
Chapter 4

Situated knowledges: feminist constructivism according to Donna Haraway

'Understanding is everything'. Thus runs the title of an advertisement from the Gulf Oil Corporation, published in 1984. A photograph shows two hands meeting in a gentle embrace: the one is young and white, the other dark and hairy. The accompanying text tells us how '[i]n a spontaneous gesture of trust, a chimpanzee in the wilds of Tanzania folds his leathery hand around that of Jane Goodall - sufficient reward for Dr. Goodall's years of patience.' The advertisement draws attention to nine years of a National Geographic Society's television special, a very popular and well-watched series on nature in the US, sponsored by Gulf. But it is also meant to provide convincing proof of 'Gulf's lively concern for the environment.'

The advertisement is reprinted in Donna Haraway's history of primatology (Haraway 1989b: 134). Why has Haraway put so much energy in analyzing this particular ad? What does she see in it? Lots of things. First, it addresses popular 1984 themes such as understanding, touch, communication, spontaneity. But it can also be understood in the context of the 1970s energy crisis and Gulf's timely zeroing in on an increasing environmental awareness in Western societies. The ad is also an illustration of the changed relationship between Western 'culture' and what it perceives as 'nature'. To be sure, before the Second World War there were also many ways in which 'nature' was captured in visual representations, but this was 'a different nature, on whose purity and strength could stay the threat of decadence. The distance was as important as the touch' (134). In this picture, the focus is on touch. And the threat is not so much decadence, 'but the failure in communication, the malfunction of stressed systems' (135). With these observations, Haraway has already travelled quite far from the actual subject of this advertisement. Instead, she takes it as a sign of what is going on in the world at large. One of the many themes her analysis addresses is the issue of gender. The small white hand touching the chimpanzee's is a woman's hand. Does the female gender of the scientist, Haraway asks, make a difference concerning the imagined relationship with nature? To answer this question, she comes up with another photographic and scientific practice, that of taxidermist Carl Akely. Some fifty years earlier, Akely was also engaged in an intimate relationship with nature. His life had only one focus: '[T]he recapturing and representation of the nature he saw' (1989b: 36). Haraway relates of safari's to Africa, in which Akely is hunting game, both with his camera and with a gun. In these stories, Haraway zooms in on the masculinity of the metaphors used by Akely and others to describe his work: thus, the search for and killing of the perfect gorilla (i.e. perfect for being stuffed and exhibited as the typical specimen of his kind) was described as 'a sportsmanlike act' (41), in which the capture of an adult male gorilla was the most heroic aim to be achieved. Female primatologist Goodall, on the other hand, guides the television viewers through the field of science as if it were an *ars erotica*, in which patience and sensitivity are pivotal.¹

In this chapter, I will assess the viability of a feminist constructivist approach to knowledge through an analysis of Donna Haraway's work. In my opinion, Haraway's views approach most closely the contours of a feminist theory of knowledge as sketched at the end of the previous chapter. I want to stress, however, that my reading provides only one of the many possible keys for disclosing Haraway's work which, as the above illustration may indicate, covers many issues and disciplines – from the history of

primatology to feminist theories of gender, from literary science-fiction to immunity systems discourse, from post-colonialism to the workings of information technologies.

My interpretation will focus on Haraway's concept of situated knowledges, which she proposes as the most feasible alternative for the traditional epistemological criterion of objectivity. Haraway's explanation of situated knowledges, as I will show, draws upon the metaphor of *vision* and emphasizes the technological and collective character of building theories and knowledges. Accordingly, the former 'subject' and 'object' of knowledge reappear as apparatuses of visual and bodily production. By giving them both the status of material-semiotic actors, the epistemological boundary between subject and object gets blurred (see section 1). Consequently, Haraway harbours a preference for hybridity. Her narratives about scientific discourse are not only peopled with hybrid subjects/objects, they are also hybrid in their unconventional mixture of styles. Haraway's envisioned subject of knowledge, I will argue, combines a Nietzschean ethic of self-affirmation and non-innocence with a socialist-Christian ethic of a feeling for a suffering humanity (see section 2). Thus, Haraway's approach to knowledge thus shows many similarities with the radical constructivist perspectives outlined in the first chapter, especially with the work of Bruno Latour. However, Haraway takes issue with Latour for his refusal to take account of the workings of constructions of gender, race and ethnicity in science and technology (section 3). 'Situated knowledges' is therefore suggested to be more closely associated with Sandra Harding's notion of strong objectivity. I will argue, however, that this suggestion does no justice to the complexity and innovative character of Haraway's approach to knowledge. The concept of 'situated knowledges' contains several dimensions of meaning, the ranges of which can best be explored with the help of more detailed readings of concrete practices of (scientific) knowledge (section 4).

1. Objectivity revisited

In Haraway's view, feminist theorists are trapped between two alternative positions. On the one hand, they feel attracted to constructivist views of knowledge, according to which claims regarding truth and objectivity are part of the language and power games of science. On the other hand, they would like to hold on to an empiricist position, from which scientific knowledge claims can be criticized for their male bias. Feminists want to have it both ways: they *simultaneously* would like to subscribe to "an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects [...], and a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a 'real' world" (Haraway 1991: 187).² But Haraway does not fancy either option. The constructivist approach tends towards relativism, which "is a way of being nowhere while claiming to be everywhere" (1991: 191). Empiricism, on the other hand, presumes the feasibility of a universalist point of view - which could then be described as a way of being everywhere while denying the need to be anywhere. Both, Haraway argues, fail to see that knowledges are always located, and that perspectives are necessarily partial. Because they are not locatable, neither universalists nor relativists can be called to account. Their claims are irresponsible. Haraway proposes the term 'situated knowledges' to refer to the feminist alternative for relativist and universalist (totalizing) accounts of knowledge. Because "it is hard to climb when you are holding on to both ends of a pole, simultaneously or alternately", she thinks it is "time to switch metaphors" (1991: 188).³

As a vehicle for reconceptualizing objectivity, Haraway reclaims the metaphor of *vision*. She emphasizes the *embodiedness* of vision: every vision comes from somewhere, it is always situated. In our postmodernist culture, we notice an enormous proliferation of increasingly advanced visualizing technologies, which make it possible to be everywhere and get to know even the most hidden and dark places. But this is an illusion, a 'god-trick'. Worse even: "[L]ike the god-trick, this eye fucks the world to

make techno-monsters” (1991: 189). *All* vision is particular and specific. Familiar notions of objectivity only support false promises of transcendence. “The moral is simple,” Haraway argues, “only partial perspective promises objective vision” (1991: 190).

The moral may be simple, but the message is both intricate and intriguing.

First, Haraway challenges the usual understanding of objectivity as *opposed* to partiality and situatedness. Even within feminist standpoint epistemologies, partiality is linked up with a kind of subjectivism, which detracts from the general validity of knowledge claims. Thus, Nancy Hartsock speaks of the ‘partiality’ and ‘perversity’ of abstract masculinity in a pejorative sense, Sandra Harding claims that strong objectivity provides ‘less partial’ accounts, and Hill Collins admits the ‘partial perspective’ of Black feminist thought to be “only one angle of vision” (Collins 1991: 234). But Haraway turns the meaning of notions such as ‘partiality’ and ‘perversity’ upside down. Situated knowledges are knowledges from specific positions. But they are not ‘distorted’ or ‘narrow’ because they would fail to grasp everything. On the contrary, because of their specificity, they yield highly detailed, faithful, and informative insights. Moreover, because of the multitude of possible positions, they may produce many unexpected knowledges. The point of objectivity for Haraway is not transcendence, but the need to make ‘partial connections’ among different positions. Sometimes, Haraway tries out different metaphors, such as those of conversation or translation⁴, at other times she speaks of the ongoing construction of ‘webs’ or ‘maps’⁵. More recently, she proposed the image of the game of *cat’s cradle* to elucidate her perception of critical theorizing as an alternative kind of ‘string theory’, one which is precisely *not* a ‘Theory of Everything’. Critical theory should rather be like an open-ended, collective game with no winners or losers, in which each player constructs his/her own patterns and knots, to pass them on to others, who may transform, unravel or embroider on them further (Haraway 1994a; see also 1997: 268). Hence, what is of central significance in situated knowledges, are the connections between the local and the global, or the kinds of connectivities that globalize (Harvey and Haraway 1995: 511) - provided that we realize that what counts as ‘local’ or ‘global’ does not depend on objective qualitative differences in scale, but is itself an outcome of the kind of connections made.⁶

Secondly, the claim that only partiality leads to objective vision, implies a transformation of the notion of vision. Vision, according to Haraway, is never a matter of immediate knowing. The ability to see requires the medium of a body, a technological device - whether this is a camera, a microscope, a scanner, or an organic eye. All of these are optical devices, and none of them functions as a flat mirror. They do not simply reflect what is before them. Vision, according to Haraway, rather is about *diffraction*. Consequently, situated knowledges are not to be perceived as practices of representation; instead of reproducing what is already given, situated knowledges *regenerate*. Their production of new ‘interference patterns’ or ‘geometries’ dispenses with existing subject-object boundaries, making room for the emergence of ‘promising monsters’ (Haraway 1992b). Hence, in Haraway’s reclaiming of the metaphor, vision is not primarily a matter of how the world impinges upon us. It is also about our being implicated, as embodied, material knowers in that world, and it is about the power to see, i.e. to (co)construct the world known.

Haraway’s interpretation of vision thus implies a radical rethinking of the notions of the *subject* as well as the *object* of knowledge. As I will set forth in the following, when focusing on the issue of objectivity, Haraway merges the subject and the object by referring to both as ‘material-semiotic actors’. But she simultaneously holds on to this distinction insofar as it enables her to stress the non-innocence of knowledge, and the concomitant relevance of epistemological responsibility and empowerment.

1.1 *Objects as actors*

As a biologist, a historian of primatology and a feminist, Haraway is particularly concerned about *bodies* as objects of scientific discourse. Even biological bodies are not natural or given entities, merely there to be discovered and unveiled. As objects of knowledge they are brought into being by knowing and partial subjects, who have stakes in constructing them as such. As soon as these bodies are wrought, they can become very powerful and effective in constructing other, sometimes unexpected and unintended objects. An object of scientific discourse therefore should not merely be perceived as passive and inert matter, but also as “an active, meaning-generating axis of the apparatus of bodily production” (1991: 200). Thus, objects are uplifted from mere matter, mere resource, inertly waiting to be investigated and appropriated, to the position of active subjects. They are elevated to the status of material-semiotic actors.

The concept of a material-semiotic actor testifies to an underlying ontology, according to which processes of materialization, i.e. the construction of material bodies, and processes of semiosis, i.e. the generation of meanings, are deeply intertwined.⁷ Haraway insists that her take on constructivism boils down to anything but linguistic monism or idealism.

This approach intends to make room for a relationship with the natural and social world which does not aim at mastery and domination. In this respect, Haraway rejects all “semiotic politics of representation” (1992b: 311). Practices of ‘speaking for’ always produce an essential difference between passive resources and active spokespersons. As such, even if the speaker sides with the foetus, the earth, the jaguar, or the rain forest, s/he still constructs a distance between nature and culture, i.e. between speechless objects and articulate subjects. Moreover, one of the detrimental effects of ventriloquism is the exclusion of those most close to the ones spoken for, such as the pregnant woman in relation to the foetus⁸, or the local people in relation to the rain forest. These actors come to be perceived as threatening to the actors to be preserved and protected. The woman or the local people are reduced from the knowing and caring subjects they might very well be(come), to the antagonistic environments of the represented. Contrary to the pretension to *speaking for*, according to Haraway, we had therefore better try to *articulate with* the worlds we study.⁹ To clarify the difference, she compares two textual practices. One concerns a *Discovery* magazine article accompanying a photo of an indigenous looking Kayapó Indian with a video camera. The other is a book by Hecht and Cockburn about the tropical rain forest. Whereas the first invites its readers to interpret the photo of the Indian as an interesting combination of the ‘primitive’ (the man) with the ‘modern’ (the camera), the second avoids such distinctions by describing the rain forest as a collective, co-constituted by humans, animals, land, plants, etc... Hecht and Cockburn do not perceive their ‘object’, the rain forest, as a realm of ‘pure nature’ that ought to be protected against human influences, including those of the local people. They instead describe it as a ‘social nature’ of which the local people form an intrinsic part (1992b: 309). From such a perspective, we can learn to deal with the picture of the Indian man differently. Instead of reading it as a *representation* of a particular constellation, we can side with, *articulate*, his filming practice as part of the building of a new and powerful collective. According to Haraway, “[i]n their claims for authority over the fate of the forest, the resident peoples are articulating a social collective among humans, other organisms, and other kinds of non-human actors” (1992b: 310). Whereas representation suggests the possession of a passive resource, articulation implies the existence of a social relationship. As knowers, we realize that we are not in charge. The world is not a silent matter, a passive resource waiting to be revealed; it rather is “a coding trickster with whom we must learn to converse” (1991: 201). Quoting Gayatri Spivak, Haraway remarks that although nature is one of the things we cannot not desire, we must at the same time acknowledge

that we cannot possess, hence represent it. It is precisely its unpredictability which should assure us both of its reality and its unrepresentability (1992b: 313).¹⁰

1.2 *Embodied subjects*

Whereas in Haraway's view the object of knowledge is endowed with more activity and autonomy than we usually expect from an object, the knowing subject loses its autonomous and transcendental position. Although she considers the postmodernist diagnosis of the death of the subject 'bizarre', Haraway agrees that the notion of a transcendental, unitary, transparent, and self-knowing subject can no longer be maintained. But this does not lead her to drop the notion of the subject completely. Instead, she perceives it as the opportunity to invent new images of "non-isomorphic subjects, agents and territories of stories unimaginable from the vantage point of the cyclopean, self-satiated eye of the master subject" (1991: 192).

Elaborating upon the metaphor of vision, and analogous to her conceptual move concerning the object of knowledge, Haraway proposes to see what was previously called the subject as an apparatus of visual production. Thus, the epistemological subject is constituted by constructed bodies that perceive, interpret, measure and value the world from their particular and partial perspectives. Just like the body object, this subject is a discursive construct: "The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly" (1991: 193). The knowing subject is split and contradictory, its 'being' is problematic and contingent, always moving and taking various positions.

Haraway proposes to develop a new image of the knowing subject as a 'modest witness'.¹¹ The modern form of this image, upheld since the emergence of experimental science, involves a knower whose modesty renders him invisible. Thus, the modest witness to the workings of Boyle's air-pump belonged to the category 'unmarked'. He inhabited a space which its inhabitants perceive as 'a culture of no culture' (1997: 23). In other words: the modern modest witness was supposed to be not bothered by any cultural, sexual, racial or other subjective marks which could blur his vision. Hence, the typical modest witness was a white, educated, respectable, English 'gentleman'. Women, people of colour or servants were not perceived as candidates.¹² They would not be able to merely report what they saw. A modest witness was to restrict himself to his role as the transparent spokesperson of nature.

To the extent that "[w]itnessing is seeing; attesting; standing publicly accountable for, and psychically vulnerable to, one's visions and representations" (1997: 267), Haraway nevertheless remains attached to the figure of the modest witness. But she wishes to 'queer' its image, such that the activity of witnessing becomes a visible activity: situated and embodied rather than aspiring for transcendence, a practice of engaged and critical interpretation rather than a neutral assessment of the facts, and an acknowledgement of partiality rather than a stubborn insistence on purity. It "insists on its situatedness, where location is itself always a complex construction as well as inheritance, and that casts its lot with the projects and needs of those who could not or would not inhabit the subject positions of the self-invisible and the discursive sites, the 'laboratories' of the credible, civil man of science" (1997: 270).

But location is not self-evident, specific subject positions are not given in advance. It, for one thing, "is not a listing of adjectives or assigning of labels like race, sex, and class" (1997: 37). A located position rather has to be *made* in order to make particular objects of knowledges possible, whereas at the same time it can only take shape in the construction of objects of knowledge itself. Haraway feels attracted to a proposal by Susan Leigh Star to take sides with those witnesses who usually remain invisible, precisely

because they do not fit the standards of, for instance, new technologies. Star uses her own peculiar allergy to onions as a, perhaps politically futile but no less insightful paradigmatic case for what one can learn from the position of a subject who falls *in between* consolidated categories, but who is forced to relate to them nevertheless. As Star phrases it, “[b]y experience and by affinity, some of us begin not with Pasteur, but with the monster, the outcast” (Star 1991: 29).

1.3 *Non-innocence*

Haraway’s insight that the *conceptual* distinction between subject and object is losing its validity, is intrinsically connected to her view that within 20th century technoscientific practices an actual *implosion* of subjects and objects is taking place. Processes of knowledge acquisition consist of constantly changing and complex networks. Apparatuses of visual and bodily production are producing ever shifting boundaries, constituting subjects and objects whose ‘beings’ can be long-lived and resistant, but remain essentially problematic and contingent nevertheless. Moreover, the constant (re)drawing of boundaries has very real, material, and often unexpected effects: “Objects are boundary projects. But boundaries shift from within; boundaries are very tricky” (1991: 201). Precisely because practices of knowledge constantly generate objects, issues, and experiences that are very real, they cannot be perceived as innocent. They have both ethical and political implications. Haraway therefore sticks to a notion of the subject: it enables her to discuss issues of accountability and empowerment in close connection with the problem of objectivity.

On the one hand, Haraway distinguishes the subject position from the object position because the situatedness of knowledge refers to the ability of the fragmented, never-whole subject to make partial connections, to resist fixation and to be accountable. ‘We’, as knowing subjects, are asked to enter into conversations, to articulate with rather than speak for, and to show a constant awareness of our responsibility in the fabrication of objects. The object, although also a material-semiotic actor, is not asked about its responsibility. The object world is presented as ‘a coding trickster’. As independent actors, objects can refuse to be our delegates. As subjects of knowledge, we must respect this, for “we are not in charge” (1991: 199).

On the other hand, Haraway frames a new notion of the subject to empower those who have been put into the position of objects, who have been marginalized and usually denied the status of knowing and moral subjects. To characterize, but also to indicate the critical potential of these subjects-to-be, she names them ‘inappropriate/d others’, a term coined by Trinh (1989). It describes the positions of the ‘other’ of the rational and transcendental subject. At the same time, it indicates the relative freedom of movement of the subjects-to-be regarding a position of otherness that they can neither fully occupy nor completely adjust to. Haraway has especially set her hopes on knowledge practices from perspectives ‘from below’ because they might be able to constitute other, less unitary forms of subjectivity. In this respect, she joins in with other feminist concepts of critical subjectivity, such as eccentric subjects (De Lauretis 1990), the outsider within (Collins 1986; Collins 1991), and oppositional consciousness (Sandoval 1991). Such terms, according to Haraway, emerged within feminist theory in order to decode “what counts as ‘woman’ within as well as outside ‘feminism’” (1991: 144). They do not so much finish with gender as the central category of feminist critique but rather form the ultimate expression of “what ‘gender’ is grammatically about”: the contestation of any alterity or difference as taken for granted (1991: 147). Therefore, “to be an ‘inappropriate/d other’ means to be in critical, deconstructive relationality, in a diffracting rather than reflecting (ratio)nality” (1992b: 299).

The image of the ‘inappropriate/d other’ neatly fits the outlines of Haraway’s ‘queered’ modest witness. However, the above enumeration of feminist concepts of critical subjectivity does not exhaust her list of possible critical locations. Haraway’s world of promising monsters, as we will see, does not merely contain subjects who are marginally human; it is also inhabited by creatures which do not belong to the human species at all.

1.4 *Beyond identity*

In her conception of situated knowledges, Haraway attempts to put the political requirement of a feminist standpoint on a par with the epistemological issue of objectivity. In her revision of the idea of rational knowledge, objectivity does not abstract from partiality, but rather is *grounded* in it. Moreover, “rational knowledge is power-sensitive conversation” (1991: 196). In my reading, however, Haraway’s idea of partial positioning should not be confused with the strategy of identity-politics, as advocated in feminist standpoint thinking. As I explained in the previous chapter, Sandra Harding’s version of standpoint thinking asks the knower to learn to look at the world from the perspective of the marginalized, either by situating him/herself as an ‘outsider within’ (for example as woman, as black, or as African-American lesbian writer), or by developing a ‘traitorous identity’ (by, for example, becoming a feminist man, or an anti-racist white). Contrarily, the concept of situated knowledges can be understood as an attempt to think through the consequences of the ongoing proliferation of increasingly specified and hyphenated identities. In our time, the assumption of a subject in possession of a coherent identity has become meaningless. In this respect, Haraway notes that the Western tradition typically assumes that “not to have property in the self is not to be a subject, and so not to have agency” (1991: 135). She thinks feminists mistakenly go along with this assumption when they believe that loss of the notion of (gender) identity would equal the loss of (female) agency. She believes that, on the contrary, it is possible to “disperse the coherence of gender without losing the power of agency” (136). This is why “a scientific knower seeks the subject position not of identity, but of objectivity” (193).

This should not be taken to imply that the identity of the knower, as constituted by sex, race, class and many other categories, is completely irrelevant. But, as Haraway explains, “‘Being’ does not ground knowledge, at least not until ‘being’ has been made into a strategic, *built* site generating interrogation, not identification” (Haraway 1989b: 309). In other words, Haraway agrees on following a politics of identity in the field of knowledge, *on condition* that this strategy is aimed at destabilizing and recoding the identities taken as its starting point. Accordingly, she warns against romanticizing alleged female or Black perspectives. Although subscribing to the originally Marxist idea that visions from below are epistemologically superior, she continues to emphasize the need for critical scrutiny and reinterpretation: “[H]ow to see from below is a problem requiring at least as much skill with bodies and language, with the mediations of vision, as the ‘highest’ techno-scientific visualizations” (1991: 191). Haraway’s readings of the discourses of science, technology and popular culture, like writing-experiments such as the famous Cyborg Manifesto, constitute highly idiosyncratic and politically charged yet ‘true’ stories, featuring eccentric and contestable actors.

2. Hybridity

To Haraway, the Western scientific views and treatment of monkeys and apes provide telling stories about the driving forces and motivations behind Western practices of knowledge acquisition. Her

elaborate study of the history of primatology, *Primate Visions* (Haraway 1989b), covers many fields outside the strict domains of the socio-biology and ethology of apes, such as the social networks of scientists, (post)colonial history, gender relationships, the rhetoric of advertisements, or the aesthetics and politics of exhibitions of nature.

The desire inscribed into science, according to Haraway, consists, on the one hand, of the wish to reclose the 'broken cosmos' of the ecosystem. It is a longing to return to our *origins*. On the other hand, the man of science dreams of conquering *space*. Non-human primates have functioned as a means to fulfil both desires. Apes are often seen as the mediators between human beings and nature, as a possible source of information about man's origin. Primatologists lead us back to nature: their stories are of salvation, of 'paradise regained'. Apes are close to humans, yet are definitely not human. They are our closest others, like mirrors reflecting our image of ourselves. Adopting Edward Said's term for the way the Orient has long functioned as a self-reflecting mirror for the West, Haraway characterizes primatology as *simian orientalism* (1989b: 11). But monkeys have also been given the doubtful honour to be the first of the primate species to travel into space - to be man's guide to the future. Haraway relates the story of the famous 'chimpanaut' HAM, who became something of a mixture of animal and machine, i.e. a cyborg (1989b: 136-139).

The figure of the cyborg did not only play a crucial role in science-fiction literature since the 1950s. The term, Haraway discovered, was actually coined in 1960 by two American scientists, Clynes and Kline, the first a designer of electronic data-processing systems, the other a clinical psychiatrist. Their cyborg was a self-regulating man-machine which they thought would be needed in future flights in space (Haraway 1997: 51). To Haraway, the cyborg stands for more. At the end of the 20th century, it is no longer only a phantasy projected in some far away future - it has become "a powerful social and scientific reality" (1989b: 139). Cyborgs come into being when boundaries get blurred, particularly those between animals and humans, or between self-controlled, self-governing machines and organisms. Haraway does not see this development as threatening the singularity of humankind. On the contrary, as she confesses at the end of *Primate Visions*: "I have always preferred the prospect of pregnancy with the embryo of another species; and I read this 'gender'-transgressing desire in primatology's text" (1989b: 377). What the figure of the cyborg embodies, for Haraway, is a different conception of *kinship*, one which would enable 'us humans' to relate to and be accountable to a wider circle of beings than only our 'own' kind. It enables Haraway to declare a mouse 'my sister', and to state: "I am joined in a family romance with the (onco)mice of all species and (female)men of all genders in the worlds of technoscience [...] I need my sibling species to get me through this life story; our bodies share substance; we are kin" (1997: 119-120).¹³

Haraway uses the label of *science-fiction* to characterize both the discourse of primatology and her own accounts of primatology: they do not simply represent 'scientific facts', they are also instances of 'speculative fiction' (1989b: 15). Scientific story-tellers are not neutral in their inquiries, their social and political commitments are inscribed in their representations of nature. Haraway does not find fault with this by itself. It is what keeps science going, as the place "where possible worlds are constantly reinvented in the contest for very real, present worlds" (1989b: 5). But her motivations are clearly different from what she sees as the driving forces behind 'science-as-usual'. She longs for a world without oppression and domination, a world where sexual, racial and other so-called natural distinctions have lost their meaning; and where even species boundaries, particularly between humans and non-humans, are no longer sacred. She realizes the grandiosity of her aims, yet obstinately wants "a possible but all too absent elsewhere" (1991: 4).¹⁴

In her practice of reading and interpreting the texts of science, technology and popular culture, Haraway constantly attempts to evoke this elsewhere. To accomplish this, she makes up what I would call 'hybrid stories'. Haraway's accounts are hybrid, first, because they cover a variety of subjects and disciplines, and convincingly sketch a crisscross of lines between them. Secondly, her stories are unexpected mixtures of styles; switches between for instance an academic, impersonal tone and personal, self-ironic remarks can be encountered within one paragraph. Finally, they feature many a favourite 'monster': chimponaut HAM, the cyborg, black woman preacher Sojourner Truth, human son of god Jesus, or transgenic animal OncoMouseTM - hybrid posthumanist subjects, *bien étonnés de se trouver ensemble...*

2.1 *Cyborgs and other tricksters*

In 'A Cyborg Manifesto'¹⁵, Haraway sketches her picture of the postmodern world of information technology. In this world, the figure of the cyborg occupies center stage. Reacting against the feminist tendency to distrust new technologies as endangering the social situation and bodily integrity of women, Haraway advances the cyborg as a figure for feminists and other progressive people to embrace as their image of embodied subjectivity. The cyborg represents a possible subject formation that destabilizes established boundaries: between organism and machine, between animal and human, between the physical and the non-physical. But the central opposition which the cyborg undermines is the opposition between *nature* and *culture*. It is Haraway's assumption that a variety of social categories, such as race and gender, have been used to reinvent nature in a way that suits dominant hierarchical theories of race and gender differences. Not only chimponaut HAM or science-fictional human robots may be considered as exemplary cyborgs, but so too may be all beings who, in the history of Western culture, have been assigned a position in between nature and culture. 'Monkeys, aliens and women' have served as the exemplary deviations of the norm of the Western subject of scientific knowledge (Haraway 1989a). The Cyborg Manifesto urges those who have been ascribed this position of the other to mobilize its destabilizing aspects, to develop its deviant sides. As boundary creatures they actually are monsters – "a word that shares more than its root with the word, to *demonstrate*. Monsters signify" (1991: 2).¹⁶ Deliberately posing as the monster, the hybrid creature one actually is, would not merely expose one's own anomaly. It would also show the arbitrariness and constructed nature of what is considered the norm(al). It would deconstruct the assumed natural (bodily, hence fixed) boundaries of, for example, sex, race, organism, and self. Apart from that, within the world of technoscience, there is an actual growth of 'unnatural', boundary transgressing beings, such as transsexuals, transuranic elements (plutonium), transgenic plants (the FlavrSavr Tomato), or transgenic animals (OncoMouseTM).

To Haraway, the cyborg fits in the already mentioned chain of feminist concepts, such as eccentric subjects, oppositional consciousness, and inappropriate/d other, that try to grasp various forms of oppositional subjectivity. The cyborg is Haraway's figuration of a possible feminist and posthumanist subjectivity. At the same time, she cautions not to read the Cyborg Manifesto as a mere piece of 'technophillic' propaganda: the figure of the cyborg is "a limited trope that's about the kind of pain as well as possibility in contemporary technoscience" (Olson with Haraway 1995: 76).¹⁷

In one of her articles, Haraway unexpectedly turns to the tradition of Judeo-Christian humanism (Haraway 1992a). In the search for new figures of subjectivity, she re-tells the stories of two key figures in the traditions of Judeo-Christian humanism and of 19th and 20th-century US feminism: Jesus and Sojourner Truth¹⁸. It is precisely their resistance to being represented as fully human which makes these

figures so evocative and compelling. In Haraway's reading, they are both tricksters. They appear in several guises, without ever revealing their 'true' nature.

Haraway's analysis sets up some striking analogies. She compares the characters of Jesus and Sojourner Truth by connecting two renowned one-liners. Pilate's exclamation to the angry crowd 'Behold the man!' is a rhetorical question: Look at this poor, mistreated and innocent man. Isn't he human? This biblical 'Ecce Homo!' is remarkably similar to Sojourner Truth's question to the white, male anti-suffrage provocateurs in her audience: 'And ain't I a woman? Look at me!' Both characters are staged as suffering servants who claim their humanity in a hostile world which denies them full human status. To Haraway, they embody hopes for a new, a 'non-generic humanity'. Sojourner Truth's self-chosen name already signifies her troublesome and elusive nature. Her identity is one of displacement. With the question 'Ain't I a woman?' she simultaneously claims and deconstructs the identity of woman. By subtly rendering the 'truth' of her womanhood undeniable, she challenges the traditional concept of woman as white, fragile, and protected by men. Haraway's reading of the biblical stories likewise shows the actual complexity and ambiguity of the character of Jesus. He appears in many guises: as son of man, son of God, king, preacher, criminal and scapegoat. In Haraway's blasphemous, ironic reading, this Jesus mocks the humanist story of self-made man. The crucial point, however, is that both Sojourner Truth and Jesus are figures "of a broken and suffering humanity" (1992a: 87). Pilate's 'Ecce Homo!', showing a humiliated and pitiful man who still claims to be king and witness to the truth, is a mockery. But it is one "that cannot evade the terrible story of the broken body" (1992a: 90). This lends these post-humanist humans a different outlook from that of the figure of the cyborg to whom, at least in the *Cyborg Manifesto*, experiences of pain and suffering seem utterly strange.

However, Haraway is aware of the dark sides of cyborg-like subjects. This for instance shows in her story about OncoMouseTM. The name refers to the first patented mammal in history: a white laboratory mouse, implanted with an oncogene which, if it works well, will develop breast cancer. OncoMouseTM is a 'chimerical' creature. It is a living animal, an 'animal model system' as well as 'an ordinary commodity', owned by the pharmaceutical company *DuPont-Merck* (Haraway 1997: 79). OncoMouseTM is advertised as the new and promising device against breast cancer among human females. It can be perceived as one of the new modest witnesses of our 'Second Millennium': just as Boyle's modest witness inhabited the 'culture of no culture', OncoMouse emerges from the 'nature of no nature'. It is both an organism and an artefact, born and invented: a living animal whose natural home is the laboratory. Thus, OncoMouse fits the image of the cyborg well. And although it is not human, Haraway proclaims it/her as 'my sister'. On the one hand, this kinship involves the way that her existence may actually rescue the lives of women. In this respect, OncoMouseTM becomes a Christian figure, a scapegoat and a saviour: "[S]/he suffers, physically, repeatedly, and profoundly, that I and my sisters may live" (1997: 79). On the other hand, this kinship involves her being marked in similar ways as humans can be marked: whether this involves the marks of TM, gender, or race, they all point to particular, marginalized subject/object positions within existing configurations of power, property and knowledge.¹⁹

Haraway's world of technoscience is inhabited by a vastly expanding population of hybrid subjects/objects, which she presents as our 'siblings', our 'kin'. But this does not mean that Haraway's stories are uncritically supportive of the technoscientific developments that produce these cyborgs, among which she also counts: the gene, chip, seed, foetus, bomb, race, brain, database and ecosystem (1997: 11; 43; 270). On the contrary, she is sharply aware of the ambiguities and contradictions inherent to these developments. On the one hand, the making of OncoMouse opens up possibilities which 'aren't all hostile', on the other hand, Haraway's writing is motivated by a strong feeling that lots of things are really 'not alright'.²⁰

2.2 Heteroglossia and ecstatic speakers

Haraway's sense of ambiguity and contradictions also comes to the fore in her style of writing. It is a style which sets forth to convey the complexity of the worlds it is describing. And it is a style that is deliberately 'noisy', so that readers will not be able to forget the *constructed* and hence *non-innocent* nature of these accounts. Haraway attempts to use a technology of writing, "resolutely committed to foregrounding the apparatus of the production of its own authority, even while it's doing it", a technology she sometimes refers to as cyborg writing (Olson with Haraway 1995: 50).

Indeed, the revolution preached by the Cyborg Manifesto primarily consists of taking power over language, of becoming literate, and able to reclaim and reconfigure all too familiar plots of all too familiar stories: "Cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other" (1991: 175). Cyborgs use their knowledge subversively, for instance by resisting the norms of perfect communication that information technology imposes on us. Instead, they strive for 'a powerful heteroglossia'. In line with this, the author of the Cyborg Manifesto announces that her text will be full of *irony*, that is, full of "contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, [...] the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true" (1991: 149). It will involve both "humour and serious play" (149).

The Cyborg Manifesto indeed sets an exuberant example of heteroglossia. It contains a cacophony of voices which cannot be traced back to one, original source. The author of the Cyborg Manifesto manifests herself as a true cyborg.²¹ Sometimes we hear the socialist-feminist speaking, elsewhere it is the epistemological relativist, while at still other places the 'perverse' anti-humanist takes the stand. The text dodges attempts to endow it with a univocal meaning. Its style can be typified as *hybrid*, or *polyvocal*. Still, being a manifesto, the text carries a message for the world. Consequently, the Cyborg Manifesto is also an *evocative* text that hopes to affect and seduce its readers. At the same time, its author worries that we might uncritically go along with her evocations. To prevent this, she regularly inserts *self-reflexive* remarks to sensitize us to the artefactual nature of the cyborg myth. All this adds not a little to the Manifesto's confusion of tongues.

The 'Ecce Homo' text displays a different mixture of styles. As Haraway remarks in a footnote, it alternates between a more scholarly and a more religious tone. As speaking subjects, the figures of Jesus and Sojourner Truth appear as preachers of their own particular gospel. Jesus is the wandering prophet, claiming to be the son of God, spreading God's word to large crowds. Sojourner Truth emerges as both a preacher of the gospel and a passionate speaker for women's suffrage and abolitionism in 19th century USA. Both intend to shake up their audience, but at the same time they wish to offer hope to the outcasts of society. Both are exemplary for the kind of 'ecstatic speakers' that Haraway thinks we need: to invent "powerful new tropes, new figures of speech, new turns of historical possibility" (1992a: 86).

As a transformed modest witness, a cyborg-author living in, off and at the margins of the worlds of technoscience, Haraway resists the 'style of no style', so typical of most scientific writing. In its pretension to let "the facts shine through, unclouded by the flourishes of any human author", the epistemic virtue of modesty is mistaken for invisibility and transparency (1997: 26). Whereas a 'queered' modest witness would be a knower who is visibly located, partial and accountable.

2.3 *The ethics of hybrid subjects*

In Haraway's work a variety of 'promising monsters' takes the floor, a multitude of authorial voices can be heard - the subject of knowledge has become truly split and fragmented. To many a critical reader, this celebration of hybridity and heterogeneity has a serious drawback: it would lack sufficient moral or political grounding.²²

In my view, however, Haraway's accounts are not lacking in morality at all. On the contrary, they are instigated by two quite different ethical positions. One is particularly prominent in the figure of the cyborg of the *Cyborg Manifesto*, the other is most explicitly proclaimed by the figures of Jesus and Sojourner Truth. In the foregoing, it was shown how all of Haraway's actors share a tendency towards unruliness; they enjoy playing with established certainties. But the cyborg from the *Manifesto* seems to stop here; in her bonding with others she seems to be driven merely by an inclination to provoke. When relating to others, this cyborg is 'perverse'. In her preference for 'unnatural' relationships, she is antithetical to the human being as Western humanism has conceived it. She, for instance, lacks a history of origins. Consequently, the desire for the return of a lost unity, a lost paradise, as inscribed in the Judeo-Christian tradition, is utterly foreign to her. Neither is she troubled by an unconscious, by pre-Oedipal symbiosis or by unalienated labour as modernists such as Freud and Marx would have it. The cyborg even challenges radical feminism in its lack of a definite sex, though she is not neutral or androgynous either. When asked to 'come out' regarding the cyborg's sexual identity, Haraway concedes: "Yeah, it is a polychromatic girl ... the cyborg is a bad girl, she is really not a boy [...]. She is a girl who's trying not to become a Woman..." (Penley and Ross 1990: 23).

The cyborg challenges assumptions of purity and identity that so often subtend racist, sexist and ethnocentric practices. But she is equally sceptical about politically progressive projects as far as they appeal to innocent victimhood or unambiguously celebrate assumed identities. The cyborg does not feel attracted toward a politics based on shared identities. She concludes only temporary, monstrous alliances, founded on affinity and "related not by blood but by choice, the appeal of one chemical nuclear group for another, avidity" (1991: 155). The figures of Sojourner Truth and Jesus likewise contradict ideas of univocality, identity, and purity. But they add an important dimension to this loosening up of boundaries: they are marked by histories of serving and suffering. As such, they appear to articulate the position of 'inappropriate/d others' more adequately than the cyborg does.

Haraway's work thus accommodates two radically antagonistic ethical points of view. On the one hand, there is the anti-humanist ethic of resistance and self-affirmation, as celebrated by the cyborg. On the other hand, there is a socialist-Christian ethic of solidarity, of a feeling for a 'suffering humanity'. The incommensurability of these two stands becomes even more salient, when we read the title 'Ecce Homo' not only as Pilate's blasphemous reference to Jesus, but also as derived from Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo*. The subtitle of this intellectual autobiography neatly fits Haraway's call for self-affirmation: "Wie Man wird - was Man ist". For Nietzsche, this meant the exact opposite of becoming Human. His *Ecce Homo* meant to shock his audience. The prime target, however, was not Western humanism, but the Judeo-Christian tradition. And it is here that Haraway's perspective differs. Whereas Nietzsche used his philosophical hammer to *crush* Christian values, because they would constitute a slave morality, Haraway precisely *evokes* the figure of a former slave and the image of a suffering humanity - not to celebrate them as morally superior, but to talk about their empowerment. The Hegelian and Marxist master-slave plots are thus retold in a postmodernist and feminist fashion.

Consequently, Haraway's 'Ecce Homo' envisages a different future from that of the *Cyborg Manifesto*. The latter ends in a militant mode: it delights in a feminist "speaking in tongues to strike fear into the circuits of the supersavers of the new right" (1991: 181). The author of 'Ecce Homo', on the

other hand, offers more comforting possibilities. She has hopes for “a collective humanity without constructing the cosmic closure of the unmarked category” (1992a: 92). To her, the idea of a common language is not an idle dream, and not at all at odds with requirements of specificity. It should rather be seen as “a never settled universal, a common language that makes compelling claims on each of us collectively and personally, precisely through their radical specificity” (1991: 92). This subject is definitely more than a Nietzschean self-affirmative provocateur. S/he emphasizes his or her radical specificity and simultaneously recognizes those of others. S/he is a post-humanist subject, yet ‘human, all too human’.

In her elaborate discussion of the Cyborg Manifesto, Jill Marsden claims that its call for responsibility and political accountability, its “appeals to a security systems of humanist values” contradict its consistent rejection of any return to the notion of a transcendent subject, to the extent even that the “uncritical appeal to responsibility smacks of the slave morality that cyberfeminism otherwise so refreshingly ignores” (Marsden 1996: 14). Notably, Marsden may be right concerning the Manifesto. But when we take the whole of Haraway’s work into view, the conclusion can be turned around: it is not so much that Haraway’s anti-humanist preference for transgression and boundary-crossing that is tainted by her purportedly humanistic appeals for accountability and collective positioning, it is rather that her anti-humanistic stand is propelled forth by a strong ethical belief that ‘we’ (and who could ‘we’ be but those creatures usually named ‘human’?) are responsible for what we know.

3. Feminism and constructivism

Haraway’s declared anti-humanism is in agreement with Foucault’s analysis of ‘Man’ as a historical-discursive outcome of power/knowledge figurations. Her proposal for situated knowledges shows no little resemblance to his plea for the insurrection of subjugated knowledges. Both authors envision the emergence of knowledges from the positions of those who, in the history of Western thought, were considered not fully Human. Moreover, like Foucault, Haraway subscribes to a perception of reality as a close intertwinement between language and practice. For Foucault, the notion of discourse refers to that which captures the linguistic and material dimensions of human life, while Haraway’s analyses assume the interconnection between what she calls processes of materialization and processes of semiosis.

Haraway also lines up with Foucault in so far as she is interested in what Foucault considered to be *the* philosophical question of modernity since Kant, i.e. ‘who are we?’ But Haraway distances herself from the Foucauldian answer. In the late twentieth century, she claims, the era of biopolitics is already far behind us; we are now confronted with the reign of high technologies of information and communication. Therefore, “[i]t is time to write *The Death of the Clinic*. The clinic’s methods required bodies and works; we have texts and surfaces. Our dominations don’t work by medicalization and normalization anymore; they work by networking, communications redesign, stress management” (1991: 245, n.4).

In her later work, Haraway adopts Bruno Latour’s notion of ‘technoscience’ as an apt characterization of our contemporary world. It is particularly in her urge to reconfigure the oppositional frameworks of modern thought that Haraway shows most affinity with the work of Latour. Thus, while Latour speaks of the ‘no man’s-land’ or ‘nonplace’ where modern oppositions collapse (Latour 1993: 96), Haraway uses the image of the ‘black hole’ from which a multitude of hybrid entities emerge (Haraway 1992b: 330).²³ And while Latour adopts Haraway’s metaphors in describing the progeny of his ‘Middle Kingdom’ as ‘hybrids’, ‘monsters’, or ‘tricksters’ (see for instance Latour 1993b: 47), Haraway goes along with his assessment of our time as amodern.²⁴ Neither of them believes in the non-innocence

of their own practices of investigation and writing: they both concede that they make stories, invent worlds and construct realities. However, this is also one of the points on which they diverge. Whereas Latour (modestly?) concedes that, though somewhat less lusty for power, his strategies for persuading the reader do not really differ from those of the scientists he studies, Haraway takes issue with his going along with their agonistic game: “*Science in Action* works by relentless recursive mimesis. The story told is told by the same story. The object studied and the method of study mime each other. The analyst and the analysed all do the same thing, and the reader is sucked into the game. It is the only game imagined” (1997: 34). Haraway’s reflection on the non-innocent, constructed nature of her own stories leads her to emphasize the responsibility of critical scholars to craft *different* stories: less strong, less powerful.²⁵

Haraway and Latour prefer the semiotic vocabulary of actors and actants to the philosophical notions of subjects and objects, because it enables them to conceptualize the social status of non-humans (Haraway 1992b: 311; 335, n.33). However, Haraway finds that Latour’s conception of actors that matter socially is too narrow. For one thing, his collectives of hybrids consist only of humans and things. This leaves a whole array of ‘non-machine non-humans’ out of the picture - most obviously animals, but also all those entities usually subsumed under the heading of ‘nature’ (1992b: 331).²⁶ Moreover, in his steadfast refusal to take notice of the possible ways that social (i.e. gender, racial, class) inequalities might be part of the technical content of science, Latour appears to fall back on the very distinction between the social and the technical he otherwise so fiercely rejects. Suddenly, Haraway observes, Latour’s agnosticism fails him. Because sex, race, class are taken as purely ‘social’ categories, and any explanation of ‘nature’ in terms of the ‘social’ is declared taboo, these categories are tacitly deemed irrelevant for the analyses of scientific constructions of facts and artefacts. Somehow, according to Haraway, it still has not come across that most feminist and anti-racist scholars reject the idea of such categories being given or preformed, and are precisely interested in “*racial formation, gender in the making, the forging of class, and the discursive production of sexuality*” (Haraway 1997: 35 [my emphasis, bp]). In other words, feminist anti-racist scholars are constructivists to the core.²⁷ Furthermore, both Haraway and Latour reject the ideal of representation as undistorted reflection, and emphasize the political nature of all representation. But they radically differ in their valuation of the practice of representation itself. Latour believes that his proposed ‘Parliamentary of Things’, which enlarges rather than reduces the number of representatives, would free us of the nagging problem of how to distinguish between faithful and unfaithful representations, between ‘translations’ and ‘betrayals’ - in science as well as in politics. Haraway, however, is deeply suspicious of the act of representation itself. She notes that within Latour’s actor-network theory, the need for spokespersons is taken for granted, and that actors only acquire existence insofar as they function as obedient delegates or ‘docile constituencies’ within a particular techno-scientific network (1992b: 313).²⁸ But, in Haraway’s view, we should also account for the multitude of actors that *resist* delegation, or *fall through* the mazes of the net. In view of this awareness of hybrid objects/subjects as ‘tricksters’, Latour’s world of technoscience is far too smooth, “not very lively” (313). With the alternative concept of *articulation*, Haraway wishes to call attention for the always provisional and relational character of knowing.

These different assessments of representation by Haraway and Latour return in a striking difference in their styles of theorizing. Latour finds that the first principle of symmetry (to treat the false and the true in the same way) requires a ‘slimming treatment’ for the body of explanations: we have made up far too many, such as society, ideology, or the unconscious, and we could do without most of them (Latour 1993: 93). And indeed, the framework of actor-network theory is a slimline construction that works very elegantly in its explanations of science in the making. It smoothly brings us from chaos to order. Haraway’s writing, on the other hand, is full of ‘noise’ and ‘pollution’ (1991: 176). Rather than imperceptibly seducing readers to accept her stories as the most convincing and final accounts, the

author puts in all kinds of reflexive remarks, warning devices which remind the reader of the constructed nature of the story told. Her style of writing is deliberately excessive and multi-vocal: instead of tidying up the mess of things, instead of disciplining unruly actors, it destabilizes what looks in order, and puts on its analytical technologies as “unruly partners in discursive construction” (1992b: 304).

Haraway agrees with Star’s critical intervention in Latourian actor-network theory. Star proposes to start studies of science and technology not by following the obedient actors and delegates, but to begin from the perspective of those who do *not* fit the standards of an established network, but still have to live within it: “I think it is both more analytically interesting and more politically just to begin with the question, *cui bono?*” (Star 1991: 42-43). In other words, Haraway would like Latour and his colleagues to start their accounts of science and technology from a more *situated* perspective.

4. Situated knowledges

4.1 A multi-layered concept

When formulating her main difference with Latour *cs.*, Haraway sides with feminist standpoint thinking, in particular with Sandra Harding’s notion of strong objectivity. According to Haraway, Harding carries through the principle of symmetry to the full, because she takes account of aspects of gender, race and class as both constitutive of and constituted through practices of knowledge. The criterion of strong objectivity, according to Haraway, shares much with the notion of situated knowledges: it emphasizes the need for the *location* of both the object and the subject of knowledge, its knowledge is “finite and dirty, not transcendent and clean” (1997: 36), and it is committed to those whose lives are at stake in the production of certain knowledges and technologies.

Although I agree with Haraway that there are important points of overlap between the concept of situated knowledges and Harding’s version of feminist standpoint theory, I think their differences are more essential. To understand the full scope and novelty of Haraway’s perspective, I think it is necessary to read ‘situated knowledges’ as a multi-layered concept.

Entirely unfaithful to Haraway’s wariness against clear distinctions therefore, I would want to distinguish three dimensions of meaning in the concept of situated knowledges. The first involves a *descriptive* claim. On this level, *all* knowledge is assumed to be partial and situated, *all* knowledge can be perceived as an instance of ‘science fiction’. Especially the discourse of Western science is structured by a consistent denial of its own situatedness. The second dimension of situated knowledges is of a more *normative* vein. Here, it refers to the views ‘from below’ that offer better vantage points for seeing the world. Partiality means that the knower deliberately *sides with* what falls outside the norm, with ‘inappropriate/d others’ such as women, blacks, gays, working class people. On this level, Haraway’s reflections show most affinity with feminist standpoint thinking. Finally, on a third level, ‘situated knowledges’ contains a *visionary* dimension of meaning. Here, better knowledge does not simply stand in opposition to dominant forms of knowing, but involves the active construction of new perspectives. It extends the ‘class’ of inappropriate/d others to include not only plants, animals, machines, but also all kinds of ‘science-fictional’ characters whose ‘beings’ exceed natural boundaries, such as OncoMouse or FlavrSavr, whose ‘beings’ exceed natural boundaries. The dualistic oppositions and boundaries which for the first two levels of meaning are of great epistemological significance, on this level lose most of their explanatory meaning. In other words, whereas the descriptive and normative dimensions meet the criteria of the modern genre of *critique*, the visionary dimension contains Haraway’s digestion of the postmodern turn, such that to be simultaneously critical and constructivist becomes a viable option. It is

on this third level that I find Haraway's concept of situated knowledges most innovative, and most different from Harding's elaboration of feminist standpoint theory.

In the visionary interpretation, situated knowledges are prone to emphasize the *constructed*, i.e. the always contested and limited nature of who or what they represent. Although Haraway is convinced that the rhetorical strategy of speaking as a woman, or a notion such as shared experience, are too important to dispense with, she thinks it crucial to focus on the apparatuses of production that bring these objects into being - not in order to undermine their legitimacy, but to prevent that their 'irreducible narrative' dimensions are mistaken for 'the thing itself' (Olson with Haraway: 59).²⁹ In view of this constructivist interpretation of feminist objectivity, other differences with standpoint theorizing come to the fore. Thus, Haraway appreciates Leigh Star's use of her allergy to onions, because it explains that to be situated does not necessarily mean to speak from positions outside or resistant to the system; it might also refer to the positions of insiders who do not quite fit in. And there are more ways of not fitting the standard than belonging to the 'second' sex, race or class.

Therefore, in discordance with Haraway's identification of Harding's requirements of strong objectivity and strong reflexivity with her own proposals for situated knowledges and diffraction, in my understanding Harding's perspective yields knowledges which differ significantly from Haraway's envisioned practices of knowledge. Both Harding and Haraway, for instance, speak of the need to 'see through the eyes of the other'. But whereas Harding's envisioned others are the human members of marginalized social groups, Haraway's others may also be a dog, an insect, a chimpanzee, a transgenic mouse or a camera. The si(gh)tes from which such situated knowledges emerge, transgress the boundaries of human, organism, machine; the 'mutated murine eyes' of a little field mouse, for instance, may offer an important 'ethnographic' perspective on the laboratory which is its home (1997: 52). Whereas Haraway delights in 'perverse' or 'monstrous' affiliations, and opts for a point of view from which the talk of the violation of boundaries becomes obsolete, Harding's discussion of for instance 'the feminist man' hinges on the assumption that this is a 'perverse' identity because it involves a tricky game with boundaries which, ultimately, cannot be crossed. A feminist man, in Harding's view, occupies a contradictory position: praiseworthy for the feminist betrayal of his male identity, he at the same time is cautioned not to forget that he remains a man. The dividing line between given and achieved identities is fixed. Compare this to Haraway's view of the position of feminist men as, indeed, "a little bit different, a little bit fraught", but also, in the end, not "really all that different from anybody else who's trying to be a competent political person" (Olson with Haraway 1995: 68).

The successfulness of strong reflexivity, Harding has claimed, can be measured according to the extent that the knowledge concerned testifies to the creative use of the lenses of oppositional forms of theorizing. Though it does not rest on the same firm foundation as knowledge from a supposedly transcendental point of view, knowledge from a standpoint has a 'ground', i.e. the perspective of particularly marginalized lives. However, as I argued in the previous chapter, because this 'ground' itself gets to be constructed from a particular standpoint, Harding's criteria for strong reflexivity and strong objectivity invite critical knowers to proceed by way of closed circular reasoning. In my view, Haraway's preference for 'diffraction' over 'reflection' is indicative of her wish *not* to end up with closed-off stories. The site from which the quality of diffractions could be assessed therefore is uncertain in principle, open to contestation and displacement. Situated knowledges rest on more contingent and provisional grounds than knowledges from a standpoint. Or, as David Harvey once put it: "[T]he situation is not something that is fixed. It is itself in flux and therefore situated knowledges are knowledges which are not built from some fixed standpoint but are integrated into the processes which are structuring and restructuring the world" (Harvey and Haraway: 508).

Haraway's acknowledgement of the contingency and the lack of foundation of even our most reliable and faithful knowledge suggests that we need other critical tools than the unmasking of prevailing accounts as lies. Among other things, it holds an incentive to humour and irony. In this sense, Haraway's position shows much resemblance to Richard Rorty's description of the postmodernist intellectual as an ironist. But her insistence on irony surely is more than a private matter. It is motivated by a strong commitment to public causes, by feelings of solidarity and a desire for justice. And Haraway's irony does not merely spring from the relativization of her final vocabulary. It also is an attempt to preserve complexities and ambiguities, or, to repeat the formula of the Cyborg Manifesto: "Irony is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true" (1991: 149). In this respect, Haraway resembles Rorty's ironist intellectual in her invention of new vocabularies, and her 'abnormal' rewriting of the world - be it that she indeed practices irony in her style of writing, whereas Rorty holds on to the serious tone of the academic philosopher. Critical theory, in Haraway's view, can no longer be about removing blinders in order to show how things 'really' are. It rather involves a different kind of negativity, i.e. 'diffraction': "[T]he non-innocent, complexly erotic practice of making a difference in the world, rather than displacing the same elsewhere" (1994a: 63).

4.2. Displacements

It is not an exaggeration to characterize Haraway's discourse as produced by an ecstatic speaker who preaches her own peculiar, politically inspired and postmodernist gospel. This may appeal to some and be indigestible for others. But I think there can be little doubt that Haraway's work inimitably manages to fuse feminist and constructivist themes. Thus, the feminist subject position of the 'outsider within' has been radicalized by the figuration of the cyborg, whose vision is not simply double, but whose artefactual eyes diffract the world into a mosaic pattern. Furthermore, Haraway's relativization of the distinction between subject and object as two types of material-semiotic actors seriously weakens the traditional hegemonic relationships constituted by practices of knowledge. Finally, her work shows a persistent awareness of the existence of power/knowledge configurations: by suggesting the non-innocence of its own constructions, by its focus on the empowerment of inappropriate/d others, and by emphasizing the inevitable responsibility that goes with any knowledge claim. In a significant footnote, Haraway elaborates her position as follows: "'Objectivity' in a postmodernist framework cannot be about unproblematic *objects*; it must be about specific prosthesis and always partial knowledge. At root, objectivity is about crafting *comparative* knowledge [...] this query translates into a question of the politics of redrawing boundaries in order to have non-innocent conversations and connections" (1991: 248, n.4).

Does this mean that feminist researchers and theorists of knowledge should all become 'harawayans'? Goddess forbid! I guess she would exclaim. Apart from that, it would also be quite impossible to 'follow' Haraway. Her work is highly idiosyncratic, her style of speech peculiarly hybrid. It cannot be reduced to a package of methodological guidelines. But, of course, we neither can get away with concluding that the crafting of situated knowledges is merely a matter of personal taste. Haraway's theorizing has a universal appeal, it is a call to 'all of us'. So, what road does the concept of situated knowledges open up for feminist and other critical practices of knowledge? What does it enable us to see, and what are its drawbacks?

These are the questions that will guide my further investigations. But, as the above implicates, I would do injustice to Haraway's notion if I treated it as a concept that could be methodically applied and tested for its usefulness. Therefore, rather than answer them straight out, I will approach these questions in a more roundabout way. In the remainder of this study, the epistemological or theoretical mode of analysis will be replaced by the exploration of a set of actual knowledge practices. In order to enable the reader to follow the ensuing displacements without losing track of the questions which direct this study, it may be helpful to finish this part with some provisional conclusions.

To begin with, both the constructivist and the feminist theorists discussed in Part I agree about the situatedness of all knowledge in the *descriptive* sense of the term. All claims to knowledge are embedded within the particular local and historical circumstances from which they emerge, and should be understood in relation to their context. Consequently, on this descriptive level, constructivists and feminists agree on the relativity of claims to truth. But they differ in the normative assessment of this finding. According to Rorty, Foucault and Latour, the fact that power and knowledge are inextricably intertwined is not something to worry about: the heteronomous character of processes of knowledge production is in itself no indication of 'good' or 'bad' practice. Their point is merely to take account of the historical and local context as the empirical conditions of possibility for particular knowledges to emerge. In this sense, the constructivists' descriptive assessment of the situatedness of all knowledge leads to a position of epistemological relativism. Not so for the feminist authors. Their descriptive assessment of the situatedness of all knowledge has a determinate *critical* edge: contextualizations of claims to knowledge to them often reveal the gendered, hence distorted nature of prevailing knowledges. From this they infer that it is necessary to develop criteria as to *which locations* produce better, less distorted knowledges. Therefore, for the feminist authors discussed, the claim of the situatedness of knowledge yields a *normative* epistemological project. Consequently, they try to develop criteria for subject positions from which 'better' knowledges might be produced: Keller wants dynamic knowers, Code sets her hopes on a friendly attitude, Harding and Collins prefer politically informed standpoints, while Haraway longs for more perverse approaches. With the latter, however, Haraway actually adds a third dimension to the notion of situated knowledges, which contains a *visionary* aspect which in my view is shared by constructivists and feminists alike. That is, in their descriptions of, or allusions to, an alternative epistemic subject, constructivists and feminists share a preference for marginality and 'abnormality'. Whether it is the 'maverick', the 'outsider within', the 'edifier', the 'cyborg' or the 'anthropologist', all of these figures embody hopes for unexpected vantagepoints.

In this respect, I disagree that we need to occupy, as Keller, Code, Harding and Collins suggest, a 'middle ground stance' between realism and relativism. In my view, and in agreement with the constructivist perspective, realism and relativism need not be conceived of as straightforward opposites. As indicated above, none of the constructivist accounts discussed adopts an anti-realist, i.e. idealist position in the *ontological* sense of the term: all agree that things exist independently of our perception of them. Constructivist thinkers are merely anti-realist in the *epistemological* sense that they do not believe in the possibility of undistorted representations of reality. They are, just like Keller, sceptical about 'truth'. What, in other words, their relativism resists is not a realist, but an *absolutist* or *universalist* interpretation of claims to knowledge and truth. Consequently, none of the constructivists discussed takes the radically relativistic stance which feminists, and rightfully so, reject: neither in the ontological, nor in the ethical sense do they hold that 'anything goes'.

Therefore, I want to suggest that rather than aiming at the production of more *truth-adequate representations*, a feminist theory of knowledge should line up with constructivist approaches in their envisioning of the possibility to craft, what I would call with Haraway, *different, more promising stories*. This position implies the need for a shift away from an *epistemological* assessment of knowledge

practices in terms of representation, truth and objectivity, towards a more *narrative* approach which would focus on positioning and the performativity of language.

The next part of this book will consist of a case study of a set of concrete knowledge practices. On the one hand, this case study will illustrate and clarify the three dimensions of 'situated knowledges' as distinguished above. On the other hand, it will indicate what a shift from epistemology to narrativity might entail for the assessment and evaluation of these particular knowledge practices.

The subject matter of the case study in Part II is the public discourse on ethnic minorities in the Netherlands as it has evolved since the 1980s. In my opinion, the Dutch minorities discourse constitutes a good case for exploring the range of the concept of situated knowledges. It consists of a diverse whole of politically non-innocent discursive practices, in which the relation between marginal (ethnic and racial) groups and dominant society is at stake, in which the 'reality' of the Netherlands as a multicultural society is a disputed issue, and in which constructions of object and subject positions are closely connected to constructions of gender and ethnicity. In other words: the texts concerned will confront us with many of the same problems that the notion of situated knowledges puts on the theoretical agenda. It must be added that my choice for a pre-eminently 'social' issue implies that I will not be able to reflect on one of the central points of contestation within constructivist approaches of knowledge, i.e. whether we should hold on to the distinction between knowledge of 'nature' and 'things' on the one hand, and knowledge of 'society' and 'humans' on the other.

Choosing the Dutch minorities discourse as a case of situated knowledges involves not only a displacement from theories to practices of situated knowledges. It also involves a shift with regard to what Lolli Nauta has named the 'exemplary situation' of the concept of situated knowledges.³⁰ For Haraway's theoretical concept can itself be perceived as an instance of situated knowledges, developed within and in response to the particular political and social context of the contemporary US. Consequently, the question is whether the ensuing case studies, which shift attention to the notably different situation of racial and ethnic relationships in a European country, will lead to a different evaluation or interpretation of what it might mean to produce situated knowledges.

Finally, the turn to a subject matter such as the Dutch minorities discourse involves a third displacement, related to my own position as the author of this study. It forces the 'I' of this text to come down from her philosophical speaking stance, leave behind the supposedly neutral position of the analytic of abstract concepts, and become a more embodied and located 'I' who enters into engaged interpretations. In other words, to complicate the structure of this exploration further, I would want to invite the reader to consider the following readings of the Dutch minorities discourse as (provisional, tentative) practices of situated knowledges themselves.

Notes

1. Haraway's comparison turns out a bit more positive for Akely than my schematic impression here suggests. After her affirmation of the 'masculinity' of Akely's approach, insofar as "Akely had to shoot before nature got too close, or the manhood he sought to assure would have been hopelessly compromised", she concludes that Akely's position actually was quite ambivalent: "He was engaged in a delicate negotiation between masterful touch and decadent embrace" (1989b: 136).

2. 'Situated Knowledges' originally was written as a review of Sandra Harding's *The Science Question in Feminism*, and published in *Feminist Studies* 14, Fall 1988.
3. Haraway's move here is reminiscent of Thomas Kuhn's view of how scientific revolutions come into being. This is not a coincidence. In an earlier work, Haraway studied examples in biology of revolutionary switches in metaphor, relying on the insights of Thomas Kuhn and Mary Hesse about the crucial role of metaphors and models in science. She here states that "a view of scientific theory that does not give a large place to metaphor, with its predictive value and potential for development, has trouble accounting for the very progressive aspect of science such views are most interested in" (Haraway 1976: 3).
4. "Feminism loves another science: the sciences and politics of interpretation, translation, stuttering, and the partly understood [...] Translation is always interpretative, critical, and partial. Here is a ground for conversation, rationality, and objectivity – which is power sensitive, not pluralist, 'conversation'" (Haraway 1991: 195); "We just live here and try to strike up non-innocent conversations..." (199); "Feminist embodiment, feminist hopes for partiality, objectivity and situated knowledges, turn on conversations and codes at this potent node in fields of possible bodies and meanings" (201).
5. "That is because feminist embodiment resists fixation and is insatiably curious about the webs of differential positioning. There is no single feminist standpoint because our maps require too many dimensions for that metaphor to ground our vision" Haraway 1991: 196).
6. Marilyn Strathern, in an attempt to think through the 'partial connections' between feminism and anthropology, makes use of Haraway's reflections on situated knowledges and the cyborg perspective to conceptualize the possibility, as she calls it, to "make connections without assumptions of comparability" (Strathern 1991: 38). Concerning feminism and anthropology, Strathern claims that "were each a realization or extension of the capacity of the other, the relation would be of neither equality nor encompassment. It would be prosthetic: each extends the other, but only from the other's position. What the extension yields are different capacities. In this view, there is no subject-object relation between a person and a tool, only an expanded or realized capability" (38).
7. As Haraway phrases it in a conversation with David Harvey: "There is no gap between materiality and semiosis; the meaning-making process and the materiality of the world are dynamic, historical, contingent, specific; [...] bodies and institutions and machines are made, not made up" (Harvey and Haraway 1995: 509).
8. See for instance Franklin 1991; Van der Ploeg 1996.
9. Haraway explains her choice of the term articulation by way of a short etymological excursion: "In obsolete English, to articulate means to make terms of agreement", supplemented by her own, more idiosyncratic associations: "It is to put things together, scary things, risky things, contingent things" (1992b: 324).
10. Of course, interpretations of certain practices *as* practices of articulation are still stories narrated by people. Haraway admits that her account of the Amazon Indians as forging collectives of human and non-human nature is a 'fiction', one of which it is yet undecided whether the Amazonians wish to connect with it. In the end, describing certain practices as articulations rather than representations remains a matter of situated knowledge, i.e. of knowledge for which, in the end, its author carries responsibility (1992b: 311, 313).
11. Haraway derives this figure from Shapin and Schaffer's *Leviathan and the Air-Pump* (1985). Like Latour, in her description of the founding border of modern science, the distinction between the technical and the political, Haraway makes use of this book's account of the emergence of modern science (with Boyle as its founding father) and modern

politics (with Hobbes as its founding father). And, like Latour, as I will discuss extensively in section 3 of this chapter, Haraway wants to dispense with this founding border: “The technical and the political are like the abstract and the concrete, the foreground and the background, the text and the context, the subject and the object. As Katie King (1993) reminds us, following Gregory Bateson, these are questions of pattern, not of ontological difference. The terms pass into each other; they are shifting sedimentations of the one fundamental thing about the world – relationality” (Haraway 1997: 15).

12. Haraway discusses an interesting study by Elisabeth Potter, who shows how, initially, the figure of the modest man was problematic for early modern Europeans, as they still associated masculine virtue with practices of war and battle. In crafting the new figure of the modest man, it was not only his scientific reliability that was at stake, but also his gender: the modesty of the man of science had to be different from the modesty of a woman from the same social class. Hence, whereas female modesty got linked up with the body and sexual chastity, male modesty was associated with the mind, with clear and unprejudiced sight. As Haraway puts it, “women might watch demonstration; they could not witness it” (1997: 31).

13. In a ‘PostscriptTM’ to a chapter on conceptions of race and biological kinship, Haraway exclaims: “I am sick to death of bonding through kinship and ‘the family’, and I long for models of solidarity and human unity and difference rooted in friendship, work, partially shared purposes, intractable collective pain, inescapable morality, and persistent hope. It is time to theorize an ‘unfamiliar’ unconscious, a different primal scene, where everything does not stem from the dramas of identity and reproduction” (Haraway 1997: 265).

14. “How might an appreciation of the constructed, artefactual, historically contingent nature of simians, cyborgs and women lead from an impossible but all too present reality to a possible but all too absent elsewhere?” (Haraway 1991: 4). The introduction to *Primate Visions* ends on a similar note: “I want the readers to find an ‘elsewhere’ from which to envision a different and less hostile order of relationship among people, animals, technologies, and land” (1989b: 15). And at the beginning of ‘The Promises of Monsters’, Haraway announces that she wants her theorizing to produce “effects of connection, of embodiment, and of responsibility for an imagined elsewhere that we may yet learn to see and build here” (1992b: 295).

15. The Cyborg Manifesto was first published in the *Socialist Review* under a slightly different title (Haraway 1985).

16. In English, Haraway’s reminder of the ambiguity of the word monster by associating the Latin noun *monstrum* with the verb *demonstrare*, may seem a bit far-fetched. In Dutch, however, the noun *monster* really carries these two meanings. It may refer to an anomalous, frightening creature, but it can also mean a sample or a specimen.

17. In spite of this, the image of the cyborg has become extremely popular among the lovers of cyberspace who do not at all pick up the critical dimensions of Haraway’s metaphor. On the occasion of a presentation of Haraway’s work in Amsterdam, two Dutch researchers lashed out at the “intellectual laziness and lusting after trends and fashion” of many a cyborg lover (Van der Ploeg & Van Wingerden 1995: 398). And Haraway herself also expressed disappointment about one-sided, celebratory readings of the Cyborg Manifesto: “But I get irritated when people use the Manifesto to tell how great cyberspace is. As if technology would make the world better! Terrible! As if I would unthinkingly believe that technology is good. But the African baby swimming in diarrhoea thanks to the policy of the Worldbank is a techno-baby too. Such a child lives in the same transnational, postmodern, complex world as we do” (Dobbelaar & Slob with Haraway 1995: 4 [translated from the Dutch translation]). The Cyborg Manifesto indeed contains some reminders of the ambiguity and double-sided nature of the cyborg, such as the remark that the cyborg also is “the awful apocalyptic *telos* of the West’s escalating dominations of abstract individuation, an ultimate self untied at last from all dependency, a man in space” (1991: 150-151). However, in my view, the celebratory tone in this text still gets the upper hand.

18. 'Sojourner Truth' is the name of a black woman, born around 1797 as Isabella Baumfree, slave to a Dutch master in Ulster County, New York. In 1843, she adopted her new name and started travelling around the country to preach the gospel, but also to speak at women's suffrage and abolitionist meetings. Sojourner Truth's most famous speech, the one Haraway is referring to, was held at a women's right convention in Ohio in 1851. As Haraway also indicates, her repetitive exclamation in this passionate denunciation, "And ain't I a woman?" has become a famous catch-phrase for the 19th and 20th century US (Black) women's movement. Haraway enumerates a long list of contemporary authors who refer to Sojourner Truth (see Haraway 1992a: 99, n.10). Hill Collins, for instance, considers Sojourner Truth to be "a formidable intellectual" (Collins 1991: 14-15).

19. "Like the stigmata of gender and race, which signify asymmetrical, regularly reproduced processes that give some human beings rights in other human beings that they do not have in themselves [...], the copyright, patent, and trademark are specific, asymmetrical, congealed processes – which must be constantly revived in the world of commerce, as well as in science – that give some agencies and actors statuses in sociotechnical production not allowed to other agencies and actors" (Haraway 1997: 7).

20. "[...] the nice thing about a figure like OncoMouse, and the America that she inhabits, is that it is also so full of contradictions. There are redistributions of agencies and powers all around OncoMouse, and they aren't all hostile [...]. But at the same time I have a kind of tooth-screaming ache that says it is really not alright in the world with women, it really is not alright in the world with the racializations or the ethnicizations, the kinds of inequalities which are mobilized by capital but not explained by it" (Harvey and Haraway 1995: 521).

21. In the introduction to *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, Haraway indeed presents herself as originally a "proper, US socialist feminist, white, female, homonid biologist", who gradually turned into "a multiply marked cyborg feminist, who tried to keep her politics, as well as her other critical functions, alive..." (1991: 1).

22. In an earlier article, I also took issue with the figure of the cyborg insofar as its preference for 'perverse' couplings seemed too light-hearted. The cyborg seemed not sensitive enough to the suffering of others, in my view, because she is not familiar with the experience of suffering herself. I particularly distinguished the *postmodernist* irony of the Cyborg Manifesto from the *romantic* form of irony. Both display an awareness of the contradictory and uncontrollable nature of life. But whereas a romantic subject longs for harmony and transparency, and suffers from the fact that such a state is beyond his reach, the cyborg seems quite untroubled by the ambiguities and multiplicities that constitute her daily existence. For this reason, I saw no guarantee that the cyborg's affinities would 'naturally' drive her to a commitment to the oppositional politics of marginalized groups (Prins 1992). Since then, however, as the present discussion of Haraway's work shows, I think that Haraway's figure, not in the least because of her expanding 'family', has grown into a much 'rounder', a more-dimensional character.

23. Haraway notes: "Where Latour and I fundamentally agree is that in that gravity well, into which Nature and Society as transcendentals disappeared, are to be found actors/actants of many wonderful kinds" (1992b: 330).

24. "Allied with Bruno Latour, I will put my structuralist engine to a modern purpose [...] the modern refers to a view of history of science as culture that insists on the absence of beginnings, enlightenments, and endings: the world has always been in the middle of things, in unruly and practical conversation, full of action and structured by a startling array of actants and of networking and unequal collectives" (Haraway 1992b: 304, and 329-330, n.6). Note how Haraway gives Latour's notion such a twist that it fits her resistance to stories of origin, as well as her belief in the need for conversation and collective political practice. The title of her most recent publication skirts location in terms of a-, post-, late-, or hyper-modern. According to Haraway, these terms suggest too much continuity. Indeed, "we (feminist, antiracist, mutated modest witnesses) have never been modern" (1997: 191). Haraway therefore prefers to situate her own stories with the help of an email address: *Modest_Witness@Second Millennium.FemaleMan@_Meets_OncoMouseTM* (Haraway 1997).

25. Latour, for that matter, objects to the ‘monomaniac image’ of his work. In response to a number of Dutch comments, he provides a short autobiographical detour, and expresses the hope that this may show that his actual interests are not so much in sociology of science and playing games of power, but in “religion, politics, sexuality, Third World, temporality” (Latour 1995: 31).

26. Haraway notes one exception, i.e. Latour’s work with primatologist Shirley Strum on baboons (1992b: 331). In my opinion, she is a bit too quick with her criticism here, in the sense that in Latour’s accounts of scientific practices, microbes, oil, timber, fossils, or plants do play a part in the particular actor-network under study. But I do agree with the point Haraway actually wishes to make, namely that Latour’s actors, whether humans, artefacts, or otherwise, tend to be reduced to “resource, ground, matrix, object, material, instrument, frozen labor” (1992b: 332), i.e. to their function as obedient delegates within a network.

27. Haraway has suggested on several occasions that there is not a symmetrical engagement among main-stream and feminist scholars of science studies in reading each other’s work. In a direct meeting with Latour, for instance, Haraway explicitly raised this matter of what she named the ‘segregation of citation networks’, and asks why Latour almost totally ignores the work of feminist authors in his texts. For all of her incisive criticisms, in this response to *We Have Never Been Modern*, Haraway made good use of her sense of humour, her ability to be ‘generously suspicious’, and the political and philosophical affinities between them, to avoid putting Latour “in the position of the permanently latent and playful little boy, Peter Pan, who doesn’t have to pay much attention to the grown-up consequences of his charming escapades, and me in the position of the always too grown up and hopelessly pious (read ‘political’) Wendy” (Haraway 1994b: 3).

28. “So in practice, there is not much difference between people and things: they both need someone to talk for them. From the spokesperson’s point of view there is thus no distinction to be made between representing people and representing things. In each case the spokesperson literally does the talking for who or what cannot talk” (Latour 1987: 72).

29. “What should be plain from this way of analysing is that what counts as ‘experience’ is never prior to the particular social occasions, the discourses, and other practices through which experience becomes *articulated* in itself and *able to be articulated* with other accounts, enabling the construction of an account of *collective* experience, a potent and often mystified operation. ‘Women’s experience’ does not pre-exist as a kind of prior resource, ready simply to be appropriated into one or another description. What may count as ‘women’s experience’ is structured within multiple and often inharmonious agendas. ‘Experience’, like ‘consciousness’, is an intentional construction, an artefact of the first importance” (Haraway 1991: 113).

30. In his analysis of the historical roots of the concept of autonomy in Western philosophy, Nauta shows how abstract and general theories of the autonomous subject actually build upon particular historical and local constellations, which tacitly function as the ‘exemplary situation’ of the theory in question (Nauta 1985).