

## Chapter 8

---

### Heterogeneity: stories of difference

In this chapter, I will read a number of texts pertaining to the Dutch minorities discourse, which in my view stand out for the way they call attention to the actual *heterogeneity* of the lives, histories and perspectives of members of different ethnic groups in the Netherlands, including and in relation to those of the indigenous Dutch. It is tempting to assemble these texts under the denominator of yet another 'genre' of discourse, were it not that their differences are no less significant than their similarities. In these texts, it is not so much the differences between for instance 'white' and 'black' which are stressed, but rather differences *within*, and/or commonalities *across* ethnic boundaries. Ethnic and racial identities are perceived as matters of social and discursive constructions: although fairly fixed and stable, they are always 'in the making'. They offer room for their own undoing and transformation. This constructivist angle makes it difficult to position these texts within the familiar spectrum of political positions. Elements of the denunciatory, emancipatory and empowerment-genre can be discerned, but neither of them predominates. Incidents of racism, examples of discrimination, stories of exploitation are to be found, but they do not lead to one particular culprit. Some protagonists are successful, while others find themselves in the margins of society - but no one is measured according to the yard-stick of emancipation. The increase of actual ethnic and racial diversity in society is emphasized, but it is not appraised or celebrated as a good in itself. And whereas the individuality of the people portrayed prevails, they do not serve as exemplary pioneers for one particular (ethnic) group.

Although there is not one clear-cut standpoint from which these stories are told, as I will show, emphasizing heterogeneity does not imply a lapse into relativism either.

#### 1. Mine's curls

The generic image of the 'foreign woman', as sketched in Van Manen's *Women as guests* (see chapter 7, section 1.2) is approvingly and extensively quoted in a book published two years later: *Aysel and the others* [Aysel en de anderen], by Papatya Nalbantoglu. Van Manen's image is referred to here as a 'striking' description of the enormous transition women had to make in migrating from the Turkish countryside to the more urban environment of the Netherlands (Nalbantoglu 1981).<sup>1</sup> The author of these portraits is Papatya Nalbantoglu, whose own life story, as also the story of a Turkish woman, is shortly mentioned in the introduction. But her life differs significantly from the image of the generic 'foreign woman' outlined by Van Manen. Nalbantoglu stems from a Turkish upper class family, lived in big cities such as Istanbul and Izmir, and was raised in a sheltered environment and a liberal atmosphere. Only after she married a Dutchman, moved to the Netherlands and started working as a Turkish language teacher, was she confronted with the poverty, illiteracy and traditional values of many of her fellow-countrymen.

Nalbantoglu's portraits give a vivid image of the variety of problems that particularly Turkish

women and youngsters of the so-called second generation have to deal with.<sup>2</sup> Many of these problems are also marked by issues of gender, such as domestic violence, forced marriage, and the isolation and illiteracy of the first generation wives and mothers. Discrimination, conflicting cultural demands, Dutch ignorance, failures in educational career, unemployment - they make up for tragic life stories, disillusion, severe crises and despair. The author especially lashes out at the (scientific) 'experts', who merely indulge in theoretical exercises and don't have a clue of what is really going on in the practice of everyday life. She is particularly concerned about the possibility for immigrants to hold on to their own cultural identity, and expresses outrage about the "arrogance and complacency" (Nalbantoglu 1981: 8) of Dutch social workers and welfare institutions concerning their lack of respect for other cultures and their self-evident assumption of the superiority of Western norms. She believes that one can only do something useful for Turkish women if one does not push them in the emancipatory direction of integration, but recognizes their commitment to their own culture, their own people, their own men. Nalbantoglu's stories may be read as the accounts of an experiential expert, one who gained her insights from practice rather than theory. Moreover, as a Turkish woman, she has better access to the Turkish migrant population than any Dutch person could have, no matter how well-meaning he or she may be.

In the epilogue of a next book, *The curls of Mine* [De krullen van Mine], Nalbantoglu states that she tried to analyse situations "from my perspective as a Turkish migrant and as a teacher" (1985: 279). That she indeed takes on such double perspective shows in the ways in which the author constructs her own position within the text. Sometimes she identifies with the 'we' of Dutch society, particularly the Dutch educational system, and speaks of 'our' responsibility regarding Turkish and Moroccan pupils. At other times, she identifies with the 'we' of immigrant people, for instance when she recalls her own experiences with discrimination and indifference. Thus, the author takes on the position of a mediator between Turkish people and the autochthonous Dutch.<sup>3</sup> When appealing to Dutch society, particularly its educational system, to take on more responsibility, she speaks from the position of a (Dutch) teacher: "To analyse the migrant parents or their families from behind a magnifying-glass does not make us less guilty in our responsibility concerning the deplorable situation they are in. They do not belong behind a magnifying-glass. They belong to us, with us,..." (281). While in the concluding lines of her epilogue, Nalbantoglu explicitly speaks as a member of the immigrant community: "As migrants we should continue to give our comments and our critique, as we should also participate in a militant way in the building of future Dutch society. This we owe to our common history" (283).

One of Nalbantoglu's stories concerns Mine, a fourteen year old Turkish girl, whom the author gets to know in her Turkish language classes. Mine is known as a 'difficult' pupil: obstinate, short-tempered, inaccessible. Their first conversation is full of little misunderstandings. Finally, Mine bursts out in tears: she feels misunderstood so often. She blames her own 'clumsiness': she can't find the right words to say what she really means, not in Dutch, and not in Turkish. Her teacher tries to reassure her. As Mine starts taking Turkish language lessons, Nalbantoglu gradually comes to know more about her. Two years ago, a younger sister drowned. Since then, her mother is very confused. Mine took over responsibilities in the household, including the care for her two brothers and younger sister. When her father got unemployed a year later, it was arranged that Mine could attend school again. But the situation remains demanding: during the day time, her father watches over his wife. When Mine comes home, she is expected to relieve him of this and other household tasks. At school, problems with Mine reach a climax when she verbally abuses a teacher, even slaps him in the face. Nalbantoglu is asked to mediate. During the ensuing talk, Mine opens up. She is full of disappointment and bitterness: although all her life she has done her utmost

in trying to adjust to the Dutch ways, she feels discriminated against and harassed out of school. Out of frustration she bites her nails, almost mutilating her fingers. She also has made it a habit to literally tear her hair: the author reports how Mine shows her the bald spots on her head. Disappointed in the (Dutch) teachers she thought she could really trust, Mine is determined to leave school. Her teacher understands that there is no point in arguing. A couple of months later, it turns out that Mine works in a clothing factory - twelve hours a day. In a final meeting, she shows as embittered as before: "Try again, what? Things stay the same anyway. I am a Turkish migrant and I will always remain that, in spite of my mastery of the language and my acquired Dutch manners. I cannot be one of them anyway" (187-188).

Most of the information in the story about Mine is conveyed through reports of the conversations between the author and her protagonists. The first does not always understand Mine, sometimes doubts whether her assessments of a situation are right. Thus, the author can hardly imagine that the teachers, whom she knows as very motivated and committed colleagues, behaved in such a negative way towards Mine as she claims. This, however, does not lead her to doubt Mine's credibility. Holding on to her loyalty and understanding for Mine, she rather takes her own disbelief as an indication for the extent of Mine's disappointment: "It seemed unlikely to me, if not impossible that Sjors had meant what he said, or what Mine claimed he had said. The greater had to be Mine's disappointment and disillusion to experience that someone whom she appreciated so much [...] let her down at such a critical moment" (85). The author thus leaves it an open question who and what exactly should be blamed for Mine's misery. The narrative structure of the account reminds readers that there are different assessments of the situation, and that there is not one simple, ultimate 'truth' behind these interpretations. Thus, there are different minor voices resonating in the text, which show how Mine has to deal with a variety of conflicting demands made upon her. There are the Dutch teachers, who try but fail to understand, there is Mine's mother's, who out of feelings of guilt asks for more freedom for Mine, and there is Mine's father, who applauds her choice to get a job and financially support her family. And there are the more dominant voices of the author and the protagonist, Nalbantoglu and Mine. The author puts emphasis on the conceit of scientific experts, on well-meaning but ignorant teachers, the difficulties at Mine's home, and the prevailing double standard which makes no one protest against a girl of school age working 12 hours a day. Mine blames her own 'clumsiness', her inability to express herself in either Dutch or Turkish, and the discriminatory attitude of her Dutch peers and teachers. This multiplicity of voices constitutes the provisional inventory of the many aspects that make up Mine's problematic position. None of the suggestions mentioned is granted with the status of the better or final explanation. But they do agree in their assessment of Mine's situation as deplorable.

Ayhan is another protagonist presented by Nalbantoglu. He is a boy who causes his teachers and parents much trouble because of the many fights he ends up in. To the author, Ayhan's aggression is caused by his experiences with everyday racism. Ayhan is cited several times in his reports of such incidents: "Miss, I am fed up with it, really. It is incredible, the kind of people that live in this neighbourhood. I am abused and kicked at, again and again. Also by boys much smaller than I am" (1985: 112). The author confirms his account by testifying of some of these incidents where she was present. And she adds some of her own experiences with explicitly hostile and discriminatory remarks. When a Dutch colleague who has great difficulties with Ayhan also bursts out against her, belittling her because of her Turkish descent, she concludes: "Now I understood Ayhan much better. I was on my own" (118).

According to Ayhan, however, his problem is not so much a matter of racism, but of his difficult personal character and temper: his older brother deals with nasty people by ignoring them, his sister

bottles it all up, whereas “[m]y problem is that I react. I can't help it, I want to know, feel, think and act. That's life after all. But I am not allowed to! I am not allowed to live according to what I think” (124). Thus, the author and her protagonist, as actors involved in the events related, use different explanatory frameworks to interpret the problems they experience: the first speaks of everyday racism, the latter emphasizes individual character.

These perspectives of course do not exhaust the variety of perspectives from which a story like Ayhan's could be told. They, for instance, are quite different from the interpretation of a like situation from an emancipatory perspective. Thus Van den Berg-Eldering, in her study on Moroccan families in the Netherlands, observes that “[a] Moroccan boy who at school is called a dirty Moroccan by a Dutch pupil, will get his Moroccan friends together to have a scrap” (1978: 116). Here, a similar incident is presented quite differently, namely as an example of ‘aggressive behaviour’ that shows the importance of the concept of ‘honour’ for Moroccan men and boys. According to Van den Berg-Eldering, conflicts between Dutch and Moroccans may easily ‘escalate’, because of the latter's particular commitment to the virtue of honour. The assumption is that certain values, mutual expectations and subsequent behaviours had a clear function and place in the environment of the home country, which they lost after the migration. As a consequence, according to Van den Berg-Eldering, misunderstandings and conflicts arise in meetings with the (Dutch) autochthonous population. From this emancipatory perspective, it is the clash between different cultures which causes Dutch society problems with Moroccan boys.

Hence, there are at least three explanatory frameworks which may be used to explain conflicts between white Dutch and members of other ethnic groups: they may be perceived as cases of *cultural misunderstanding*, as Van den Berg-Eldering does, they may be seen as examples of *everyday racism*, Nalbantoglu's view of the matter, or they may be taken as matters of *personal temperament*, as Ayhan has it. Ayhan's remarks, moreover, call attention to yet another possible explanatory framework, used by none of these interpreters, i.e. the framework of *gender*. His characterization of his sister “bottling it all up”, seems to be consistent with another observation made by Van den Berg-Eldering, namely that Moroccan girls rarely cause the kind of problems boys do.

Nalbantoglu's story about the Turkish girl Sema confirms that picture. Through the years, so Nalbantoglu, Sema lived an exemplary life, being obedient to her parents, working hard at school. Silently she swallowed negative remarks and jokes about Turks, and received compliments about her ability to adjust. Until she suddenly ends up in hospital, after a suicide attempt. It appears she feels torn apart between two worlds, neither understood by her parents, nor by her Dutch teachers. In the dialogues that follow, Nalbantoglu cautiously guides Sema in finding words for her problem: “I tried to explain to her as best as I could that she did not have to choose, but that she had to learn to deal with the differences” (1985: 36). Sema's problem, according to the author, is an identity-problem. It proves that the Dutch policy of integration, in the daily practice of education boils down to forced assimilation. For many children this leads to severe crises of identity, sometimes bringing them at the edge of insanity. As in the case of Sema, who at a certain moment asks: “Who am I, miss? [...] What will become of me?” On which Nalbantoglu reflects: “I don't know what to say, feel helpless. There is no answer, no solution, and besides: she is not the guilty one, she is not the one on trial... Who should be on trial here, are the institutions, family, school, society that only made demands on Sema, without taking her seriously, without seeing her as a human being” (38).

Van den Berg-Eldering, when addressing the situation of Moroccan girls, also speaks of their silent adjustment. But her explanation, as in the case of the boys who enter into fights, focuses on aspects of culture and processes of (cultural and social) genderization. For girls “are used to live in situations

where they are the inferior, and apart from that: aggressive behaviour by girls is judged negatively” (1978: 136). While Van den Berg-Eldering does not perceive their inclination to adjust as problematic - after all, it does not lead to open conflicts or annoying behaviour as in the case of the boys -, Nalbantoglu’s story shows that behind such an obedient and resigned outlook many problems may be hidden. And she does not explain these by reference to a different culture, but again points an accusing finger at an ignorant and careless environment.<sup>4</sup>

Now, what distinguishes Nalbantoglu’s accounts from the denunciatory stories discussed in the previous chapter? For one thing, Nalbantoglu’s accounts relate of her personal involvement with her protagonists and the things that happen to them. Unlike the omniscient narrator of Soetens’ dramatic portraits, the sober documentalist staged by Van Manen and Kagie, the subservient interviewers in the stories of empowerment, or the modest witnesses in the emancipatory studies, the author here does not recede into the background of the stories. On the contrary, she figures as an important actor in the events narrated. She listens, gives advice, or mediates. She interferes and takes a stand. Sometimes her actions have a decisive influence on the course of events, at other times she has to watch helplessly, and can only report how things unfold before her eyes. It is the kind of involvement which also appears in Stella Braam’s denunciatory reports on the netherside of the labour market. But there is little of Braam’s sobriety in Nalbantoglu’s voice. And the moral of the stories is not straightforward and unambiguously denunciatory. Few facts go without saying. On the one hand, Nalbantoglu vents her accusations, feelings of anger, frustration and indignation against specific persons and institutions. But her stories also express a sense of the tragic, of the impossibility to pinpoint one guilty party, or to suggest that there are simple and unproblematic solutions. Regularly, the author expresses her feelings of uncertainty and doubt. She indicates that she does not know what to do, or speaks of exhaustion, of being ‘fed up’ with the whole situation. Finally, Nalbantoglu’s stories contain significant amounts of direct dialogue, conversations between the author and the main protagonists in the drama. Because of this staging of different voices, different perceptions of the situation at hand are presented next to one another. The author’s voice sometimes comments on them, by explaining them, or putting them into (her own) perspective. But more often, she refrains from taking this authoritative stance, thereby endowing her protagonists’ voices with an authority of their own.

The multivocality and dispersal of the authorial voice in Nalbantoglu’s stories is what makes me want to distinguish it from the other denunciatory stories, which are organized according to a more homogeneous framework. It’s heterogeneous aspects, however, certainly do not detract from the passionate tone. Thus, in *The curls of Mine*, the image of Mine’s curls, as they are left behind on the red floral carpet of the living room, serves as a forceful *j’accuse* to whomever and whatever it may concern.

## 2. White, brown & black

*Colour* is the friendly title of a collection of interviews which make up a kaleidoscopic portrait of, as its subtitle goes, *White, brown and black in the Netherlands* (Schouten 1994).<sup>5</sup> Different ethnic, social, cultural and gender identities, an amalgam of worldviews from down-right racist to militantly anti-racist, from Muslim to Marxist, and a variety of characters, such as the owners of a coffeeshop, a single working mother, an anti-racist feminist, and a recently converted Moroccan Muslim, pass in review.

Each portrait, after a short introduction by the author, consists of an uninterrupted monologue (or dialogue) by the protagonist(s). People tell their stories literally in their own words, however inadequate their command of the Dutch language. It is as if they talk to the reader directly, without the help of an intermediary. The sobriety of the organization of the texts adds to the documentary-effect: the portraits suggest to merely register reality as it is.

Nevertheless, a particular representation of the world, however documentary or realistic, will include a particular view of that reality. So, what view of Dutch reality is *Colour* offering us? In a short prologue and epilogue, the author provides some guidelines concerning how to read these portraits. He for instance states that “[t]hat is the way I listened to all these people: not to their right or wrong, but to their poetry. What I wanted to hear was the music of the Netherlands, all dissonants included” (1). Schouten defends his choice for not correcting the ungrammatical language of some of his interviewees with the argument that ‘immigrant-Dutch’ often is more creative and evocative than so-called ‘good’ Dutch: “The immigrants shake up the Dutch language as a bed that is being aired” (280). Put vividly, in these remarks the author dismisses a *moralistic* perception of reality in favour of a more *literary* approach. The concomitant image of ‘dissonants’ suggests a mild acceptance of voices that are ‘off key’, of the inevitable weird chords that are assumed to sound in any performance of a complex, experimental piece of music. In my reading, in its construction of the Dutch multi-racial society as something given, *Colour* constitutes an *affirmation* of Dutch diversity. It is testimony to promising interracial relationships, creative cultural compromise, pragmatic solutions, but also to nasty conflicts, wrecked lives, frustrating experiences. As such, it does not only celebrate racial and cultural diversity as the source for dramatic and ‘colourful’ stories, it also establishes this diversity as an indisputable and inevitable matter of fact.

The narrative devices used to achieve this documentary effect produce a poetic kind of realism. It is a realism that does not turn away from the conflicts, frustrations and anger that people experience in situations of fundamental transformation. But these difficulties are presented, not as the ‘evils’ of a supposedly racist society, but as peculiar to a society in transition, and, more particularly, as the inevitable consequences of an open and democratic society. As such, the realism of *Colour* effectively dampens too enthusiastically embraced feelings of utopian optimism. Still, as one reviewer of the book phrased it, the stories regularly succeed in arousing the hope for a truly multicultural society (Peters 1994).

### 2.1. *Skilful arrangements*

Schouten’s commitment to realism shows in the complete erasure of his own role as interviewer from the texts, in the author’s ‘present absence’, as I named it earlier. It also shows in the author’s ‘absent presence’, i.e. in the use of particular narrative devices which help to achieve the afore mentioned documentary effect - one of which precisely is the erasure of the voice of the interviewer. In his ‘absent presence’, the author of *Colour* comes to the fore as a skilful arranger who orchestrates his different voices in a well-considered manner.

Thus, the book opens with a section in which the reader is confronted with a host of racist utterances, followed by five other sections which give the floor to people from the former colonies, to guest workers, to refugees and to ‘mixed’ couples. The latter sections function as a powerful counterpoise against the first. Whereas the opening voice comes from an old lady in Amsterdam who blames immigrants for the deterioration of her neighbourhood, the protagonist who is granted the last word in the book strikes quite a different note: this young Israeli student optimistically and with confidence aspires to

a career in Dutch politics - becoming the mayor of Amsterdam sounds like a good idea to her: "I really feel part of this city, of life here, I feel like an *Amsterdammer* and so really never pitiful. Yes, I belong here" (270).

The composition of the sections themselves is likewise carefully arranged. The first section, as already mentioned, starts with what could be called the stereotypical voice of Dutch racism. Whereas the voices that close off this section are those of a Dutch-Surinamese couple who run an Amsterdam coffee-shop, and who insist on mutual respect among their ethnically mixed clientele.

Though the word 'racism' is part of the vocabulary of many of his protagonists, the author himself carefully avoids it. We get a glimpse of the authorial view of what racism is about in the heading of one section: "'They call her a racist, but I think that she is right' or: how the Netherlands started to feel uncomfortable" (9). This quite charitable view of racism as an expression of uneasiness is reinforced by the voices of non-white protagonists, some of whom appear also very able to vent stereotypical judgements. The comment 'They call her a racist, but...' for instance is made by a young Moroccan woman, Latifa Oumlil, referring to a Dutch woman who felt so needled by the anti-social behaviour of her immigrant neighbours, that Latifa can understand why the woman changed from an amiable neighbour into a "brute of a woman" (36).

On the whole, Schouten's stories make quick work of the associations that usually go with familiar categorical distinctions. Thus, Belgin Inal tells about the disastrous experience of her marriage with a Dutch boy whom she had met during his vacation in Turkey. Her father initially opposed to the wedding, but let her leave for the Netherlands anyhow. There she soon discovers that her husband is from a poor and backward family. The couple has to live with his parents, authoritarian folks who check on her every day. And they expect gratitude - not realizing that, in Turkey, coming from an intellectual upper-class family, she had led quite a luxurious life. The story evidently turns upside down stereotypical oppositions associated with Dutch versus Turkish, such as modern versus traditional, literate versus illiterate, or democratic versus authoritarian. It's tragic content notwithstanding, in its undermining of these familiar hierarchical oppositions, it rings a clear oppositional bell. The subsequent portrait immediately (realistically?) tones down this effect. Here, we read the story of an anonymous "pale, nervous, Dutch girl", whose fairy-tale wedding with a rich and handsome Moroccan guy quickly turns into a nightmare because of his distrust, jealousy and violent temperament.

It is as if the arranger of these stories wants to make clear that reality is not one coherent whole - it may contradict stereotypical images, but it may just as well confirm them. *Colour's* heterogeneity consists of its display of both one and the other.

The author, finally, is also present in the arrangement and composition of the protagonists' monologues. The traces of this work of arrangement are carefully erased, but the literary sophistication of the texts indicates that the original interviews are proficiently reworked and recomposed. A variety of narrative devices enhances the impact of the portraits. Many accounts, for instance, start *in medias res* (in the middle), thus pulling the reader right in the heart of a story. The portrait of two elderly women from the former Dutch East Indies opens with an account by one of them:

*It always starts on the same part of the street. It is a dusty road, as you find them in Indonesia: stones, sawa's, a bamboo grove... (60).*

The speaker relates the course of an apparently regularly returning nightmare about the Japanese occupation. Her account is followed by a no less dreamlike memory of the other woman. She remembers a

mysterious Japanese officer who came to visit her and her grandmother every week: he always quietly ordered her to play the piano, listened, formally thanked her afterwards, and left. The fragment ends with the war coming to an end:

*He thanked me and grandmother and she said: are you going back to Nippon? No, he said, I am not going back. What will you do then, asked grandma. Then he said: this...*

*THREES: Harakiri?*

*TITIA: That gesture. Sitting, straddle-legged, boots on (62).*

Titia's imitation of the silent gesture is named, but, in line with the businesslike style of both her story and its protagonist, the Japanese officer, only shortly, indirectly.

As is the case with all portraits in *Colour*, the account of Threes and Titia represents them as both the protagonists and the skilled narrators of their own moving stories. In this case, moreover, the form of the dialogue enables the author to allow the reader a glance on the relationship between the two women. In the following fragment, for instance, Threes relates how, as a child, she was told by the nuns of her boarding school, the so-called 'sisters of love', that her mother had died:

*After five minutes they thought I had cried enough.*

*TITIA: Ah, no, Threes.*

*THREES: Honestly. That one has no mother, that one has no mother either, and that one has no mother either. Period (62).*

It is suggested that Threes and Titia are having this talk among the two of them. Titia's concise comment testifies to feelings of shock and compassion. The passage subtly illustrates how the voices of the two women, as the author had phrased it in his introductory sentences, "warm themselves on each other" (60). But Titia's surprise also indicates that she hears of this painful detail for the first time. The interviewer's voice may be written out of the setting, the dialogue at the same time suggests how important his role is. As a third and interested participant in the conversation, it is his presence which elicited this story.

In the portrait of the Dutch-Turkish couple Ineke and Ali Aksoy, the form of the dialogue in front of an invisible but very present third actor, is particularly telling. Both protagonists alternate between addressing each other, and explaining their relationship to a silent and invisible third. Their account relates of the sometimes difficult, but always pragmatic way in which they compromise between his returned Muslim faith and her secular lifestyle. One topic is where to buy meat:

*ALI: If she buys from Albert Heyn, then...*

*INEKE: You also eat it.*

*ALI: I do not eat that often.*

*INEKE: You always eat it. But he often gets meat from the Dutch butcher*

*(232-233) [emphasis mine, bp]*

At first sight, it may seem that the portraits assembled in *Colour* just *register* the ethnic and political diversity of the Netherlands. But, as I have indicated, their composition betrays the hand of a careful arranger who organized and processed the material of his voices in a well-considered manner. The documentary effect of the text is achieved with the help of particular narrative devices. There is not first a



given reality, which then is documented. Rather, this given reality is a product of textual arrangements. The registrations are not innocent, the protagonists are carefully staged.

A significant quote opens Schouten's book. In a short *in memoriam* for Willem Wittkampf, a Dutch journalist who was exemplary in his use of documentary methods, the author cites jazz musician Lester Young: "Go down to the audience, see what the plumber is thinking, what the carpenter is thinking, so when you go to the stage you can help tell their story" (5). The quote suggests an analogy between the task of a documentalist, such as Wittkampf or Schouten himself, and the task of a performer like Young. It presents a wholly different perception of what it is to represent reality than does the image of the objective knower as a 'modest witness'. It builds on the image of an actor on stage, a musical improviser who seduces his audience in 'believing' him. The quote, moreover, expresses a particular, almost ethical, understanding of the task of a performer: in helping his audience tell their own story, a good performer seduces them by expressing their feelings in a way they themselves would not be able to. Hence, the 'good' documentalist works like a performing artist. He uses the skills of his art to act as the more articulate, the better equipped representative of the people he portrays, of the world they inhabit. As the readers of these portraits live in this same world, in a sense, the stories also offer them a perception of themselves. The documentalist, like the musician, gives his audience back their reality. But he does not do this by holding up a mirror. His realistic portraits return reality in an *altered*, a *processed*, a *stylized* form. Schouten is not secretive about his manipulation of the recorded material. In his epilogue he states that he used what struck him, and rearranged whatever he wanted: "During an interview, you try to win over the man or woman in front of you; in a written story, you try to win over the reader" (279).

## 2.2 A colourful palette

In the end, whether the narrative devices indeed have the intended performative impact, whether they manage to 'win over' the readers, depends on the actual reception of the story. Some of Schouten's narrative choices betray great confidence in both the literary skills and the benevolence of his readers. The protagonists' accounts, as I already indicated, are conveyed literally in their own words. The author has not corrected their language, or made them speak more fluently than they actually did. As a consequence, some of the individuals portrayed speak bad or broken Dutch. Quite a number of readers of *de Volkskrant* criticized Schouten for this: it would have made his respondents look foolish.<sup>6</sup> In the epilogue to the book, the author disagrees. The risk of being misunderstood is part of the job, he claims with his predecessor Wittkampf. Apart from the argument of the aesthetic value of 'immigrant-Dutch', Schouten also puts emphasis on the capability of his readers to judge for themselves. As he sees it, readers otherwise would not understand Abdellatif Chedaoul's complaint that he is rejected for his poor Dutch when he applies for a job [I find his Dutch is actually quite fluent, and certainly more than sufficient for the jobs he applied for, bp]. Neither would one be able to estimate Yardena Shitrit's joy, when she is put in charge of the publicity of a municipal agency [her Dutch is clearly not as good as Chedaoui's, bp]. Schouten here defends his faithfulness to the actual language use of his protagonists with an appeal to the autonomy of the readers: he merely provides the audience with information, they are expected to judge for themselves.

I agree with Schouten that the literal presentation of the protagonists' words often adds to their evocative power. It certainly serves literary purposes. However, Schouten's professed trust in the independent judgement of his readers is remarkably at odds with the image of the author as a skilful and wilful arranger. I sympathize with his democratic and trustful attitude; his wariness of moralism provides

for a multiplicity of outlooks on Dutch multi-ethnic society. But I hesitate to go along with Schouten's suggestion that having protagonists 'speak for themselves' evidently enlarges the possibility for readers to make an adequate judgement. The reverse could just as well be true.

This became especially clear to me, as I came across another, quite differently structured story about a woman who was portrayed by Schouten too. The article concerned also appeared in *de Volkskrant*, sometime before Schouten's series of portraits started (Jungschleger 1993). The protagonist in both stories is Janny van der Staay, a young woman of Ghanaian-Dutch descent. In Schouten's version, as usual, the figure of Van der Staay is introduced with a few pregnant sentences: "Janny van der Staay (26), from Ghana, in her Dutch house has furnished two rooms for her children, whom she left behind in Ghana in 1989, when she went to look for her Dutch relatives" (257). Then follows Van der Staay's monologue. She relates of her history as the acknowledged child of a Dutch businessman and his Ghanaian secretary in Ghana. Her father gave her his name, visited her and her mother every week, and supported them financially. He suddenly died when she was nine years old. As his eldest child, she took part in the rituals surrounding his funeral. Initially, some of her father's business friends took care of her further maintenance and education. By then she had already discovered that Van der Staay had failed to officially register her as his child at the Dutch embassy. Thus, when the informal support stops, and the embassy refuses to take further responsibility, she leaves for Holland. A difficult search for her father's relatives begins. Some welcome her, others are reluctant - although the striking resemblance of this young black woman to her white father is undisputed. Van der Staay's words make clear that she is determined to insist on her right of birth and will fight to legalize her stay in Holland.

In Schouten's arrangement, Van der Staay does not tell her story in this neat chronological order. Her narrative is more associative, her Dutch somewhat broken. For me, this sometimes makes her account unclear. When, for instance, she mentions her father's 'other wife' in Ghana, she says: "So she came here with her husband, they married, illegally and a year later the man died" (262). When I read this the first time, I found myself stumbling over several aspects of the message: where does 'here' refer to? how come, 'illegal'? and who, suddenly, is this so impersonally referred to 'man'? At another moment, she reports to have told one of her Dutch aunts: "[O]ne day I am going to live on you" (261) - which to me sounds as if she intends to sponge on her relatives. Of course, most puzzles can be solved by putting them into context. Misunderstandings can be smoothed away through a benevolent interpretation of Van der Staay's words as the somewhat unhappy formulations of someone who does not fully master Dutch language. But this does not detract from the fact that Schouten's choice to let her tell her 'own' story, does not turn Van der Staay into a more reliable witness of her own experiences, it does not make her a better defender of her own cause. In Schouten's presentation, therefore, democratically left *speaking for herself*, in a sense Van der Staay is also left *on her own*.

Van der Staay's case could have been made much stronger. This is convincingly shown by Jungschleger's portrait. The difference in the use of narrative devices makes for a different performative impact of her story, as far as I am concerned. For one thing, the heading of Jungschleger's article: 'Caught between Ghanaian and Dutch law', immediately provides Van der Staay's story with a, for its Dutch readers, familiar frame of interpretation, i.e. the vocabulary of rights and justice. And, contrary to Schouten, Jungschleger's article does not merely give the floor to Van der Staay herself. The author's own voice is very much present too. She explains, observes, comments, and in doing so, confirms and sustains her protagonist's words. Thus, she explains that Van der Staay's situation is one of conflicting legal systems: while Ghanaian law accepts polygamy, and leaves room for her being a legitimate child of Van der Staay's, according to Dutch law his acknowledgement of her was illegal because he was married to

another woman at that time. Moreover, Jungschleger presents her protagonist as an educated, hard-working and principled person: within her four-year stay, Van der Staay managed to become qualified as a child care worker, and made herself an indispensable colleague in the multicultural neighbourhood of the Bijlmer - information the reader does not get from Schouten's portrait. And whereas in the latter account, Van der Staay seems merely to insist on her rights, in Jungschleger's story, she alternates her right of birth with refusals to be dishonest, wishes to be 'a good citizen' and a dignified protest against the suggestion that she wants to take advantage of anyone. These presentations of self, moreover, are enforced by the author, who speaks of "the well-educated Van der Staay", or "the fact that she is strong on principles". And when Jungschleger cites her, as she frequently does, Van der Staay speaks in fluent Dutch. Thus, in Jungschleger's portrait, Van der Staay is presented as a far more 'reasonable', hence more 'reliable' subject for a Dutch audience than in Schouten's text.

Schouten's evocative, moving and colourful representations of 'white, brown and black' constitute a powerful affirmation of the Netherlands as a multiracial society. The force of his discourse is due to its consistent deconstruction of fixed racial and ethnic categorizations, and its exposition of the actual heterogeneity and complexity of lives located within and at the crossroads of a multitude of such boundaries. At the same time, the differences between the stories featuring Janny van der Staay, as explained above, indicate that an affirmation of diversity may easily turn into a subordination of the particular case to this more general aim. For the purpose of affirming diversity, Schouten's literary focus on the particularity, if not peculiarity, of each individual story is highly functional: each portrait adds to the colourfulness of the author's palette. Seen from the perspectives of their protagonists, however, it sometimes may work just the other way around: by respectfully preserving the 'authenticity' or 'otherness' of Van der Staay's account, it also remains a not fully understandable story. The risk is that it gets reduced to merely another exotic note in the music of the Netherlands.

In terms of Lyotard's philosophy, it could be said that Schouten's story shows respect for the irreducible 'differend' between familiar Dutch discourse and Van der Staay's 'otherness', whereas Jungschleger's account reduces her story to a mere 'litigation': a case of conflicting (systems of) rights. But as such, it also offers a telling example of the risk involved in Lyotard's insistence on the 'differend', or in Schouten's claim that he merely wished to listen. For such a respectful attitude may become an excuse for the *aesthetization* of otherness, for feeling justified merely to contemplate and represent the other as irreducibly different, without taking pains to understand and become involved. Jungschleger's representation does just that: it makes an effort to translate, to interpret, in order to help undo the wrong that Van der Staay suffers. In other words: too little respect for a differend may indeed lead to an unjustified reduction of the complexities of a wrongful situation - but too much respect leaves it untouched, and thus might involve its wrongful repetition.

Thus, Schouten's refusal to act as the legitimizing authority, as the more articulate representative of his protagonists, constitutes both the *force* and the *frailty* of his project. *Colour* convincingly affirms the reality of Dutch racial diversity - but it thereby comes close to *reiterating* that world as one which sometimes leaves its new inhabitants on their own.

### 3. Interethnic friendships

In the 1980s, sociologists Yvonne Leeman and Sawitri Saharso were among the first scholars in the field of Dutch minority studies to start research from an explicitly constructivist perspective on gender and ethnicity.<sup>7</sup> They were curious to know how young people in the Netherlands gave meaning to interethnic relationships. Between 1985 and 1988, the two researchers attended classes on interethnic relationships and discrimination, which were given at nine different secondary schools with an ethnically mixed student population, predominantly of a working class background. They also listened to informal conversations, talked with teachers and held extensive interviews with a selected sample of 78 students, about half 'Dutch', half 'ethnic'.<sup>8</sup> Thus, they tried to get as close as possible to the daily environment of the subjects of their research. Initially, Leeman and Saharso refused to divide the interviewees into different ethnic groups beforehand. After all, the aim of their investigation was to find out what categories the youngsters used themselves. But soon they had to acknowledge that the differences between the 'Dutch' and the 'ethnic' students were such that it made no sense to treat them as one group. Ultimately, two books resulted from the project: one discusses the ways young people from different ethnic groups deal with ethnic identity, discrimination and friendship (Saharso 1992), the other gives an account of the perspectives of indigenous Dutch youth on interethnic communication and discrimination (Leeman 1994). The two texts read as the interdependent, but certainly not identical parts of a twin-project.

#### 3.1 *Young together*

In *Young together* [Samen jong], Yvonne Leeman reports about the ways in which indigenous Dutch youngsters experience and give meaning to interethnic relationships. The main difference between the 'Dutch' and their 'ethnic' class-mates, so she claims, is that for the first their Dutchness has little to no significance for their feeling of identity. Nevertheless, their experiences with interethnic relationships show great variety. It appears, for instance, that half of the students have Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, or other non-'Dutch' friends. Although the overall majority use a dichotomous framework to talk about ethnicity - in their language, you are either 'Dutch' or a 'foreigner' - this does not bring with it assumptions of a homogeneous opposition of 'us Dutch' against 'them foreigners'. Rather, most youngsters see their 'ethnic' class-mate as 'ordinary', as just 'one of us' (Leeman 1994: 220/221).

Friendship, however, does not automatically provide them with more knowledge of what it means to be a 'foreigner'. The youngsters' perception of their immigrant class mates as 'ordinary', according to Leeman, blinds them to the significance of the actual differences between their friends and themselves. The author particularly observes that many youngsters lack the ability to put themselves in the place of their 'foreign' friends. Although gender sometimes makes a difference. Thus, girls are more inclined to empathize with 'foreigners as human beings', and some admit that they set aside their prejudice after having become more personally involved with 'foreign' classmates. Boys, on the other hand, usually go along with the competitive culture among each other, which includes tough behaviour and verbal abuse. They are interested more in the social or political aspects of discrimination, than in what it can bring about at the personal level.

Leeman's study, which she typifies as 'ethnographic' (38), attempts to provide a deeper understanding of the lifeworld of 'Dutch' youngsters. She wants to get to know their world 'from the inside'. One of the approved means to achieve this, is to give ample room to the direct speech of one's informants. Consequently, in *Young together*, there is much alternation between the author's voice and the direct speech of her protagonists. The author also makes use of the youngsters' vocabulary to enliven her own descriptions. Sometimes, quotation marks indicate this, as in: "She disassociates herself from the 'vulgar ones with miniskirts' as well as from the 'eggheads' [*stuutjes*]" (86). While in other cases the context indicates as much: "Gerdien finds herself boring. She would like to belong to the cheeky ones [*de brutalen*]" (88), or: "Ron places himself among the people who read books. Others are superficial" (87). Often, though, the author translates the youngsters' words in more (social) scientific jargon: "Merel feels such a cultural difference with Pakistani, Turkish and Moroccan youngsters that this blocks the possibility of a friendship with them on terms of equality. On the one hand, she feels concerned with ethnic youngsters from a social worker attitude. On the other hand, she feels rejected by Afro-Caribbean youngsters" (160).

### 3.2 *A lot to learn*

Regarding such controversial issues as the multi-ethnic society and racial discrimination, as the discussion of Philomena Essed's work already showed, it is difficult to represent respondents' perspectives from a neutral point of view. In the case of *Young together*, the author's interest in how to teach adolescent students about life in a multi-ethnic society rules out the possibility of neutrality even more. Lessons are meant to convey certain knowledge, skills and/or values. In order to assess their utility, one must already have some preconception of the desired effect. This pedagogical motive inevitably influences Leeman's assessments of the students' views.

The author makes use of a variety of terms to introduce or describe students' point of view. Some are fairly neutral, such as 'saying', 'feeling', 'assuming', 'experiencing' or 'finding'. Terms like 'knowledge', 'insight', 'understanding' or 'realizing' suggest a more appreciatory assessment. Thus some of the Dutch youngsters are noticed to "give evidence of a *more elaborated view* on migration, discrimination and the multi-ethnic society" or to "*know*[ing] something about the experience of discrimination 'foreigners' undergo" (117) [my emphasis, bp]. Leeman pays particular attention to seven students for whom their Dutch identity is less self-evident than for the rest: four of them are from ethnically mixed descent, the other three are indigenous Dutch, but due to their exotic looks they are sometimes mistaken for Surinamese or Turkish. Marek, for instance, is a Dutch-German-Jewish boy, whose position is singled out by the author as 'interesting'. In his own words, Marek feels himself "nothing. The only thing that I once in a while stand up for is Amsterdam" (79). He is convinced that if people would stop identifying as Turkish, Chinese or Jewish and accept one another for what they are, discrimination would stop. Marek, so Leeman, "develops a new identity. He opens new horizons. He shows that ethnicity need not only be conceived of as a dual concept, in which the opposition Dutch/'foreign' applies" (81). And in the chapter dealing with interethnic friendship, the author likewise picks out one boy, Edwin, who "attracts notice because of his knowledge of and insight in the mutual difference. He sees ethnic youngsters as representatives of a social category and is able to place himself in their particular frame of reference. He talks about the others as people like himself, without ignoring the ethnic difference" (166-167). Edwin's attitude is set against the attitude of one girl who refuses to see differences at all, and another who

emphasizes cultural difference and sees herself as a modern person who wants to 'do good' (166). The author's appreciation of the boy's attitude is explicitly endorsed: "Only the latter opens the possibility for equal friendship" (183) - unlike the 'arguing away' and 'protective' attitude of the girls.

These 'knowledgeable' guys appear to be the proverbial white crows among the majority of white Dutch students, who "know little about" (221) or "have no eye for" (222) interethnic relationships or discrimination. According to the author, they are 'unable' to connect the issue with more general socio-political views. Regularly she enters into a discussion with and unmask the interpretations of her interviewees. Like Lisette, of whom Leeman relates that "'[a]ssimilation', the idea that she, in the first instance, agrees with completely, appears to crumble off quickly, as badly baked earthenware, when she has to apply it" (124). Or when Derek finds that "[i]f they call us whites it is not bad, but if we say nigger to them, we are said to discriminate because they are a minority", the critical comment goes: "He legitimized his actions with an argument based on a simple principle of equality. A principle that does not hold. He knows that, but ignores this. Probably because he experiences his action as self defense. As an attempt to maintain himself" (137). And when some youngsters do not recall ever having had experiences with discrimination, the author remarks that "[t]hey forget that one can also witness discrimination" [that is: besides being a perpetrator or a victim, bp], and suggests that they lack the ability to put themselves in the position of 'foreigners' (120).

Leeman's final assessment of Dutch youngsters' perspectives on issues of ethnicity and discrimination is pretty devastating: "Their view of assimilation is quite empty and superficial. It is rather an intuitive attitude than a solidly founded opinion. The youngsters have not a word to say for themselves when I ask them to illustrate the concept of assimilation with some examples. Obviously, they have not thought it through thoroughly" (123).

### 3.3 *Some and all*

For the investigation reported in *Some and all* [Jan en alleman], Sawitri Saharso deliberately chose not to categorize her respondents according to their ethnic descent. Instead, she wanted to know, in what terms her 'ethnic' respondents described themselves, and whether they perhaps felt something of a common ground (Saharso 1992: 3). Although the author initially had hopes of developing some kind of typology, at the end of her project she feels fortunate not to have succeeded - 'squeezing' everything into one conceptual framework would have done violence to the richness of the empirical material. Saharso now prefers to make "the connection visible on the level of the individual biography" (4). Her vivid descriptions testify to the creativity and originality with which ethnic youngsters are able to deal with issues of identity and difference. Saharso finds that ethnicity matters to the way young people from other than indigenous Dutch descent relate to themselves and others. But it matters in very different ways.

For some, their ethnic identification forces them to draw very clear and closed off boundaries. Take Spanish Juan, who divides the world in two opposite camps: it is the 'Dutch' against the 'foreigners': "I never trusted Dutch people, never. And I will never in my life, honestly. No, I have more confidence in foreigners than in the Dutch" (53). Reason for his distrust is the fact that Dutch people can discriminate against you at any moment. His description coincides perfectly with Philomena Essed's definition of everyday racism: "I do not experience it that often, one day you come across this, the other day you come across that, and there are days that nothing at all happens. Then of course you are really glad. Yes, it is irregular, just like the weather" (52). To Juan, those Dutch who do not actively discriminate are either

indifferent or sneaky. 'Foreigners' therefore should stand up for themselves and for each other. But to his bitter disappointment, they rarely do: "I don't just let it [being called names, bp] happen, you know, you are among foreigners. But they [Juan's 'foreign' class mates, bp], they just watch, unless they are abused themselves. Then they do help" (53). The author concludes that Juan feels alone and isolated, and has quite a gloomy view of the future: he can't return to Spain, being a foreigner there also, but Holland does not look very promising either.

For others, the availability of a variety of ethnic identities offers the opportunity to play with boundaries. Moroccan Aziz, for instance, passes himself off as Italian 'Antonio' for his Dutch girlfriend. After two years, what started as a joke has become a matter of tacit mutual understanding between the two of them: although she already knows his Moroccan name and identity, they keep on playing the game. Because Aziz does not eat pork, he now even poses as an Italian Muslim for her family - without anyone questioning this quite unusual identity. Although the author notes that Aziz is not ashamed of being Moroccan, according to her he shrewdly makes use of his exotic looks to profit from the erotic 'surplus value' an Italian identity provides. The really unexpected aspect of this story, however, is that Aziz' initial joke has not been unmasked as a lie: people in his environment don't really attach that much value to his 'true' ethnic identity. The joke thus triggered of a new language game, in which the boundaries of usually strictly established ethnic lines have become more porous. While Aziz, because of his experiences with explicit racism, clearly is aware of being a member of an ethnic minority group, he criticizes "those Moroccans" for being chauvinistic, and "those foreigners" for not speaking "normal Dutch". And while posing as an Italian, most of his friends are Surinamese. Aziz refuses to be captured under one single category.

Other stories likewise illustrate how ethnic youngsters try their own ways out of the confines of established ethnic divides. Like Prewesh, a young Hindustani, who prefers to dissociate himself from a Hindu lifestyle in public, who dresses to look like a Surinamese Creole, and whose best friend is Javanese. Or Debie, a Hindustani girl who prefers friendships with Dutch, East-Indian and Creole youngsters, and who, as she says herself, may look Surinamese but thinks as a white person "from the inside". Although, ultimately, she does not see herself as white: "I do not say that I am Dutch, when they ask me: 'Now, who do you feel you are?' I say: 'I feel ordinary, perfectly ordinary'" (78-88). Within a particular circle of students, to give a last example, the indigenous Dutch boys who manifest themselves as anti-racist, do not only *associate* with the so-called 'foreigners' in their class, they are also explicitly *referred to* as being like 'foreigners' by the members of this group. Among these 'foreign' youngsters, the term 'Dutch' is reserved for those who vent racist or politically conservative opinions. The difference between being 'Dutch' and being a 'foreigner' is a difference between being 'boorish' and being 'cool'. What matters to them is not a particular racial or ethnic identity, but a particular lifestyle, one which can be adopted no matter one's colour. Within this 'ethnic' group of students, the label 'foreigner' has thus become a name of honour (142-144).

Gender appears to make a significant difference for the experiences of discrimination and friendship of these Dutch 'ethnic' youngsters. Whereas the guys are more often confronted with aggressive behaviour and verbal abuse, particularly the Turkish and Moroccan girls regularly have to answer for "those stupid scarfs" (even if they don't wear them), and other supposedly woman-unfriendly aspects of Islam. In ethnically mixed friendships, the girls show sensitivity regarding each other's different backgrounds, and make an effort to get to know the other's cultural and religious habits. Among the guys, one of the approved ways to consolidate mutual ties is to bombard each other ironically with 'wrong' jokes about ethnicity or race.

Saharso explicitly perceives the youngsters' experiential accounts as narrative constructions: as interpretations of experiences, they are no doubt sincere and true - nevertheless, they are 'constructed truths' (4). Moreover, the author presents her own readings as interpretations too: "[I]n my descriptions I have continuously indicated that this is my reading of the story of others, and I have attempted to write in an open-ended way, such that readers have the opportunity to develop their own interpretation" (6).

Saharso attempts to evoke the lifeworld of her protagonists with a variety of narrative devices. She frequently gives the floor to her interviewees in extensive direct quotes, or adopts their terminology in her own descriptions: "Thus she [Bea, a Hindustani girl, bp] once was called 'a Turk', she relates, by someone of her own 'race' even" (75). But, like in Leeman's account, the author sometimes also distances herself from her protagonists. In the further explanation of Bea's position for instance, she seeks recourse to the vocabulary of social psychology: the problem for Bea is that "she does not meet the 'somatic standard image' of the group she reckons herself to belong to" (75). Or she comments in a more personal vein on the self-image of one, would-be happy-go-lucky Antillean guy: "Delano, however, does not at all give the impression of being a superficial loafer; he is an extraordinary serious guy, rather inclined toward melancholy" (87).

Apart from this authorial self-presentation as either the scientific or the more grown-up commentator, the author sometimes comes to the fore as one of the actors on the scene of the interview. On the one hand, this happens by mentioning or citing her own questions:

*I ask Paul what he knows about the time that his mother came to the Netherlands: 'My mother told me that in the time they had just arrived, they thought it terrible [...]. 'What kind of things would they have to then assimilate to? 'What every Dutchman does, just stick to the rules...' (110).*

On the other hand, the reader occasionally is admitted a glimpse of her more personal feelings. Sometimes the author is caught by surprise:

*When I ask [Marek] whether he has ever been discriminated against, he answers that he sometimes is being called a kraut [mof]. (Here, as a researcher I clearly reckoned without my host. While I had chosen Marek because of his Jewish roots, his experiences with discrimination derive from Dutch anti-German sentiments. He is being identified with the oppressor, the former occupier) (95 [Marek is the Dutch-German-Jewish guy who also figures in Leeman's text, see also pp.16-17, bp]).*

Sometimes the author shares her secret thoughts with the reader:

*He knows that it is a relationship with no future. That's why he just broke it off, but I gather that we should not take that too seriously and that they could be 'thick' again by to-morrow (77).*

Or she was deceived:

*Posing for the picture that we make of each class, Prewesh throws his arms around Louis' neck and if you see the two of them together you would think they are great*



*friends. But appearances are deceptive. Prewesh about Louis: 'I do not have a white friend with whom I can really talk about my parents' (139).*

Especially in her extensive portrait of Aziz, the guy who poses for Italian Antonio, Saharso is quite present - in her comments as an author, but also as a partner in the conversation. Saharso reports how she asks questions, and tries to find things out - sometimes to be "left little wiser" (56). She makes suggestions:

*'But what happens then if say.. Antonio gets a chop [of pork, bp] on his plate?'* (57),

thinks along:

*'It doesn't ring a bell with them?'* *'Well no. I don't get that either.'* *'I would immediately think: Italians are Catholics.'* *'But that need not be the case. As you have Dutch Muslims, you also have Italian Muslims'* (57),

or puts right a misunderstanding:

*'Why should I necessarily marry a Moroccan girl?'* *'You need not do that for me. I was curious why you absolutely did not want that'* (63).

At the end, when Aziz has apparently been fantasizing about a big house that he will own one day, she asks him

*Where that beautiful house of his then might be*

and comments on his enthusiastic reply in an amused and ironic vein:

*So, for Aziz, a kingdom and a horse (63).*

### 3.4 Everyday knowledges

Like Leeman, Saharso sometimes explicitly disagrees with her protagonists. But her comments are far more mildly put. She observes that 'ethnic' youngsters with a strong tendency to identify with the Dutch have difficulty connecting this with experiences of discrimination which, after all, remind them that others do not see them as full-fledged Dutch: "They invented several 'solutions'. Jacqueline, the East-Indian/Moluccan girl, has declared the whole issue of her descent taboo. Stanley shuns talks about discrimination. Indo-European Paul chooses the 'blaming the victim' option. Only Marcus gets entangled in his own words" (126). The author's voice only once loses its distanced and friendly tone when she gives a slashing sketch of one white boy: "Matthias is an arrogant rich little guy who behaves haughty towards his classmates. He probably looks down even more on Farid and Kemal, them being the lowest of the lowest" (107).

On the whole, however, and other than Leeman, Saharso is very willing to appreciate the perspectives of her protagonists as 'knowledge'. Thus she analyzes the remarkable use of the word 'race'

by some of the youngsters. This indeed is remarkable, because in the Netherlands 'race' is a loaded and obsolete term, strongly associated with biological racism and the holocaust. Saharso's explanation: the youngsters actually use the word not in the biological sense, but as a synonym for 'ethnic group' or 'cultural minority', concepts they apparently do not know. Moreover, as the word 'race' is especially used when the issue of discrimination is discussed, it is meant to refer to unchangeable physical features, to something, as the youngsters would phrase it themselves, 'about which nothing can be done'. She concludes: "If this interpretation is correct, it would be a denial of their insight in the political dimension of 'race' relationships, if we would dispose of it as faulty or merely explain it from their ignorance of concepts such as ethnic groups or cultural minorities. I am therefore inclined to see their use of the notion of 'race' as an expression of their everyday knowledge about the relationships of inequality that accompany racism" (124).

Thus, Saharso depicts 'ethnic' youngster as subjects with a great deal of valuable know-how about interethnic relationships. Rather than entering into discussions with them, confronting their views with her own, more scientific, more mature, or more politically informed insights and definitions, she goes along with their views as much as possible. The overall vein is, that we, as researchers and as readers, could learn from these young people's perceptions of interethnic relationships, especially from their playfulness and creativity regarding ethnic boundaries. In Saharso's view, they are the real-life embodiment of what Stuart Hall has named the 'ethnicities of the margins' (see Hall 1995). They recognize that every subject always speaks from a certain location, without being tied to these positions as if they were fixed and unchangeable givens.

The twin project of Leeman and Saharso clearly challenges the new realist celebration of political innocence concerning issues of race and ethnicity. To recall one of the new realist positions: for Herman Vuijsje, the political innocence of the indigenous Dutch working class could be the starting point for 'normal' interethnic communication. Leeman, however, is deeply concerned about the lack of political knowledge among her white-Dutch respondents, most of them from a working class background. In her view, the 'innocence' of these youngsters implies that they often are not aware of the significant differences (in cultural background, personal history, racial position) between themselves and their 'ethnic' classmates, let alone that they try to place themselves in their position. And Saharso's account draws attention to the fact that for people from non-indigenous Dutch descent, innocence simply is not an option: all young people she interviewed identify as 'foreigner'. It is a position they simply cannot deny because of their particular backgrounds and life stories, and because of their shared experiences with discrimination. It is precisely their non-innocence which makes these youngsters more 'savvy' in matters of interethnic relationships. In this respect, the accounts of Leeman and Saharso are in line with Philomena Essed's assessment of Dutch society, according to which white 'innocence' boils down to ignorance and indifference, whereas black women come to the fore as knowledgeable subjects. But Leeman and Saharso diverge significantly from Essed in their interpretation of respondents' accounts. Essed's readings, as outlined in chapter 6, start from an elaborate body of knowledge on the position of blacks in white-dominated societies. As a scientific researcher, she already knows what it means to be 'black' (or to be 'white') in a 'white' world. Leeman and Saharso, on the other hand subscribe to a constructivist view of race and ethnicity according to which racial and ethnic positions are not fixed, but in constant (re)construction, hence liable to change. As scientific researchers, they start from an agnostic position from which they precisely do *not* know what it means to be 'Dutch' or 'ethnic' (and young) in contemporary Dutch society. On the contrary: this is exactly what they want to find out in their interviews with 'Dutch' and

'ethnic' youngsters. Thus, Leeman's findings confirm Essed's assumptions about the white-Dutch lack of political knowledge. But they also show a variety of ways in which these youngsters relate to their 'ethnic' classmates, and how these relations are not only shaped by race and ethnicity, but also by class, gender and age. Whereas Essed's black subjects are considered knowledgeable if their experiential accounts are in agreement with the researcher's knowledge, Saharso is willing to adopt the views of her 'ethnic' respondents' as 'everyday knowledge', even if their way of putting it is not always in accordance with her own vocabulary. And whereas Essed's protagonists count as knowledgeable if they are able to recognize manifestations of the structural conflict between black and white, Saharso's protagonists show to be 'up to date' according to their proficiency in the deconstruction of established ethnic boundaries.

#### 4. Shining in the shadow

Italian anthropologist Livio Sansone did not want to repeat the familiar Dutch image of Surinamese-Creole young men as a problematic group. He therefore zoomed in on the lifestyle and perspectives of the 'average', lower class Creole young man living in Amsterdam (Sansone 1992).<sup>9</sup> The question guiding his research project: how is it that, in spite of their familiarity with and appropriation of Dutch culture, even the younger generation of Creole men apparently lags behind on the labour market, and becomes structurally dependent on social security?

Sansone seeks his answers in the so-called adaptation approach. He refuses to see members of the Creole lower classes solely as victims of macrostructures such as racism or capitalism, but he also distances himself from approaches which 'blame the victim'. From the adaptation perspective, the notion of a 'subculture of poverty' plays a crucial explanatory role. The basic assumption is that the cultural characteristics of a marginal social group consist of an adaptation to their socio-economic position, whereas, at the same time, members of this group remain focused on main-stream norms and values. For Sansone, this means that such a culture primarily is the effect of poverty, and only in second instance, but nevertheless, also a factor that enforces arrears. He emphasizes the importance of choice: "Although material circumstances limit one's freedom of choice, life in a situation of social arrears demands difficult, radical choices. An individual or a group can by its own actions, consciously or unconsciously, contribute to its (bad) social position" (9). Choice involves more than processes of rational deliberation; it also is a matter of the imperceptible incorporation of values and norms, of what French sociologist Bourdieu has coined *habitus*, "the lens through which one can see and at the same time a mechanism which narrows one's vision" (9).

In a constructivist vein, Sansone criticizes static perceptions of racial identity: "In my view black and white are cultural and political constructions, historically rooted, but continuously to be defined again" (15). He conceives black and white identity as constitutive of one another, and his fieldwork confirmed that "[b]eing black is inextricably linked up with white society" (16). This does not mean that 'black' and 'white' simply are each other's opposite. Rather, Sansone claims that especially the younger generation is working at the making of a 'black' identity (as they name it themselves), which actually is an up-to-date and dynamic amalgam of Surinamese-Creole, Afro-American and white working class culture, interspersed with features of age, sex, peer group, neighbourhood and class. Although they do not identify themselves as Creole, at the same time these youngsters, according to Sansone, carry on the inherent syncretism and aptitude to transformation of Creole culture.

Sansone likewise subscribes to a constructivist view of gender, according to which male and female gender identities are constitutive of one another. And his accounts of the circumstances in which Creole young men try to find their way in Dutch society regularly point out how gender identities are *intertwined* with ethnic or racial identities. Nevertheless, it is surprising to notice that, as dynamic and hybrid their 'black' identity appears to be, so static are the informants' assumed constructions of gender. The observation, for instance, that "[t]here is no male subculture without a female counterpart" (230) implies that male identity is constituted in opposition to and interdependence with the lifestyles of Creole women. Because of the Dutch social security system, for instance, women no longer need men to provide for them and their children. But many, according to Sansone, do expect their lovers to provide them with some excitement and glamour - which only reinforces the guys in their self-image as fun loving macho men. They thus tend to repeat, both in speech and action, stereotypical images of black versus white male sexuality. Being a black man is associated with sensuality and virility, with being and doing 'sexy', whereas white men supposedly are sexually less active, consequently less attractive to (both black and white) women.

Sansone describes his research as 'ethnographic fieldwork'. In 1980, he moved to live in the Amsterdam *Staatslieden* neighbourhood. In the course of the next ten years he worked in a local youth centre, known as an 'integrated' club, attended by both Creole and white Dutch youngsters. In this centre, Sansone performed as a barkeeper, member of the committee, cultural worker and, in his own words, an 'improvised' social worker. The author recalls the intensity of his involvement with his 'research population': he joined disco parties, family celebrations and strolls through the city centre. His home became an open house to many. He coached some of the boys during their study. He made friends, ended up in quarrels, but also in love affairs. Private life and work were hardly separable. He even organized a trip to Italy for fifteen of his 'informants' to show them his own country of origin. This aspect of mutuality was carried through in the writing process: Sansone asked a group of (key) informants to read and criticize parts of the research report before publication.

In Sansone's introduction, the intensity and reciprocity of his contacts with 'the field' are brought to the fore as elements of a particular method of research, i.e. "participatory observation in leisure time" (28). As in the cases of Saharso and Leeman, Sansone's disclosure of his working method is meant to indicate the extent to which he managed to become an 'insider' in the world under study. Thus, he introduces his account as written "from the perspective of" the Dutch-Creole youngsters (1). What this means, may be illustrated by the next passage:

*The fact that you are a bad learner does not necessarily mean that you are stupid. On the contrary, it merely indicates that you, just like many other Creoles, cannot achieve your fortune by way of a school certificate. This is due to the way your character is made ever since your birth: you get born with the character trait that you either 'like books', or you 'like the street/life'. It is no use resisting this 'predestination' (Sansone 1992: 40).*

In this fragment, the author summarizes his informants' explanation of the often "not brilliant course of their educational career", as he describes it euphemistically. The author remains close to the vocabulary of his protagonists. The use of quotation marks and of the personal pronoun 'you' render this passage into a kind of indirect citation. This loyalty to his protagonists' language is one of Sansone's means to represent

their perspectives, to give the reader a view 'from the inside'. In showing his fluency in their language, his ability to put himself in their shoes, the author suggests that he 'knows his people'. I use this latter expression on purpose. For it does not only refer to his considerable familiarity with his 'research population'. It also suggests that he sees through their outward appearances - that he has got them taped, so to speak. In the above fragment, for instance, the devices of the inverted commas and the personal pronoun 'you', indicate the author's *closeness* to his informants, but also make it clear that he would not want to give the impression that he *agrees* with their explanations. These narrative devices thus offer him an opportunity to show both his intimacy with and his distance from their views. The words used are theirs - not his. This entanglement of closeness and dissociation, of simultaneously 'speaking with' and 'speaking to' the subjects of discourse, is a persistent feature of the narrative structure of *Shining in the dark*.

A few other fragments may exemplify this further:

*'Ordinary work' - performing a 'lousy job' - for the informants, as for most low skilled autochthonous people [...], is not an aim in itself, but merely a means to make money. With the money you can buy what can give you pleasure [...] The salary wishes of most informants for that matter do not seem unreasonable to me (Sansone 1992: 49).*

Here, the author starts in the more distanced mode of the third person. His use of his protagonists' terms ('a lousy job') simultaneously reduces and ensures the distance between them. The subsequent sentence uses the more intimate 'you', which suggests it to be an indirect quotation of the protagonists', but not necessarily the author's view. Finally, the author inserts an opinion in the first person mode. In this personal statement he explicitly stands up for his protagonists.

At other points, the author disagrees with his protagonists, for instance with those who defend their own or other's dealing in hard drugs:

*Most outsiders find it reprehensible to sell drugs to addicts. One of the tasks for a hustler is to disprove this stigma. To realize this, responsibility in the hard drugs scene is 'reversed'. The 'guilt' for dealing in hard drugs is ascribed to the users, the dealer is not to be blamed. The argument is that there are dealers, because there are junkies (Sansone 1992: 137).*

In this passage, the disagreement shows in the characterization of the hustler's argument as a reversal of responsibility - from which it is clear where the author thinks responsibility actually should be located. The presentation of protagonists' own solutions - which they deem to be better for them than what they call the 'white solutions' - as 'strategies of avoidance', 'magical solutions' or 'escape routes', also indicate the author's attitude as a mix of involvement and distance.

In his final chapter, Sansone concludes that Dutch-Creole youngsters are in a paradoxical situation: their cultural adjustment to mainstream society is attended with marginalization rather than improvement. Their adjustment almost exclusively concerns the lifestyles of the white working classes, particularly in the 'arena' of leisure time. Moreover, this successful adjustment to a Dutch lifestyle heightens expectations, and brings along a more critical assessment of their actual opportunities as

semi/unskilled black guys. Such a critical attitude, according to Sansone, although it displays a keen understanding of the mechanisms of exclusion which affect them, rather than helping forward also “may contribute to self-exclusion” (238). In his view, the survival strategies of the youngsters, unfortunately, ultimately work to consolidate rather than improve their marginal position. They are only short-term solutions, related to their youth (as in the case of a ‘career’ as a disco-dancer), or to the last successful deal (as in the case of a ‘career’ as a drug-dealer). And such success is relative: it may provide one with status within one’s own circle, but to the outside world it only confirms familiar negative stereotypes. Although this self-exclusion, according to Sansone, happens “unconscious[ly] and is not experienced as painful” (232), it nevertheless is ‘a drama’ (233) for these youngsters. That they themselves do not present their situation as such - on the contrary even - is explained by the author as a mechanism of self defense, consisting of ‘techniques of reasoning’ which neutralize loss of face.

Thus, when claiming that the only way to get ahead is the “long and slow way up through the available, regular jobs” (234), Sansone explicitly disagrees with, and ‘speaks to’ rather than ‘with’ his informants, who would be quite reluctant to accept such a ‘white solution’. Sometimes the author also takes a few lines to address policy makers. Thus he emphasizes the necessity to make the labour market more accessible and more attractive to lower class Creole youngsters: if government stays on the sideline, “rather than rebellion” this could yield “frustration, infantilization and the implosion of the Creole community” (235). But for the greater part, Sansone’s text is addressed at this community itself. Rather than informing policy makers and other outsiders, the author offers his informants a more honest, but no less sympathetic portrait of their lives, an alternative to their all too flattering self-portraits.

‘Shining in the shadow’ appears to be a well-chosen metaphor. It acutely summarizes both sides of the lives of young Creoles in Amsterdam: both the dark side of their existence in the margins of Dutch society, and the bright side of their enjoyment of life against all odds. At the same time, the image catches its author’s perspective, which *goes along* with the young men’s dynamic and swinging outlook on life, but *goes against* this outlook by focusing on the paradoxical and tragical dimensions of these apparently so easy-going, ‘happy-go-lucky’ guys.

## 5. Partial stories, risky stories

With a denunciation, the author sides with the victims, within the genre of empowerment the perspective of the ones who resist is supported, and in an emancipatory text the author sides with the disadvantaged. The partiality, hence situatedness of each of these genres of discourse seems to be clear. But what about the heterogeneous texts discussed in this chapter? What side do these accounts take, what could their partiality consist of? In other words: why would these stories count as cases of situated knowledges?

At first sight, the texts subsumed under the heading of ‘heterogeneity’ seem to be the least partial of all knowledge practices discussed in this case study. They do not unambiguously engage with a collective struggle, nor do they straightforwardly aim at collective emancipation. They do not identify damages to be repaired, arrears to be made up, or causes to fight for. Their focus rather is on contingent constructions of race and ethnicity, on the different sides of Dutch multicultural society. Sometimes they even depict human suffering as tragic rather than unjust, associating it with inevitable fate rather than changeable circumstances. Yet, I would want to argue that these stories are more ‘situated’. Admittedly,

they do not take side in the sense that they are ‘partisan’. But they are truly ‘partial’ in both senses of the term, i.e. they take sides and they are open-ended. On the one hand, that is, these are stories told from *specific locations* - they are committed to particular, marginalized groups, and to particular, ‘better’ worlds. On the other hand, they persistently remind the reader of their own particularity and specificity; which makes them into *fragmented, contested* and *open-ended* accounts. In my opinion, the stories by Nalbantoglu, Schouten, Saharso, Leeman and Sansone thus constitute interesting, be it quite different cases of situated knowledges in the *visionary* meaning of the term. Let me explain this in more detail.

Heterogeneity can be seen as the distinguishing mark of these texts in at least two respects. First, by staging different actors and a multiplicity of voices, the stories take account of the complexities and ambiguities of the world described. Thus, in Nalbantoglu’s story about Mine, the reader comes to hear the voices of different actors, all with their own view of Mine’s situation. *Colour* presents a cacophony of different voices which together, as Schouten phrases it, make up the ‘music’ of multi-ethnic Dutch society. The ‘ethnic’ youngsters presented by Saharso likewise show a sampling of ways to position oneself as ‘other’: through denial, anger, celebration or playfulness. But sticking to ‘your own kind’ seems to appeal to none of them. Leeman finds that this goes for many white-Dutch students as well, among whom she likewise registers a variety of associations with their ‘ethnic’ friends. In other words: the stories testify to the essential contingency of categories of racial and ethnic identity, however rooted and stable they at the same time may be. The difference with the other three genres is that the protagonists here are not representatives in the usual meaning of the term: they do not speak for, or on behalf of a particular, well-defined constituency, nor do they speak from one coherent, clearly marked position. Not that their speech is wholly unmarked - it is not the speech of ‘merely’ fellow human beings. The protagonists staged in these texts clearly belong to a particular ethnicity, culture, gender. But their accounts simultaneously testify to the pliability and arbitrariness of such categorical distinctions.

Secondly, the author’s own perspective in these texts is not transparent and univocal either; it is rather split up between different positions. Nalbantoglu, for instance, switches between speaking as a teacher, i.e. as part of and committed to Dutch education, and speaking as an immigrant, i.e. as part of and committed to the Turkish community. Other authorial voices do not stick to one side either: regarding her respondents, Saharso shows to be amused, surprised, angry, more mature and willing to learn, while Sansone observes, *with* his respondents, that they are frequently confronted with racism, appeals *to* them to take up responsibility for their own lives, and speaks *against* them regarding their celebration of their ‘own’ culture. Schouten’s authorial voice, which at first sight seems wholly absent, appears very present in the arrangement of stories which highlight Dutch multi-ethnic society from a variety of perspectives. In a sense, the dispersal of the authorial voices affects the ‘authoritative’ position of these authors. For when a text asks of its readers to regularly switch perspectives, it renders it more difficult to unthinkingly go along with its accounts. Some authors declare that this is precisely what they wish to achieve. Thus, Saharso attempts to write such that her readers can develop their own interpretations, whereas Schouten likewise wishes his audience to judge for themselves.

The familiar inference from a classical epistemological perspective would be that stories told from such a heterogeneous position offer a radically relativistic outlook. Because the author endows each point of view with equal validity, and does not offer one last, overall perspective, the text leaves its readers empty-handed. In my view, however, the performative effect of these heterogeneous texts can be assessed in a more positive way. As I have shown, an author who speaks from different perspectives appeals to a variety of understandings and emotions within the reader. Her possibly unified views may fall apart into a diffracted whole of dispersed positions. Clear-cut standpoints can no longer be held. They must make way

for more complex and many-sided, yet no less 'truthful' stories.

To be sure, the accounts discussed in this chapter are not very reassuring: their protagonists nor their authors are wholly bad or wholly good. These are deliberately risky stories. Their authors have not sought for an 'innocent' position; on the contrary, they are located right in the middle of the complexities and ambiguities which make up the lives of the people portrayed. They do not pose as neutral mediators, nor as partial ventriloquists. They may sometimes agree, and sometimes disagree with their protagonists. In either case, they are engaged in non-innocent conversations.

It is for these reasons that the 'genre' of heterogeneity shows most affinity with the *visionary* dimension of Haraway's notion of situated knowledges. These are stories that do not reflect reality as it presents itself, either from an objective stance or from one particular standpoint. They rather give an indication of the kind of stories a strategy of 'diffraction' might yield: instead of constructing hard and inescapable realities, these stories are both faithful and unfaithful, do justice and injustice to the realities and the people represented. They call attention to the ways in which oppositions such as 'Dutch' versus 'foreigners', 'black' versus 'white', 'allochthone' versus 'autochthone' are repeated and (re)affirmed, but also how they are broken down, undone, resisted. They are true, precisely because they show that concerning Dutch multi-ethnic society there is not one reality to be represented, not one story to be told. With their exploration of the variety of available narrative scripts, they enable, in Lorraine Code's words, the construction of new rhetorical spaces, of more promising scripts than the worn-out and tiresome antagonistic ones featuring some 'Us' versus some 'Them'. Or to cite Lyotard: "To give the differend its due is to institute new addressees, new addressors, new significations, and new referents in order for the wrong to find an expression and for the plaintiff to cease being a victim. This requires new rules for the formation and linking of phrases [...] A new competence (or 'prudence') ought to be found" (1988: 13).

## Notes

1. The cover of Nalbantoglu's book happens to be a photo by Van Manen (see Van Manen 1979: 13). It shows a young Turkish woman in traditional clothing, including a white headscarf, who looks in the camera with a smile. She walks in typically Dutch surroundings: a grassy flat meadow, some trees and bushes at the horizon. The road is still wet due to the latest rain-shower, against which the woman apparently has protected herself with the umbrella she carries with her. The picture adequately illustrates Nalbantoglu's sketch of the vulnerable position Turkish women occupy in a cold Dutch society.
2. Beside *Aysel and the others*, the author also published a children's novel (Nalbantoglu 1977), a series of portraits of Turkish youngsters (Nalbantoglu 1985), and a collection of columns, previously published in *Het Schoolblad*, the professional journal of the *ABOP*, a trade union for teachers (Nalbantoglu 1990).
3. Helma Lutz wrote an interesting comparative study about Turkish women in the Netherlands and former West-Germany, who, like Papatya Nalbantoglu, willy-nilly take upon them the role of mediators between the community of Turkish immigrants and German or Dutch society (see Lutz 1991).
4. In one chapter of her study, Van den Berg-Eldering focuses explicitly on the relationships between Moroccan and Dutch families. She reports of difficulties caused by the paternalism, feelings of superiority and stereotypical images from the side of the Dutch. These interpretations are partly consistent with Nalbantoglu's assessments, as they are with



Philomena Essed's views of Dutch paternalism, the attitude of 'good intentions' and the pressure on ethnic 'others' to assimilate. But whereas the latter would interpret these stories with the help of the conceptual framework of racism, Van den Berg-Eldering uses the explanatory framework of culture, and imputes the resulting conflicts to a lack of Dutch knowledge of Moroccan culture (see Van den Berg-Eldering 1978, chapter 10).

5. The interviews were first published in a series, also titled 'Colour', in *de Volkskrant* between August 1993 and May 1994. A difference between the newspaper portraits and the book publication is the absence of the accompanying photos in the latter. The large black-and-white pictures in *de Volkskrant* show only the face of the person interviewed. With a friendly smile, he or she looks straight into the camera. The pictures give little indication of clothing, body posture or surroundings. They constitute a forceful underlining of the message of universal humanity conveyed by the collection of texts as a whole.

6. With the decision not to improve the language of his respondents, Schouten deliberately follows the example of his much admired, older colleague, Willem Wittkamp, who introduced this style of journalistic report in the Netherlands in the 1950s. Wittkamp was criticized for exactly the same reasons as Schouten some forty years later - the only difference being that the faulty language of Wittkamp's protagonists made them recognizable as members of the Dutch lower classes.

7. In chapter 6, I discussed Leeman & Saharso's contribution to the debate on feminism and anti-racism in the *Dutch Journal of Women's Studies* (see Leeman & Saharso 1985; 1986). Next to the separate studies discussed here, they also published a report on the response of Moroccan, Moluccan and Surinamese youngsters on racial discrimination (Leeman & Saharso 1989).

8. Leeman and Saharso do not explain their consistent use of 'Dutch' and 'ethnic' as mutually exclusive terms. In their accounts, 'Dutch' refers to the white-Dutch students, 'ethnic' is the denominator that covers all others (among which are Hindustani, Creole, Turkish, Moluccan, Pakistani, Kurdish and Chinese students). The choice is not obvious. The term 'Dutch' includes Dutch nationality, which a number of the 'ethnic' youngsters might also have, whereas the term 'ethnic' actually holds for the 'Dutch' students too, as their ethnic identity is white. But I do see the problem of other options. 'White' and 'black', or youngsters 'of colour', does injustice to the great variety among the latter group, and is also too different from the youngsters' own terminology. Whereas the adoption of the distinction which the youngsters themselves often use, 'Dutch' and 'foreigners', is too different from the authors' own vocabulary.

9. This is the last in a series of studies by Sansone about young Creole young men in Amsterdam. See also Sansone and Heukels 1986, and Sansone 1990.