how gender may work as a prism which enables us to develop alternative conceptions of the relationship between subject and object, as well as the relations between subjects. They do so without getting caught by the idea that a feminine perspective yields better knowledges. The prism of gender appears to take these feminist thinkers 'beyond' gender. Both aim at a transformation or, to put it in a more fashionable way, a deconstruction of the hierarchical dichotomies linked up with existing gender relationships. Both also end up taking a middle ground stance between a *relativistic* position which would acknowledge the equal validity of 'feminine' and 'masculine' perspectives, and a *realist* position which would deny the validity of any perspectivism.

At the same time, however, the way in which Keller and Code make use of the prism of gender makes them vulnerable to the criticism that their work actually privileges the position and experience of one particular group of women, i.e. of Western, white, middle-class, heterosexual women. A one-sidedness which, in my view, is furthered by their focus on prevailing psychological and psychoanalytic frameworks for explaining the differences between men and women - frameworks which were developed on the basis of empirical findings in Western, white societies. This is not to suggest that Keller and Code would fail to recognize the epistemic relevance of other marginal positions. Both at times explicitly acknowledge the significance of categories such as race, ethnicity and class.³⁷ Nevertheless, in their attempts to think through a perspective which goes 'beyond' gender, Code and Keller remain focused on issues of gender exclusively. In this respect, the prism of gender also exerts something of a mesmerizing force.

In the next chapter, I will discuss a third strategy for dealing with the paradox of gender. This is the strategy adopted by more sociologically informed feminist thinkers, who attempt to think through the notion of feminist and other oppositional standpoints as privileged epistemic positions. Especially the recent versions developed by Sandra Harding and Patricia Hill Collins wish to acknowledge the multiplicity of women's perspectives, while simultaneously holding on to the possibility of 'better' or more 'objective' knowledge.

Notes

1. See for instance Butler 1986; Diamond & Quinby 1988; Bordo 1989; Fraser 1989; Hekman 1990; Sawicki 1991; Braidotti 1991a; McNay 1992; Ramazanoglu 1993.
2. See for instance Comay 1986; Leland 1988; Fraser 1989; Bickford 1993; Kaufman-Osborne 1993.
3. See for instance Star 1991; Berg & Lee 1995; Hirschauer & Mol 1995; Pasveer & Akrich 1996; van der Ploeg 1996.
4. One particularly infamous intervention was Foucault's discussion of rape. In an interview he suggested that rape be considered an 'ordinary' crime of violence, to be compared with for instance a punch on the nose, and not as a sexual offence, because this would confirm the dominant picture of sexuality as something especially private and sacred (see Foucault 1983). Monique Plaza retorted that there indeed *is* a difference between a blow on the face or being raped, namely sexual difference (Plaza 1983). See also Braidotti 1991: 93-94, for a discussion of this encounter.
5. See for instance Rorty 1993. In this article, Rorty shows convinced that neither pragmatism nor deconstructivism should be thought of as a tool for feminist politics. It may show the constructedness of categories such as masculinity and femininity, but it can do no more than this 'mopping up' the faults of naturalizations and essentializations; pragmatism itself is unable to point out new directions.
6. See for instance Restivo 1988; Grint & Woolgar 1995; Gill 1996; Grint & Woolgar 1996.
7. See chapter 3, section 2, for a more elaborate discussion of Harding's approach. For other overviews, see Hawkesworth 1989, and the respective Introductions to Jaggar and Bordo 1989; Alcoff and Potter 1993; Lennon and Whitford 1994.
8. Compare Sandra Harding's observation of the 'contradictory nature' of the feminist project, as "forced to 'speak as' and on behalf of the very notion it criticizes and tries to dismantle - women" (Harding 1993a: 59). Or Braidotti's note that "[f]eminism is based on the very notion of female identity, which it is historically bound to criticize. Feminist thought rests on a concept that calls for deconstruction and de-essentialization in all of its aspects" (Braidotti 1994: 157). To Halsema, the paradox of contemporary feminism lies in its attempt to affirm a notion of feminine identity while simultaneously accounting for the multiple differences between women (Halsema 1997: 1). Note that these circumscriptions refer to a different paradox than the 'paradox of women' Teresa de Lauretis identifies as the contradictory position women occupy in dominant discourse: "[T]he paradox of a being that is at once captive and absent in discourse, constantly spoken of but of itself inaudible or inexpressible, displayed as spectacle and still unrepresented or unrepresentable..." (de Lauretis 1990: 115).
9. Keller uses the metaphor of the 'lens' to describe the gist of the feminist project: "[A] lens that brings into focus a particular question: What does it mean to call one aspect of human experience male and another female?" (Keller 1985: 6).
10. Compare Nancy Hartsock's heartfelt cry in a critical discussion of Foucault's notion of power: "Why is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic?" (Hartsock 1990: 163) See also Braidotti 1991, for an elaborate and critical analysis of the coexistence between the

philosophical discourse of the crisis of the subject and emerging feminist conceptions of the sexuated, embodied subject. Braidotti particularly strikes a note of caution about the focus on 'the feminine' in postmodern French philosophy: "[F]aced with a trend towards the feminization of the postmodern field of knowledge, feminists would be advised to exercise their critical judgement. For all this emphasis on the feminine is no guarantee that the concerns and revendications of women are actually being taken into account. On the contrary, there is a danger that the new metaphors will be as much a snare as a present for women" (Braidotti 1991: 10).

11. In this study, in accordance with the terminology of the feminist authors discussed, I will use the term 'gender'. To me it is interchangeable with notions such as 'sex' or 'sexual difference'. This betrays the position I take in a couple of the central debates within contemporary feminist theory. But although a word is enough to the wise, it might need some further explanation. One of these debates concerns the inter-continental difference between (predominantly French) theories of sexual difference and (predominantly Anglo-Saxon) theories of gender. The first perspective, of which the work of Luce Irigaray is the most prominent representative, arises from a mixture of disciplines, notably Lacanian psychoanalysis and post-structuralist philosophy. One of its basic assumptions is that the female subject position cannot be perceived independently of its primary location, the (sexed) body, a body which in itself always is a point of intersection between the biological and the social, the material and the symbolic. Given the ubiquity of a symbolic order which is built on the mutual exclusion of femininity and subjectivity, the only viable way out, according to these feminist thinkers, consists of strategies of mimetic repetition, the "metabolic consumption of the old in order to engender the new" (Braidotti 1994: 39), the development of a new 'female feminine subject' (Irigaray 1984; Braidotti 1991a: 248-263). Feminist theories of gender, on the other hand, were developed first and foremost, as Donna Haraway states, "to contest the naturalization of sexual difference" (Haraway 1991: 131). The notion of gender springs from psychological and sociological theories on personal identity, and is based on a strict distinction between biology and culture - where 'sex' belongs to the first, and 'gender' to the second. A landmark article was Gayle Rubin's 'The Traffic in Women' (Rubin 1975). For gender theorists, change should come from women's resistance against prevailing ideologies or systems of gender - as will become clear in the passage following this note. For adherents to the sexual difference perspective, the idea that the existing order can be rejected without a vengeance, denies the inextricable link between (female) subjectivity and (female) embodiment; whereas, for those who start from the perspective of gender, the strategy of mimesis runs the risk of leaving things as they are (see Braidotti 1994: 153-154; and Braidotti with Butler 1994, for an interesting encounter between two outspoken proponents of these oppositional views).

Since the late eighties, some theorists of gender started questioning the sex/gender distinction. Which brings me to the second debate mentioned. Here, Judith Butler took the lead by deconstructing (biological) 'sex' as itself a gendered category: "gender is not to culture as sex is to nature [so she ripostes Evelyn Fox Keller's well-known slogan, bp]; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which 'sexed nature' or 'a natural sex' is produced and established as 'prediscursive', prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts" (Butler 1990: 7). In 1985, for that matter, Dutch philosopher and scholar of science studies Annemarie Mol already published an article with the telling title: 'Who knows what a woman is...', which shows the constructed (and hence unstable) nature of 'woman' within different scientific disciplines (Mol 1985). Witness my stated indifference concerning the use of 'gender', 'sex', or 'sexual difference', it will be clear that my position is most close to those of Butler, Mol and Haraway.

12. The title of the article, 'The Traffic in Women', is borrowed from Emma Goldman, whose essay under the same title discussed the problem of female prostitution. Rubin's adoption of Goldman's phrase suggests (quite in accordance with the classical Marxist view of gender-relations under conditions of capitalism) a generalization of the position of the prostitute to the position of all women: women would be no more than goods, traded on a market where only men have the power to buy and sell (Rubin 1976). Compare Irigaray's observation of the same vein: "Women, signs, goods, currency, all pass from one man to another..." (Irigaray 1981: 107).

13. Keller here relies on the work of feminist psychologists, such as Dinnerstein 1977, and Chodorow 1978.

14. This late sign of public recognition took place in 1983, the same year Keller's biography was published.

15. But Keller reminds feminist scientists to keep a keen eye for the risks involved in this strategy: "Once dissociated from gender (and hence from sex) [...] it can serve once again to render women themselves superfluous" (Keller 1987: 47).

16. "Despite repeated attempts at clarification, many scientists (especially, women scientists) persist in misreading the force that feminists attribute to gender ideology as a force being attributed to sex, that is, to the claim that women, for biological reasons, would do a different kind of science. The net effect is that, where some of us see a liberating potential (both for women *and* science) in exhibiting the historical role of gender in science, these scientists often see only a reactionary potential, fearing its use to support the exclusion of women from science" (Keller 1992: 20). I suspect that the reason that particularly women scientists resist feminist analyses has to do with the dilemma between being either equal-hence-the-same, or different-hence-inequal, which appears just as inevitable now as it was in Barbara McClintock's time.

17. Which, notably, brings Keller's position closer to 'sexual difference' thinkers like Luce Irigaray than it is usually considered to be.

18. Note that Keller's professed belief in the openness and flexibility of science is at odds with her earlier, but not retracted psychodynamic diagnosis of the 'masculinity' of science, which she linked with prevailing static conceptions of autonomy and objectivity (see 1992: 8). Keller even described these dispositions in *pathological* terms. Thus, the sadistic personality is taken to be the paradigm case of static autonomy, whereas the paranoid state of mind models static objectivity. The question arises how a practice, constituted by such pathological dispositions could be able to cure itself, without the outside help of a (critical) analytic. Of course, Keller's own analyses of another scientific mind-set already indicates that this is not impossible. Science can be rendered into a more *sound* or *normal* practice, when autonomy and objectivity would be perceived in a more dynamic way. But these insights do not derive from science itself, but from *feminist* insights about female processes of socialization. Hence, Keller's belief in the ability of science to change from within does not appear to do justice to her own role as a critical reader, as a feminist 'psychoanalytic', who looks at and diagnoses scientific discourse and practice from the outside.

19. Keller clarifies her position in-between realism and relativism in a response to Kelly Oliver, who argues that her wariness against relativism makes Keller relapse into an objectivist position (Oliver 1989): "I explicitly reject the view of science as 'mirror of nature', and call instead for an account of scientific knowledge that does justice to the wide diversity of interests that have informed the construction of different forms of knowledge we call 'scientific'. At the same time, however, I also argue against an account of scientific knowledge that reduces those forms of knowledge to the interests that inform them. I invoke the term 'nature' to refer not to any particular representation of reality, but to that which pre-exists us as cultural, linguistic beings and accordingly, that provides a kind of ultimate [...] resistance to the free intervention of culturally specific imagination" (Keller 1989: 150). Elsewhere, she phrases it thus: "Although we may now recognize that science neither does nor can 'mirror' nature, to imply instead that it mirrors culture (or 'interests') is not only to make a mockery of the commitment to the pursuit of reliable knowledge that constitutes the core of any working scientist's self-definition, but also to [...] practice an extraordinary denial of the manifest (at times even life threatening) successes of science" (Keller 1992: 36).

20. In her more recent work, Keller links up with the work of J.L. Austin, and talks of the *performative* character of language (see Keller 1995: X-XI).

21. "For Kant, one of the fundamental questions of philosophy is 'What can I know?'. In my view, insight into the nature of the knower is required to answer this question satisfactorily.[...] If it is read with the emphasis on the pronoun - 'What can *I* know?' - then who I am, the circumstances of my epistemological life, my cognitive 'location' will rightly figure in the reply. Emphasis on the *I*, upon the knower, permits the recognition that what holds knowledge together is a real human being: not just someone who *could* say 'I think', as in the theory of the transcendental unity of apperception" (Code 1987: 127).
22. For a discussion of Code's notion of epistemic responsibility, see also Krol 1992.
23. "It is only those who, in their knowing, strive to do justice to the *object* - to the *world* they want to know as well as possible - who can aspire to intellectual virtue" (Code 1987: 58).
24. "The experiences that epistemologists tend to draw upon are usually no more 'experiential' than the 'individuals' to whom the experiences allegedly belong are individuated. These are the generic experiences of generic epistemic subjects. But the end result is to focus philosophical analysis on examples that draw upon the commonplaces of privileged, white, male lives, and to assume that everyone else's life will, unquestionably, be like theirs" (Code 1995: 32).
25. Code enters into quite a critical exposition of a book by Mary Field Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic 1986). The authors of this book, in their wish to subvert the traditional focus on the object, so she claims, now "concentrate so narrowly on *S*, upon the knowers, that it is not easy to determine *what* their subjects know" (Code 1991: 253). They thus fall into the trap of substituting one one-sidedness for another: "[I]n its commendable project of creating an approach to knowledge based in women's experiences, *Women's Ways of Knowing* risks making of experience a tyranny equivalent to the tyranny of the universal, theoretical, and impersonal expertise it seeks to displace" (256).
26. Note that this proposal is close to the reflections on the (empirical) subject of knowledge in Code's *Epistemic Responsibility*, where it is for instance emphasized that cognitive activities comprise the experience and personal history of the individual knower, as well as a set of "communal, historical and cultural factors, acquired through interaction and communication" (1987: 101). In other words: here it is already stated that any knower is 'historically situated' (112). The significant difference with Code's later view is, that here the awareness of his/her locatedness still serves to let the knower become more self-critical and responsible, i.e. to try and avoid 'subjectivism' and strive for 'objectivism' (142). "Acknowledging that there is a selectivity in knowledge, based upon subjective factors, forces a more, rather than a less, rigorous examination and analysis of knowledge claims so that the consequences of subjectivity can be evaluated as such" (112).
27. As comes to the fore in her announcement that "[b]ecause my engagement in the project is prompted, specifically, by a conviction that *gender* must be put in place as a primary analytic category, I start by assuming that it is impossible to sustain the presumption of gender-neutrality that is central to standard epistemologies" (Code 1995: 29).
28. I will come back to Crenshaw's analysis, the issue of credibility and the figure of the reliable witness in chapter 6, where I discuss Philomena Essed's study on black women's testimonies of everyday racism.
29. "Knowledge of other people is possible only in a persistent interplay between opacity and transparency, between attitudes and postures that elude a knower's grasp, and traits that seem to be clear and relatively constant. Hence knowers are kept on their cognitive toes: the 'more-or-lessness' of this knowledge constantly affirms the need to

reserve and revise judgment" (Code 1991: 38).

30. Code adopts the notion of 'second persons' from Annette Baier's, *Postures of the Mind: Essays on Mind and Morals* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1985). Elsewhere Code cites Seyla Benhabib's critique of the prevailing view of the knowing subject, to underline Baier's concept: "[I]t is a strange world from which their [i.e. Descartes and Locke, bp] picture of knowledge is derived: a world in which 'individuals are grown up before they have been born; in which boys are men before they have been children; a world where neither mother, nor sister, nor wife exist'" (Code 1987: 129).

31. See Code 1991: 163-165; 1995: 49-51. Notably, Code discusses three examples of (female) scientists whose 'styles of reasoning' testify to the possibility to differ from the mainstream scientific approach and still be a successful scientist. She mentions five distinctive marks of their research practices: respect for the object, a willingness to let the object speak for itself, a recognition of irreducible complexity, a sense of accountability to the world under investigation, and a concern to understand difference. In short: the relationship these scientists maintain with the objects of their research resembles the way one would relate to close friends. One of these scientists is Barbara McClintock. Code is less scrupulous than Keller in suggesting a link between McClintock's different approach and femininity: "In view of her dissociation of her life and work from 'all stereotypic notions of femininity,' it would be a mistake to interpret McClintock's epistemic position as an intentional celebration of 'feminine' values. But she shows in her professional practice that it is possible to make space in scientific research for suppressed practices and values that, coincidentally or otherwise, are commonly associated with 'the feminine'" (1991: 152).

32. The distinction made here between the 'who' and the 'what' of a person shows a striking resemblance to Hannah Arendt's remarks on personal identity. According to Arendt, 'what' one is can be captured in a list of characteristics (of 'facts', as Code would say), i.e. of features that one shares with others. But to show 'who' one is, in one's uniqueness as this particular person, one can only tell stories (see van der Hoek 1992 and 1996).

33. Code adopts the term 'concrete other' from Seyla Benhabib, who introduced the distinction between the 'generalized' and the 'concrete other' to show what moral philosophy could take to heart from Carol Gilligan's empirical findings concerning the differences between male and female lines of moral development. In Benhabib's view, the male connotated approach of ethics as primarily concerned with issues of justice, assumes the necessity for the moral subject to place him/herself in the position of the 'generalized other', i.e. insofar as s/he is the same. The female connotated approach of ethics as primarily concerned with issues of care, on the other hand, requires the moral subject to place him/herself in the position of the 'concrete other', i.e. to concentrate on features that make him/her different from one self (see Benhabib 1992). To Code, Benhabib's insights in moral theory also hold for epistemology, as she considers epistemology to be an ethical project itself (see Code 1991: 124-127).

34. It must be noted that Code's notion of narrativity is quite broad. Her own study of the concept of *Epistemic Responsibility*, Keller's biography of McClintock, *A feeling for the Organism*, and Genevieve Lloyd's historical analyses in *The Man of Reason* are all presented as examples of 'stories', of texts which belong to a 'discursive' or 'descriptive' rather than an argumentative genre (see Code 1995: 7-9; 170-173).

35. "It is not possible to designate a vantage point external to practices from which judgements of their worth can be made. The best we can do in our efforts to be intellectually virtuous is to aim for the greatest degree of objectivity possible" (Code 1987: 194). Earlier in this book, Code puts accents slightly different, anticipating her later more radical stand: "First, and most importantly, we belong in the world and are part of it. Our observations presuppose this participation. However objective and neutral we may try to be, this is a fact we cannot escape. I am claiming that it is by no means desirable to try and escape it. Our explanations and understanding would not be truer, better, or

more adequate if we could stand outside the world" (1987: 163).

36. Code refers to Cheshire Calhoun's observation that feminist moral critique often occurs in an 'abnormal moral context', that is: feminists are using new vocabularies and neologisms, such as 'marginalization', 'silencing' or 'the Other', which makes their critique not (yet) very accessible, renders it incommensurable, with traditional moral language (see Code 1995: 78; Calhoun 1989: 396-398). But the term 'abnormal' of course is also reminiscent of Kuhn's use of the term to describe moments of scientific revolution, and Rorty's adoption of Kuhnian language to speak about the project of future philosophy as one of hermeneutics or edification. In other words: Code's phrasing here makes feminist critique a good example of edification, as it tries to understand and to invent 'abnormal' discourse.

37. Keller dedicates a footnote to the shift within feminism in general to issues of race and class. But proceeds to argue that for a world as 'culturally homogeneous' as modern science, "analysis of the force of gender and gender norms remains relatively straightforward" (Keller 1992: 17, n.4). Code, on the other hand, dealing primarily with the less homogeneous worlds of the social sciences and everyday knowledges, develops her notion of 'positionality' precisely to include the variety of differently located subjects, and she makes frequent use of cases in which issues of race are focal. As she notes in the introduction to *Rhetorical Spaces*, "[r]ace, disability, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual preference, bodily size, age [...] are just some of the aspects of subjectivity that intersect with sex/gender to produce requirements for theoretical analyses no single-factor explanation could hope to achieve" (Code 1995: xiii).