

## Chapter 7

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### Denunciation, empowerment, emancipation: different stories to tell

In line with the proposed narrative turn at the end of the previous chapter, this third part of the case study will consist of an exploration of the narrative structures of Dutch knowledge practices concerning ethnic minorities. Is it possible to tell other oppositional stories than the story of racial conflict told in *Understanding Everyday Racism*? More in particular, the questions guiding my readings are threefold. First: what kind of realities are depicted in the texts at hand? Which injustices, problems, or developments are brought into the limelight? Secondly: what kind of narrative strategies are used to achieve a particular reality-effect? The focus will be on the triangle of actors involved in narration: author, protagonists and audience. Thirdly: what may be the possible performative effects of these narrative practices? Which reality effects are achieved at what costs? Which subject positions are empowered, which ruled out? Finally, I will return to the main question: to which extent can these stories be conceived of as cases of situated knowledges?

Since the end of the 1970s, a host of journalistic reports, political brochures and biographical portraits of members of ethnic minority groups saw the light of day. Next to this, academic studies carried out at governmental request assumed large proportions. For the purpose of my inquiry, I selected a small sample from this large body of texts. I will discern three genres of discourse: the genres of denunciation, empowerment and emancipation. Texts pertaining to the first two genres are written mostly by politically engaged authors, such as journalists and activists, whereas authors within the third genre are mostly scientists: sociologists, psychologists, cultural anthropologists. For my readings, however, these distinctions are irrelevant. What matters is that each of these texts, just like Essed's *Understanding Everyday Racism*, fosters an oppositional-realist understanding of its own undertaking: in their exposition of reality, these accounts wish to contradict prejudice, undermine stereotypes and undo the ignorance of their intended audience. Moreover, within each of these genres, authors make use of narrative devices to structure their accounts of reality.

## 1. The genre of denunciation

### 1.1 *Silent suffering*

*He was derailed, but was he to blame? Why hadn't his father been able to make a living in his own country? Why had the illiterate man brought his family to a strange country with such a difficult language, that even a clever guy like Hassan had not been able to manage at school? If he thought it through seriously, Hassan knew the answer. He had a keen sense of the unjust distribution of money and goods in the world that*

*was guilty of the migration of simple farmers to the jungles of industry in countries far away* (Soetens 1980: 20).

Some of the earlier Dutch collections of real-life stories about members of ethnic minority groups were compiled at the end of the seventies by Nelly Soetens, a Dutch teacher in French who in 1969 was one of the founders of the Rotterdam Action Committee Pro Guest workers [*Aktie Komité Pro Gastarbeiders*].<sup>1</sup> Her stories accuse Dutch society of indifference, ignorance and racism, and specifically denounce Western capitalism for its exploitation of (foreign) labourers. Soetens wrote her accounts to inform a wider audience about the appalling living conditions of these, to most Dutch readers, approximate strangers, and to elicit more sympathy for their difficult situation. According to the introduction to one of her publications “[i]t [...] is the hope of the compiler as well as the editor that this series of sketches will convince many that after the influx of guest workers and after their family reunion it still is our moral duty to help and offer the same chances for development to the children of guest workers as to our own” (Soetens 1977: 5).

Soetens’ texts present evocative and moving pictures of the personal histories and daily life experiences of guest workers and their families in the Netherlands. The stories portray foreign workers as people from the poorest section of their own population who came to the Netherlands to work for a better future - only to become outcasts again: uneducated, innocent, hardworking, striving for a better future for their children, but exploited and discriminated against in a hostile environment. Their children often end up badly: the boys get addicted to heroin, remain uneducated and unemployed, the girls get enclosed in a forced marriage, or stigmatized and repudiated by their community for being a ‘whore’. Soetens’ accounts put much emphasis on these tragic endings: “Thus, the deepest love became her misfortune, a lonely life, isolated from her family and other countrymen, with only a couple of superficial dutch acquaintances” (1977: 61); “And now love, to which he had clung with so much force, had disappeared from his life” (89). The dramatic impact of the stories sometimes is enforced by rhetorical questions in a denunciatory mode: “Is it a wonder they go to the wall?” (26), or: “He had learned hard, but had he done his utmost in school only to become an unskilled labourer?” (1980: 44) More often, the author concludes with straightforward judgements: “That is the way workers are bartered and foreign workers are misused to depress the wages for work that cannot be paid well enough” (1977: 60); and: “Thus, Dutch workers are played off against foreign workers” (70). In these judgements, a variety of guilty parties is pointed out, such as the home environment of the children, members of Dutch society in general, and Dutch policy makers and captains of industry in particular.

The main target of denunciation in these accounts is Western capitalism, specifically its exploitation of foreign labourers and their forced transportation to cultures alien to them, which will inflict deep wounds upon their children. The individual stories are presented as illustrations and confirmations of these more global structures of inequality and exploitation. In one publication, each individual history closes with a moral at the end: “Years ago, the government thoughtlessly, and urged by industrial circles, admitted foreign workers. It seems it never entered their minds that these were human beings, human beings with family ties...” (1977: 50), or : “Most people in Western Europe, and elsewhere too, have been confused so much by a small group at the top, that they are convinced that workers are stupid and lazy, have no sense of responsibility and that for that reason you’d better not provide them with too much. But in that way, the bigwigs of course keep the best parts for themselves” (70). In a later book, the moral is inscribed in the narratives themselves. The critical insights are attributed to the person portrayed, as in the fragment quoted in the beginning of this section: “If he thought it through seriously, Hassan knew the

answer” (1980: 20). Or: “Against her father, the man [Amina] had hardly known during her youth, she felt a dull, helpless hate. She was sold, rendered the property of someone else” (11).

These quotes indicate that Soetens’ stories are told by an impersonal, omniscient narrator. They frequently make use of free indirect speech, a narrative device by which the author ‘cites’ her protagonists indirectly, using the third person singular and the past tense. The rhetorical questions (“he was derailed, but was he to blame?”) could, strictly speaking, be the author’s, but contextual features suggest that they articulate the thoughts of the character concerned, of Hassan, or Amina. Thus, the author acts as the spokesperson for the people she portrays: by conveying the humiliating and deteriorating conditions under which foreign guest workers live, while at the same time reminding the reader that they are human subjects, capable of feeling, thinking, and resisting what is done to them.<sup>2</sup>

The use of free indirect speech, however, has a reverse. It is known to be an effective literary device in cases where the author wants to give words to emotions or insights which the character depicted is assumed not (yet) able to articulate. Free indirect speech even leaves it an open question whether this actor has indeed said, thought or felt the way the author suggests.<sup>3</sup> Hence, although Soetens’ protagonists are depicted as *subjects* of particular experiences and feelings, they are first and foremost depicted as *subjected to* them.<sup>4</sup> The author denies her characters critical or ‘knowledgeable’ agency. Speaking as an omniscient narrator, the author is, almost by definition, more literate and more articulate, even about their own intuitions and insights, than the subjects of these feelings are suggested to be themselves. On the one hand, the ascribed thoughts and feelings function as indicators of the humiliating experience of subjects who are being ‘objectified’. On the other hand, the indirect, ‘spoken for’ way in which these subjectivities are presented, denies these characters their status as subjects. It represents them as people who cannot represent themselves - and therefore need a more articulate, a more politically knowledgeable spokesperson to voice their frustrations, needs and wishes. Maaïke Meijer refers to free indirect speech as a form of ‘narrator’s guardianship’ [*vertellerscuratele*] (Meijer 1996: 157). Phrased in a more constructivist mode: a potential performative effect of Soetens’ stories is that they affirm the status of foreign guestworkers as not-yet-fully-subjects, which they at the same time so passionately denounce.<sup>5</sup>

In Soetens’ accounts both men and women are victims. The male guest workers get frustrated due to economical exploitation. They feel not able to provide for their family as a man should, their authority is threatened, their honour injured. Women suffer even more. Here, however, the author is less unequivocal in her allocations of blame and sympathy. On the one hand, the stories of the wives and daughters of guest workers are of the same vein as those of the men. Because of their sudden move to such a different society, a housewife becomes isolated, a clever and ambitious girl does not receive the bit of extra attention of her teacher that she needs, or poverty forces another girl to remain at home to look after her younger brothers and sisters. But, on the other hand, there is also mention of the “strict Mohammedan cultural pattern” (1977: 22), which legitimates the authoritarian attitude of a father, who beats up his son for going out with one of these ‘immoral’ Dutch girls, or of a father who forces his daughter into an arranged marriage. And there is mention of mere male abuse, not at all in line with this strict cultural pattern. The painful story of Rabia, for instance, relates of her being betrayed by three (Moroccan) men successively: by a rejected admirer, who makes her lose her job, by her married lover, to whom she loses her virginity, and by her father, who consequently repudiates her. At times, the author tries to evoke sympathy for these men. Like for Kaddour, who severely beats up his wife when he finds out that she secretly leaves the house for a short walk in the neighbourhood. The author mentions his feelings of shock and guilt afterwards. But: “his honour is injured and rage soon gets the upper hand” (1977: 37). These

fragments, however, are rare compared with the attention paid to the women's perspectives. All in all, although in Soetens' accounts, the men come out less sympathetic than the women, issues of gender rarely figure as explicit targets of denunciation.

### 1.2 *Women as guests*

In 1979, photographer Bertien van Manen made a series of black-and-white, realistic portraits of 'foreign women' in their daily environment: in poorly furnished, sometimes deteriorating rooms, at work, at a party, in the mosque, etc. (van Manen 1979). All pictures are anonymous. The subscriptions mention only place and year, sometimes completed with a bit of additional information: "Amsterdam 1976. In the mosque, during Ramadan" (57), or "Haarlem 1978. A bath, but no kitchen" (102). The anonymity may be explained by reasons of protection: some of the people photographed are probably illegal residents. At the same time, it adds to the impression that the people posing for the photographer are first and foremost to be perceived as representatives of a whole *group* of female guestworkers in the Netherlands. *Women as guests* [Vrouwen te gast] was published by a feminist publishing house. The pictures are alternated by verbal accounts in which some of the women (referred to by their initials or first name only) relate their histories in uninterrupted monologues. According to the introduction, "[t]hey left the familiar and protective, mostly agricultural neighbourhood, to end up in a chilly, often hostile Western country" (7). Each section of the book deals with one country of origin, starting off with a two-line information about how many women from this country live and work in the Netherlands, and the note that "[t]he number of illegal residents is unknown."

A distinction is made between two categories of women: on the one hand, mostly Turkish, Moroccan and Tunisian women came with their children to be reunited with their husbands, on the other hand there are the guest workers from Italy, Spain, Portugal and Yugoslavia who came "to become economically independent or to break with family ties and village traditions" (105). Accordingly, the plots of the stories differ. Next to Moroccan Chaïbia, an illiterate cleaning woman who has lived illegally in Holland for 12 years, and provides for her disabled husband and four children, there is the story of Italian biophysicist Rosella, who is actively involved in Italian immigrant organizations. And next to Gloria, a Portuguese housewife, member of the Portuguese Democratic Women's Movement and illegal resident for 13 years, 27 year old Fatima tells about her gradual 'awakening', and her realization of the secondary status of women in Moroccan culture, her attempts to divorce her husband, her determination to learn the Dutch language, and her wish that her daughters may attend college someday.

The uniqueness of each account is underlined by the author's choice to have the women recount their stories in first-person direct speech. Quotation marks add to the suggestion that each story consists of one long citation of an uninterrupted monologue. The similarities in style and composition, however, are at odds with the suggestion of uniqueness. Each story follows the chronological sequence of events, from the woman's situation in her country of origin to the actual here and now. Experiences and emotions are conveyed just as efficiently as the more factual information. Sentences are short and to the point: no side paths taken, no registration of laughs, hesitations or sighs. Few clues are given concerning this particular woman's style of talking, of telling stories. Neither do we get an impression of differences in tone, temperament or expression. The women are presented as all equally articulate in expressing themselves, equally able to give a cool and distant report of their vicissitudes.

Only one story is told from the third person perspective. The reason for this was, so the author

explains, that Chaïbia did not speak Dutch. A mediator, Chaïbia's French speaking husband, was needed to make their communication possible. This explanation adds to the suggestion that the first-person narratives reproduce the words of the protagonist directly, as they were spoken. But a short anecdote indicates that the reporting process probably has been more complicated than that. Gloria, a Portuguese who has lived in the Netherlands for 13 years, recalls how she once ordered a fried half chicken. After quite a long waiting time, the man behind the counter returned: not with half, but with eleven fried chickens! The reason: she had pronounced the Dutch word *half* as 'alf', which sounds much like the Dutch word for eleven, *elf*. Gloria's hilarious story makes clear that it is not unlikely that many of the women interviewed did not phrase their stories in the fluent and efficient Dutch sentences printed on page. The author probably streamlined and adjusted the women's speech, not only to correct it linguistically, but also to make it fit dominant Dutch codes about how to tell a life story. Thus, the Dutch reader's understanding, both her comprehension of and her sympathy for the women portrayed, would not be hampered by the women's insufficient mastery of Dutch language and cultural codes. The first-person narratives, whose remarkable uniformity in style and composition is so discordant with the diversity of the group of women they portray, are the product of much careful 'authorial' work of translation, rearrangement and editing.

The general account with which the book concludes likewise contrasts with this diversity. The author here tells the story of 'the (foreign) woman' and her "[l]ife in two different worlds", as if all women inhabited one single category. This generic woman has been chased from her safe home environment. Although her position at home already was one of subordination, the move to Holland only worsened it. Before, she still had certain well-defined responsibilities, and could earn respect if she fulfilled her role well. Now, she must pass her days in a hostile country, where her world is narrowed down to the confines of the four walls of her house. Only when she manages to get a job, she will gain some independence. She will earn some money, and get into touch with Dutch culture and habits. This makes her see that women need not play a secondary role, and leads her to gradually resist the authority of her husband. Who, already frustrated by humiliating experiences of discrimination and exploitation, sticks to his role as the master in the house even more. Marital conflicts arise, of which the woman will be the victim. For if she runs away or wants a divorce, she is not only banned from her own community - she also runs the risk of losing her staying permit.

Thus, in this generic portrait, the specific position of immigrant country women with a Muslim background is taken as paradigmatic for all foreign women portrayed. The situation of the category of women distinguished earlier, those who wanted to gain economic independence or break away from the ties of tradition and family, is left out of the picture. The suggestion is that it is only *after* her emigration, and thanks to a gradual process of integration in Dutch society, that a foreign woman is able to "discover[s] that she is her own person" (178). The starting-point for emancipation thus gets located exclusively in the Netherlands.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.3 *The netherside*

The Dutch audience at large only gets to see 'the tip of the iceberg'. The metaphor is perhaps a bit worn down, yet still quite appropriate for Rudie Kagie's *Notes from the Dutch guestbook* [Berichten uit Hollands gastenboek], published in 1987, and Stella Braams' *The blind spot of the Netherlands* [De blinde vlek van Nederland], published in 1994. Both authors, freelance journalists, explored the fringes of the

Dutch labour market. They report about their descent into the netherworld of labour brokers, illegal textile workshops, kitchens of reputable restaurants, and the insides of oil tankers. Their stories show the gross exploitation of foreign and/or unskilled workers, a reality of social and economic abuse, hidden from view for the majority of the Dutch population.

Kagie and Braam convey their accusatory message mostly through reports about the trials and tribulations of particular individuals. But they do not reveal emotions, wishes, or identity crises. They talk about wages, working hours, physical problems, secret contracts and slush money. Their style of writing matches this matter-of-fact approach: the events concerned are recounted with a keen eye for factual detail, such as the names of people, places, and companies. In both texts, the author is extremely sparing with comments, with expressions of indignation or direct accusations.

But the two texts also show interesting differences. Kagie's *Notes* are conveyed by an impersonal narrator. The guest workers, employers, representatives of labour unions and other protagonists reveal their side of the story to an invisible observer and interrogator. The author's activities as an investigator are written out of the accounts as much as possible. They can only be traced indirectly. Sometimes, for instance, a question asked is phrased by indirect speech: "The WAO-percentage [percentage of people who have officially been recognized as medically unfit for work, bp] among foreign workers at Hoogovens is about 20% - double the WAO-percentage among Dutch workers. How would that be possible?", followed by a direct quote from an official, who 'answers' to what apparently was a direct question. More often, the question is not mentioned at all, but can be read back in the words of the respondent: "No, the sub-manager of staff matters of Hoogovens denies that [this] indicates that foreigners do the most unhealthy work" (169). Likewise, when we are told that "Achmed shows the letter" (163), we may assume he shows it to Kagie, and when an official is noted to be 'correcting' when he says that "we do not know the word illegal contractor over here" (167), he is apparently correcting the all too nosy journalist.

In his final chapter, Kagie states that he ends where his book should end: in the headquarters of the *FNV* [Federation of Dutch Labour Unions]. Thus, responsibility for changing the situations is located outside the research and writing activities themselves. The author's work is to make things public, to reveal reality such that things may happen afterwards: public opinion aroused, politicians and other authorities forced to undertake action.

In *The blind spot*, on the other hand, the author figures as an important actor in the events related. While Kagie took the classical routes of journalistic investigation: interviews, reading, research, Braam regularly went undercover. In posing as for instance an illegal Hungarian looking for work, she actually gets involved in the practices she investigates. She works in greenhouses, in an expensive restaurant, as a cleaning woman, for a catering company. Sometimes she associates with a Turkish or a Moroccan colleague-journalist, who has easier access to some places. Because of this method of participant observation, Braam not only sees and notices all kinds of dubious practices, she also intervenes: by enlisting a barrister to defend a worker's interest, a representative of a trade union to undertake action against bad working conditions, or a governmental labour inspector to check the situation in a certain company. The reports of the course of affairs she initiated add to the gravity and complexity of the situations described. Often, the persons or agencies enlisted, although officially installed to prevent and correct illegal practices, cannot change anything. They are powerless against the workings of the international market and against clever employers who make use of loopholes in the law. Moreover, illegal workers would betray their own basic interests if they would publicly talk about the condition they live in: they could lose their job and be thrown out of the country. In her epilogue, the author relates how, initially, she was convinced that she could help her temporary colleagues in exercising their rights - after all, she

was an independent and a more knowledgeable person. But she soon learned that Dutch labour relations fit perfectly on paper, but in the practice of everyday life, unskilled workers (Dutch citizens and illegal immigrants alike) are caught in a situation of utter dependence. Moreover, even the organizations and officials whose support should be expected often are not really interested: if you are poor and without any social status, you are not a 'case' worth investing in.

Braam's well-meaning interferences as an actor on her scenes of investigation sometimes brought about unintended and detrimental effects. Even the stories themselves sometimes constituted a not all too felicitous interference. Thus, one of the author's earlier publications led to the closing-down of the illegal factory in question, consequently to the dismissal of its eighty workers. In telling this story about the impact of a story, Braam indicates that the revelation of reality is not an innocent activity: it makes one co-responsible for the situations described - for better and for worse.

The actors displayed in these different denunciatory stories are the victims of injustices and wrongs. Their authors make an appeal to their addressees, primarily the indigenous Dutch, to understand the difficult situation of members of ethnic minority groups, to protest the described practices of exploitation and oppression, and to change existing Dutch habits, rules, policies. Notably, in the texts discussed, issues of class are considered more important than issues of gender, race or ethnicity. Different narrative strategies are put to work to heighten the impact of the denunciatory message. Some emphasize the dramatic aspects of the story told, like Soetens' rhetorical questions, others count on the dramatic effect of merely showing the 'naked facts', as in the concise stories by Kagie and Braam, or the black-and-white, realistic pictures by Van Manen. Sometimes, however, a narrative device may work in a more ambiguous way: free indirect speech, for instance, emphasizes the status of the actor as a victim, but it also underlines his/her position as not-yet-subject of his/her own feelings, actions and insights. In the texts discussed here, the author poses as the more articulate, more knowledgeable and literate subject, the one who has taken up the task of being a mediator and representative for the people portrayed.

## 2. The genre of empowerment

### 2.1 *Pioneers*

A second genre of texts reserves room for the portrayal of members of ethnic minority groups who stand out, who can be regarded as pioneers. In being successful in their personal career, these individuals serve as examples, as role models for other black and migrant people. They are the living proof that, with much hard work, perseverance and belief in one's own qualities, it is possible to 'make it' as a Turk or a Surinamese in Dutch society. Moreover, in setting a positive example over and against existing stereotypes and prejudice, they pave the way for those who come next. Often, these protagonists are presented as extra-ordinary personalities, endowed with a great deal of energy, and a passionate involvement in their work and other activities. But they did not achieve their success the easy way: considerate resistance and distrust from their Dutch surroundings had to be countered - a challenge they took up and managed to overcome. The notion of 'having to prove yourself' returns regularly. Thus, as the secretary of an industrial council of a big company, Moroccan Bouchaib Saadane relates how he initially met with considerable resistance: "I did not know what to do. Quit the job and say 'Guys, what a bunch of racists you are' or prove to them that filling a position does not depend on another nationality or another colour. I

chose the last option” (Essed & Helwig 1992: 25). Surinamese Rinia de Rooij, member of the city council of Haarlem, tells that “... all eyes [are] watching you. You have to prove yourself twice. You are not only a woman, but also black. For many colleagues it is not yet self-evident that there is a black colleague [...] But the higher you get, the more subtle becomes the discrimination” (Goudt 1989: 18). And Özden Kutluer-Yalim recalls the first time that she, a Turkish woman, worked with Dutch colleagues only: “It was not nice. There were colleagues who did not agree that a foreign woman with such limited knowledge of the language had such a position, and was put so high on the salary scale. And they made me feel it” (Van Lippe-Biesterfeld 1986: 47).

At least as important is the fact that the protagonists within this genre see themselves as responsible representatives of their own group. Next to radiating a strong conviction that ‘you can make it if you try’, they are just as firmly committed to affirmative action, cultural diversity, and political self-organization. Their belief in the importance of individual qualities goes hand in hand with the belief in the need for collective empowerment. Maviye Karaman, for instance, has been actively involved in union activities for Turkish workers, and was one of the founders the Turkish Women’s Movement in the Netherlands (Van Lippe-Biesterfeld 1986: 89-101); Surinamese-Hindustani Tara Sing Varma felt inspired by the Black Power movement, and started her political career as a member of the Dutch Communist Party. Next to her works as a representative for the *Green Left* party [Groen Links] in the city council of Amsterdam, (and since 1994 as a member of the national parliament), Varma initiated a support center for asylum seekers (Goudt 1989: 46-54); Esmâ Salama, a qualified nurse, also sees it as an important part of her job to be of use to her own Moroccan community: “I think that there should be a reflection of society, there should be more Moroccan nurses in health care” (Arib & Reijmers 1992: 55).

Empowerment is not only argued for by these pioneers in terms of group interests and equal rights. Especially in Essed & Helwig’s compilation of portraits, with the appropriate title *For example* [Bij voorbeeld] (1992), the value of *diversity* is considered at least as important.<sup>7</sup> The authors criticize the use of implicitly mono-cultural norms for its exclusive effects. They argue that what usually counts as ‘being qualified’ for a particular task or function, is decided by white autochthonous (often also male) Dutch, and thus immersed with Dutch norms and values. Judgements of quality are not neutral, not solely determined by functional requirements. Therefore, in order to prevent unfair procedures, the standards by which people are judged ought to be screened critically on ethnocentric bias. If it wishes to make true its professed commitment to the emancipation and equality of members of ethnic minority groups, Dutch society should become more open to cultural and ethnic differences. Differences should be accepted as a matter of respect for the other.

Next to this, it is emphasized that the ability to make use of other cultural resources makes for an enrichment of Dutch culture. Diversity does not only imply respect for the other, it also welcomes differences as valuable in themselves. But, and here proponents of diversity seem to contradict themselves, ‘diversity’ should also be embraced because it is profitable. Bouchaïb Saadane’s account, for instance, is larded with remarks about the connection between his Moroccan background and his successfulness as president of an industrial council: “And, you know, Moroccans are perfectionists [...] they always see how they can do things better [...] they are always willing to learn and to learn from their mistakes” (30). In the end of his account, the authors note that “[...] his Moroccan background and modern views of management go smoothly together...” (32). His story makes clear that Saadane’s talents as a mediator, a negotiator and a democratic president, which he associates with his Moroccan background, make him a more efficient manager. As he is granted the last words: “That method is always successful. Then the people stand behind you and you behind them, you know what they want and how far you can go. It is great to make

decisions which are supported by everyone” (33). Another protagonist argues that more ‘allochthonous’ workers would make for more sociability, more humour, greater flexibility and better service for the customer (90). Yasemin Tümer likewise draws attention to the benefits of being a migrant: “See, I am a migrant, I am a Turkish woman. A migrant is a citizen of the world, who has a different horizon. I pick things up quickly. I always look for combinations out of which I can let emerge something new” (103).

The arguments for diversity thus appear to go in two directions. On the one hand, differences have to be embraced for the sake of the intrinsic values of equality and diversity, which are of more importance than clinging to the purportedly neutral notion of ‘quality’, which actually always relies on contestable and context-bound criteria. On the other hand, it is argued that the acceptance of a diverse body of workers adds to the quality of one’s work in the standard terms of efficiency, flexibility and creativity. Arguments concerning greater efficiency, for instance, suggest that managers from another cultural background would be better suited to the aims of a company than people from a Dutch background. Sometimes it is even suggested that ‘being different’ automatically endows the individual in question with the capability to deal with (other) differences: “The advantage that people from other cultures have in dealing with differences should not be limited to them. Dutch people too can develop that sensitivity”, according to Essed & Helwig (83). In short, ‘difference’ here becomes almost a guarantee for being more qualified *per se* - rather than being qualified *differently*.

## 2.2 Representatives

If we take account of the narrative structuring of these texts, it appears that author and protagonists share the same perspective. The author does not interpret, mediate or translate, as her protagonists are perfectly capable of speaking and acting for themselves. The author shows great modesty towards them, and recedes into the background of their stories as much as possible.

Thus, one author makes mention of her hesitation to grant the request to do the interviews in the first place: “Wouldn’t I, as a Dutch woman, be pulling the strings again, as Özden Kutluer says in her interview? Wouldn’t I ask questions from my Dutch way of thinking? Wouldn’t it be much more sound if the women wrote down their own stories?” (Van Lippe-Biesterfeld 1986: 3).<sup>8</sup> But she immediately reassures both herself and her readers that several reasons, among which “the urgency they felt to tell their stories” (3) outweighed her doubts. Hence, she wanted to ask little, and first and foremost listen - in order to relate the stories in the spirit of the women who conveyed them: “They asked for a sketch of reality, not just ‘nice stories’”(4). The protagonists are introduced as examples, not only for other migrant women, but for *all* readers: “[T]he recognition of the power and vulnerability of these nine women can help and stimulate us in the lonely moments we all have. When we are torn by doubt and don’t know how to carry on” (4).

In the subsequent stories, the author strikes a tone of great admiration. She emphasizes that the women portrayed are fighters. Often from childhood on they are driven by strong feelings of justice, and an eagerness to educate themselves. Most of them had always shown great intelligence, and were ‘different’ from the other children: “She was good at everything, always was the smartest, and was consolidated and supported in that by her surroundings” (42). The author’s assessments are in complete agreement with her protagonists’ views of themselves: “I was different. I was progressive. That is to say: just” (54); “I knew a lot about Marxism and liberalism, read a lot and knew more than other girls my age” (22). The accounts

sometimes come close to hagiographies. This is for instance the way that Yugoslavian Nera Jerkovic is depicted: “Nera is tall and slender. Has her sturdy red hair cut short, green eyes, and is awfully beautiful, as if an inner strength radiates from her” (18). While Zorica Majic is portrayed as: “[...] a woman from the very beginning, a pioneer, a hard worker. As a Yugoslavian trained to think and work in accordance with policy, she does not lose herself in details, her actions don’t suffer from emotional infatuation” (70). Noteworthy, this tone of admiration returns in the women’s accounts of their parents. Almost all are spoken of as exceptional people, great sources of inspiration and support: “[H]is aversion against the oppression of women” (18); “[H]er power, her perseverance, her eternal optimism” (31); “My mother and my father have always been an example to me [...] They were no prototypes” (42); “[S]he is really proud of her father, how he stood up for her if she wanted something” (92); “He never forced any of us to think the same as he. He let us free” (121).

The closeness between the author’s and her protagonist’s voice also shows by their being typographically distinguished as little as possible. The two come to speak as one:

*Despite extreme poverty, Nera was raised protectively in the warm hugging arms of her mother. ‘Mother had a hard time. She has some very unhappy years but she had me.’ She worked in the secretariat of a polyclinic for children. ‘She always worked.’ With the help of day-nursery and grandmother that was possible. Grandmother was Germanic, ‘hence severe and aloof’, and grandfather (electrician) was Italian, ‘a darling of a man’ (19).*

While the author’s voice is quite single-mindedly focused on empowerment, her protagonists also speak out in a more denunciatory mode about issues such as the shortcomings of Dutch policy, or the whiteness of the Dutch women’s movement. This mode of speech resonates the tone of the introduction to the book, written by dr. E.A. Latham, who strikes an extremely denunciatory tone, for instance regarding “the delusion of superiority and narrow-minded parochialism” within Dutch society (9), while Dutch policy is characterized as “a structure of oppression” (12). Latham also points accusatory fingers at the field of minority studies, at anti-racism groups and at the white women’s movement. The authorial voice in the preface (Van Lippe-Biesterfeld) and the voice in this introduction (Latham) thus provide quite contradictory frameworks of interpretation for the portraits which they introduce. Whereas the preface tries to evoke an attitude of admiration regarding the heroic accomplishments of the women portrayed, the introduction prepares the reader for stories of a ‘tragic nature’ (8) which illustrate the damaging effects of the imposition of ethnic categories, which, according to this author, form a ‘cobweb’ of “a systematic and methodical subordination” (9).

*In the citycouncil!* [In de gemeenteraad!] contains seven extensive interviews with the first female black and migrant city-councillors in the Netherlands (Goudt 1989).<sup>9</sup> Stated aim of the book is to render visible the difficulties of the task these women have set themselves. Thus, beside confrontations with racial and sexual prejudice, they have to learn to work within a political culture relatively unknown to them. The author of the introduction concludes with a note on pride and strength: “[...] women from very different cultures have to prove themselves twice, perhaps even three times over. The dedication, the courage and the commitment with which the first black and migrant women councillors turn out to do this, will inspire many” (Goudt 1989: 10).

The ensuing portraits are structured with the help of familiar journalistic formula’s. All texts

alternate between question and response, between the voice of the author-interviewer and the voice of the protagonist-interviewee. The first starts by introducing the latter with a telling quote, a short life history, a recollection of the circumstances of their first meeting, or a delineation of the character of the woman in question. In the remainder of the account, the author comes to the fore with questions, observations and comments. Her attitude is one of understanding, sympathy and admiration. In one case, the authors even stand up for their protagonist when she downplays her own capacities. After having cited Eef Kogeldans about her perhaps not being as emancipated as her younger colleagues, they finish their account in a way not unbecoming to a barrister defending an innocent client: "Eef Kogeldans does not defend herself, which is perhaps typical for her, by declaring that the younger generation of Surinamese women, particularly those who spent an important period of their youth here [in the Netherlands, bp], have two advantages. They were raised in a society which gives children the opportunity to formulate their own opinions, and they build on what other women have accomplished. Women like Eef Kogeldans" (92).

Finally, a likewise inspirational account concentrates on the position of Moroccan women (Arib & Reijmers 1992). The text starts with a denouncement of the patronizing views of Dutch policy makers and the supposedly 'missionary attitude' of the Dutch women's movement. Moroccan women, the authors argue, are marginalized because, as *women*, they often fall outside the scope of minorities policy whereas, as *Moroccans*, they are neglected as a target group for policy aimed at women's emancipation. Authors and protagonists speak in one voice when they express their dissatisfaction with existing stereotypes of Moroccan women. Thus, the authors find that Moroccan women are often "not perceived as individuals with needs of their own, but as members of a group" (53), and they quote their protagonists in uttering like complaints: "Often you are pigeon-holed or not addressed as a person, with your own values and norms, your own background and identity, but you are addressed as: 'gee, you...' [the Dutch *jullie* is used here, i.e. the plural *you*, bp]. And if you don't fit that image, they say: 'gee, how good of you to have achieved that, while others have not. You don't belong to them anymore, because you are different, you have Dutchified, you are not like them, you now belong to us'" (61).

The individual protagonists in this book are presented as representative of Moroccan women in the Netherlands, who would have become collectively involved in a process of emancipation and empowerment. The opening lines speak of a true movement: "After ten years of active movement by a group of very different Moroccan women, the need was felt to collect the experiences and views of this group concerning their own emancipation. After years of silent struggle Moroccan women want to come forward. This silent struggle is characteristic for Moroccan women" (8). In a likewise generalizing vein, the authors state that "[Moroccan][w]omen have become convinced of the necessity to defend their interests as women" (21).

The suggestion of collective empowerment is enforced by the design of the text as a whole. The separate chapters do not focus on one protagonist, but each discusses one particular issue. A woman who is given the floor to tell about her experiences in one field, is often also quoted in other chapters, where she ventures her views regarding other issues. Thus, in the chapter on upbringing and education, one of the women is presented as a social worker for girls (35), whereas she is later quoted extensively on the issue of health care, now in her quality as a psychiatric nurse (51). Every time she is quoted, a woman is named by her first and family name, yet no connections are made between fragments in one and fragments in another chapter, which actually often contain the same cast of protagonists. Hence, the women portrayed, although their stories are as heroic, and their personalities as strong as the protagonists in *Van daar*, do not come forward as particular individuals with a unique history. They rather are depicted as representatives

of the much larger collective of active, independent and militant women - no matter that *Moroccan women in the Netherlands* ultimately appears to convey the stories of no more than six individuals.

### 2.3 Visibility

Considering the aim of the genre of empowerment, i.e. to foster greater public visibility and appreciation for members of ethnic minority groups, the frequent use of photos in each of these texts may come as no surprise. Still, the pictorial material deserves a separate note because of the remarkable way in which it underlines and contributes to the gist of the stories told.

In Van Lippe-Biesterfeld 1986, as well as in Essed & Helwig 1992, each written portrait starts with a full-page photo of the person interviewed, which sustains the textual message of the need for more visibility and identifiability of members of minority groups. Especially Goudt 1989 contains an abundant number of photos. The front page shows five of the seven councillors on an Amsterdam bridge, holding on to a tandem. The book contains several pictures of each woman interviewed: during a council meeting, playing the piano, in the office, on the phone, shopping, etc.. And each chapter finishes with a portrait (photo and text) of the interviewer(s): all young & female members of an ethnic minority group. The last page is reserved for the (Turkish) photographer, portrayed while portraying one of the journalists. The backflap, finally, brings all contributors together again. These personal pictures underline the public function of the women concerned: they can be recognized and addressed as official representatives for the public at large. In Arib & Reijmers 1992, finally, the accompanying photos are indicative of the discursive message too. The introduction to the book shows a picture of a group of six smiling, young and modern-looking Moroccan women. The caption does not identify them, but repeats a sentence from the text: "The emancipation process of Moroccan women has pursued a course of its own" (9). It might be possible that these women constitute the group of six women interviewed, especially because most of them re-appear in other pictures in the book. But there are no clues to confirm this. One caption suggests that the women portrayed are members of the *MVVN*, The Moroccan Women's Association in the Netherlands. Hence, like the text, the pictures here convey a double message: they anonymously represent a collective movement, and they make visible six representatives of that movement, individual forerunners who stand out for their courage and will-power.

Within the Dutch minorities discourse, the genre of empowerment is primarily concerned with the portrayal of exemplary individuals, whose extraordinary achievements contribute to the empowerment of their ethnic group as a whole. Texts within this genre address at least two kinds of readers. First, they offer role models to other members of minority groups, stories which can serve as sources of inspiration and encouragement. Secondly, they constitute proof to their readers, especially to a white-Dutch audience, that blacks and migrants can and wish to make a significant and positive difference to Dutch society. The narrative structure of the stories underlines their message of empowerment. Thus, compared with the denunciatory texts, the relationship between author and protagonist has been reversed: now it is the protagonist who knows better, and who is therefore directly given the floor. The person interviewed counts as the true expert, who can speak for her/himself, both in the figurative and the literal sense. The author's function is reduced to that of a service hatch: her questions offer the opportunity for the protagonist to express herself, the author directly passes on his or her words, and if s/he sometimes takes over, it is merely to resonate or enforce the views of the protagonist. Author and protagonist almost speak with one

voice. And while in the genre of denunciation, protagonists predominantly remain the anonymous representatives of an oppressed group, in the genre of empowerment they are made into unique and publicly recognizable personalities. Still, there is an intrinsic association between the genres of denunciation and empowerment, to the extent that both judge Dutch society as a society which systematically excludes and marginalizes members of ethnic minority groups. The difference is that in the genre of empowerment it is the 'victims' rather than well-meaning 'others' who express the denunciations. This immediately detracts from their position as victims, and enables them, to use Lyotard's word, to speak as a plaintiff, as an articulate subject of resistance. The critical notes of denunciation thus become embedded in, and overruled by the affirmative message of empowerment.

### 3. The genre of emancipation

#### 3.1 *Making the object speak*

One of the first Dutch in-depth scientific studies concerning the situation of a particular ethnic minority group was published in 1979 by cultural anthropologist Lotty van den Berg-Eldering. It set the standard for many research projects to come. Subsidized by the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work, it focused on the position of Moroccan families. The questions addressed are indicative of the governmental concerns of that time: will Moroccan families settle permanently in the Netherlands, to what extent will they preserve their own culture, and to what extent will they occupy the position of a minority? (Van den Berg-Eldering 1979: 13) The aim of the study is to provide guidelines in order to foster the emancipation of Moroccan citizens, such that they can participate in Dutch society on an equal basis with the indigenous population, and preserve part of their particular cultural and religious identity at the same time. For this purpose, the author followed some 45 Moroccan families for a period of two years. During the period of research, she remained associated with a local foundation for the welfare of foreign workers. As such, she could, as she frames it, "offer something in return", namely her assistance as interpreter, social worker, solicitor and mediator. The research project explicitly aims at solving 'practical' issues: in the concluding chapter, the author offers a series of recommendations for governmental policy, concerning issues such as housing, education, religion, preservation of culture, and (compulsory) courses in Dutch language.<sup>10</sup>

Van den Berg-Eldering preferred the method of participant observation to the approved means of the extended survey with a pre-fabricated questionnaire. The reason is that she wished "to get to know the object of study and 'to make [it] speak'" (21). With this, the author voices a concern shared by many researchers in the field of Dutch minority studies. On the one hand, it is their task to formulate general and valid conclusions, findings which can be of use for the development of a better policy. On the other hand, however, they also wish to convey a sense of the uniqueness of each individual case, and do justice to the actual diversity within the group under investigation. This tension between a more *scientific* and a more *literary* aim is one of the marked characteristics of the genre of emancipation. Whereas in 1979, Van den Berg-Eldering's expression of 'making the object speak' seemed mainly a figurative way of speech, the authors of later studies come to foster a more literal concern to let their 'objects' speak for themselves, to give a sense of the uniqueness and complexities of each individual story. This growing appreciation of the literary aspect makes for a heightened attention for the narrative dimensions of these scientific 'stories'.

Before entering into a more detailed analysis of these narrative dimensions, I would want to emphasize that the following critical readings do not mean to suggest that the actual authors of these

stories could have written their accounts in a radically different manner. I rather wish to show the possibilities and limits for authors to situate themselves, i.e. to produce 'situated' knowledges, *within* the confines of this particular genre.

In Van den Berg-Eldering's study, the main line of exposition is conveyed by an impersonal narrator. But, regularly, more particular stories, typographically marked by a smaller letter, are inserted. Sometimes, they consist of personal impressions of the author's meetings with Moroccan families, both in Morocco and in the Netherlands: "Once I came to visit a family in Morocco..." (62); "Twice I witnessed..." (120). In these accounts, a first-person narrator takes the floor. Other stories are told in an impersonal mode. Apparently, these are related to the researcher by her informants, although their role as a narrator is not inscribed in the story: "A Moroccan from the Rif area, who thought his wife must breathe some fresh air in the Netherlands too, sometimes took her out for a walk in the evening, when it was dark" (94); "A Moroccan father once begged the police to lock his son in for one month, perhaps he would then afterwards better his life. Another father wanted to see his son put on a boarding school" (136). Sometimes readers are even granted a glimpse of the 'object' returning the investigating gaze. Thus, after having explained that sipping, smacking and belching are ways of showing that you enjoy the food, the author puts in a personal anecdote that illustrates this: "When once in Morocco I was eating, this caused hilarity with an old grandmother and her family. She said to me: 'What a fine way of doing that, you eat with your mouth closed, are you sure you are eating at all?'" (191).

Most of these inserted stories relate about the vicissitudes of particular individuals, who nevertheless remain anonymous: they are not referred to by proper names, initials or pseudonyms. Neither do we get to know their age or place of residence. The actors are only identified by their position within a particular relational network: 'a Moroccan', 'the migrant', 'his wife', 'the Dutch neighbours', 'the parents', 'his father'. This anonymity is in line with their narrative function. They serve as representatives for the group under investigation, just like the concrete, smaller-printed stories function as illustrations of the general descriptions. Once, the author reflects on the reductive effects of generalizations: "Each generalization [...] violates reality" (120). But she elucidates this critical observation by, again, invoking general categories: "The relations within the family vary according to whether it concerns a family of the traditional, transitional or developed type" (120). Thus, although Van den Berg-Eldering's study makes a marked distinction between the impersonal, scientific mode of writing, and the more personal, narrative accounts, there is little tension between these two dimensions: the latter merely serve as enlivening moments in an otherwise cautiously accounted for picture of the general situation of Moroccan families in the Netherlands.

The alternation between the impersonal general mode of speech and more personal concrete stories is a strategy adopted in many scientific studies. Several reports at times zoom in on one individual person or family. Such portraits are written in the form of a report of the meetings and conversations through which the researcher got acquainted with the person or family in question. A first-person narrator sketches a portrait: the impression the protagonist makes, his/her facial expression, outward appearance, the atmosphere during the conversations, life histories, and visions and opinions on all kinds of issues - often conveyed through direct quotes. Thus, in a report on Turkish families, the authors' text is intersected with direct quotations from their protagonists. Here, however, there is a certain tension between the two modes of representation. The reader, for instance, is warned not to draw simplifying conclusions: one should not label the behavioural pattern of the individual families described as either 'Turkish' or 'Dutch', one should not perceive them as mere representatives of a kind. But the warning is conveyed by means of

the no less schematic qualifications of 'traditional' and 'modern': "It would be too easy to label a traditional behavioural pattern as 'Turkish' and to put a modern pattern on a par with being 'Dutch'" (Risvanoglu-Bilgin et al. 1986: 106).

Many texts within the genre of emancipation grapple with this issue of the relation between the general and the particular, between smooth categorizations and untidy realities. On the one hand, an author may present more elaborate individual stories, in order to show the great diversity within the research population, and remind readers how each 'case' surpasses the boundary of typification: "Reality appears to be too unruly for sound categories of this kind..." (De Vries 1987: 16). On the other hand, the individual stories are presented as examples of certain 'types'. Thus, the portraits of two young Turkish women are accompanied by the caution, although it might be tempting, not to conceive of them as representatives of categories, such as 'the' modern and 'the' traditional woman. But the ensuing portraits relate of such extremely opposite characters and life stories, that they fit these categories all too easily.

According to another study, "in reality, pure types do not exist and [...] different combinations are possible" (Brouwer et al. 1992: 269). The reminder notwithstanding, the actual design of the storylines does present individual protagonists as exemplary of a type, or even a combination of types. The book gathers the results of three different research projects about run-away girls. The projects 'cover' four categories of girls: Turkish, Moroccan, Hindustani (Surinamese from Indian descent) and Creole (Surinamese from African descent). The three parts (Turkish and Moroccan girls were the 'object' of the same investigation) show an almost identical textual structure and sequence of chapters. They distinguish between four types: girls of 'type 1' are marked by strict rules at home, 'type 2' girls face a disorderly home situation, girls of 'type 3' show a need for more autonomy, whereas girls of 'type 4' are seeking more freedom [*ongebondenheid*]. The attempt to "create order in this chaotic amount of data" (2) by meticulously organizing and streamlining their text, points to the authors' concern for the scientific values of generalizability and objectivity. Throughout, the text is replete with quantifying descriptions, such as: "Four fifth of the Turkish and Moroccan girls investigated, report that at their home there are very strict rules" (19), or: "Of the 38 interviewed Moroccan and Turkish girls who were received in *Saadet* [a relief center for Muslim girls, bp] [...], eleven went home or to relatives..." (117). The authors thus try to avoid over-generalizations by carefully indicating the exact range of the generalization in numbers and percentages. At the same time, they show a great commitment to the individual histories by working with extensive quotes on almost every page: of the girls, their parents and the social workers involved. Nevertheless, these actors are presented as examples and illustrations, for instance of a particular type of girl. The dramatic tone of the preface, written by professor Köbben, an authority in the field, thematizes this difficulty of connecting the particular and the general. Köbben speaks of the difficulty of meeting *scientific* standards and how "[i]t did cost the authors an immense amount of effort and time to grasp the chaos of contradictory - actually or seemingly contradictory - data" (VII). But he also stresses, even privileges, the *literary* aspects of the text, for: "More precious than [the recommendations] are the touching, often heart-rending, sometimes tragi-comic stories of all they [the run-away girls, bp] went through. That is the crux of what is offered here" (VII).

A publication with the telling title *If you ask me* [Als je het mij vraagt] (Hutschemaekers & Zarouali 1991) provides another way out of the problem: it is simply split up in two parts. The first part consists of the personal stories of the Turkish and Moroccan girls portrayed. The second contains the more general results of research: it gives numbers, percentages and a variety of findings about this particular group of teenagers. In the introduction to the first part, the authors tell that some accounts are written by the girls themselves, while others are composed by the authors on the basis of interviews. Moreover, nine

Turkish and Moroccan girls were actively involved in the production of the stories as the interviewees of their peers. The use of particular narrative devices may sometimes tell whether a story is the result of an interview, or written by the protagonist herself. Colloquial expressions such as ‘you know’ or ‘look here’, or short observations such as “[s]he looks very determinant and says:...” (15) indicate that the text is composed by the authors, based on an interview. A more solemn choice of words and expressions indicate that author and protagonist are the same person. One story catches the eye. It is told by an omniscient, impersonal narrator, who enables the reader to follow the protagonist in her meetings with others through the staging of direct dialogues. These are supplemented with fragments which describe Ilham’s inner feelings: “What could she do as a foreign girl? She received her MAVO-diploma and now she wanted to find a job. But why didn’t she succeed? It could not be her appearances” (26). In other words: this story is shaped according to the dramatic conventions of popular novels. The free indirect speech and rhetorical questions in the fragment cited indicate that the denunciatory mode is not wholly absent in the girls’ accounts. Ultimately, however, their indestructible optimism always regains the upper hand.

The plots of the girls’ life stories are subsumed under the headings of Past, Presence and Future. Stories about the past are marked by warm and nostalgic memories of their home country: a paradise for ever lost, and with it a life of simplicity and innocence. The present is a life torn between different worlds, in which the girls nevertheless are relatively uncertain about where they really belong, or who they really are. 17 Year old Esra, for instance, sees herself as “a child of two cultures”, but feels “most at ease here in the Netherlands” (15). Her problem is the dividing line between the private and the public: in private, she can live according to the rules of her religious faith, in public she cannot. To be sure, Esra upholds her faith not out of awe for some authority or for social convention, but from personal conviction: “I am the only one at home who thinks that way [...] I feel sorry for them [...] But you cannot force a faith upon a person. It has to come from the inside” (15). In other words: Esra presents her following of Islam as a ‘modern’ kind of commitment. When talking about her feeling of self, Fushia notes that “[a]t school and in the shop where I work, I can be myself. But at home and in Morocco, I have to act” (10). Fatma reports something similar: “At home, I adjust, at school I behave the way I am: a girl of seventeen. At home I am more grown-up” (20). And although she thinks she will have to resign to her fate of being married off, beneath this surface of obedience, Fatma’s actual desires are crystal clear: “If I were my own boss, I would travel a lot, go in for sports, and have a boy-friend” (20). These statements too testify to a ‘modern’ feeling of self. Not so much because the girls show affinity with ‘modern’ values and lifestyles, but because of the self-evident distinction they make between who they are themselves and what others expect from them.

The future, finally, is full of promises for most girls. Determined to make something of their lives, the girls aspire to achieve happiness and a nice job. The success stories of two young fashion-designers, Sefika and Faithy EL, constitute the living proof that talented, hard-working and determined Turkish and Moroccan girls can have a splendid career.

The stories in *If you ask me* show much resemblance to the narrative plot of a typically modern girl’s book, in which the protagonist has to win over all kinds of obstacles, before discovering her budding ‘true’ self and clear the path for a blossoming future. The personal stories are alternated by poems from one of the authors, Zohra Zarouali, a 18-year old Moroccan girl herself. They express the frame of spirit of the narratives in a more lyrical mode. All in all, the ‘literary’ first part of this book, in its lively impression of the personal dreams, hopes and emancipatory aims of Moroccan and Turkish girls, can be expected to have not only a reassuring effect on Dutch readers that these are indeed just ‘normal’ teenage girls, it could also function as a source of identification to girls in similar situations.<sup>11</sup>

In yet another study, the tension between the scientific and the literary aim is likewise dissolved by a straightforward separation between two modes of writing (Hoek and Kret 1992). Whereas the predominant part of this account is written from an impersonal perspective, and lacks any direct quotes from respondents, one of the last chapters unexpectedly presents four extensive case stories, first person accounts in which the authors relate about their meetings with respondents. They share their impressions and experiences with the reader, and sometimes, though not very frequently, intersperse their own accounts with direct quotes from respondents. The stories are well written and vivid portrayals of four Moroccan families and their teenage daughters. An awkward slip of the pen, however, shows that the friction between the scientific and the literary aim cannot be evaded here either. For, rather than 'an ambitious type of family', or 'a typically reluctant family', the stories are announced as 'descriptions' of 'an ambitious family type' or 'a reluctant family type' - as if this one particular family constitutes a whole category. The infelicitous formulation indicates that, in the genre of emancipation, it is ultimately the general findings which count.

Hence, the problems with which these authors grapple is how to assign, within accounts that aim at the more or less objective exposition of general findings, an appropriate place to the particular stories of individual protagonists, and to their own voice as the interpreter of these stories, as the author of these accounts.

### 3.2 *Authorship*

The ultimate predominance of the general over the particular in texts of the genre of emancipation limits the range of possible positionings of the author vis-à-vis the actors in his/her stories. Thus, there is little room to account for one's personal and/or political engagement in the research project at hand. If any remarks of such nature are made, they can either be found in the text's preface, or in its methodological account. But even there, quite strict boundaries are observed. Van den Berg-Eldering, for instance, starts by providing the reader with some background information about her personal and practical involvement with the lives and problems of her informants. The author gives a short impression of the intensity of her ties with Moroccan families, and of the powerful position often attributed to her. She relates of situations in which she felt torn between conflicting roles (should I now act as the social worker or as the scientist?), between conflicting loyalties (should I foster the individual interests of this informant or the general interest of the Dutch institution?), or between acting in the short-term or the long-time interest of people. But, other than the general remark that she mostly chose the side of the migrant, the author does not go into concrete cases. The reader can only guess as to which actual choices were made and which were their consequences.<sup>12</sup> Ultimately, the voice of the detached observer wins from the voice of the engaged social worker. Van den Berg-Eldering thus carefully sticks to the profile of the scientific knower as a 'modest witness', to use Haraway's term: simultaneously present and absent, as an author she is endowed with the authority to witness - not to judge.

#### 3.2.1 *A present absence*

Within the genre of emancipation, the impersonal, third-person form of narration dominates. The active role of the author as a researcher, i.e. as an actor on the scenes of investigation, is often written out of the

story. This, for instance, is achieved with the help of grammatical constructions that lack an active subject, as in: "In all, finally 44 families were interviewed and with 56 girls a conversation was held" (Hoek & Kret 1992: 43); "Apart from the interviews with families, also a great number of activities on a larger scale were attended, such as Hindustani weddings and religious feasts" (Mungra 1990: 41); "During the design and start of this investigation resistances could be observed" (Rinsampessy 1992: 28). The impersonal mode can be persevered to the extent that the author even writes about him/herself in the third-person singular. Thus, Rinsampessy uses the third-person form to describe his own position and activities as a researcher: "The researcher in this study is from Moluccan descent [...] This, however, does not imply that he is a participant in all situations" (24). Mungra, also reflecting upon his position as a member of the group under investigation, likewise refers to himself in the third-person: "In this case, the researcher and the persons under investigation belong to the same ethnic group" (49). And rather than reporting something like: 'I sometimes noted that I identified too much with my respondents, for instance with mr. so and so, when he told me that...', the author observes that "there is a danger that the researcher who belongs to the same ethnic group as the persons under investigation, identifies too strongly with what is brought to the fore, which may detract from objectivity" (52).

The absence of the author as an actor on the scene of investigation is also striking when it comes to his/her position as interviewer. Although the 'objects' of research are usually referred to as 'respondents', the texts provide few reminders that their speech actually was elicited in a more or less formalized context, and in response to particular questions and remarks - or to even more sophisticated devices for eliciting 'informal' speech, such as the 'future' and 'course of life' games used by Hoek and Kret (1992: 47-49). Instead, respondents are quoted as if 'speaking for themselves', outside any particular context.

Often, traces of the conversational context are erased completely, as for instance in extensive first-person monologues, or by presenting quotes as illustrative examples in an ongoing story by the author: "A few women do mention anger. When Malika is forced to sexual intercourse: 'I felt really angry. I am a human being, aren't I. It is bad when this happens'" (Deug 1989: 95). Sometimes, features of the interview-situation can be read back in the respondent's speech. Thus, when a Surinamese-Creole woman is quoted, saying "[y]ou are so different, you put your parents in a home..." (Lenders & van de Rhoer 1983: 73), it indicates that apparently her partner in conversation is white. A final example of this erasure of the active role of the researcher is an appendix to one study, which contains the literal texts of personal letters written by some of the Turkish girls interviewed. At places the letters are censored, to protect the privacy and recognizability of the girls, and they are of course printed with their permission. The texts of the letters indicate that they are part of a correspondence with the researcher: "Many thanks for your splendid letter (...) I am awfully ashamed that I did not write a letter back responding to your previous letter" (De Vries 1987: 234). But the appendix contains only the replies - about the letters and postcards sent by the researcher we come to know nothing.

Cases in which the questions or remarks responded to are explicitly repeated constitute the proverbial exceptions that prove the rule. And if this happens, in most cases the conversational context as such is not evoked. In the next fragment, for instance, the formally phrased questions are not *cited*, only *mentioned*, whereas the respondent's answers, with the help of quotation marks, the inclusion of pauses, hesitations and unfinished sentences, are made as colloquial as possible:

*Question: How do you feel in this neighbourhood?*  
*'Wonderful.'*

*Question: Do you feel accepted as an Antillean?  
 'As Antillean ..(pause) hmmm, how shall I put it, yes.. yes.'*  
 (42 years, two children) (van Dijke et al. 1990: 43)

Or the questions asked are indicated with the help of indirect speech:

*On the question whether she would ever want to get to work, she answers: 'Yes, I am not intending to grow old as a housewife...'*  
 (Von Benda-Beckman & Leatemia-Tomatata 1992: 98)

It is also possible to phrase a question as if something has become a puzzle to the author in the course of writing, followed by statements from respondents that could be regarded as answers to such a question in hindsight:

*An obvious question is: if gossip influences the lives of the girls so much [...] why don't they keep aloof from it? [...] Of course, this thought does sometimes enter the minds of some girls: 'Woman, don't give a shit for other people!' were Gülten's clear words to her mother.*

(De Vries 1987: 88)

### 3.2.2 An absent presence

Whereas the author thus can be written out as actor on the scenes of investigation, at the same time, s/he is very much present as the ultimate authority who structures the text. A closer reading of the observations and descriptions given shows that these are rarely wholly neutral or (morally/politically) innocent. Often, they are infused with 'authorial' values.

Such values may pop up in the use of particular terms and words, which are suggested to merely *describe* certain facts and developments but at the same time carry subtle associations of approval or disapproval. Thus, the conclusion that "the girls rather seem to be in the stage that they *start to realize* that not everything connected to 'freedom' for a girl is unattainable or 'Dutch' or immoral" (De Vries 1987: 180), is more than a mere observation. As the description of a *learning* process, it also contains an *approval* of the development observed. The girls, so the author suggests here, are heading the right way: they are gradually learning to see through prejudice, and come to gain insight into how things 'really' are. Likewise, when discussing the views of Turkish girls on male and female sexuality, the author uses words as 'amazement' and 'shock' to describe her feelings when she is confronted with what she sees as the defense of a downright double morality. And she allows the reader a glimpse of the proceedings in one such conversation: "So that means, I say hesitantly, that there have to be two kinds of women, whereas all men... 'If a lady is not bad, a man cannot come near her', so she interrupts me" (De Vries 1987: 154). The author's disagreement with her protagonists also comes to the fore when she writes that the girls and women 'legitimize' the greater premarital sexual freedom for men in different ways, for instance by reference to their 'supposedly' greater sexual need (154). And she has to draw her conclusion reluctantly: "Whatever *one* may think of the internalization of the double moral standard with Turkish women and girls, it is a fact that they themselves *seem* to have no, or hardly any problems with it" (155) [my emphasis,

bp]. The girls' views clearly stand in glaring contrast to the author's own.

A second way in which norms and values may creep into the empirical descriptions, lies in the use of categorizations and typologies, so characteristic of the majority of Dutch minority research.

Van den Berg-Eldering's study is exemplary in this respect. When re-describing the general characteristics of the group of 45 families that constituted her sample of Moroccan families in the Netherlands, the author distinguishes her informants in a variety of different subgroups or categories. The list is remarkably long.<sup>13</sup> Some distinctions seem quite trivial and innocent. Others are of a more evaluative nature. This holds especially for the most decisive and encompassing distinction made by Van den Berg-Eldering, i.e. the distinction between the *traditional*, the *transitional* and the *modern* type of family (83).<sup>14</sup> This tripartition can easily be put on a hierarchical scale of developmental stages, heading toward the modern family - once even literally referred to as the 'developed' type (82).

The distinction between traditional and modern is adopted in several later studies (see for instance Risvanoglu-Bilgin et al. 1986, and Mungra 1990), but it is also criticized for its suggestion that "families would only be able to develop in one direction" (Hoek & Kret 1992: 130). Hoek and Kret therefore come up with an alternative, by discerning *four* kinds of Moroccan families: the *ambitious*, the *assertive*, the *ambivalent* and the *reluctant* type. The authors emphasize that, of course, reality is more complex and dynamic, and that these must be considered ideal-types, theoretical constructs only. Neither would they want to suggest a hierarchical relationship between these types, or a desirable development from one type to the other. Still, it appears quite difficult, if not impossible, to evoke a picture of the kind of family referred to without any indication of appreciation or disapproval. A description of the father and the mother in an assertive family as 'developed' and 'progressive' people (82-83), relies on the authors' implicit appreciation of their positive attitude vis-à-vis education, career, freedom of choice, particularly for their daughters. And comparisons with the other types of family clearly go in favour of the assertive type: the mother has "*not lost* her independency and freedom of movement, as *happens* frequently to other mothers..." (83), she is "*more equal* to her husband" (83), and the parents, according to the authors, are more 'easy-going' concerning their daughters' contact with boys (84) [emphasis mine, bp]. Value judgements can also be discerned in sentences which distinguish between two characteristics of a family-type with a 'but', 'however', or 'though', suggesting the first mentioned element to be consistent with their ambitious attitude, whereas the second would stand in contrast to it: "The parents allow their children to speak out [*mondigheid*], *but* ultimately they also expect respectful behaviour of their children, irrespective of their gender" (83); "Thus, girls are allowed to talk with boys they know from school, *but* not with boys they do not know" (84); "In each other's presence, mother and daughter stress that they have a confidential relationship, *though* the daughter *admits* that, in the case of conflicts, the mother has the last say" (85) [emphasis mine, bp].

In descriptions like these, the authors inscribe their own position vis-à-vis the Moroccan families they got acquainted with. When, for instance, the reader is informed that "[t]he parents in this category [the ambitious type, bp] talk easily about what they consider important in the upbringing of their children", this indicates that the parents in question were apparently experienced as such by the authors in their role as researchers. As accessible subjects, both willing and able to talk about their views on education, these parents probably were pleasant respondents to work with. Almost by definition, this cannot be said of representatives of the reluctant family type. The descriptions of this type of Moroccan family testify to the problems these families caused the authors as researchers. Not only did they show 'reluctance' towards 'modern' Dutch values (the parents are characterized as 'conservative' and 'traditional' (115), they also

were reluctant to the researchers - as these experienced at their cost: "Matters of upbringing are hardly under discussion, and when *a third party* inquires after it, *as in this research*, it can be considered an undesirable interference from *outsiders*" (115). The following seemingly general description hardly conceals the irritation and humiliation the researchers must have felt during this meeting: "In these families, *one* may meet sons, sometimes ten, eleven years old, who, when the father is not at home, station themselves before *the visitors*, with - not very politely phrased - questions concerning the reasons for the visit" (119) [emphasis mine, bp].

The large body of texts which belong to the genre of emancipation focus on the social, economic and cultural deprivation of ethnic minority groups. Most studies concentrate on the problems of a particular subgroup, such as single mothers, run-away youngsters, victims of sexual violence, teenage girls. Some convey a picture of the everyday life and perspectives of one group, while others focus on an issue, such as people's position on the labour market, practices of sexuality and practices of birth-control. The texts share an interest in the self-realization and emancipation of individuals, independent of their racial or ethnic identity. At the same time, the projects are remarkably loyal to existing ethnic and racial dividing lines. The majority of studies focus on one particular ethnic group, such as the Creole, Hindustani, Antillean, Turkish or Moroccan minority. South-Moluccan, Chinese, and Dutch East-Indian citizens also receive some attention, but their situation is clearly considered less problematic.<sup>15</sup> Most studies are carried out at governmental request and subsidized by governmental bodies. Written within an academic setting, their authors are often supervised by a committee of established scientific researchers and experts from the field. Inscribed readers of the texts are policy makers, politicians, managers, social workers, teachers - in short: everyone professionally engaged in the integration of ethnic minority groups in Dutch society.

Within the genre of emancipation, a gradual development can be discerned towards a greater concern to let respondents 'speak for themselves'. This may create a tension within a text, because criteria of scientificity (gathering reliable data, drawing generally valid conclusions) are liable to suffer from the shift in emphasis to more literary criteria, such as a story's power to appeal to the imagination of the readers by bringing its protagonists to life, evoking feelings, and conjuring up images. As indicated, each account finds its own more or less felicitous solution: by seeking a certain balance between personal and impersonal narration, between direct quotes and interpretative comments, between quantification and qualification, between showing the unique and particular, and concluding about the categorical and universal. In the end, the hierarchical difference between the author (i.e. the researcher) and the protagonists (i.e. the 'objects' of research) remains intact. This shows in the textual positioning of the author: whether as a 'present absence' or as an 'absent presence', the stories ultimately are unmistakably told from a particular, authorial perspective.

#### 4. Different stories

As a whole, the texts of the three genres discussed here share a strong involvement with and concern for the position of ethnic minority groups. The accounts are embedded within particular views of the nature and dynamics of power relationships in the Netherlands. Within the genres of denunciation and empowerment, the stories are structured by (mixtures of) the critical frameworks of Marxism, feminism, anti-racism or black consciousness. They start from assumptions regarding the existence of deep-seated relationships of dominance, to be changed through *collective* strategies of resistance. Texts within the genre of

emancipation stand closer to the social-liberal tradition of political thought. For authors within this genre, the autonomy, independence and responsibility of *individuals* are both their starting point and ultimate aim. Accordingly, governmental and other social institutions should create the conditions under which individuals are able to develop their personal capacities.

The foregoing readings show that there are other stories to tell about Dutch interethnic society than the story of *Understanding Everyday Racism*, i.e. the story of the inescapable conflict between 'black' and 'white'. But how are we to assess the value of these denunciatory, empowering or emancipatory stories in terms of situated knowledges?

To begin with, my analyses of the narrative structures of these stories indicate how they can be perceived as situated knowledges in the *descriptive* sense of the term. This shows, first, in the construction of the authorial position and the inscribed relationship between the author and her protagonists. The situatedness of an account can be circumscribed by answering questions such as: does the author pose as a personal or an impersonal narrator of the story, does she speak about, with or against her protagonists, are protagonists presented as unique individuals or as representatives of a particular type, and which devices are used to convey their feelings and perspectives: free indirect speech, indirect or direct quotes? Secondly, the situatedness of an account can also be read in the inscribed relationship between the author and her audience: does the author speak to, with or against her readers, are the inscribed readers benevolent or reluctant receivers, do they share the authorial point of view or do they have to be won over, are they to be impressed, castigated, inspired, moved or silenced? Finally, the situatedness of these stories (still: in the descriptive sense of the term) lies in the kind of performative impact they may have, i.e. in the ways they might repeat, consolidate, undermine or transform the realities they describe. Here, again, narrative devices may play a constitutive role. Thus, I argued how Soetens' use of free indirect speech inaugurates the position of her protagonists as not-yet-fully subject, whereas other stories, by means of for instance a textual closeness between the author's and the protagonist's voice, reinforce the 'authoritative' position of the latter, thus contributing to the empowerment of the marginalized group the protagonist represents.

The stories presented in this chapter offer different alternatives to the one script of racial conflict reiterated in *Understanding Everyday Racism*. Still, these stories also convey situated knowledges in the *normative* sense of the term. That is, they can be conceived of as accounts of reality from a particular standpoint, insofar as they side with the marginalized. The genres of denunciation, empowerment and emancipation respectively side with victimized, resisting, and disadvantaged groups within Dutch society. But this also implies that oppositional frameworks play a constitutive role in most of these accounts, such as working-class/capitalism or victim/perpetrator in the genre of denunciation, marginal/dominant, foreign/Dutch, or black-and-migrant/white-and-indigenous in the genre of empowerment, and underdeveloped/developed or traditional/modern in the genre of emancipation. In their realist self-understanding, the narrative structures of these accounts appear to perpetuate these oppositional structures. Only texts of the genre of empowerment, in their breaking through of (stereo)typical generic boundaries and their affirmation of diversity, give a glimpse of the more *visionary* dimension oppositional knowledge practices might engender. Their straight forward celebratory tone, however, narrows down the visionary dimension of situated knowledges to a one-dimensional, utopian mode of speech. In my view, situated knowledges would amount to more multi-dimensional, multi-vocal writing practices. Their situatedness would not be confined to existing racial, ethnic or sexual boundaries. Rather than merely subscribing to such established 'party' lines, they emphasize the need for deconstruction of these lines. Their perspectives are not 'partisan', but truly 'partial': they would simultaneously *side with* the marginalized, with those who do not

fit in, and emphasize the unfinished, fragmented, heterogeneous character of both the world, and stories about the world.

## Notes

1. Soetens had become acquainted with the circumstances in which foreign workers had to live since she started giving lessons in Dutch language to Spanish workers in Rotterdam in 1962. She was the life and soul of the Rotterdam Action Committee Pro Guest workers until its premature discontinuance in 1993 (see Schouten 1994: 79-89 for an interview with Soetens).

2. In this paragraph, some of the key-concepts from narratology are introduced which I think are helpful in elucidating the narrative dimensions of the text at hand. On the whole, I rely on Mieke Bal's introduction to narratology (Bal 1990 [5th ed]). But, as a philosopher, I am quite a beginner in the field. Therefore, and for the sake of clarity, I will make a selective and idiosyncratic use of Bal's much more elaborate and sophisticated narratological set of analytic tools. To begin with, I will use the notions of *protagonist* (compare Bal's 'hero'), *character* and *actor* interchangeably to refer to the people who figure as the 'objects' of research in the text at hand. Secondly, I will use the term *author* when referring to the one who appears in the text as the subject of knowledge, as the one who, ultimately, structures the story. With this choice, I explicitly distance myself from the radically structuralist perspective of narratology, and its concomitant insistence to speak only of the 'narrator', or even better, 'the narrating instance' as a technical position inscribed in, and resulting from the text. By using the notion of the 'author', even alternating it with a proper name, I indicate that, for the purpose of my analyses, the *technical* difference between the 'narrator' and the 'author' is less relevant than finding out how an actual author (a journalist, a researcher) positions him/herself in the text. Thus s/he can speak as an impersonal or a personal narrator, from an omniscient or a limited perspective, as a visible actor on the scene of investigation or as an invisible recorder of the words of other actors, etc.. At those points in my analyses where these distinctions are not the focus of my concern, I will speak of the 'author' - to emphasize both the 'authority' and power implied in that term, and the fact that, no matter how much we are 'subjected' in and by discourse, in the end, there is an embodied, situated, real-life subject, responsible for the story told.

3. About free indirect speech, Bronzwaer notes that although the character does not speak, possibly not even thinks the lines in question, s/he somehow 'feels' them: "[T]he sentence represents what takes place, semi-consciously and hardly articulated, in the mind of the personage" (Bronzwaer 1977: 235). In another introduction to literary theory, the ambiguity effect of this figure of speech is emphasized: the reader cannot be sure whether the personage actually thinks or feels the thoughts or feelings described, or whether the narrator merely gives an interpretation of gestures, facial expressions and the like. Free indirect speech would therefore be particularly suitable for ironic texts (Van Luxemburg et al. 1987: 172-173). In the case of Soetens, irony is certainly not intended. On the contrary, her use of free indirect speech stresses the seriousness of the feelings given word, and adds to the dramatic impact of the stories.

4. Bal would probably speak of Soetens' characters as subjects of *focalization*. She prefers this term to the notion of perspective, because the latter does not distinguish clearly between *who sees* and *who speaks*. In the stories at hand, as readers, we see with the protagonists, but they do not speak to us (Bal 1990: 113-116).

5. In another context, when speaking as the president of the Action Committee Pro Guest workers, Soetens emphasizes how important it is that "[f]oreign youngsters with their own identity learn to function as part of the militant working-class, with the ultimate goal of a just society without exploitation of one human being by the other." Again, it is the author who, as their articulate representative, decides for the guest workers what *counts as* their empowerment, namely

their identification as “part of the militant working-class” (Soetens 1979: 67). Notably, in classical ethnographic texts, the use of free indirect speech has been extremely popular, especially when it came to ascribing subjective states to cultures (“the Nuer think...”) As James Clifford notes, “ethnographers aspire to a Flaubertian omniscience that moves freely throughout a world of indigenous subjects” (Clifford 1988: 48).

6. A couple of years later, another photobook by Ariëns and Van Manen appeared. This one wanted to give a picture of the Dutch women’s movement in the 1980s. Next to sections on abortion, therapy, sexual violence, it also pays attention to ‘female caravan dwellers’ [*woonwagenbewoonsters*] and Surinamese women, indicating that within these (minority) groups women had also started their own organizations, initiating gatherings and activities to improve their position. The book furthermore contains some scattered pictures of women of ethnic minority groups (Ariëns and Van Manen 1982).

7. Essed also published a collection of articles (on affirmative action, black and migrant women and intercultural management) under the title of *Diversity* [Diversiteit] (see Essed 1994a, and Essed 1996a [English edition]). In the light of her earlier work on everyday racism, which I typified in the previous chapter as a mixture of the genres of denunciation and empowerment, Essed’s later propagation of ‘diversity’ signifies an important shift in political perspective. Whereas in *UER*, talk of ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’ is still denounced as cover-up for the perpetuation of everyday racism, in the later work these same terms are focal in the appraising descriptions of anti-racist and affirmative action projects. Still, she warns against those forms of multiculturalism that would go only ‘skin-deep’ (Essed 1994b: 243).

8. The title of this collection of portraits of foreign women, *Van daar*, both means ‘from there’ and ‘that’s why’ (Van Lippe-Biesterfeld 1986).

9. The city-council elections in which these women participated took place in 1986. They were the first for which ‘foreign’ residents were conferred active and passive franchise, provided they disposed of a valid staying permit and had lived in the Netherlands for more than five years. As a result, 48 persons of foreign descent were elected, seven of whom women. Among these 48 many were actually no ‘foreigners’ at all, as they were already naturalized as Dutch citizens. For this reason, the group preferred to organize itself under the denominator of ‘black and migrant councillors’ (Goudt 1989).

10. For a study that likewise focuses on the relationship between participation and cultural orientation, but now for Turkish families, see Risvanoglu-Bilgin et al. 1986.

11. The second author of the book, Zarouali, is also the author of several youth novels. Main character in these novels is Amel, who endures all the typical trials and tribulations of a Moroccan-Dutch girl. The novels are written from the perspective of Amel, in the first person. With their focus on the tensions between romantic love and respect for one’s parents, or between ‘Dutch’ and ‘Moroccan’ sexual morals, they have a high dramatic impact. At the same time, they are full of everyday considerations: Amel, for instance, often gives detailed information on the clothes she and other people are wearing. All in all, it is no wonder that Zarouali’s novels are extremely popular among Moroccan-Dutch youngsters: they offer ample opportunity for young readers to identify themselves with the protagonist (see Zarouali 1989; Zarouali 1993).

12. The remark that she generally chose the side of her informants tells very little of course. Van den Berg-Eldering for instance notes how especially female Moroccan workers are gradually becoming unpopular with employers because of their frequent absence due to sickness - which she imputes to their overload of work at home. The author then puts the following dilemma before the reader. Called to the help by a Moroccan woman who was about to be fired

in her period of probation because of pregnancy, should she let the short-term, individual interest prevail or give precedence to the long-term, collective interest? (1979: 28) The author does not indicate what her interpretations of short-term and long-term interests in these case would be, nor does she give a clue about her actual response to the woman concerned. But the suggestion clearly is that to serve the short-time interest would consist of helping the woman keep her job, whereas it would be in the long-time interest of female Moroccan workers that the woman is fired. From my contemporary, feminist perspective, however, it would not be their *culture*, but their *gender* which binds these workers, and I would consider their long-time, collective interest served best if pregnancy would not be a justified reason for dismissal in the first place - a rule which in fact has now been laid down by Dutch law.

13. Thus, the author discerns categories such as: 'born countrymen', 'urban countrymen' and 'townsmen' (32); (seven) categories of motives for family reunion, like the category of migrants who decided to take their wife with them to the Netherlands before the marriage (59), a subcategory of which contracted a second marriage (60), or the category of whom the left-behind wives protested the social restraints imposed upon them (63); groups from several regions in Morocco: from the Rif area (*Riffijnen*), from the regions around Tanger and Tetouan, or from a region in the Southwest (Chleuh) (91); first and second generation migrants (155); three types of communities of families, based on relationships of kinship, regional descent and/or friendship (160); categories of means of pressure exerted on migrants by their relatives in Morocco to meet their liabilities (220), etc., etc..

14. Interestingly enough, these categories were originally used, so Van den Berg-Eldering explains, to typify *heads* of families, that is: types of *fathers* (82-83).

15. For very different reasons, however: whereas Dutch-East-Indian people are considered to have been extremely eager at assimilating to Dutch culture, the Chinese form a closed, self-supporting community. Hence, these groups are not 'problematic' insofar as they cause Dutch society little problems. The Moluccans are a completely different story: they came to the Netherlands in the early fifties, after the declaration of Indonesian independence, as political refugees. Whereas they anticipated to return to a free *Republik Maluku Selatan* soon, for a long period Dutch government did nothing to provide for any structural integration of the Moluccans into Dutch society. It took some violent political actions by a group of Moluccan youngsters from the second generation, with several people killed on both sides, to draw attention to the problematic and neglected situation of this group. Hirschmüller et al. notes that the Moluccan actions of (train)hijacking, kidnapping and executions in 1975 and 1977 constituted an important, but soon forgotten impulse for Dutch government to develop an explicit policy regarding minorities and to take issues of participation more seriously (Hirschmüller et al. 1988).

The former guest workers from the Mediterranean area (Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal) are the least investigated groups. The reason for this might be, what one author calls their 'silent success': after an initial phase of marginality, they either adapted quite easily to Dutch society, or returned to their home country. In line with the emancipatory view, Flip Lindo explains the difference between these groups and those of the Moroccan and Turkish population by reference to the higher educational level of the mothers in the Mediterranean families, and a more open attitude towards the education of their daughters (Lindo 1994).