

Thinking Borders:
Gender Examinations of Rationality, Objectivity and the Knowing Subject

Marcela Linková a Alice Červinková (eds.)

This book has been published in the National Contact Centre – Women and Science project of the Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic financed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports CR under the EUPRO programme (OK 437).

Editorial copyright © Marcela Linková a Alice Červinková 2004
Individual chapters copyright © individual authors

Graphic design: Michal Ureš
Printing: Ka.Ma s.r.o.

All rights reserved
ISBN 80-7330-050-8
Institute of Sociology, Academy of Science CR, 2005

Content:

Note on language	7
Negotiating Borders, Creating New Spaces Alice Červinková a Marcela Linková	9
Women and Science: Feminist Epistemologies and Critiques of Scientific Discourse Jan Mátonoha	25
Women, Science and Feminism: Some Questions of Scientific Knowledge from the Point of View of Feminist Epistemology Mariana Szapuová	39
Can Reason be “Emotional” and Objectively “Prospective”? (On the Question of Cognition in Feminist Epistemology) Etela Farkašová	57
Addressing the politics of location: Strategies in feminist epistemology and their relevance to research undertaken from a feminist perspective Dagmar Meyer-Lorenz	75
Feminist Critique of Progress and Modern Science in the Work of Anna Pammrová Jiřina Šmejkalová	97
On contributors	117
Index of names	121
Index	122

Note on language

Not surprisingly, language has proven to be the greatest problem when preparing this collection. At one level, the issue of language is directly thematised in Jiřina Šmejkalová's contribution in relation to the considerations of Anna Pammrová and other theoreticians on the issue of the insufficiency of existing language and its tools for capturing and expressing women's experience. On another level, this aspect is indirectly seen in the other contributions – in the efforts of feminist theoreticians and researchers to find more adequate terms for describing the experience of marginalised knowing subjects and these authors' own subject positions. Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer's paper in particular introduces a wide range of conceptualisations of situation and situatedness for which we have no corresponding terms in the Czech language.

In view of the fact that this publication is bilingual – Czech/Slovak-English, we have decided to keep the terms that do not necessarily function or exist in Czech (such as locationality or positionality) and we explain them in footnotes. On the other hand we believe that the effort to introduce (authorially) specific terms for concepts that are intimately linked in their emphasis on analysing gender marginalised positions, is indeed a mark of a struggle with resisting language. We do not, however, believe that this multiplicity necessarily leads to a better understanding of the meanings of these terms. Rather, it can veil the overlaps and similarities of such signifying practices. And also, such a strategy can mask the links and connections between feminist critical approaches to the production of knowledge and the thematisation of location and feminist subject positions on streams of thought that address the issue of location from other than feminist or gender positions.

Another reason why we felt the issue of language so keenly is that in the Czech Republic there are barely any critical studies of the production of knowledge speaking from this particular social and historical experience, even within the gender studies community. As Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer rightly points out in her paper, we here very often (co)operate without critically reflecting upon our own positions, definitions and vocabularies, and assume that we share a common language. We hope that this publication will not only open the wider issue of the impact of gender on production of knowledge, but also a critical discussion and exchanges on from where and how in this region, with our particular historical experience of gender relations and knowledge production, we speak and make knowledge claims.

Negotiating Borders, Creating New Spaces

Marcela Linková and Alice Červinková

The publication of this collection was inspired by contributions presented at the international historically-oriented conference entitled *Women Scholars and Institutions*, organised in June 2003 by the Research Centre for the History of Sciences and Humanities and the Women in Science Commission of the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science. The National Contact Centre – Women and Science at the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic organised a session at the conference entitled *Gendered Knowledge: The Reshaping of ‘Normal’ Science*. This publication is a result of the subsequent co-operation between the panellists and organisers. It also stems from the conceptual framework of the Centre’s activities. In our work, which concentrates on supporting women in science, we are continually faced with the fact that the topic of women in science cannot be limited to simple tallies of women in scientific institutions and activities aimed at increasing the percentage of women in the top echelons of power. The issue is far more complex and reflects the general arrangement and foundations of scientific practise, the organisation of scientific institutions, and the measurement of excellence.

In the discussion that developed during the session, various concepts of objectivity, the identity of the knowing subject and his or her formation, as well as various opinions concerning further courses of development were presented. The question of how to proceed further well demonstrated the differences between proponents of feminist empiricism who promoted the idea of objectivity as externally defined (which could be perceived in feminist epistemologies as objectivism) and proponents of feminist standpoint theory. Further, a clash between epistemological concepts and the dominant scientific practices of research institutions was highlighted in discussions concerning the possibility of reshaping the current conditions into a more gender aware environment. Is it at all possible to alter the way in which scientific knowledge is produced if we as knowing subjects are always already embedded in certain space, time, and cultural contexts, have various personal experiences, and have been socialised as female and male scientists into (or out of) research institutions?

It is perhaps not surprising that the answers tended to concentrate on specific women and men researchers, the concept of researchers’ personal responsibility and accountability, networking, experience sharing, and working with students; in short, on non-structural activities.

This key issue of achieving change in the current arrangement of power relations in the sciences was the main incentive for us to incorporate the issue of knowledge construction and production into the activities of the National Contact Centre – Women and Science in the first place. From our perspective it is becoming more and more apparent that the activism and practical assistance the Centre provides are firmly anchored in the theoretical questions posed by feminist critiques of science and feminist epistemologies. The issue of how to carry out gender mainstreaming and to contribute to achieving gender equality in research and development is inseparable not only from the theoretical concerns about how knowledge and power relations in research and development are produced and reproduced and how the gender identity of women scientists in research institutions is formed, but also from how and on what grounds gender mainstreaming¹ and equal opportunities policies are formulated, shaped and implemented.

Today, the implementation of gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities policies is generally discussed and promoted in the context of utilising human resources and potential losses to society/economy/science if women's talents are not fully used. From our perspective, gender mainstreaming is a very controversial concept because on the one hand, the rhetoric described above is probably the only one that is currently acceptable for political leaders and the management of institutions. Therefore, some feminist theoreticians and activists see it as an important part of the emancipatory project in that it is the only way to penetrate power structures and start changing them from within. On the other hand, the concept has been problematised from feminist positions because of the above-mentioned rhetoric, which neutralises the position of women in society, and also because – from the position of post-structuralist feminism – it reproduces the existing gender system. Carney [2003] seeks an explanation for this discrepancy in the problematic communication between feminism and mainstream politics in their different cultural backgrounds. It seems as if the actors in both camps have given up any attempt to approximate these two languages and to negotiate a common meaning. Feminist starting points, and with them feminist language, have disappeared from the practices of gender mainstreaming and a neutral language of new management has been developed to implement equality.

It is also possible to approach the issue of the position of women in science as a position of a marginalised group which is forced to develop strategies of negotiating its own position in order to penetrate existing power structures.

Nicky LeFeuvre [2000] distinguishes four such strategies or approaches. First, there is the strategy of feminitude, which is based on the essentialist presumption that men and women are naturally different. Arguments for greater representation of women in science within this approach tend to emphasise different, special qualities and skills women have that, it is argued will—if women can participate in the production of knowledge—result in these different qualities and skills being incorporated into the research environment. This approach is implicit in the above-mentioned policies of gender mainstreaming.

The second strategy is surrogate maleness, according to which women assimilate to the existing context and take on its values. When this occurs, the potential for change is built very slowly because gate-keeping practices preventing greater participation of women are then upheld and reinforced by both female and male gatekeepers. The third approach is the patriarchal approach, which claims that the dominance of men over women is a fact and therefore any attempt to improve the position of women in science is counter-productive because, according to the theory of deprofessionalisation, an increase in the number of women will only lead to a reduction in the prestige of the field, an outflow of men and a decrease in salaries. The last strategy is the strategy of gender subversion, which builds on the social constructivist assumption that gender is a historically situated process and not a role or a quality. If the existing gender system does not ascribe equal value to socially constructed masculinities and femininities, then any attempt to achieve equality based on emphasising the different qualities men and women have is bound to fail because it will always reinforce the existing gender system (which indeed gender mainstreaming rhetoric seems to be doing). According to this strategy, change has to be built on a critical deconstruction of binary differences between men and women.

Given the above-mentioned differences in terminologies, the emphasis on women's discrimination, institutional and structural barriers, and women's rights is counter-productive because this discourse has not become part of the existing power centre. Although this rhetoric is informed by feminist ideals and has a greater potential for change than previously pursued avenues, its continued deprecation and, indeed, counter-claims that the equality of women and men has already been achieved in our cultural context, pushes this rhetoric to the periphery of political interest. It is needless to say that the fear of changing the status quo that this language inherently includes is part of its rejection.

At the institutional and theoretical levels, three aspects of the “women and science” problem have come to be conceptualized: science by women, science about women and science for women. These three approaches place emphasis on various aspects and therefore their level of acceptance by a wider (professional) public differs. In the words of Bruno Latour [1987], the various approaches to addressing the issue of women in science open “Pandora’s boxes” of questions which we take for granted in our knowledge production and which are no longer problematised by the scientific community when seeking answers to new research questions.

The first black box is the low participation of women in research and development, which would fall into the category of “science by women.” Although this issue is not easy to address and some of the proposed measures, such as percentage quotas or targets, are hotly contested, it is the area that is the least problematic. We believe that this can be attributed to the quantifiability of the concern related to the low representation of women in science. Statistics clearly show that the percentage of women in science is still very low although in most old and new EU member states the number of women students at the undergraduate and graduate levels exceed the number of men. Why then do women not reach higher decision-making positions and full professorships in greater numbers? What is, however, problematic about the current attempts to increase the number of women in various bodies is that the measures adopted to counterbalance the low numbers fail to examine and modify the existing structural arrangements that are largely to blame. It is presumed that if conditions for women scientists change, the numbers will go up but such a change in conditions is meaningless as it concentrates again only on women and their “problems” without attempting in any way to re-define and re-conceptualise the values on which science is organised.

Feminist research suggest several explanations for the low percentage of women in science. One of them is the structural barriers women face in relation to the arrangement of the scientific career path based on the myth of an uninterrupted, focused career which is not appropriate for the social experience of women due to the unequal distribution of roles in the private sphere and in childcare. The opponents of this approach (often including women scientists) argue that such an arrangement is a woman’s individual decision, a choice. By using the rhetoric of personal choice they veil the structural embeddedness of traditional masculine social experience (a unidirectional, uninterrupted life course without breaks or side-tracks) and the exclusion of traditionally feminine experience (non-linear life course due to the currently

predominant gender contract) and the transfer of discrimination and disadvantages related to this arrangement outside the frame of considerations concerning the structural causes of discrimination against women in science. This of course makes it impossible to systematically study the displays of this type of disadvantage in institutions and precludes any changes in the situation.

This issue is well illustrated by quotes that the Centre obtained from participants in a workshop called Science for, about and by Women organised in 2002 by the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences. Motherhood was an obstacle for the participants not because it limited them in their scientific accomplishments but because it reduced their qualifications in the eyes of others.

The best is not to talk about the family at all, pretend it does not exist, and work more than the others in order not to give any grounds for criticism. And especially have even fewer absences than the others because the greatest offence is sick kids. As for support and leadership from older colleagues – there is none. The situation has gone so far that I feel completely overburdened and am thinking of quitting.
[workshop participant]

The first clash I experienced that was about stereotypes came in 1977 in the Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs. For the first time someone saw me as a woman. It became quite hard there work-wise. I was so absolutely angry and stupefied by it and I felt it to be an injustice. The most common stereotype was that since I have children, I give less to my work. I felt very bad about that because my colleagues worked even less [than I did]. I came to the conclusion that the best thing is not to tell anyone about my family. I realised that my self-defence went as far as not to mention the slightest difficulty at work. It led to a complete closure; I kept my private life to my friends only. This stereotype was applied very strictly in my case because I was the only one in the department who had kids. Then there were either people without children or older people...

[from an "Woman of the Month" interview for the National Contact Centre – Women and Science]

Women scientists often deal with these problems at an individual level. On the macro level, however, these are unidentifiable problems because they are addressed from the point of view of individual biographies. Quite likely, because a scientific career is still not a typical women's career, by doing science women transgress and find themselves in rather uncertain territory where they encounter problems resulting from their gender socialisation and, more importantly, structural prejudices related to femininity; as a result they often adopt other, more accepted types of behaviour.

Another reason for the low participation of women in science is addressed in the theory of the homosociability² of human organisations and the existence of old boys' networks. Foreign research studies have documented a great tendency among individuals to select for their work groups and research teams "similar" people, people with whom they feel comfortable.³ In institutions where women are poorly represented and do not have any decision-making power regarding the hiring of new work team members, the homogeneity of the work collective is reinforced. This is related to another well-described issue that when there is a job opening, this information is disseminated through informal channels even before the formal information appears. In this way, based on friendship ties, open positions are unofficially filled before they are formally advertised.⁴

The homosociability and prejudices concerning the abilities of women in science are clearly illustrated in a study conducted by two Swedish researchers. In their groundbreaking paper "Nepotism and Sexism in Peer Review" published in 1997 in *Nature*, Christine Wenneras and Agnes Wold present the results of a hiring procedure for post-doctoral fellowships at the Swedish Medical Research Council. Their research clearly showed the impact of sex on results; in order for women applicants to achieve the same score as their male counterparts, they had to publish 2.5 times more in prestigious publications such as *Nature* or *Science*.⁵

Another black box is historical scientific construction, including research on women, which serves to enforce traditional stereotypes about women, which would fall into the category of "science about women". We live in a gender polarised society that attributes to women and men different qualities, skills, values and moral systems which are oftentimes explained using biological arguments, especially in terms of women's reproductive capacities. "the questions this branch of biology attempts to answer could only be thought of in a society where men are taken to be more intelligent than women

... these questions could not be dreamed of in a culture where 'intelligence' is seen as an umbrella term for many abilities which are possessed in different measure by individuals" [Tanesini 1999: 67]. In this connection, Sandra Harding insists that if in the course of history that was a gendered being that tried to establish the difference between the sexes of its own kind and affinities between men and males and women and female of other species, it was men [Harding 1986].

When we examine historical studies about science, we can see that "scientific" opinions about women, their biology and therefore also their limitations resulting from reproductive function, are completely unscientific from today's generally accepted standards of scientific research and objectivity. As Tinková [2003] shows, "scientific publications" about the difference of women published at the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century are a detailed account of the gender stereotypes, prejudices and opinions of men who formed early science. They are not based on any surveys, research studies or measurements; they are mere statements or wishful thinking on the part of the authors. We are, however, still living with these prejudices today and not infrequently these "authorities" are cited as the basis for today's arguments. Feminist histories of science clearly show that our presuppositions about how and what women and men can do are based on the fact that there were no other sufficiently strong competing theories and we can presume that, because of the inability of women to fully participate in higher education and research prior to the beginning of the 20th century, these prejudices are the work of men who have shaped early science and a result of conservative social forces which strove to achieve a clear and fixed social arrangement after the periods of social upheaval in Europe [Fox Keller 1985].

All these concerns are closely related to the production of knowledge and the values upon which it is built. Over the last thirty years, feminist epistemologists have pointed to the values and prejudices upon which science has historically been constructed. These theories build upon the presumption that our knowledge is always situated. All the contributions in this collection examine this area from different perspectives. Standpoint theories show that the values upon which science is constructed – objectivity, rationality, a disinterested and indifferent knowing subject – are values our societies connect with masculinity, and therefore – a priori – exclude women from the position of the knower because women are defined in opposition to masculinity as the "Other". Although there are modes of thought within this area of knowledge production which claim that women's knowledge is better as a result of their marginalised position on the periphery⁶,

others tend to concentrate on exposing the prejudices and presumptions that shape the production of knowledge. Feminist standpoint theory, for example, shows that there is no single objective and neutral position from which it would be possible to make universal knowledge claims, that knowledge is not produced in a social and value vacuum, and examines how a privileged position has historically been created. Its proponents strive to create socially situated perspectives that would have the epistemic privilege and authority to make knowledge claims.

Post-modern feminist epistemologies have different starting points but they agree with feminist standpoint theories on the premise that knowledge is always contextualised. Post-modern critiques concentrate on the issue of language and thought systems. They claim that our reality and knowledge are discursively shaped and therefore we are not capable of understanding concepts as they are but only as concepts verbally expressed in discourse. Linguistic signs are reflexive rather than referential. They do not refer to things as they are, but rather acquire their meanings in interactions with other signs within a discourse. The issue of power is a main concern for post-modern critiques of science because the ability to penetrate a discursive field and to be expressed at the conceptual level is crucial for a thought change. Both of these approaches are united by an awareness of the constant re-negotiation of knowledge and knowledge production procedures and therefore they place emphasis on the process of knowledge production rather than on its results.

The category of “science about women,” and the examinations in feminist epistemologies link to the last black box, “science for women”. Various studies which examine the integration of gender dimension into research projects show how research projects are problematic from a gender point of view, both in the context of discovery and in the context of justification. At the level of context of justification masculine experience has been treated as the norm and women’s experiences have not been included at all (for example, in medical research studies control samples were formed only by male populations although research results were then applied both to men and women). In the context of discovery, a definition of which research topics are considered as relevant is one of the major problems. Research studies that fall within the area of “science for women” explore the ways in which women’s experiences and needs (social medical, economic, etc.) have been marginalised and excluded from research priorities because they were not perceived as relevant or important. Preoccupations in this area identify research priorities that carry significance for women’s social experiences, and promote them as relevant research questions.

All three of these areas of feminist explorations in science are crucial in that they uncover the power ambitions and processes of institutionalising knowledge. They take us back to the beginning of this introduction, to the question of how to achieve change. To a greater or lesser degree, the obstacles and prejudices facing women in science have been described in various countries and the mechanisms of marginalisation and production of knowledge have been exposed. What is, however, obvious is that these critiques have not succeeded in infiltrating the power centre, the dominant discursive field within which we participate in knowledge production. This highlights the political engagement of these types of research, which leads to their being disparaged or condemned as unscientific. Thus they document from a gender perspective how women, their research, results, and other types of knowledge, are marginalised in science. In this sense they function as strong critical tools that challenge the authority of dominant epistemological positions based on concepts to the criticism of which this publication is dedicated.

We have selected the title of the collection – Thinking Borders – not because we wanted to emphasise the borders of how far human thoughts can reach, but rather the barriers, borders of what becomes acceptable and accepted knowledge. Borders are not firmly set. Thinking about how the borders of acceptability are constructed cannot be done if we presume that science occurs in a value neutral, indifferent environment.

Of course, the story of the relationship between women and men in science could be written in many different ways. As we have suggested above, the issue of the low percentage of women in research and development is perhaps the most acceptable area for discussion. The quantifiability of the issue and the budding political will to address equal opportunities for women and men on the labour market has made it possible to open discussions about women in science at a political level. On the other hand, feminist epistemologies and their criticism of the way science is constructed are far more difficult for the academic and non-academic communities to accept because science occupies a special position in our symbolic system; what is unscientific and irrelevant is tested against what is scientific. Science is a type of norm in which and against which relevant scientific (or unscientific or even “pseudoscientific”) issues are defined. There is no given key to decide what will be included in scientific research, what will be regarded as a relevant research question, but rather it is a matter of negotiation in the academic and political environments.

In putting together this collection, we wanted to show that a large amount of the knowledge and presuppositions about women, scientists, what constitutes knowledge, and what is accepted by the scientific community as relevant and validated knowledge is often a result of the narrow-mindedness of the scientific imagination, of social fear and thus also fear of political changes. Of course, it is also a result of relations, locations, contexts and support from other actors. Feminist studies of science is so unacceptable for the existing scientific power structures that it is still not possible to mobilise enough support to make this type of research—whether explicitly feminist or not—a supported part of knowledge making, scientific preparation of young scientists, and continued socialisation of scientists. We wanted to show that asking how knowledge is organised (for example from a gender point of view) is far more interesting than scientific life based on accepted and untested “truths,” and that this type of research is absolutely necessary if science is to be truly “scientific,” if it is to respond to the stimuli coming from society, and if we want to gain a better understanding of how we as scientists participate in knowledge production.

These starting points show that we do not see a difference between engagement with and the objective production of knowledge because we believe that all knowledge is engaged – socially, economically, and politically. Accusations of irrationality or insufficient methodological detail can often be a defence mechanism of those whose knowledge claims could be cast into doubt by new knowledge claims. Scientific truth becomes truth only at the moment when it is accepted as such by the scientific community and its support mechanisms (scientific journals, grant agencies and political structures). Therefore we believe that it is necessary to open those “Pandora’s boxes” concerning the position of women and science and gender issues in research projects because the silences and absences often highlight the borders, the ability to mobilise, and the openness to ask new questions.

Although questions about whether and how science would change if there were more women are unanswerable until that happens, critical considerations of what the change may bring are necessary. We believe that a greater percentage of women in grant agencies, in places where decisions are made about the directions of research policy and research priorities, in leadership of research institutions is important not only with respect to achieving the rights of women to self-fulfilment and to exercising their equal rights as citizens but equally because the questions and answers science will produce may be different and may take into account experiences that have been historically

marginalised. If we pursue this question a little further and ask what would happen if the representation of women in science dramatically increased, we are faced with a crucial question: in what ways would science change? Greater participation of women in the production of knowledge does not have to mean the production of knowledge informed by feminist ideals. How would the arguments used by feminist critics of science change given that one of the main and most accepted arguments today is the necessity to increase the participation of women in science? This issue is closely tied to the issue of official support for gender mainstreaming that can be blind from the perspective of the feminist production of knowledge. Although it will undoubtedly bring a qualitative change, an increase in the percentage of women knowledge producers will not necessarily bring the type of change feminist epistemologists are striving for. Therefore we need to ask what would happen with the concept of gender inequality and gender relations as such. With respect to the process of change for which we are striving in our activities, it will be crucial to insist on the difference between women and feminism and to critically reflect upon linguistic changes that will occur as the number of women in science increases, and contribute to shaping them.

Notes

¹ Gender mainstreaming is defined as the “permeation” of the aspect of equal opportunities for women and men through all conceptual and decision-making processes in all their phases, including planning, implementation and assessment. Before adopting a decision, governing bodies are required to assess the impact of such a decision on men and women (conduct gender analysis). If it is discovered that one or the other sex will be negatively affected by such a decision, the decision-maker is bound to adopt measures to eliminate or mitigate the negative effects of such a decision. Gender mainstreaming has been adopted as the main tool for achieving gender equality in society both at the level of the European Union and at the level of the Czech Republic (government resolution No. 456 of 9 May 2001).

² The term homosociality was introduced by Witz and Savage in 1992 and refers to practices through which women are excluded from the exercise of power and to the ways through which access to power is determined by men.

³ See, for example, Tallberg, T. (2003). *Networks, Organisations and Men: Concepts and Interrelations*. Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration; Brooks

A. and A. MacKinnon (eds.) (2001). *Gender and the Restructured University: Changing Management and Culture in Higher Education*. The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press; or Davies. K. (2001). *Doing Dominance and Doing Difference: Doctors, Nurses and Gender*, Conference Paper 01/05 at <http://www.women-eu.de/start.htm> (Women in European universities).

⁴ In this context it is interesting to note the research conducted by Margaret Murray [2000], who studied women mathematicians in the US who obtained their PhDs in the forties and fifties. Murray's research shows that at a time when non-coeducational women's and men's colleges predominated in the US, there were also old girls' networks, which functioned in similar ways as the men's do. Indeed, women tended to find positions in women's colleges and universities where emphases was put on teaching rather than research, but it is still a very important finding with respect to the co-education of these institutions. Because the representation of women in higher education remained marginal, especially due to the backlash after the Second World War, which coincided with a tremendous increase in the number of men in colleges as a result of the G. I. Bill and other developments, women's networks disappeared while men's strengthened their role in connection with the exponentially growing number of institutions of tertiary education in the US and the expansion of the faculties.

⁵ In the documentary "Femmes de Tête" produced by the French TV channel ARTE, both authors stated that this research and the publication of the results, although it brought revolutionary insight into discriminatory practices in scientific institutions, put an end to their scientific careers precisely because of the results. Both of them also said that fortunately they have a prospering medical practice and so they do not need to worry about their financial situation. However, two very successful women scientists were "punished" at the end of the 20th century by the scientific community for documenting problematic aspects of current gendered practices.

⁶ This perspective was dominant in the early manifestations of standpoint theory. At the end of 1980s and especially in the 1990s theoreticians have steered away from this purely essentialist approach.

Bibliography

- Brooks A. and A. MacKinnon (eds.) (2001). *Gender and the Restructured University: Changing Management and Culture in Higher Education*. The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Davies. K. (2001). *Doing Dominance and Doing Difference: Doctors, Nurses and Gender*. Conference Paper 01/05 available at <http://www.women-eu.de/start.htm> (Women in European Universities).
- Fox Keller E. (1985). *Reflections on Gender and Science*. Yale University Press, New Haven and London.
- Harding, S. (1986). *The Science Question in Feminism*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Latour, B. (1987). *Science in Action*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- LeFeuvre, N. *Analysing Women's Access to Professional Occupations*. Conference paper 01/06 na <http://www.women-eu.de/start.htm> (Women in European Universities).
- Millen, D. (1997). 'Some Methodological and Epistemological Issues Raised by Doing Feminist Research on Non-Feminist Women'. *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 2, no. 3, published at <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/2/3/3.html#witz1992>, received: 30/4/97, accepted: 30/9/97, published: 30/9/97, downloaded: 6/2/2004.
- Murray, M. A. (2000). *Women Becoming Mathematicians: Creating a Professional Identity in Post-World II America*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Tallberg, T. (2003). *Networks, Organisations and Men: Concepts and Interrelations*. Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration.
- Tinková, D. „Přirozený řád“ a ideologie oddělených sfér. příspěvek k otázce konstruování „přirozené role ženy“ v pozdně osvícenské vědě“ in *Kontext: časopis pro gender a vědu*, 3-4/2003, pp. 1-17.
- Witz, A. and M. Savage (1992): *Theoretical Introduction: The Gender of Organizations* In Savage, M. and A. Witz (eds.): *Gender and Bureaucracy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Wold, A. and Ch. Weneras. (1997). "Nepotism and Sexism in Peer Review". *Nature* 387:341-343.
- Tanesini, A. (1999). *An Introduction to Feminist Epistemologies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Women and Science:
Feminist Epistemologies and Critiques of Scientific Discourse

Jan Matonoha

The relationship between women and science may bring to mind various, perhaps even disparate associations and ideas. In the context of feminist critique of science, this relationship is quite specific and carries with it a number of assumptions and perceptions. Within contemporary (internally very differentiated) feminism (or feminisms), a debate on the relationship between women and science does not aim solely at tackling the issue of the low percentage of women in science or increasing the visibility of the unique successes of the few prominent women scientists who have prevailed in the domain of science despite the various subtle or not-so-subtle discriminatory practices of research institutions. Feminist thought aspires to provide a deeper, structural analysis of the relationship. Its goal is not simply the inclusion and support of women within the existing scientific structure and paradigm that asks for their loyalty (or complicity). It seeks a complex and fundamental transformation of this paradigm, with the aim of including alternative ways of knowing and shifting the links and relationships within that conglomerate of knowledge, power and social practices we have come to call 'science'.

Over the past two decades, feminist critiques have endeavoured to show that science is not disinterested, neutral, pure, or disentangled from the complex mesh of the political and social decision-making processes. These critiques have attempted to reveal the various cultural assumptions preceding and conditioning the allegedly value-free scientific conceptualisations of reality, and to reveal those moments in science when it (implicitly, covertly and indirectly) serves as an instrument justifying a particular social arrangement. Feminist critiques (of the masculine project) of science concentrate on a variety of areas, including the issue of institutional and structural discrimination, the oppression and shunting of women in science, and the issue of what role scientific discourse plays in the creation, maintenance and dissemination of gender stereotypes. One of the crucial points on the feminist agenda is the questioning and deconstruction of the traditional concept of science in areas of gnoseology and the history of knowledge. Let us now try to answer, briefly and selectively, the following three basic questions:

1. What is it that feminism criticises in the existing scientific model?
2. Wherein lie the major problems and obstacles facing women in science?
3. What alternatives does the feminist approach to science offer?

This chapter then serves as an elementary, introductory point of entry to the issue at hand while more detailed, deeper and more concentrated examinations will be offered in the remaining contributions in this collection which, against the backdrop of the three questions above, each investigate a different aspect of feminist concerns with science (the issue of objectivity in E. Farkašová's contribution, the issue of androcentrism in M. Szapuová's contribution and the concept of location in D. Lorenz-Meyer's contribution).

Critiques of scientific discourse

Feminist critiques of the current model of knowledge seeking as it has been constituted and institutionalised since the beginning of the modern era onward, are not unique and isolated. These critiques have joined many other voices that have problematised the position of science. Thus, for example, in their account, Elizabeth Grosz and Marie de Lepervanche Grosz E. and M. de Lepervanche [1988] start by noting Hume's conclusion that purely inductive work is impossible, and move on to Karl Popper and his thesis about knowledge claims not being based on the verifiability of facts but on a hypothetical falsification of theories. They then proceed to Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* [1970], where science is presented not as a linear sequence of feats of genius but rather as a system of heterogeneous claims included and includible into dominant and recognised systems of categories, hypotheses and methodologies. Science is viewed not as a steady, cumulative and homogenous advancement but as a process of shifting between differing, incompatible and competing paradigms separated by diachronic and synchronic ruptures dividing various stages and systems of knowing. The stability and dominance of a paradigm is only temporary, and depends on the speed with which exceptions accumulate within a paradigm. When the number of such exceptions reaches a critical mass, the paradigm collapses to be replaced by a new paradigm constructed on entirely different axioms.

The terms *episteme* and *discourse*, introduced by Michel Foucault in his *The Order of Things* [1966, English edition 1970], *The Archaeology of Knowledge* [1969, English edition 1972], and in his inauguration lecture "Orders of Discourse" [1970, English edition 1972], pose a similar (though not direct) analogy to Kuhn's theory. These terms crucially remind us – and this is particularly important from the perspective of a critique of science – that knowledge is not available to us in some pure, unmediated and transparent form or some raw state but that it grows, is archived and communicated

according to very complex and at the same time implicit and unnoticed rules and regularities. These rules, or structuring frameworks, organise and filter information to make it includible in the current knowledge system, in the established 'order of discourse'. As such, they play an irreplaceable productive and formative role, while at the same preventing us from conceptualising the discovered reality in ways other than precisely those allowed by established categories and 'rules'. In other words, these rules and regularities of articulation, which Foucault refers to as a discourse, allow us to claim something about reality while at the same time disallowing certain modes of claiming and thinking.

Like Kuhn, Foucault points to the discontinuous nature of epistemes and discursive formations, that is, to the fact that individual discourses not only change diachronically (arise and disappear, their identity slowly shifting or disappearing altogether) but that they exist synchronously in a state of permanent tension and competition for a dominant position in a given epistemic field. Foucault uses the example of Johann Mendel, the abbot of an Augustinian monastery in Brno, to document the way in which a discourse conditions the accessibility and dissemination of knowledge. Mendel's research, which de facto laid the foundation for modern genetics, was not accepted at the time by the scientific community despite the fact that his findings were completely accurate, as was proven later. His findings could not have been incorporated into the sum of scientific knowledge before the general context of thinking in biology about the phenomenon of heredity changed and a new discourse was formed.

Seyla Benhabib [1990] mentions several other moments when the traditional epistemological system was subjected to significant critique arising mainly from modern linguistics and the philosophy of language. One such moment came when the focus of attention shifted to the structuring role of language, to the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign (Saussure), and to the exposure of the illusion that objects precede our cognitive categories and conceptualisations. Another moment was when it was demonstrated that cognition was an activity specific for a given community sharing the same type of language game (Wittgenstein) or horizon of interpretations (Gadamer). Finally, she mentions the way in which we reduce the heterogeneity of reality through noetic assumptions of homogeneity and identity.

Benhabib examines in great detail Lyotard's concept of (meta)narrativity as being one of the elementary models for our knowing and grasping of reality. Lyotard points to a crisis of confidence in master narratives, to the disclosure and deconstruction of social legitimising processes which grant otherwise disparate and contingent facts an illusive appearance of perfectly justified and sensible whole by inserting them into the context of grand narration. One such deeply ingrained narrative that lies at the core of the Euro-American civilisation is the story of scientific progress.

Following the gradual disintegration of the episteme based on the idea of representation, truth has ceased to be considered a reflection of an original existing in reality. It is seen instead as a complex cognitive construct arising in a particular discourse according to the rules of a particular language game and in competition with other competing forms and modes of knowing. Consequently, science is seen not as some unveiling of truth hidden in reality but as a certain type of a rhetoric game, a process of persuasion and negotiation, an assemblage of facts in a continuous narrative that confirms our position. Alessandra Tanesini describes knowledge as a certain type of mis-representation increasing our power, and Donna Haraway summarises tersely: "All knowledge is a condensed node in an agonistic power field" [Haraway 1991: 185]. We could, of course, recall other important sources of inspiration for the critique of the traditional scientific system, for example John Stuart Mill, Friedrich Nietzsche, Edmund Husserl and others. Indeed, many a scientist actively involved in the "hard" sciences opposes the naive idea of science revealing an exact and "objectively" known reality. Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle springs to mind, the meaning of which could be concisely described in the following way: an instrument or method (whether an electron microscope or a sociological questionnaire) standing between us and the observed object always, inescapably, influences the environment of the observed object and thus distorts the observation. This situation offers, in principle, only two possibilities: we can use the most accurate instruments available for detailed observation, thus disrupting and changing the original conditions and state of the observed object (and thus, strictly speaking, we study a different object), or we can reduce accuracy (and the level of intervention) of the study method, and study in less detail and with less accuracy but in an environment which is closer to the natural state and thus also to the true identity of the object under study. In one way or another, it becomes clear that our knowledge is always approximate, offering only a limited degree of certainty. Pursuing this idea further, we can add that the studied object and the study method (and, indeed, the observer himself) create a new, comprehensive entity with its own specific parameters (at which point any discussion about the "original, authentic" attributes of the observed object becomes meaningless).

By way of concluding this section, let us summarise some basic objections and critical points that Luce Irigaray raises about the current masculine project of science.¹ She has questioned the assumption that the subject of the observer enjoys a status different from that of the observed object. She also challenges the position that identifies the process of gaining knowledge with a mere increase in instrumental control. Further, she critically points to the epistemic procedures that force cognitive schemes and patterns onto reality professing themselves to come naturally from the nature of the observed – although they are petrified and ideologically burdened constructs [paraphrased according to Grosz and Lepervanche 1988]. Irigaray claims that the most traditional attributes of science, such as quantifiability, the repeatability of an experiment and measurements, the accuracy of the method, transparency of the meta-language etc., do not serve to provide a more authentic knowledge of things around us but rather (forcefully) secure a fixed and stable position for Man as the supreme authority and arbiter controlling reality.

Women in science: obstacles and problems

Feminist critiques note the distinctly masculine nature of science. What is at stake are not a status, career or self-fulfilment of the individual men and women, female and male scientists, as the general situation, the complex arrangement of the image and operation of science which bears profoundly masculine marks or “virtues” (the conquering nature of science, orientation toward managing/controlling the natural environment, stress on strict rules, disassociation of personality, simplified and uncontextualised use of the concepts “the truth”, “laws” etc.). Science is thus presented as a masculine space, implicitly hostile to women’s world. Sandra Harding [1990] refers to Dorothy Smith, who has shown that in our concept of culture (in the widest sense of the word) as it has been postulated by men, there is no place for women, strictly speaking. Women perform all those auxiliary, basic and “unclean” activities, which condition but do not enter culture, which are not represented in it. Paradoxically, the better women perform their work (which they have not chosen, although it is taken for granted that they should perform it without protest), the more invisible they become and the less they interfere with the functioning of culture.

The image of science clearly connotes masculine attributes; at the same time, the female subject is continually pushed out of science by the stereotypical metaphorical and interpretative frameworks into which the female subject is integrated. Feminist

critiques therefore also concentrate on the critique and deconstruction of ingrained metaphors, cognitive schemes and traditional value-burdened dichotomies. It is pointed out that this continual, culturally “archetypal” identification of the female element with nature, instinct and matter, in contrast with the identification of the masculine element with culture, knowledge, rational intellect and a “virile” mind, plays a not insignificant role in the seemingly value-free scientific discourse, imprinting itself into the subconscious patterns that structure the explanatory and interpretative strategies of scientific and scholarly texts. Compare, for example, the manner in which the process of impregnation is generally described. It quite clearly bears the marks of the traditional division of activity and passivity – the waiting female egg and the “penetrating” male sperm. Indeed, this identification of women with nature is in and of itself naive in that it fails to problematise the term “nature” itself. For example, Donna Haraway [1991] persuasively argues that what we refer to as nature, as some natural given, is a complicated construct and a result of our cognitive practices. Nature was created only when it became integrated into the context of grand narratives, including the history of Man and his position in a world he has shaped as an appropriate background for his “heroic” achievements.

For many feminist theoreticians the desired goal is not simply to gain an access into a thus conceptualised structure of science. Their aim is not a mere participation in the current scientific paradigm but its general transformation. Besides, it becomes clear that female scientists themselves often perceive and see science differently than their male counterparts, as shown in a research study conducted by Jan Harding. Harding has differentiated between two basic types of intellect: the convergent intellect focused on one, more narrow and exact type of solution; and the divergent intellect, open to a wider spectrum of potential answers [paraphrased according to Grosz and Lepervanche 1988]. Boys opting for a study of exact sciences display the convergent intellect, while boys opting for humanities display the divergent intellect. What is important is the fact that girls who have embarked on exact sciences veer toward the divergent type. Their expectations and ideas concerning the essence and meaning of scientific work thus differ markedly from the ideas held by their male colleagues. Generally, while boys see science primarily as a competition and a conquest of the object of knowledge, girls conceptualise science as a practical service and assistance to others, based on the joint acquisition of knowledge, which itself is founded on principles other than the binary logic of truth/untruth.

Most of the above-mentioned attributes and features of science are criticised from feminist positions and exposed as anachronic and counterproductive.² What feminist critiques of science have in mind, and the alternatives they offer, is discussed in the next chapter.

Alternative feminist epistemologies

What feminism criticises in the first place is the contemporary scientific position which presents itself as disinterested and value free, standing in an absolute (i.e., perspective-free) and privileged meta-position against the object of knowledge and against society and its cultural and power structures. Feminist critiques refute this, arguing that a researcher is never, under any circumstances, an anonymous voice coming from nowhere, but is a concrete individual with concrete social motivations, goals, ideological interests, expectations and ideas, political and personal histories, a particular cognitive background etc. These (and many other) aspects unavoidably influence the course and results of scholarly undertaking (from the choice of research preference, through the allocation of research funds, to the interpretation and evaluation of the data obtained). Feminist concepts of science and knowledge do not want to muffle, suppress or conceal those aspects in the name of some alleged impartial objectivism; on the contrary, they want to admit, learn to reflect on and work with such aspects. Unfortunately, contemporary science takes the opposite course; it tries to veil or deny the contingency of its attitude and position. It does not or refuses to admit that our knowledge is selective, that it pays attention largely or even exclusively to that which lies within its circumference and that confirms and privileges its position.

Sandra Harding argues that it is necessary to locate the researcher in the same critical plane as the analysed object. The aim is to question the epistemic privilege of the researcher and to subject the researcher to the same critical and analytical study as the object of observation. Compare, as just one example, that psychiatry undertook the study of the allegedly strange and pathological aspects of the female mentality; as feminist critical thinking later showed, these very “peculiarities” were a product of the psychiatric approach itself, which stemmed from a purely masculine perspective. It was not the phenomena that were pathological but the very nature of the research itself. In order to be able to show this, it was first necessary to shake the privileged, authoritarian, “objective and impartial” meta-position of psychiatry as a science.

Feminist critiques of science did not immediately reach this attitude and knowledge but in fact had to pass through a process of development that included several distinct yet complementary phases. The phases not only represent successive, diachronic stages in the development of feminist critiques, but also inform various synchronic positions and attitudes assumed by feminists of different convictions and methodologies. Harding summarises and characterises these phases/positions as follows:

1. Feminist empiricism critically pointed to the fact that some results of scientific research are quite obviously prejudiced and distorted due to a lack of awareness, ignorance etc. The critique was carried out from the position of 'proper' science, i.e. science that claimed not to be susceptible to these failures or that at least aspired to correct these failures. Yet it was still built upon an anthropocentric arrangement of science that does not view the subject of the researcher as a subject that is always already situated in a certain social, cognitive and historical context.
2. In opposition to the attempts to increase objectivity and impartiality, standpoint theory stresses the influence of our concrete position, our situatedness within the concrete social and experiential context of our cognition. Standpoint theory (drawing to some extent on Marxism) claims that the feminist position, that of socially underprivileged subjects, unveils a completely different, inadmissible, unseen and often more authentic version of reality. Here we must add that this does not happen automatically and directly: this independent, alternative position must be achieved by first discarding the cognitive and mental stereotypes that are complicit with the hegemonic forms of knowledge.
3. As we have seen, the two theories above are in contradiction. However, a clash or change, and the transformation of a paradigm that depends upon changing conditions, are an inherent feature of our world, and as such we have to accept it. The last phase of this 'development', as Sandra Harding sees it, is a 'transitive epistemology', which professes to have the ability to incorporate these dynamic transformations [Harding 1987].

Standpoint theory claims that the perspective of the underprivileged is able to offer an alternative and subversive realistic view of reality less conserved by the ideological sediments and traditionally established cognitive processes. Donna Haraway, however, warns against theories that idealise too uncritically a perspective from the bottom, the perspective of the margin and/or of the oppressed. Such a position itself is not free of

blind spots, is not innocent, and deserves to be subjected to the same interpretative and deconstructive analysis as positions of privilege. Nonetheless, Donna Haraway's concept has much in common with the standpoint theory. In an attempt to avoid the trap of the false dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity, she presents the idea of situated knowledge and partial perspective [Haraway 1991]. Precisely because of its partiality (and its reflection), situated knowledge is far more rational and "objective" (in the sense that it is closer to the actual process of our cognition; compare with the examination of 'strong objectivity' proposed by Sandra Harding in E. Farkašová's contribution). In contrast to the concept of 'visuality', which sees everything from nowhere, from a non-position, a privileged meta-position unmarked by any standpoint, Haraway endorses a concept of knowledge which is aware of its embedment and which acknowledges the limitations of its cognitive point of view (and thus it can be accountable for its descriptions of reality).

The concept of situated knowledge, however, has nothing to do with relativism. Paradoxically, relativism is, from a certain perspective, identical to the rejected totalitarian concept of objectivity. This similarity lies in the fact that both (only from opposite ends) claim to be everywhere and at the same time nowhere; in other words, they see/know everything without declaring the position from which they see and where they stand. That allows them not to be accountable for what conceptualisation of reality they purport and from where they do so. Objectivism, which effectively asserts its "non-position" to be absolute and omnipresent, only permits a debate within the framework of its very own logic. It does not open up any external position based on an alternative and distinct set of axioms from which it could be examined and doubted. Relativism's nature is reversed but equally problematic. Its elusive and constantly absent non-position opens up an infinite number of standpoints from which it could be criticised, thus eventually depriving any argument of a criterion and meaning altogether. Thus, it is not relativism what forms an alternative to objectivism, but the concepts of partial perspective and situated knowledge, which – in contrast to both objectivism and relativism – make their clearly declared positions liable for a debate and examination. Haraway presents the following set of dichotomies to characterise these two opposing concepts of knowing:

Traditional concept of objectivity	Partial perspective, situated knowledge
universal rationality	ethnophilosophy
common language	heteroglossy
New Organon	deconstruction
unified theoretical field	various opposing positions
world system	local knowledge
master theory	network of differing clarifications

Thus, instead of a centralised, homogenous and universal field of knowledge with canonised methods for conducting research, but also instead of an idealised perspective from the periphery or from the bottom, Haraway introduces an idea of plural network of differentiated perspectives and various specific and partial discourses. According to Haraway, the foundation of rationality does not reside in any claim to universality and disinterested perspective. On the contrary, it is based precisely on the awareness of individual, partial, situated, localised positions (however complex and often contradictory these might be). From this perspective, the absolutist claim to a universal truth seems to be overly simplistic.³

To sum up, the basic tenets of the feminist approach to science is that knowledge is situated, there can be no privileged meta-position, and self-reflexivity of the researcher. Feminism points to complex interrelations between science and power, to the fact that so-called objectivity is not granted so much by the alleged concentration on the object of knowledge disentangled from various influences but by a sort of tacit consensus of an interpretative scientific community. It is quite clear that from the perspective of feminist critiques the point is not to silently join the current system of science. The point is not participation (or complicity) in the existing form of science, nor the “feminisation” of science (in the name of false and essentialist assumptions of a priori better, “more natural”, more emphatic, more intuitive approaches). The point is a total transformation of the scientific paradigm, an incorporation of a pluralist spectrum of individual, alternative and consciously partial, situated ways of thinking and making claims about the world around/in us.

Notes

¹ For other aspects of the critique of science raised particularly from the position of feminist epistemologies, see especially the contribution by E. Farkašová.

² For more on this, see especially the issue androcentrism of science in the text by M. Szapuová.

³ For more on the issue of politics of location, see contribution by D. Lorenz-Meyer.

Literature

Benhabib, S. (1990). „Epistemologies of Postmodernism. A Rejoinder to Jean-François Lyotard“ Pp. 107-132 in Linda J. Nicholson (ed.). *Feminism/Postmodernism*. London, New York: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1970). *The Order of Things*. London: Tavistock Publications.

Foucault, M. (1972). „Orders of Discourse“ In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Fox Keller, E. a H. E. Longino (eds.). (1996). *Feminism and Science*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Grosz, E. A. a M. de Lepervanche (1988). „Feminism and Science.“ In Caine, B. – Grosz, E. A. – M. de Lepervanche (eds.). *Crossing Boundaries. Feminisms and the Critique of Knowledges*. Sydney – Wellington – London – Boston: Allen & Unwin.

Grosz, E. A. (1997). „Těla a poznání. Feminismus a krize rozumu“. *Labyrinth* 1-2.

Haraway, D. J. (1991). „Situating Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective.“ Pp. 185-201 in D. Haraway. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association Books.

Harding, S. (1990). „Feminism, Science and the Anti-Enlightenment Critiques.“ In L. J. Nicholson (ed.). *Feminism/Postmodernism*. London, New York: Routledge.

Harding, S. (1987). „Introduction: Is there a Feminist Method?“ In S. Harding (ed.). *Feminism and Methodology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Kuhn, T. (1997). *Struktura vědeckých revolucí*. Praha: Oikoymenth.

Lyotard, J.-F. (1993). „Postmoderní situace“ In *O postmodernismu*. Praha: Filosofický ústav AV.

Tanesini, A. (1999). *An Introduction to Feminist Epistemologies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Wittgenstein, L. (1993). *Filosofická zkoumání*. Praha: Filosofický ústav AV.

Additional literature on the topic

Bleier, R. (ed.) (1986). *Feminist Approaches to Science*. New York, Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Birke, L. (1985). *Women, Feminism and Biology. The Feminist Challenge*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf.

Braidotti, R. a N. Lykke (eds.) (1996). *Between monsters, goddesses and cyborgs: feminist confrontations with science, medicine and cyberspace*. London: Zed Books.

Code, L. (1991). *What can she know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press.

Harding, S. (1986). *The science question in feminism*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Harding, S. (1991). *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Kirkup, G. a L. Smith Keller (eds.) (1992). *Inventing Women. Science, Technology and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press – Open University.

Longino, H. E. (1990). *Science as Social Knowledge: Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Women, Science and Feminism: Some Questions of Scientific Knowledge
from the Point of View of Feminist Epistemology

Mariana Szapuová

The view that science represents one of the highest and most significant achievements of the human mind and reason is a fundamental conviction of the Western philosophical tradition, which is deeply rooted in European thought. The concept of science as a neutral and autonomous sphere of the human spirit, independent of any historical or cultural context or political influence, has become an inseparable component of the Western cultural tradition, of the broader concept of the world, as well as of human self-image. Within this tradition, the high social as well as epistemological prestige of science has been (and continues to be) linked above all with faith in its objectivity, autonomy and neutrality. Science is considered to be the most reliable, if not the only, tool or method for comprehending the world around us—both in its natural and social aspects—precisely because of its assumed independence from social, cultural and political factors, and ideological tendencies. It supposedly represents disinterested and objective investigation, subject only to the principle of rationality. This concept of science, informed by the ideals of the Enlightenment, has in the latter half of the 20th century increasingly become the critical focus of philosophy and other specialised fields of thought devoted to science. This investigation has brought to the foreground questions of how science is conditioned by historical context, by social and cultural values, and by the individual and collective interests of its proponents. Increasingly, debate within the philosophy of science has given rise to questions concerning the historical and cultural dimensions of science, together with questions concerning the presence and influence of various values and interests in scientific work. In this regard we should mention Kuhnian “revolutionary” change as it relates to the understanding of scientific knowledge and the factors influencing its development. However, postmodernism has also given rise to powerful and related critical ideas.¹ Theoretical initiatives transcending the traditional understanding of science and indeed problematising this understanding have also come from outside of philosophy, mostly from the fields of sociology and the history of science. These initiatives configure themselves as part of a more broadly conceived cultural criticism, or within the framework of a more recent discipline: scientific studies. These new approaches focus on the social context and cultural dimension of knowledge, its anchoring in networks of social relations and cultural meanings – science being conditioned by social context— as well as on the relationship between knowledge and power, among other issues.

Debates, polemics, and arguments concerning the problems outlined above have arisen from a wide range of epistemological backgrounds, such as the contradiction between internalism and externalism (the question of which factors influence the development of scientific thought); between objectivism and subjectivism (the question of the admissibility of values in the processes of scientific knowledge production, and the role and significance of “subjective”, personal, or cultural characteristics of the cognisant researcher); between objectivism and relativism, or, using Rorty’s term, ethnocentrism (the question of the independence or dependence of science within a historical and cultural context, and the existence or non-existence of universally valid criteria of what is objective, i.e., what is the only correct and valid knowledge); and, the context of the more general contradiction between scientism and anti-scientific positions. I believe the common ground of these distinctions, and the diverse worldviews formed against their background, reveals the conflict between the viewpoint defending the autonomy of science and viewpoints that make this autonomy problematic, doubtful, or even deny its autonomy altogether. Since belief in the autonomy of science, or the autonomy of mankind’s rationality, of which science is commonly understood to be a product, remains a basic element of the intellectual apparatus of modern man, it is hardly surprising that doubt in this belief, or its outright rejection, continues to provoke unease or disagreement (not only in philosophy, but also from scientists), and continues to be a source of violent polemic. These debates traverse various lines and various dimensions. In this paper, I intend to focus on some of the viewpoints that have been formed within the framework of feminist epistemology and the philosophy of science.

The origins of the feminist reflection on science, on its foundations and methods, and on individual scientific theories and research programs, date to the latter half of the 1970s. In the course of its evolution, feminist criticism and the theory of science have proceeded through several stages, becoming an important, and one can now say permanent, part of feminist epistemology, as well as becoming part of a more broadly conceived feminist reflection on and criticism of individual social and cultural institutions and spheres of human activity. The theoretical concepts and social criticism developed within the intellectual (as well as political) movement termed the “second wave” of feminism focused primarily on a wide range of questions concerning the social status of women such as their presence or absence in various spheres of public life and culture, questions of gender identity, and also addressed numerous practical problems concerning women’s lives. In the context of such reflection it was impossible

to ignore the historical absence of women in the sphere of science. This was probably one of the first impulses that inspired many women theoreticians, philosophers as well as scientists, to systematically confront the question they were continuously facing: “Why were there so few outstanding and renowned women scientists in the history of science?” The historical fact of the absence of women in science, especially in connection with the significance ascribed to science by our culture, represented a major theoretical (and also political) problem for many feminists. It also represented a challenge to the re-evaluation of the Western intellectual tradition, the scientific canon, and to the philosophy of science. Beginning with early analyses at the end of the 1970s, and continuing to the present day, feminist reflection and criticism of science, and, more generally, feminist epistemological thought, has developed into an uncommonly rich and broad body of analysis and theory that offers diverse answers not only to the basic question stated above, but also to many other questions concerning, for instance, the starting points and aims of science and its dependence on networks of social relationships and cultural meanings. Furthermore, there are also questions regarding the context of the subject of scientific knowledge,² as well as questions about the basic principles and ideals of scientific knowledge, and so on. It should be noted here that feminist reflection on scientific knowledge (i.e., its points of departure, approaches, aims, methods) has from the outset, from when this type of philosophical and epistemological thought first began to evolve, included not only a deconstructionist but also a constructive dimension. This latter dimension is manifest in the effort to generate alternative concepts, explanatory schemes and methodological approaches, and is also present in attempts to reinterpret basic notions active in generating the traditional philosophical concepts of science, such as the notion of rationality or objectivity, or the concept of the autonomy and neutrality of scientific knowledge. These two dimensions of feminist reflection on scientific knowledge are closely linked. The effort to build alternative theories most frequently stems from a criticism of dominant concepts and is often motivated by the dissatisfaction of feminist thinkers and theoreticians with the various classical scientific and philosophical concepts which seek to explain human nature, human relationships and ways of experiencing the world (especially in the biological sciences and psychology), human history (in history and archaeology), the lives of people within society and culture, and patterns of social interaction and communication (especially in cultural anthropology and other social sciences).

My aim here is to outline the main points of departure and some of the lines of feminist reflection on scientific knowledge that have developed in the feminist discourse on science over the past two or three decades, and to discuss the topics that for a majority of these theories are the centre of attention, as well as to examine their core arguments. In doing so, I will be relying on the typology of a feminist reflection on science described by Evelyn Fox Keller, who writes that the many positions which have gradually formed in feminist thinking on science can be placed in a broad spectrum, corresponding to the broad political range typical of feminism in general; where at one pole we find liberal positions, and on the other more radical ones, with many positions “in between”. According to Fox Keller, the liberal stream of feminist reflection on science focuses, above all, on the criticism of androcentrism, while the statements of androcentrism or male bias in the sciences have multiple meanings in the concepts of individual authors, whose criticisms vary in intensity. As will be shown later in more detail, feminist authors identify many elements of androcentrism at different levels or stages of scientific research. Symptoms of androcentrism have been identified, for instance, in the very absence of women in science, in the framing of problems and methods, in the articulation of hypotheses, and in the interpretation of data. Thus the presence of androcentric prejudice therein is generally considered to be a sign of “bad” science, i.e., science that has been deformed by distorted methods and results. Some criticism (which Fox Keller regards as radical), however, goes much further by asserting that the very foundations of science, its basic principles and ideals, are male prejudiced, or are created according to a “male pattern”, and that it is impossible to amend this state of things by simple or partial modifications or by removing individual elements of androcentrism. Such amendments require a radical rupture, a radical re-evaluation and a rethinking of some very basic notions and principles, such as the principle of objectivity, neutrality, autonomy, and rationality [Fox Keller 1998: 262–265]. In the following section of my paper, I will focus foremost on those opinions that are closer to the liberal end of the aforementioned spectrum of criticism of science and its meanings, focussing mainly on the critique of androcentrism and sexism present in scientific knowledge.³

Feminist reflection on science, as I have already suggested, initially concentrated on the critique of several specific, specialised theories and empirical research, concentrating particularly on their (often hidden) underlying principles. This critique convincingly proved that a number of theories and research contained androcentric and sexist elements. The presence of such prejudices against women was first demonstrated

in certain concepts in the natural sciences, including some biological disciplines, particularly in those whose subject of research included differences between the sexes of either animals or humans. One significant work in this respect was Ruth Bleier's essay "Sex Differences Research: Science or Belief?" [Bleier 1991], in which Bleier shows that, in various fields ranging from endocrinology and neurology to psychology and primatology, researchers often went to enormous lengths to demonstrate the existence of major differences between the sexes (for example, in the area of cognitive abilities or behavioural characteristics) that would explain and legitimise forms of gender hierarchy and asymmetry existing in society [see Bleier 1991: 147–163], particularly in instances which concerned hierarchically polarised differences where masculine qualities were ascribed greater value and social significance. Similar arguments are found in biologist Ruth Hubbard's "Have Only Men Evolved?" [Hubbard 1983: 45–71], which reveals a number of androcentric prejudices present both in classical Darwinian evolution theory (particularly in Darwin's evaluation of the role of males in human evolution) as well as in other more contemporary, socio-biological theories. Based on this research, Hubbard claims that scientific theories are not immune to social and cultural influence and values, and she further (and convincingly) demonstrates the presence of commonly received convictions of Victorian morality (e.g., the postulate of male activity/female passivity) in Darwin's texts and in his principle of sexual selection. According to Hubbard, this very concentration on sexual differences is a telling sign of an androcentric research project.

Such critiques were originally governed by the intention to remove sexist prejudice from scientific knowledge, thus "improving" science, ensuring its disinterested objectivity, and preventing its results from being misused to legitimise gender inequality. At the same time, however, such critical reflection leads to newer and more universal epistemological questions concerning the very nature of science as a cognitive activity and as a social and cultural institution, the methods of scientific knowledge, and the relationship between knowledge and power. The results of this branch of feminist research and analysis, in spite of its broad spectrum of focus, allow us to identify some common or at least similar features present in the majority of feminist approaches to science. Certain topical issues remain central to the feminist reflection on science. While not an exhaustive summary, one can cite the following, most basic questions:

- The absence and historical exclusion of women from the creation of scientific knowledge. In other words, why are there so few prominent women scientists in the history of science? What obstacles have stood in their path? And furthermore, did the historical exclusion of women from science have any consequence as regards the nature and content of knowledge achieved in individual branches of science, in the methods employed and the norms of scientific knowledge applied, or for the evolution of science per se?
- Do the dominant concepts of science and processes of scientific cognition feature androcentric interests or perspectives? In what sense are certain research projects androcentric, sexist, or otherwise gender-prejudiced, and in what way do these features of scientific knowledge influence not only the very process of research, but also its results and the application of these results in technology and practice?
- In what ways have the application of some results of scientific knowledge and technologies disadvantaged women or failed to take their interests into account? How has this happened in the past, and how does it continue to happen in the present?
- In what way do gender-specific models and gendered metaphors influence the scientific representation of the natural and social worlds?
- What is the role of values in scientific knowledge?
- In what way or to what degree does traditional or contemporary philosophy of science, with its own concepts of objectivity and rationality, influence the image of science, specifically how do we understand science, its authority and significance, and what place do we ascribe science in culture and public life?
- What are the consequences, in the broadest sense, when traditional science and philosophy of science ignore questions of gender and the gender organisation of scientific work, and in what way would focusing on these questions change the character of science? What might the role of scientific education be in overcoming these problems? [see Harding 1986: 20–24, Anderson 1995, Anderson 2001].

As for the historical absence or low participation of women in science, we should first point to a phenomenon that initially seems somewhat marginal, but which I think is symptomatic of a very common attitude toward women and science. As for the question, simply stated “why were there, or why are there, so few prominent women scientists?” it seemed rather rhetorical, perhaps reflecting an underlying assumption that women were/are not capable of participating in science; that they lack the dispositions necessary for science, such as disinterestedness, objectivity, rationality, capacity for abstract thinking, and so on.⁴ In some sense it could be said that this question started

to be perceived as worthy of serious examination only as a result of the influence of feminist investigations. With respect to this, the research of various authors shows that the factors explaining the historical exclusion of women from the field of science are complex and varied. These exclusionary factors are, on the one hand, external to science: social, cultural, and political; but, on the other hand, there are internal factors: “scientific” ones, i.e., ones determined by the very character, ideology and method of science. In researching the historical formation of modern science, many feminist philosophers and theoreticians of science have argued that the exclusion of women from science was in no way accidental, and was, in fact, connected with the historical transformation of the cultural image and significance of science, and with the representation of women. This exclusion was related to, among other things, the language of the forming science and to the metaphors science used to describe and understand itself, through which science created its self-image. The metaphor of sexuality, which was instrumental in articulating the relationship between the cognisant mind and nature, its object, played a key role in this process. The influence of gender-specific models and gender metaphors on the formation of modern science, its self-understanding and its philosophical representation, have been widely addressed by many feminist writers. Towering above the rest is the work of the Australian philosopher Genevieve Lloyd, especially the classic *The Man of Reason: “Male” and “Female” in Western Philosophy* [Lloyd 1984]. Based on a thorough and meticulous examination of historical-philosophical material stretching from Plato to Hegel, Lloyd observes the metaphorical dimension of the philosophical conceptions of rationality, or of the ideal of rational knowledge that has become a fundamental feature of the notion and practice of science, and she limns various modes of such thinking. The modes of creating the ideal of rationality were simultaneously the manner in which “rationality has been conceived as transcendence of the feminine” [ibid.: 104]. It is important to note that when Lloyd speaks of the masculinity of reason she means the symbolic and metaphorical content of the notion of reason and of philosophical concepts of reason. She observes that that this symbolic and metaphorical content is tied to the symbol and metaphor of sex differentiation. Likewise, others have focused on, for instance, Bacon’s metaphors of male dominance over (feminine) nature, emphasising the role these metaphors played not only in the self-configuration of modern science but also towards conceptions of masculinity and femininity [see, for instance, Fox Keller 1994, and Kournay 1998]. This close relationship between modern experimental science and masculinity (or, more precisely, with the concept of masculinity) has continued from the 17th century to the present day. One often hears that the aim of science is to “rule” or “govern”

natural processes, to “control” nature, to “exploit” its resources, to “tie” its forces, to “fight” with the natural forces, to “win the struggle” against them, and so on. This is not entirely about semantics, although the importance of language and articulation cannot be doubted. Rather, encoded in the concept of science constructed with such terms there are certain cultural norms and expectations connected with the cultural concept of a dominant, active, and aggressive masculinity and a passive, subordinated femininity. The metaphor of an active, masculine scientist and a passive, feminine nature gradually transformed into the “silenced knowledge” of what science, in fact, is, and into the nature of science and scientific activity. At the same time, such metaphors also played a role in the concept of what is masculine and what is feminine, where “the male-female distinction itself has operated not as a straightforwardly descriptive principle of classification, but as an expression of values” [Lloyd 1984: 103], and where the masculine principle was ascribed a higher value.

Although what feminist theoreticians have termed the “maleness of science” is not exhausted by the aforementioned features of understanding scientific knowledge, some authors recognised at least partial causes of the historical absence of women in science. “Because science has been so firmly identified as male, women in scientific fields have had to mediate between two worlds and a dual identity: to be a ‘real woman’ is to be non-scientific; to be a ‘real scientist’ is to be unfeminine” [Fee 1991: 45].

However, the use of gender-coded metaphors and sexualised language that, in a serious way, co-determine the character of scientific work as well as the self-image and cultural interpretation of modern science, is not the only indicator of this “maleness”. Feminist theoreticians who claim that from the outset Western science developed as a male affair also have in mind other features of scientific knowledge. Janet A. Kournay, for instance, identifies four basic elements of the thesis of the masculine character of science. The first is that the basic standards and methods of scientific activity, such as objectivity, disinterestedness, logic, impartiality, and emotional disengagement, are simultaneously also cultural attributes of masculinity and male behaviour, and contrast sharply with the opposite norms of femininity and female behaviour. Scientists are expected to be assertive, ambitious and competitive, all qualities that incidentally define or co-determine the contents of the concept of masculinity (in Western culture, at least). The second sense in which science is masculine lies in the fact that from its beginnings science has been, and in some sense still is, controlled by men. In the past, women were almost totally excluded from the sphere of science by institutional

mechanisms (i.e., by the inaccessibility of higher education), but even now there are numerous barriers standing in the way of women's advancement in scientific careers.⁵ The third feature by which the masculine character of science demonstrates itself is, according to Kournay, that women were left outside the sphere of science also in regard to the substance of scientific theories. Many problems concerning women's lives never became the object of scientific interest, and in this sense women remained unnoticed by, or even invisible to, traditional science. This neglect is evident in a number of biological and medical research projects, as well as in the broader social sciences, where research programs often emerge out of the masculine experience, or reflect problems primarily concerning men. For instance, the conceptual scheme common in sociology and economics, which divides human activity into work and leisure, mostly reflects men's experience, and makes it impossible to conceptually assess and thematise the unpaid housework carried out mainly by women, for instance, or work produced in caring for others. Finally, the fourth sign which chiefly reveals the masculine character of science is the negative representation of women in a number of scientific theories. As examples, one may cite the numerous theories asserting the intellectual inferiority of women and theories of female hysteria, as well as many opinions of Freud, for example [see Kournay 1998: 232–234]. Such theories often present women in comparison with men as less ideal, as in some sense deficient, or even as inferior beings.⁶

As I have already mentioned, the feminist critique of science has its origins in the critique to which some women scientists (biologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and sociologists) subjected their own fields. These critiques showed the presence of a number of prejudices against women in varied scientific theories.⁷ Many such authors also drew attention to the fact that these theories were frequently used to legitimise sexist or discriminatory social practices. I have already suggested that feminist criticism gradually acquired diverse forms and focused on diverse problems, but at the same time it raised new questions concerning, for instance, the possible and necessary revision of thus-far accepted theories, as well as raising more universal, philosophical, and epistemological questions concerning the adequacy and correctness of the customary standards of scientific knowledge, or of the key notions by which scientific knowledge had been heretofore defined (such as notions of rationality and objectivity). The issue of the ideals of scientific rationality and objectivity can be regarded as particularly important, and within the framework of feminist epistemology intense attention is focused on this and related questions [see Farkašová 1996].

However, I would like here to return to the topic of the androcentric interests, values, and prejudices which are present in many areas of scientific knowledge. Although the scope of feminist criticism is far broader, the claim that “science carries a strong androcentric prejudice” is common to all branches of these critiques [Fox Keller 1998: 262]. However, it is necessary to emphasise that the “range of meanings ascribed the claim of androcentric bias reflects a wide variety of disagreement” [ibid.:263]. Thus the thesis requires further development and qualification, as is the case with the basic thesis of a feminist approach to science, according to which science, contrary to generally received notions, is not gender-neutral, but gendered. In the words of Lynn H. Nelson, “in a number of sciences the language used to describe phenomena, the questions pursued, the models adopted, the interpretation of data and observations, and the theoretical frameworks developed reflect the fact that science is and has been dominated by men.” [Nelson 1990: 189]. This also indicates the fact that scientific knowledge — the scientific method as well as the content of scientific theories — does not represent a realisation of pure, disinterested reason, but is influenced by numerous cultural, social and political factors and values, not excluding gender relationships and gender symbolism. Elements of androcentrism are the consequences of such influences and are often manifested in the choice of questions that become the object of scientific examination. For instance, if research into the biological foundation of intelligence focuses on establishing that men have greater intelligence than women, then it must be noted, as Alessandra Tanesini has done, that “the questions this branch of biology attempts to answer could only be thought of in a society where men are taken to be more intelligent than women ... these questions could not be dreamed of in a culture where ‘intelligence’ is seen as an umbrella term for many abilities which are possessed in different measure by individuals” [Tanesini 1999: 67]. In a similar vein, Sandra Harding comments on the amount of scientific effort spent on finding significant sexual differences in some branches of biology: “the point here is that if we ask which gendered humans have historically been concerned — indeed obsessed — to distinguish themselves from members of the other gender, the answer is ‘men’. Similarly, it is men who have been preoccupied with finding the continuities between men and males in other species and between women and females in other species (in researches on human evolution, socio-biology and etiology for example). Thus it is reasonable to believe that the selective focus on purported sexual sameness across species and sexual differences within species is not only questionable but also a distinct consequence of androcentrism” [Harding 1986: 100].

Androcentrism, however, does not manifest itself merely in the choice of issues, but can also influence the methodology of some research programs, as happened, for instance, in the case of research that sought an explanation for some aspects of human experience while taking into account only the experience and activity of men, and then generalising the results and declaring them to be universally valid. Such instances can be found in a number of the social sciences and many other areas. Let us mention here only one (probably the most notorious) case from developmental psychology: the theory of moral development, or more precisely, the concept of the development of moral maturity by stages, as elaborated by Lawrence Kohlberg. The thesis of a majority of feminist critics of science, according to which the elements of androcentrism in scientific research influence the methods applied, the articulation of hypotheses as well as the concepts of the scientific theories themselves, is well illustrated by the example of Kohlberg's theory. Kohlberg articulated his theory on the basis of an analysis of data he derived from his longitudinal empirical research, in which by using controlled interviews he established the type or level of moral judgement in various respondents. He found that the human capacity to make moral judgements goes through stages, while the governing principle of the development of moral judgement is the principle of equity. From the point of view of methodology, we must emphasise that Kohlberg carried out his research through controlled and structured interviews, in which the interviewees had to solve hypothetical moral dilemmas, and that the subjects of the selection process were exclusively boys. Kohlberg nevertheless generalised his observations and raised them to the status of a universally valid norm [for details, see Kohlberg, Levine, Haver 1983]. Carol Gilligan, Kohlberg's colleague and later his sharp critic, noted that when Kohlberg's scale was used as a standard, girls scored worse, as if they thus demonstrated a lower degree of moral maturity relative to their male coevals. Girls who put emphasis on the inter-relatedness of things, believing in communication as a way of solving conflicts, simply did not fall into the picture as seen through Kohlberg's criteria (founded on a judgement based on logical principles and the principle of equity). In light of this theory, the difference between females and males in the forming of personal identity in childhood is understood as a (female) deviation from the norm: "But [since] it is difficult to say 'different' without saying in the same breath 'better' or 'worse', [since] there are tendencies to create a unified scale of measurement, and [since] this scale is customarily derived and standardised on the basis of male interpretations of research data gained predominantly or exclusively from the research by men" [Gilligan 2001: 42]. It is thus clear that such psychology understands male behaviour as a norm, and female behaviour as a deviation from that

norm. However, Gilligan claims that the principle according to which Kohlberg governs the development of moral judgement, the principle of equity, is characteristic of the moral consideration of men, while the female development follows a different pattern, governed by the principle of caring. The critical re-evaluation of Kohlberg's results, which supposedly demonstrated the lower moral maturity of women, leads Gilligan to develop her own concept, based on the principle of caring. Her concept shows not only the one-sidedness of Kohlberg's theory, but also that the incorporation of a different (feminine) experience and point of view can change the general view of the researched phenomenon (in this case, moral development), and that it can lead to the transformation of the notions of a given theory or of the entire conceptual apparatus. Gilligan also draws attention to the fact that any research which reflects the experience of merely one group (in this case, men) yields a deformed view that is thus theoretically insupportable, the result of methodology influenced by androcentrism [see also Nelson 1990: 192]. Androcentric prejudice also becomes apparent when validating hypotheses, as happened, for instance, in biomedical research into the effect of aspirin in heart-attack prevention, research from which women were excluded [see Tanesini 1999: 67].

Here I would like to note that for feminist criticism of science and for feminist epistemology, the problem of evidence is of key significance, for it is important that conjectures and prejudices about gender and politics present in scientific theories be evaluated on the basis of evidence. In relation to the question of evidence, some philosophers argue in favour of feminist empirism.⁸ According to this notion, feminist research and criticism indicate that culturally conditioned convictions (including political convictions as well as convictions about relationships between people) can and should be subject to empirical control or testing. For instance, with respect to the critique of the theory of 'man-the-hunter', L.H. Nelson, a proponent of feminist empiricism, underscores that the empirical evidence shows that "women's activities are central to the dynamics of human social groups ... that male dominance is neither natural nor universal, that research into sex differences is wrongheaded, and that current division in power by sex/gender are not based on, or justifiable on the basis of biology" [Nelson 1990: 249]. This view of the problem of empirical evidence presupposes a holistic approach to science and cognition; an admission of the fact that science as a whole, as well as individual theories, does not represent an autonomous area; and that evidence for any theory also contains elements from other theories and, at least in part, also represents received ideas and experiences, part of which are also convictions of sex and gender,

and of the organisation of relationships between genders. According to Nelson, the current experience of women's activities, as well as the concurrent research in the areas of primatology, history and anthropology, provide sufficient evidence to refute the presumptions standing at the core/background of the theory of 'man-the-hunter'.

However, it would be a mistake to suppose that these and other similar critical analyses inspired by feminist theoretical or political standpoints wholly reject science as a mode and means of knowing the natural and social worlds. The intent is rather to reveal and remove certain imperfections and biases that occur in contemporary scientific thought. As feminist epistemology and theory of science have developed, such feminist reflection, which initially appeared to be a 'by-product' of the critique of certain universally accepted scientific theories or empirical research programs, gradually evolved to become a key result of this type of examination. The autonomy of science is an unreachable ideal, and therefore a superfluous one; science, as well as other forms of human mental activity, is interwoven into a network of social, cultural, as well as political meanings. Through feminist critique we now recognise that social and cultural factors, as well as everyday consciousness, common belief, and stereotypes enter the processes of scientific research through manifold ways, and thus influence their results. In other words, social and cultural influences, and indeed values and political persuasions, enter into the processes of the creation of scientific knowledge and permeate the body of science.

Notes

¹ As for the problem of contextuality and the social and historical conditioning of science, see Szapuová, M. (1998). Knowledge in a Social Context. Pp. 93-99 in *Philosophica XXXI*. Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, Szapuová, M. (2002) Problém empirizmu vo feministickej epistemológii. *Filozofia* 6: 393-405. K významu postmodernistických impulzov pre feministickú epistemológiu pozri Farkašová, E., Szapuová, M. (1999). Feministické epistemológie medzi modernou a postmodernou. In. *Čas a dejiny*. Zborník príspevkov z 3. výročného stretnutia SFZ v Liptovskom Jáne 13.-15. Sept. 1999.

² For the problem of the situated place of scientific knowledge in the context of feminist theory, see [Farkašová 2002: 383-493].

³ Within the framework of feminist theory and epistemology, androcentrism is understood as a way of perceiving and representing the world in which the male view

is asserted, and which reflects male or masculine interests, attitudes and values. By masculine interests, what is meant are interests that society and culture consider to be the attributes of men. Androcentrism in science becomes evident, for instance, when masculine experience is taken to be a universal human norm while the experience of women is either ignored or interpreted as a deviation. Sexism in the context of feminist reflection on science is understood as an element in scientific theories that assumes, claims, or implies the inferiority and subordination of women, and legitimises their subordinated position or gender-specific regulations of social roles [for detail see Nelson 1990: 190, Anderson 1995].

⁴ In this respect we should mention J. S. Mill, who as early as 1869 drew attention to the subordination of women in an essay that stated that the fact of someone not doing something is not an argument, and thus cannot be taken as proof of anyone's inability to carry out the given activity.

⁵ On the situation of women in science in Slovakia, see [Sedová 2003].

⁶ It is interesting to note that the gender one-sidedness of classical psychoanalytical theory was pointed out by Karen Horney, who was considered to be one of the mothers of psychoanalysis. It was Horney who drew attention to the close bond of psychoanalysis with the masculine character of the culture within which it emerged. According to Horney, the masculine character of this culture influenced the basic principles and methods of psychoanalysis. Horney says that psychoanalysis is the creation of a male mind and its explanation of the feminine psyche is given exclusively from a masculine point of view [Horney 2002: 23, 27].

⁷ In addition to the cited works of Ruth Bleier and Ruth Hubbard, see also [Smith 1996], or [Helen E. Longino and Ruth Doell 1996].

⁸ Empiricism in this context is understood as a position according to which scientific assertions and theories are substantiated by experience, though it is understood in a broader sense than in classical empiricism. It is not reduced to sensory perception.

Literature

- Anderson, E. (1995). "Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defence." *Hypatia* 10 (3).
- Anderson, E. *Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Zdroj: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-epistemology>, August 9, 2000, content last modified November 13, 2001.
- Bleier, R. (1991). "Sex Differences Research: Science or Belief ?" In Bleier, R. (ed.). *Feminist Approaches to Science*. Teachers College: Columbia University.
- Farkašová, E. (1996). Reason and rationality in contemporary feminist discussions. In *Science and Philosophy in Shaping Modern European Culture IV*. Bratislava: Nadácia Komunikácia.
- Farkašová, E. and M. Szapuová (1999). "Feministické epistemológie medzi modernou a postmodernou." In *Čas a dejiny. Zborník príspevkov z 3. výročného stretnutia SFZ v Liptovskom Jáne 13.-15. septembra 1999*.
- Farkašová, E. (2002). "Situovanosť vedeckého poznania verzus jeho objektivita." *Filozofia* 57 (6).
- Fee, E. (1991). "Critiques of Modern Science: The Relationship of Feminist to Other Radical Epistemologies." In Bleier, R. (ed.). *Feminist Approaches to Science*. Teachers College: Columbia University.
- Gilligan, C. (2001). *Jiným hlasem. O rozdílné psychologii žen a mužů*. Praha, Portál.
- Harding, S. (1986). *The Science Question in Feminism*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Horney, K. (2002). "Útek zo ženskosti." In K. Horney (2002). *Psychológia ženy*. Bratislava: Aspekt.
- Hubbard, R. (1983). "Have Only Men Evolved?" In Harding, S. and M. Hintikka (eds.). *Discovering Reality. Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company.
- Kellerová, E. Fox (1994). "Úvahy o rode a vede. Dynamická autonómia: objekty ako subjekty. Dynamická objektivita: Láska, moc a poznanie." In *Štyri pohľady do feministickej filozofie*. Bratislava: Archa.
- Keller, E. Fox (1998). "Feminismus a přírodní vědy." In Libora Oates-Indruchová (ed.). *Dívčí válka s ideologií*. Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství.
- Kohberg L., Levine, Ch. and A. Hewer (1983). *Moral stages: A Current Formulation and a Responses to Critics*. Basel: Karger.

- Kournay, J. A. (1998). "A New Program for Philosophy of Science, in Many Voices." In Kournay, J. A. (ed.). *Philosophy in a Feminist Voice. Critiques and Reconstructions*. Princeton University Press.
- Lloyd, G. (1993). *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*. London: Routledge.
- Longino, H. and R. Doell (1996). "Body, Bias and Behaviour: A Comparative Analysis of Reasoning in Two Areas of Biological Science." In Fox Keller E. and H. E. Longino (eds.). *Feminism and Science*. Oxford University Press.
- Nelson, L. H. (1990). *Who Knows. From Quine to a Feminist Empiricism*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Sedová, T. a kol. (2003). *Ženy a veda v SAV. Bratislava? VEDA*.
- Smith, D. E. (1996). "Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology." In Fox Keller, E. and H. E. Longino (eds.). *Feminism and Science*. Oxford University Press.
- Szapuová, M. (1998). "Knowledge in a Social Context." In *Philosophica XXXI*. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave.
- Szapuová, M. (2002). "Problém empirizmu vo feministickej epistemológii." *Filozofia* 6: 393-405.
- Tanesini, A. (1999). *An Introduction to Feminist Epistemologies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Can Reason be “Emotional” and Objectively “Perspectival”?
(On the Question of Cognition in Feminist Epistemology)

Etela Farkašová

The study of reason and rationality is often understood as the fundamental task of philosophy, while philosophy itself is often defined as a discipline dealing with inquiry into the nature of reason, its competences and limits, and the ways in which reason comprehends itself. In this light, it is natural that the examination of the competences and limits of reason has a long tradition in philosophy (Kant, Descartes, Locke – to name just a few), and hardly any author of a philosophical system has neglected this topic. It is precisely these notions of reason and rationality, key notions in modern thought, notions related to the idea of the Enlightenment and the era of scientific and technological progress, that have become in recent decades the subject of a number of critical debates. At the heart of these critiques is the rejection of the idea of the autonomy of reason, of the independent object as well as subject of knowledge, of the ability of the subject to occupy neutral locations; these premises were traditionally related to the neutrality of values and emotions as a condition of objectivity. No less important is the rejection of the idea of transparency of the methods of knowledge production and language used to describe the process of knowledge production and the results of that process. These debates also cast in doubt the claim to the universality and uncontingency of the cognitive process. In opposition to these claims a concept of knowledge production as a historically and culturally conditioned human activity has been proposed. Contemporary criticism concentrates on the concept of reason articulated in the ideals of the Enlightenment: reason is able to point the way towards progress, is the source of power, of controlling natural or social forces. This critique often goes hand in hand with the analysis of the “crisis of reason,” which concentrates on exposing the roots of this crisis.

Feminist criticism is one of the contemporary positions critical of the traditional concept of reason. At its heart is the effort to overcome the dichotomous conceptualisations of traditional philosophy and to articulate and re-define the concepts of reason, rationality, objectivity, the subject/object of knowledge, and the cognitive process as such. These debates in feminist philosophy have consequences relevant for epistemological thought as well as for philosophy in general, as they raise numerous questions related both to the concept of reason and the subject/object of cognition and to the concept of philosophy as such, questions as to how philosophy comprehends itself and how it defines its possibilities.

Feminist criticism of the traditional concept of reason and rationality, as well as of the traditional understanding of objectivity, is multi-faceted. One of the common points of departure here is the critical examination of the fact that in our culture the notion of reason has masculine connotations. Rationality and objectivity, in the forms manifest throughout history, have always been linked with masculinity, while emotions and subjectivity are traditionally ascribed to femininity. It is symptomatic of gender polarisation in this cultural tradition that the organisation of such attributes is not symmetrical, and that these attributes are not conceived as being complementary, but rather are hierarchical. Reason is ascribed a higher value than emotion, and is seen as superior (likewise the sensuality and embodiment of the subject). Objectivity is perceived as a positive value, and this positive value is more or less denied to subjectivity.

In feminist philosophy, the critique of the masculine monopolisation of reason is linked with the criticism of stereotypical ideas maintained in our culture and the asymmetry in the “gender distribution of reason”. These critical positions have significant political consequences: they legitimise women’s demands for equal participation in intellectual life, in decision-making and governance in all spheres of society. From a number of theoretical works it has become evident that the feminist critique of reason has two principal aims: a) to analyse the links between reason and masculinity as well as the genesis of these links, and b) to develop new alternatives to the traditional concept of reason and rationality. Critical approaches are heterogeneous as a result of diverse theoretical foundations that serve as a source of argument and we can cite instances where the underlying argument is psychoanalysis, Marxist theory, the Frankfurt “critical school” or French post-structuralism. The heterogeneity of the underlying arguments in feminist theory is intertwined with its inter-disciplinary nature, where the stress is on co-operation between various branches of knowledge – between epistemology, theory, history and sociology of science as well as other disciplines preoccupied with knowledge and knowledge production.

Within this relatively wide spectrum of starting points, arguments and approaches, we can identify several basic attitudes to the question of reason despite the above-mentioned heterogeneity: a) with regard to the masculine connotations of the concept of reason, some authors reject this concept (to greater or lesser degrees); b) the arguments of another group of authors stem from a dualistic model, a “dual reason” model that foresees a legitimisation of both “feminine” and “masculine” reason; and c)

some authors demand that the concept of reason be re-defined to rid it of its masculine connotations so that it may cease to be constructed as a dichotomy, reduced to a single dimension, and thus, in effect, cease to exclude women from the sphere of rationality. At the moment there are a number of typologies of feminist critiques of the traditional concept of reason. For example, Herta Nagl-Docekal stresses the need to re-conceptualise in greater detail the notion of reason [Nagl-Docekal 1999: 49-76].

With respect to the approach that refuses the concept of reason altogether, I would like to note that this approach is merely one of a great number of approaches; it does not entail total rejection of the concept of rationality, but rather the rejection of one particular type of rationality. It refers to the type of rationality reduced to a single dimension which is instrumental in nature in relation to its object and may lead to control and domination. Most women philosophers articulate the opinion that feminism and feminist philosophy need to rely on the concepts of rationality, or objectivity, and to work with them, since to discard these concepts would undermine the foundations of philosophy as such, including feminist philosophy, and would also undermine the foundations of important theoretical and political projects (including feminist ones) [Tanesini 1999: 212].

Many thinkers (Husserl, Heidegger, Habermas, Rorty, Foucault and others) have reflected on the crisis brought on by the reduction of reasons, and have approached the phenomenon from various angles, placing it in different contexts (the crisis of modernity, the modern crisis of morality, the crisis of methodology etc.) and concentrating on its various aspects. In their reflections we see an interest focused on some basic premises that were cast into doubt by these crises. Some of the major disputed premises are: reason and rational cognition is always methodologically adequate with respect to the object of study; the means, methods and procedures (both material and intellectual) are neutral and transparent; the value and validity of knowledge production are contingent neither upon time nor space (social or geographical); the production of knowledge is largely irrelevant to its context, cognition is autonomous of its origin (of its own history); the objects of study exist independently of the process of knowledge production, and they can resist incorrect methods, approaches, methods and readings [Grosz 1993: 189-191]. Feminist philosophy is in step with several contemporary tendencies in mainstream philosophy in terms of the critique of reason and the analysis of its crisis, in the belief that this crisis is to a large degree caused by the inability of cognition to reflect upon itself and to analyse its own evolution, the inability to comprehend its own history, and its localisation in a specific social time and space, in concrete cultural

contexts and concrete practices, and in the inability to reflect on its own structures as structures generated and conditioned by social forces, relationships and processes. To no lesser degree, this crisis also stems from being unable to recognise and reflect upon the significance of the relationship between reason (knowledge) and power, and the significance of the ways in which power conditions the workings of reason, in the inability of its rational self-knowledge as well as the inability to examine itself from a critical distance, to regard itself from “outside.” However, only the critique from the perspective of feminist epistemology points to how all these aspects are related to gender and gender polarisation.

In her now classic study, *The Man of Reason*, G. Lloyd provides a brilliant analysis of the relations between the ideal of an autonomous, disembodied reason (reason as defined by Cartesian dualism) and masculinity. Lloyd explains how throughout history philosophical concepts of reason were constructed based on this relationship, and that although the ideals of reason and rationality have changed over time, they were generally united in their exclusion of everything that was connected to a feminine subject. Lloyd remarks that the exclusion of women from the sphere of rational thought was not the result of some kind of male conspiracy and did not occur as the result of a conscious effort by philosophers and thinkers [Lloyd 1993: 109]. Lloyd’s criticism of the masculinity of reason is not a critique of all concepts of reason but only of those dominant concepts that have led to the exclusion of women and to a dichotomous thinking based on hierarchical principles. Many philosophers critical of the traditional concepts of reason agree that these concepts are too narrow and that they identify reason by one single style of thinking and reasoning. These philosophers believe that there are a number of styles of thought, each of which can be equally appropriate depending on their diverse objects, situations, contexts, and so on.

Among the most important contributions of feminist philosophy to critical debates on reason is the analysis of the “embodiment” of reason. Proponents of this approach in philosophy believe that the contemporary concepts of reason ignore and fail to adequately reflect the consequences of the “embodiment” of our reason. Although mind and reason are no longer understood as being separate from the brain, many theoreticians do not consider it satisfactory to merely link them in this sense, and believe that many contemporary concepts still remain trapped in the Cartesian mind/body dualism. It is crucial to stress that reason cannot be understood as autonomous and independent of the body (as a whole), but rather of physical (including practical)

activities; similarly, it cannot be conceived as separate from the “social body”, from history, social position, or cultural conditions. In short, reason cannot be comprehended as independent from the entire context in which it operates. From this perspective, the current crisis of reason undoubtedly has also arisen as a result of the historical privileging of the purely conceptual, or purely mental, over the physical/corporeal. In other words, it has arisen in consequence of the inability of Western thought to comprehend its own genesis, its own (material) production [Grosz 1993: 193]. We should therefore concentrate on the inability of reason to understand the significance of the body and embodiment (including the senses), as well as emotions, in knowledge production. This inability leads to dichotomies such as those of mind/body and reason/emotion. The approach based on excluding reason from the context of the body (in the broadest sense) tends to reduce not only the complexity of the process in which knowledge is acquired and produced, but also the nature of the subject of knowledge. Thus embodiment as a rule remains the unconscious or inadequately reflected condition of cognition. If this condition is not appropriately reflected, or worse still, if it is completely neglected, the result will be a one-sided, one-dimensional, and therefore incomplete and deformed, concept of cognition as such.

Feminist critiques are concerned with the foundation of traditional theories of reason and rationality, such as the doctrines of self-sufficiency and the universality of reason. These notions deny the significance of the situatedness of reason as well as of all human intellectual or practical activities, and consequently also the significance of their contingency. It then comes as no surprise that such theories accept the ideal of an isolated, self-sufficient agent of cognition, and that they stress the unlimited sovereignty of reason over emotional and affective elements in the process of cognition, such as the autonomy of reason from the body (in the broad sense of its meaning outlined above). It is precisely this paradigm of autonomous, self-sufficient reason as the key paradigm of modern philosophy that has become the focus of feminist critiques. One of the most powerful critiques is offered by Susan Bordo, who has analysed the intellectual and cultural background of Descartes’ philosophy. Bordo examines the links between the autonomy and isolation of reason (as an epistemological ideal) and the tendency to position oneself at a distance from nature as well as from other agents of cognition. Nonetheless, according to Bordo, reason experiences an epistemological anxiety to which it responds by a “flight to objectivity”. Bordo uses this metaphor of flight to reconstruct the basic values that shaped modern epistemological projects. The starting point of Bordo’s arguments in the analysis of modern projects in epistemology is the

comparison of the medieval and modern worldviews. Bordo stresses the importance in the Middle Ages of experiencing unity with the world, of perceiving oneself as part of the whole. In this respect, writing about modernity, Bordo stresses the significance of perspective in the visual arts. The discovery of perspective is related to the arising of a new worldview and lifestyle as well as a new concept of reason and rationality, and, in the broadest sense, a whole new cultural situation. It is precisely this new cultural situation that Bordo uses as the background for her analysis of the Cartesian shift towards the subject of knowledge, which meant simultaneously departing from the entire cultural tradition of the Middle Ages. According to Bordo, Descartes fell prey to “a dual distancing”: from the senses, body, physical experience in general, and from emotions, as well as from the world as an organic unity and from other people, including the knowing subject [Bordo 1987].

This position in philosophy has resulted in cognition being understood as something quite separate from the body. The agents of cognition in Descartes’ philosophy are abstract, self-sufficient, “disembodied” individuals. Cognition is understood as an introspective act of individual, equally abstract, “disembodied” reason. To gain knowledge, to arrive at clear and distinct ideas, it is not necessary to co-operate either with the senses or with other “reasons” (active subjects of knowledge as complex beings). Even if subsequent developments in philosophy have somewhat modified these concepts of reason, such as the Cartesian idea of reason as purely mental, unrelated to sensory experience and unconditioned by historical and cultural contexts or practices, and of reason as something not specifically localised to some degree, it survives in various forms to this day, often as the hidden, unconscious and unreflected “background premise” for an examination of reason or the process of cognition.

The idea of the autonomy of reason is also deeply rooted in later philosophical schools such as empiricism and positivism. Here, the production of scientific knowledge is accompanied by a belief in the possibility of value- and gender-neutral and emotionally disinterested objective observation that can in principle be repeated by any “normal” agent of cognition under “normal circumstances”. These epistemologies, inspired by positivism, are defined on the basis of pure objectivity and value neutrality. In keeping with these concepts, using autonomous reason, the actor of cognition is able to transcend the actor’s own localisation in a specific time, space and conditions, and is able to obtain an objective “view from nowhere”, independent of any perspective,

that allows objective knowledge to be obtained. Feminist epistemologies assert that there is no such thing as “purely” abstract reason producing “pure” knowledge; there is only “social” reason and “social” knowledge. This term refers to the comprehension of both social and natural reality: social (psychological, cultural, political, etc.) forces and relationships are inherent to “reason”, and thus to scientific knowledge, at all times and under all circumstances. Similarly, there is no “pure” object independent of the actor of cognition, since these objects appear as objects of cognition only when they are already “socially constituted”. It can be said of such objects that they are no longer a part of some “pure” nature, but rather of “social life”, of social reality. They become social objects, especially, by entering the sphere of human interests, practical activities and values. In other words, they acquire general cultural and social meanings [Harding 1999: 64]. The fact that no human being can be completely isolated from others, not even in the process of acquiring knowledge, and that we all are to some degree products of our social contexts, is emphasised and thematised by a number of philosophers in relation to their critiques of the illusion of decontextualisation. This problem appeared as a result of the methods of cognition applied in classical physics to free-falling bodies, which allowed disentanglement from any context, and became the model of cognition for other branches of science [Code 1991: 32, 34]. Feminist philosophers do not dispute the principle of objectivity in their critiques of the idea of an autonomous, unsituated and disinterested reason; they do however claim that their understanding of objectivity differs from the traditional notion in the sense that it conceives of knowledge (cognition) as situated. They also stress that knowledge, including scientific knowledge, is produced in a mesh of social practices and by actors of diverse identities. Feminist authors emphasise the simultaneously contextual and interactive nature of cognition, while also amplifying the “embodiment” of knowledge production. This concept of cognition focuses on questions of the origin and genesis of knowledge, on the interests that knowledge serves, and on the social time and space in which knowledge is produced. The cognitive autonomy of reason (science) that denies all forms of dependence (on other subjects of cognition, on one’s own senses, corporeality and emotions, on the social environment) is unacceptable for feminist epistemologies and theories of science. One reason for this objection is because it puts rationality in opposition to emotionality, mind in opposition to the body, fact in opposition to value, and objectivity in opposition to subjectivity [Code 1991: 46, 47, 55]. Feminist thinkers reject epistemological concepts that posit emotions and values outside the sphere of rational cognition, seeing them as a source of epistemological contamination or opacity; where in accordance with such concepts emotions have to

be under control during the process of obtaining scientific knowledge because they are considered unstable, imprecise, mistaken and idiosyncratic. Feminist authors call for a new model of reason and rationality that does not exclude emotions, but, on the contrary, endorses them as a component of rationality. They speak of emotional rationality, of open reason and open rationality. They call attention to the need to develop new concepts of rationality, in which such phenomena as empathy towards the examined object would play a role (the degree of empathy varies in relation to the type of object such as, for example, a biological object or object in physics).

The critique of abstract reason and its claim to universality is also related to the attention that feminist criticism has devoted to the problem of the limits of cognition. Questions regarding the limiting conditions of experience, rationality, discourse and cognition in general are also thematised within different currents of philosophy, such as phenomenology, semiotics and branches of philosophy inspired by psychoanalysis, but here, as in the critique of “pure” reason, we find that it is only within the framework of feminist theory that these questions are regarded from a gender-differentiated perspective, and answers sought within projects that emphasise this perspective. For feminist philosophers, calling attention to these limiting circumstances does not result in claims that the requirement of validity, or truth, is non-legitimate in principle, nor does it lead to relativism. In regard to the necessary limits of any kind of cognition, a feminist understanding of rationality sees situatedness and positioning as key notions. The concept of positionality can be useful when we try to understand why traditional epistemologies are marked by a continuous rejection of the idea of limits and contingency. It is generally recognised that in the symbolic order of traditional philosophical discourse, the image of the woman was understood as the image of “the Other”. This can be explained in the sense that the unreflected positioning of philosophers as masculine subjects led them to reject their own experience as an experience of deficiency, of a lack of complexity, of limit; and moreover they projected these features as “feminine” onto the notion of “otherness” [List 1994: 33].

With respect to the question of positionality and situated knowledge, a number of diverse approaches have evolved within the framework of feminist epistemologies: while the proponents of standpoint theory put great emphasis on situatedness and identify certain social situatednesses as being epistemically privileged, post-modern feminist epistemologists reject claims of the epistemic privilege of any one position and emphasise instead the contingency and instability of the social identity (or situatedness)

of subjects of knowledge as well as their representations. Feminist empiricists, however, prefer a concept of objectivity as something that is constituted in co-operative relations and in critical dialogues, especially in the plurality of perspectives of the differently positioned subjects of knowledge. In feminist epistemologies, the issue of situated knowledge is reflected first in relation to what is studied as well as to how it is studied, and also in relation to other subjects of knowledge. Particular attention is paid to the influence of the situatedness of the subject of knowledge (and the corresponding perspective) on the nature and course of the process of knowledge production. With respect to the latter, we may distinguish several kinds of situatedness: a) the embodiment of the subject of knowledge (an individual is always situated in a marked body within a concrete time and space), with relational physical location also playing a role (one sees differently from “up close”, “from afar”, “from above”, “from below”, “from the centre”, or “from the periphery”); b) the differentiation of first-person and third-person cognition (in the first case, one’s own experience conditioned by one’s situatedness is emphasised while in the latter case the subject of knowledge relies on an interpretation of external signs, on his or her own imaginative projection, or the evidence of others); c) emotions, attitudes, interests and values (the representation of objects also depends, apart from other factors, on the emotional relation towards them, on attitudes, and so on. These factors play an important role especially when getting to know other people [Szapuová 1996: 97-103], but also in the assessment of social reality); d) cognitive styles (depending on their social location, people have different backgrounds of faith and beliefs, and various metaphysical, philosophical or political worldviews, which also strongly influence their styles of observation and representation); and e) the relationship to other subjects of knowledge (including various epistemic relationships). According to standpoint theory, all the above-mentioned aspects of situatedness influence the nature and course of knowledge production, whether in relation to varying degrees of access to information, ways of looking at and articulating problems, examination, data gathering and interpretation, attitudes towards one’s own beliefs and convictions that influence the standards of argumentation, the choice of epistemic values emphasised, and so on [Szapuová 1998: 48-52, Anderson 2004].

Standpoint theory sees the question of situatedness as being closely related to the question of social identity (distinguishing its various forms, ranging from passively accepted to actively reflected social identity, leading to critical reflection and social activities directed towards the transformation of the existing social order), to the problem of social norms (and the respective power status, sets of rights and duties,

objectives and interests), and to social relationships (accompanied, for instance, by different values or attitudes towards the subject of knowledge). According to standpoint theory, human activities not only form and condition human cognition, but also limit it (they limit what we can know as well as how we can know it). According to this theory it is important to specify the social location of any specific, epistemologically-privileged partial perspective (standpoint) and the scope of this privilege and to connect it, for instance, to the question of the possibility of accumulating several privileged perspectives in the case of a multiple disadvantage in social position. Although the proponents of standpoint theory thematise the “social situatedness” of knowledge as a source of scientific knowledge – in the sense that it is precisely the (marginalised) position that offers hope for increasing the objectivity of this knowledge, and that seeing from a perspectival viewpoint is a condition for revealing otherwise invisible and unreflected biases in scientific research – they do not claim that marginalised groups have a unique capacity to produce (better) knowledge. They merely stress that a marginalised position gives rise to more critical questions, that it is from this position that problems invisible “from above” can be pointed out, that the integration of viewpoints “from below” can enhance objectivity and become a productive source in research, both (though in varying degrees) in the context of discovery and in the context of justification [Farkašová 1996: 129-133, Farkašová 1998: 111-123].

As an epistemological concept, standpoint theory stands in opposition both to universalist, “absolutist” epistemologies that conceptualise knowledge production as an abstract process run by abstract, bodiless, unlocalised individuals and in opposition to relativist epistemologies that often claim the status of the only alternative to the former. An accusation often levelled at standpoint theory is that by focusing on the “situatedness of knowledge production”, it does not transcend the level of sociology of knowledge, leading to further accusations regarding such issues as alleged relativism or regressive foundationalism or ethnocentrism [Harding 1991: 49]. The fact is that this theory emphasises the identification of historical and social conditions (and relativity) of any kind of knowledge based on the assertion that diverse social activities, embedded in diverse social relationships, lead to diverse interactions with both natural and social reality, and, as a result, to diverse representations of such reality. It does not, however, claim that all (historically and socially determined) interactions are epistemically equal or that they reveal reality to an equal degree. On the contrary, it emphasises that there are better and worse representations. Standpoint theory refuses epistemological relativism. The assertion that no individual framework is capable of absolute explanation

does not mean that it can be claimed that all frameworks are equally valid [Code 1991: 4]. According to feminist thinkers, the alternative to relativism is not a totalisation of a single “universal” perspective “from nowhere”, but particular situated critical knowledge which leads to the promise of objectivity – objectivity from the position of a particular perspective [Code 1991: 123].

A number of influential feminist epistemological concepts express a belief in the objective existence of a world that is principally knowable. Thus, they re-animate the notion of objectivity as a quality of cognitive procedures. Feminist thinkers are reluctant to give up this notion not only for cognitive reasons, but also for political and practical reasons. However, it must be noted that, for instance, under the influence of criticism based on post-modern feminist concepts, standpoint theory continues to evolve. For example, the more recent versions of this theory accentuate not only the fact that there is no one single epistemically privileged standpoint, but also the fact that there is no single legitimate way of conceptualising objectivity. This is also explained by the political and intellectual history of the notion of objectivity, as well as by its political, intellectual and social links (interaction).

By taking into account feminist interests and goals, by accentuating the importance of the situatedness of knowledge, standpoint theory transformed the traditional notion of objectivity into one of “strong objectivity” [Harding 1993: 69]. Harding, who has devoted several works to a thorough analysis of feminist epistemological concepts, positions her programme of “strong objectivity” in opposition to the objectivist programmes of (“weak”) objectivity as value-neutral and non-perspectival. She conceives of objectivity as a process rather than a state of mind. Articulating standards for maximising objectivity, Harding asserts that one of the basic requirements is that the subject (and the whole institution) of knowledge be located on the same critical causal level as the object of knowledge; this is the requirement of “strong reflexivity” or “causal symmetry”. This requirement is based on the assertion that the same type of social forces that form the objects of knowledge also form the actors of knowledge and their scientific projects. Not only the objects of knowledge, but also those who research them, are socially constituted. These actors are equally determined by a social and historical context, they are conditioned by it, leading to the observation that cognitive history always includes social history: it cannot be separated from its social and historical environment. Even the ideal of objectivity itself is always constituted in a specific context, is co-determined by a set of values, beliefs, interests and goals.

The ideal of objectivity, as it developed in the tradition which can be traced back to Bacon and Descartes, can thus be identified as a historically and locally specific intellectual value, the emergence of which is connected not only to the conceptualisations in natural sciences at the time, but also to a multitude of motivations and inspirations, so that the very ideal of objectivity that demands the suppression of subjective elements (including emotional ones), is itself a product of subjective interest, related to a historically and locally specific kind of subjectivity [Code 1991: 48].

The concept of “strong objectivity” highlights the fact that the beliefs and persuasions that are common and firmly rooted in a given culture (it is important to note, that they are mostly implicit, hidden, invisible) function as influential and concrete factors in every phase of scientific research: in selecting questions, articulating hypotheses, defining the research project, gathering and interpreting data, the choice of research methods, deciding when to wind up the research, and so on. The program of “strong objectivity” as a source of greater objectivity requires that research as well as the objects of research become objects of critical causal explanation, thus helping to successfully identify the values, interests, beliefs, and biases of these subjects that are also related to their standpoint (perspective), since these factors can strongly influence the course and nature of research. It is crucial to realise that the scientific community itself can be insensitive, or on the other hand, oversensitive to many social phenomena (among such phenomena we may list a multitude of gender stereotypes and prejudices), and not even the most objective scientific method is capable of either identifying or correcting them. A number of contemporary epistemological concepts would agree that the situatedness of subject of knowledge cannot be eliminated, but according to standpoint theory this would not even be useful; on the contrary, this theory – and it is one of its specificities – highlights the need to re-think epistemological concepts with the aim of using social situatedness as a source of maximum objectivity [Harding 1993: 69-71].

It is evident that in feminist philosophy questions of rationality, cognition and objectivity are always examined in the context of power relationships within social and political contexts. This sheds light on how the concepts of reason/rationality and objectivity/subjectivity reach into and affect the spheres of ethical, social and political ideals and exercise influence over everyday life, but also on how these very concepts were themselves formed by the cited ideals. L. Daston describes scientific objectivity as a “historical tripartite agreement,” distinguishing its metaphysical, methodological

and moral aspects. Explaining the metaphysical (ontological) meaning, or aspect of objectivity, Daston points out that in the Middle Ages 'objectivity' was not yet linked to impartiality and disinterestedness (in her understanding of "ontological objectivity" the author relies on the premise that there is a correspondence between theory and reality). It was not until later that "ontological objectivity" started to be placed in opposition to the subjectivity of consciousness. Daston argues that this process was accompanied by the formation of other oppositions (such as passive, unselfconscious nature – active, representing mind, or passive object – active subject). "Mechanical objectivity" was opposed to a subjective interpretation and non-perspectival objectivity to individual idiosyncrasies, and this non-perspectival objectivity was the concept that gradually became dominant in the understanding of the notion of objectivity – a domination that has survived to the present. According to Daston, non-perspectival objectivity that dominates and eliminates individual (or group) idiosyncrasies is a historical phenomenon that emerged in science as late as the middle of the 19th century, by migrating to science from moral philosophy and aesthetics [Daston 1992: 597]. The moral philosophers of the 18th century considered non-perspectival objectivity to be the basic premise, the condition sine quo non of creating an harmonious and equitable society, and – by evident analogy – many 19th century philosophers saw it as a condition of creating a coherent scientific community, as well as a condition for achieving scientific truth [Daston 1992: 604-607]. Together with the imperative of "shared public knowledge" that was to ensure a certain democratisation in science, the ideal of the exchangeable, impersonal observer also emerged, and this ideal tended towards the exclusion of individual idiosyncrasies as well as possible dissimilarities in cognition. According to Daston, the requirement that knowledge be communicable played an important role in constructing the new ideal of objectivity, and this communicability was related to the principle of an impersonal approach, of impartiality. Daston understands the process of the democratisation of science (the establishment of science as a democratic institution) as being closely connected with the appearance and support of the ideal of objectivity as non-perspectival objectivity, which was assisted by the averaging of perspectives and viewpoints present in the process of communication, thus expressing the strengthening of democratic tendencies in science. However, because of the ideal of non-perspectival objectivity which formed the scientific ethos, the price paid for the strengthening of democratic tendencies was often the loss of communicability, depth or precision [Daston 1992: 609, 611, 612].

This historical overview enables one to clarify and contextualise the notion of objectivity as well as to support feminist epistemology in its effort to re-think and re-articulate this notion. If one does not insist on looking at scientific objectivity as changeless and monolithic, but rather as a continuously evolving historical construct, one has a better chance of understanding not only the ideal of “strong objectivity” as a specific version of the migration of ideals from moral philosophy into science, but also to grasp the basic premises and ambitions of standpoint epistemologies. The proponents of standpoint theory, having recognised the perils of non-perspectival objectivity and having rejected the concept of neutral knowledge, demand the re-integration of the perspective of physically-, historically- as well as socially-situated cognition, and introduce the notion of “perspectival objectivity”. This may at first sound like an oxymoron, but only until we realise that objectivity cannot be achieved without an objectivising subject and that objectivity inevitably includes subjectivity. Perspectival objectivity, together with its oxymoronic connotations, becomes a possible way of articulating that there is always a physically-, historically- and socially-situated subject of knowledge, and that all information carries the stamp of the subject of knowledge who have produced it (even whole communities, including scientific communities). The notions of situatedness and positionality are key notions for feminist epistemology – whether for its understanding of objectivity, rationality, or for the cognitive process as a whole. Based on the thesis on the historical changes in the understanding of the notion of objectivity proposed by Daston, we can imagine science with a re-defined notion of objectivity; that non-perspectival objectivity is not an inherent given in Western science, and is not inextricably linked to it, but has appeared as a result of the fusion of a number of extra-epistemological impulses and fundamental changes in the organisation of science in a specific historical period. Moreover, if objectivity has a number of aspects with a different history, that were ascribed different degrees of significance in different epochs, if objectivity is not monolithic and changeless but constituted within the context of specific historical and social conditions, then the examination of objectivity cannot be carried out without an in-depth analysis of the links between the given social, political, moral and epistemological (methodological) imperatives.

These and other debates call attention to the initiatives of the epistemological concepts as one of the forms of the emancipatory and democratising tendencies in contemporary philosophy. Their efforts at redefining the notions of reason, rationality and objectivity as a reaction to complex theoretical, moral and political impulses should be seen as a considerable contribution to the further development of epistemology in particular, and philosophy in general.

Bibliography

- Anderson, E. (2004). "Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2004 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2004/entries/feminism-epistemology/>>.
- Bordo, S. (1987). *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Code, L. (1991). *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Daston, L. (1992). "Objectivity and the escape from perspective." *Social Studies of Science* 22: 597-618.
- Farkašová, E. (1996). "Teória stanoviska: diskusie v súčasnej feministickej filozofii." In J. Balážová, K. Kollár a T. Pichler (eds.). *Súčasná podoba filozofie a filozofovania na Slovensku. Zborník príspevkov z 1. kongresu slovenskej filozofie*. Bratislava: Infopress.
- Farkašová, E. (1998). "Poznávajú ženy inak? O genéze, povahe a cieľoch feministických epistemológií." *ASPEKT* 1: 111-123.
- Grosz, E. (1993). *Bodies and Knowledges: Feminism and the Crisis of Reason*. In L. Alcoff and Potter, E. (eds.). *Feminist Epistemologies*, New York: Routledge.
- Harding, S. (1993). "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is Strong Objectivity?" In L. Alcoff and E. Potter (eds.). *Feminist Epistemologies*. New York: Routledge.
- Harding, S. (1991). *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from women's lives*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- List, E. (1994). "Reason, Gender, and the Paradox of Rationalisation." In I. Bostad and E. Svenneby. *Gender – an Issue for Philosophy? Nordic Symposium of Women in Philosophy*, Oslo 2: 27-44.
- Lloyd, G. (1993). *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*. London: Routledge.
- Nagl-Docekal, H. (1999). *The Feminist Critique of Reason Revisited*. *Hypatia* 14 (1): 49 - 76.
- Zapuová, M. (1996). "Self-knowledge and knowing others." In E. Gál and M. Marcelli (eds.). *Science and Philosophy in Shaping Modern European Culture IV*. Bratislava: Nadácia Komunikácia.

- Szapuová, M. (1998). Feministická epistemológia a empirický výskum kognitívnych procesov. In E. Višňovský and R. Dupkala (eds.). *Kríza filozofie - filozofia krízy? Zborník príspevkov z 1. výročného stretnutia SFZ*. Bratislava – Prešov: ManaCon.
- Tanesini, A. (1999). *An Introduction to Feminist Epistemologies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Addressing the Politics of Location Strategies in Feminist Epistemology
and Their Relevance to Research Undertaken from a Feminist Perspective

Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer

Introduction

Over the past twenty years feminist epistemologists, philosophers of science and other participants in 'successor epistemology' projects have uncovered the systematic androcentrism and partiality of much authoritative knowledge. Their consideration of how our social location systematically shapes what we know and how, and how 'knowledge is always relative to (i.e. a perspective on, a standpoint in) specifiable circumstances' [Code 1993: 40], bridges Sandra Harding's persistent taxonomy of a reconstructed, contextualised or post-positivist empiricism, feminist standpoint theories, and post-modern epistemologies and genealogies. Thus Lorraine Code's plea that the structural circumstances of an epistemic location must be empirically specified because of their constitutive role in making and evaluating knowledge claims, is in agreement with the analytical focus of standpoint theorists on group locations within hierarchical relations of power and their effects on situated knowledges [Collins 1997]. It is also consistent with the post-modern project of re-conceiving epistemology as genealogy, and engaging in 'linguistic, historical, political, and psychological inquiries into forms of knowledge construction and conflict ... [which] include investigations into the philosopher's own desire and place within particular social locations and discourses' [Flax 1992: 457-8].

Donna Haraway [1988/1991] explicitly links these epistemological and political concerns to the notion of a politics of location when she states 'politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims' [Haraway 1991: 195]. Rosi Braidotti posits that 'the notion of the politics of location is one of the epistemological foundations of feminist theory and gender knowledge' [Braidotti 2003: 1].

While few students or researchers in gender studies in the Czech Republic would dispute the social perspectivity of knowledge on a theoretical level, most fail to incorporate and address the politics of their location in their own research practice. In their attempts to enter the academic community, graduate students in my courses on feminist methodologies continue to qualify their research procedures and findings as factual, objective and divorced from personal values and interests, feminist or otherwise, and write themselves out of their final projects. Researchers in gender studies who I have worked with tend to assume common expertise in and consensus about feminist methodology. As time is always pressing, practical methodical questions usually take precedent over a thorough inquiry into the researchers' own epistemic locations, agency and convictions.

This persistent theory-practice split is of course far from being specific to Central Europe. Jane Flax has explored how invested North American feminists are in received notions of scientificity. She argued that 'a grounding in science', its assumed universal truths and scientific methods, wards off bias, prejudice and partiality and 'preserves the innocence of the social scientist' [Flax 1992: 449]. Callaway [1992] has shown how the reflections of anthropologists on particular, personal and embodied encounters and emotions in fieldwork, which contradict prevailing conventions for conducting research and open up the researcher's process of constructing knowledge and understanding, have historically been relegated to personal diaries or published in novels under pseudonyms. More generally, training in self-reflexivity has not become an integral part of scientific education and research practice. This deficiency is exasperated by the fact that some introductory texts on feminist philosophies of science omit discussing the epistemologically formative effects of location and positionality [e.g. Duran 1998], and feminist researchers sometimes deploy the term 'politics of location' as if it is self-explanatory [e.g. Anthias 2002].

Against this background, in this chapter I first seek to unfold the conceptual dimensions of the politics of location, a concept that has travelled from North American to European and Australian contexts of reception and application, and from the humanities to the social sciences and back to philosophy. Generally speaking I take a location's 'politics' to refer to its effects and consequences for making knowledge claims. I will outline the concept's psychosocial and epistemological dimensions and specify some of their significant categories. Next, I use an essay by the Black British art critic Kobena Mercer [1991/1993] as an example of how a politics of location can be fruitfully addressed. Endorsing Longino's [1994] view that epistemology is practice rather than content, this exploration is motivated by the attempt to make insights of feminist epistemologies practically relevant for research undertaken from a feminist perspective. I shall argue that if location and positioning are epistemologically formative, then a research practice that systematically attends to the ways that the power relations and emotional investments of the researcher work to discursively structure his or her knowledge claims, will yield more accountable outcomes. I will conclude by highlighting how the politics of location link to related (feminist) epistemological concerns, in particular to the politics of representation, feminist standpoint theories and dialogic epistemologies that aim to promote socially responsible epistemic agency.

Conceptual dimensions and categories of a feminist politics of location

From its inception, the concept of a politics of location aimed at fostering reflection on and responsibility for how feminists act and know within the locations they inhabit, reproduce and transform. Over the last twenty years this concept has undergone a series of reformulations, modifications and specifications. The concept was coined in the mid-1980s by the North American poet, writer and feminist activist Adrienne Rich, and referred to the articulation and interrogation of her personal and socio-structural location – particularly the ‘circumscribing nature of (her) whiteness’ [Rich 1986: 219] – in the context of larger feminist politics and power relations. Rich acknowledges the writings of African-American and South American women and her travels to Nicaragua as prompting her to reflect on her North American location. She succinctly argued that ‘a place on the map is also a place in history within which as a woman, as a Jew, a lesbian, a feminist I am created and trying to create’ [Rich 1986: 212]. Locations are positionings in time and space which have specific effects and consequences, or ‘politics’, that need to be analysed and historicised. Structurally, a location is marked by parameters of social inequality such as gender, ‘race’, class, religion, sexuality and geopolitical location and their attending subject positions of identification and disidentification, material conditions, privileges and feelings as well as ‘conceptual resources ... to represent and interpret these relations’ [Wylie 2003: 31].¹

From the outset Rich conceives the task of ‘having to name the ground we’re coming from, the conditions we have taken for granted’ as a process and ‘struggle to keep moving, a struggle for accountability’ [Rich 1986: 211]. This struggle is material and embodied. It begins with oneself as a particular body-subject. Rich states that feminists need ‘to reconnect [their] thinking and speaking with the body of this particular living human individual’ [Rich 1986:213]; but they also need to address global relations of power such as ‘the weight of the United States of North America [on South America], its military forces, its vast appropriations of money, its mass media’ [Rich 1986: 220]. Caren Kaplan [1996/2000] aptly characterises Rich’s strategy as ‘a kind of decentring through centring, a self-conscious review and rejection of the power of dominant feminist centrality’ [Kaplan 2000: 165].²

African-American feminist writer bell hooks emphasises the necessity of material displacement for rethinking one's location in shifting power relations, albeit from the point of view of marginality rather than centrality: 'Moving [out of our place], we confront the realities of choice and location' [hooks 1990: 146]. hooks speaks of the pain of having been 'made "Other"' [hooks 1990: 151] and confronting 'silences, inarticulateness' within herself, that made it a 'personal struggle to name that location from which I come to voice - that space of my theorising' [hooks 1990: 147]. For her, a location is also a theoretical space and a space of oppositional agency that she calls the margin. The margin is both a site of oppression and a 'site of radical possibility, a space of resistance' [hooks 1990: 149].

Earlier, South Asian-born postcolonial theorist Chandra Mohanty articulated the epistemological dimension of the politics of location. She addressed the multiplicity and dynamism of locations that a feminist inhabits at any given moment, and the self-definitions, experiences of the self and modes of knowledge that arise from them. Mohanty uses the term the politics of location to refer 'to the historical, geographical, cultural, psychic and imaginative boundaries which provide the ground for political definition and self-definition for contemporary US feminists' [Mohanty 1987/1992: 74]. Like hooks, she argued that 'my location forces and enables specific modes of reading and knowing the dominant' and proposed that the 'struggles I choose to engage in are ... an intensification of these modes of knowing' [Mohanty 1992: 89]. Speaking of a non-linear 'temporality of struggle', Mohanty characterised her political engagement as 'an insistent, simultaneous, non-synchronous process characterised by multiple locations' [Mohanty 1992: 87], an ongoing 'movement between cultures, languages and complex configurations of meaning and power' [Mohanty 1992: 89] in which she locates and defines herself. With reference to Kaplan, she describes the historicising of the self as a 'continual re-territorialisation through struggle, that allows me a paradoxical continuity of self, mapping and transforming my political location' [ibid.]. As Clifford observes, a 'location is thus concretely a series of locations and encounters, travels within diverse, but limited spaces' [Clifford 1989: 182].

This focus on multiple locations and actual or potential oppositional agency makes the concept particularly attractive for theorists of post-colonialism and diaspora. British psychologist Avtar Brah, for example, explores the politics of location in the context of migration 'as locationality in contradiction' [Brah 1996: 180]: migrants and members of diaspora simultaneously experience situatedness in 'multi-axial locationality'

[Brah 1996: 205] and engage in 'movements across shifting cultural, religious and linguistic boundaries' [Brah 1996: 204]. Lata Mani, referring to Mohanty's conception of the politics of location, argued that 'the relation between experience and knowledge is now seen to be one not of correspondence but fraught with history, contingency and struggle' [Mani 1989/1992: 308]. Like Mani Brah holds that the epistemological outcomes of such contradictory locationality cannot be known in advance. 'Diasporic or border positionality does not in itself assure a vantage point of privileged insight into and understanding of relations of power, although it does create a space in which experiential mediations may intersect in ways that render such understandings more readily accessible' [Brah 1996: 207]. As Elspeth Probyn remarked, 'living with contradictions does not necessarily enable one to speak of them' [Probyn 1990: 182].

Drawing on the rich meanings of location and locality, Probyn gives further specifications of the link between one's psychosocial location and epistemological issues. Probyn agrees with other feminist theorists that the politics of location engages matters of where we are and what we experience (which she calls the ontological), as well as how we come to know (the epistemological), a process that has both spatial and temporal significance. Inspired perhaps by the fact that location refers to the act or process of locating that connotes, among other things, 'to find or fix the place of especially in a sequence' [Merriam Webster Dictionary 2003], location in Probyn's scheme refers to 'the methods by which one comes to locate sites of research. Through location knowledges are ordered into sequences which are congruent with previously established categories of knowledge' [Probyn 1990: 178]. In this dual process of locating sites of knowledge and rendering them into sequences of categories of knowledge, some forms of (subaltern) knowers and knowledges are silenced and discredited while others are legitimised. Accounting for the politics of location 'describes [these] epistemological manoeuvres' [Probyn 1990: 184]. This description lifts 'the veil of objectivity, which in a scientific model works to erase the researcher's physical and institutional presence from the scene to be studied' [Probyn 1990: 182], and recognises the researcher's affectivity with respect of the ideological workings of what he or she studies. It is a 'mode of working between and among sanctioned categories of knowledge' [Probyn 1990: 185] and aims at 'bringing to light the submerged conditions that silence others and the other of ourselves' [Probyn 1990: 186].³

In her work on nomadic subjectivity, Rosi Braidotti [1994] draws together some of the aspects of a politics of location outlined above, in particular the idea of locating the self as an embodied practice and process that emerges and is transformed in struggle. Haraway claims that '[b]ecause feminist embodiment resists fixation and is insatiably curious about the webs of differential positing... location is about vulnerability; location resists the politics of closure' [Haraway 1991: 196]. According to Braidotti, the politics of location refers to 'the practice of decoding – expressing and sharing in language the conditions of possibility of one's own political and theoretical choices. Accountability and positionality go together' [Braidotti 1994: 168]. Like Mohanty and Brah, she draws attention to the construction of locations at the micro and macro-levels [Braidotti 2003], and like Probyn she highlights the 'importance of accounting for one's investments ... [and] the level of unconscious desire and consequently of imaginary relation to the very material conditions that structure our existence' [Braidotti 1994: 168].

At the same time, feminist theorists have criticised post-modern theorists such as Braidotti and Haraway for not locating some of their own key philosophical claims. Sara Ahmed [2003], for example, has recently argued that Braidotti's statement that we have already become nomadic subjects detaches 'we' from particular bodies as well as histories of mobility and dwelling, and is neither located nor locatable. With respect to Braidotti's later work she also accuses her of failing to show how specific differences come into being and get embedded in epistemological practices. Similarly, Haraway has been criticised for equating Chicanas (women of mixed Spanish, Indian and African descent) with 'cyborgs (creatures who transcend, confuse or destroy boundaries). By uncritically affirming their marginal and contradictory locations and 'cyborg identities', Haraway obfuscates the concrete limiting effects of the social locations that Chicanas inhabit, and does little to assist the analysis of how experiences are linked to specific 'social facts' [Moya 1997: 132].

In order to combat a recurrent sense of the programmatic nature and abstraction in formulations of a politics of location evident in some of the passages cited above, I suggest the following conceptual differentiation. As an analytical concept, the politics of location generally denotes a practice of specifying the effects of one's location on one's knowledge claims. This practice first refers to reflecting on and interrogating one's personal and structural location(s), which I call its psychosocial dimension. The inquiry along the psychosocial dimension addresses five conceptual categories in so far as they are relevant to the specific subject matter under investigation, namely the

knowing subject's location in terms of intersecting parameters of social inequality at the micro and macro-level; (changing) subject positions (that have become available, for example, as a result of changing gender relations); her desires and investments; movements and struggles; and experiences. Second, the practice of specifying one's location involves investigating one's epistemological manoeuvres, which I call the concept's epistemological dimension. Inquiry along the epistemological dimension addresses four conceptual categories, namely the available conceptual resources; the choice of authorised and/or discounted sites of knowledge; the use of established categories of knowledge and their relations and orderings; and conditions that silence 'the other', including the other in oneself. For all categories the investigator has to specify how they link to his or her psychosocial location.

Feminist theorists have characterised both kinds of investigations into the politics of location, the psychosocial and the epistemological, as the effort, struggle and process of working with and against one's privileges and marginalisation, desires and investments, a process which confronts the subject with her own vulnerability. Before I address some further conceptual clarifications, I would like to turn to a mode of inquiry that illustrates several key aspects of the psychosocial and epistemological dimensions of the politics of location.

Investigating desire and knowledge-making in an essay by Kobena Mercer

In his rich and nuanced essay 'Looking for trouble', the Ghanaian-born cultural theorist Kobena Mercer reviews the artwork of Robert Mapplethorpe, particularly his photographs of Black male nudes, and his own earlier critique in the context of the (posthumous) politicisation of Mapplethorpe's work in the US, the AIDS pandemic and a wider debate about sexuality, desire and representation. The pictures under review frame, fragment and aestheticise Black men's bodies and body parts in ways that have been considered indecent. This has led to the withdrawal of public funding for some retrospective exhibitions of Mapplethorpe's work.

Mercer takes the recollection of his own embodied response to the photographs of Black men as a vantage point for an investigation of both his earlier position and his subsequent change of perspective. He recounts his first encounter with the pictures as follows:

‘When a friend lent me his copy of the book [‘Black Males’] it circulated between us as an illicit and highly problematic object of desire. We were fascinated by the beautiful bodies and drawn in by the pleasure of looking as we went over the repertoires of images again and again. We wanted to look, but we didn’t always find what we wanted to see. We were, of course, disturbed by the racial dimension of the imagery and, above all, angered by the aesthetic objectification that reduced black male bodies to abstract visual “things”, silenced in their own right as subjects and serving only to enhance the name of the white gay artist in the privileged world of art photography. In other words, we were stuck in an intransitive “structure of feeling”, caught out in a liminal experience of textual ambivalence [Mercer 1993: 351].

Mercer thus describes his and his friend’s opposing feelings of pleasure and dissatisfaction, fascination and anger, and simultaneous attraction and repulsion towards the images of the Black nudes. He then theoretically labels this experience as a structure of feeling and ambivalence. Ambivalence is a psychoanalytic concept coined by the psychiatrist E. Bleuler that denotes not vaguely conflicting feelings but the simultaneous presence of directly opposed emotions, attitudes, thoughts, or motivations that a person holds towards a person or object. Furthermore, sociologists have argued that ambivalences can be built into social structures as well. Ambivalences can therefore be conceived of as situated individual or institutional practices and performances that keep opposing valences alive, simultaneously expressing and enacting them [Lorenz-Meyer 2004]. The structure of feeling is a concept introduced by the cultural theorist R. Williams, referring to a structured lived social experience that is effective but not yet fully articulated, a ‘cultural hypothesis’ in artistic forms that precedes organised social forms.

Rather than explaining this theorisation, the subsequent interpretive moves are presented as ‘attempt(s) to make sense of this experience’ [ibid.]. In much the same way as the politics of location foster reflection, these moves provide insight into the relation between the experience and Mercer’s ensuing knowledge claims, and ultimately his own location and positionality as a gay Black critic.

Mercer’s earlier angry criticism of Mapplethorpe’s images of Black men speaks of his commitment and investment in anti-racism; his criticism hinges on the established

psychoanalytic category of 'fetishism' transposed to the context of race and racism. Drawing on feminist cultural theory on spectatorship and the male gaze, and also postcolonial and psychoanalytic theory, Mercer argued that Mapplethorpe's stylised images eroticised skin colour and reproduced racial stereotypes such as the enormous penis size of Black men. From a psychoanalytical perspective the pictures represented an 'aesthetic idealisation of racial Otherness that merely inverts and reverses the binary axis of the repressed fears of anxieties that are projected onto the other' [Mercer 1993: 353]. They ultimately revealed less about the men depicted in the photographs than they did about the fantasies of Mapplethorpe and a racialised social order. By decontextualising and fixing the object in its place, Mercer argued, the images 'lubricate[d] the ideological reproduction of a "colonial fantasy" based on the desire for mastery and power over the racialised other' [Mercer 1993: 352].

However, when read against the description of his first emotional response, it becomes apparent that this criticism focuses merely on one side of his ambivalence, namely on Mercer's anger and repulsion. In effect, simultaneously opposing valences (ambivalence) are not achieved but denied. Mercer's change of interpretation comes about when he accounts for his 'own subject position as a black gay reader in Mapplethorpe's text' [Mercer 1993:354], specifically his own fantasies and desire to look. Thus Mercer comes to acknowledge his dual contradictory identification not only with the Black men objectified in the pictures but also with the desiring viewer/subject. This acknowledgement leads to a series of reinterpretations of his own emotions as well as of Mapplethorpe's artistic strategy, his relation to established arts and the African-American models, and the broader politics of representation.

Thus, in light of his identification with the homoerotic spectator/author, Mercer's 'anger becomes intelligible as the expression of a certain aggressive rivalry' [ibid.] that was hard to acknowledge because it threatened his anti-racist stance. Acknowledging ambivalence also leads Mercer to reinterpret Mapplethorpe's visual strategy as effectively subversive. Mercer is able to appreciate Mapplethorpe's subversive intermixing of the figure of the idealised white fine art nude and denigrated 'low' animalistic Blackness in the depiction of Black men. This merging confronts the audience with their own racist stereotypes, and can 'unfix' and call into question the spectator's own subject and ideological positions. 'Mapplethorpe's work is powerful and disturbing precisely because it forces such acknowledgement of the ambivalence of identity and identification we actually inhabit in living with difference' [Mercer 1993: 355].

Furthermore, Mercer recognises Mapplethorpe's own marginality during his lifetime and his collaborative relations with the marginalised African-American models, of whose precarious socio-economic situation and early deaths from AIDS he was keenly aware. Like many feminist theorists, Mercer holds that the 'quotient of melanin' of both author and viewer cannot by itself determine the political meaning of the text, although a marginalised positionality can make critical viewings more readily accessible. He now argues that Mapplethorpe 'used his homosexuality as a creative resource with which to explore and open up a politics of marginality across the multiform relations of class, race, gender, and sexuality in which it is actually lived' [Mercer 1993: 357].

Having achieved ambivalence and moved towards a relational and dialogic reading of Mapplethorpe's work, Mercer also reflects on the effects and accountability of his own interpretations within a wider politics of representation, i.e. a debate on the conditions of possibility and the effects and consequences of representations of sexuality and 'race'. Here he critically addresses both the silence of Black critics with respect to the funding of Mapplethorpe's exhibitions that Mercer considers as endorsing a denial of homosexuality among African-Americans, as well as political appropriations of 'reductive "antiracist"' (and antisexist) criticisms like his own for repressive ends. In fact, members of the New Right had used not merely the argument of indecency but also 'offensiveness to minorities' as reasons to cancel Mapplethorpe's exhibitions or, as Mercer suggests, 'to promote a politics of coercion based on the denial of difference' [Mercer 1993: 359]. From the point of view of addressing the politics of location and the differences that different viewers bring to the images, Mapplethorpe's photographs resist closure: they 'do not provide an unequivocal yes/no answer to the question of whether they reinforce or undermine commonplace racist stereotypes' [Mercer 1993: 354] – they can do both.

I take Mercer's intervention as an apt illustration of what can be gained by specifying the politics of location. It vividly exemplifies the feminist assertion that the knower is part of the matrix of what is known, and that the location from which we speak is one from which other voices, in this case also those within ourselves, may be sanctioned. Mercer's review illustrates some of the conceptual categories relevant for the psychosocial and epistemological investigations necessary to unfold the concept's analytical power. In particular it exemplifies the epistemic effects of a thorough investigation of the author's own subject position and identifications and disidentifications, his desires and investments, and his use of a single interpretive

category (fetishism) versus the adoption of a dialogical mode of interpretation for specific knowledge claims about Mapplethorpe. At the same time it becomes apparent that not all categories of the politics of location outlined above need to be addressed. While Mercer invokes the history of white supremacy and focuses on the intersecting parameters of 'race' and sexuality, he does not address, for example, the history of his own material displacement and movements between Africa, Europe and North America, or other struggles that he is engaged in, which presumably have no direct bearing on his interpretation of Mapplethorpe's work.

In the final section I will look briefly at some commonalities and differences between a politics of location and related epistemological concepts, issues and theories, which promote socially responsible epistemic agency. This should serve to further delineate the concept's meanings and also to rebut possible criticism.

Connections and differentiations between the politics of location and related epistemological concerns

The epistemic practice of addressing the politics of one's location is closely connected to attending to the politics of representation. In the context of the so-called 'crisis of representation', a profound questioning of the one-to-one correspondence between concepts and phenomena attributed to realism, the politics of representation refers to the call for specifying the 'machineries and discourses that constitute the possibility of representing' [Kitzinger and Wilkinson 1997: 15] as well as the criteria by which representations function in the field of knowledge. 'Representation is never merely descriptive, it serves a regulatory and constitutive function' [ibid.]. Feminist theorists, such as Rich [1986] and Collins [1997] have noted that if feminists speak from a position of unrecognised specificity they are more likely to generalise and speak about 'all women' or to homogenise those conceived to be in the centre and those in the periphery. With respect to specifying regimes of representation, post-colonial theorists have suggested that researchers and writers pay more attention to their (self) representation than to presenting the silenced other or, in Gayatri Spivak's words, the subaltern. 'To confront them is not to represent them but to learn to represent ourselves' [Spivak 1988: 288-9]. Spivak writes that we need to learn 'to speak to (rather than listen to or speak for) the historically muted subject' [Spivak 1988: 295].

One objection to such calls for more self-reflexivity and self-representation is the assertion that we cannot be our own mirrors. How can we account for our positions and desires if we are not immediately transparent to ourselves? Indeed there is a danger that reflexivity takes a confessional form that remains divorced from the actual process of research and knowledge generating. Like other kinds of texts, social scientific texts make available 'positionalities of meaning and desire' [de Lauretis 1988 as cited in Moore 1994: 120] to both authors and readers. Using anthropologists as an example, Henrietta Moore [1994] draws attention to the fact that a 'self-critical, self-reflexive post-colonial stance' can become a self-congratulating gesture, concealing that the subject in the text is a construction that is not isomorphic with the author of the text.

I believe that there is no simple refutation of these insights. We can never be transparent to ourselves, and reflexivity is necessarily partial and mediated. But it is also true that producing 'unlocatable, and so irresponsible, knowledge claims' [Haraway 1991: 191] the knowing subject is removed from the equation and her position cannot be interrogated. The practice of addressing the politics of representation and location should therefore not be abandoned, but must always be more than a gesture: one has to specify the enabling and limiting conditions of one's location(s) for making particular knowledge claims and, above all, spell out exactly how these conditions impact on what is known. As feminist researchers have observed, this inevitably includes confronting the 'simultaneous positions of subversion and complicity in relation to multiple layers of power ... implicated in the process of knowledge production' [Cheng 2001: 184]. This tends to involve the experience of vulnerability and the unsettling of the self, which can arise, for example, from being confronted with inequalities of power between researcher and research participants, or the latter's probing questions about the legitimacy and usefulness of the research that may contradict equalitarian feminist values and commitments. Addressing the politics of location signals a 'disinclination to provide closure to the dilemmas addressed' [Shildrick 2001: 143] and it can be taken to encompass the politics of representation.

But investigating one's location with respect to ensuing knowledge claims does not necessarily make one a standpoint theorist. Although there are points of connection between the politics of location and feminist standpoint theories there are important differences. At the heart of standpoint theory is the proposition that some groups of women occupy marginal positions in dominant power structures and have less stake in them. They therefore have epistemic privilege and can achieve oppositional standpoints

from which they can generate more objective (or less false and distorted) accounts of the social world. Prime examples are women of colour and lesbians, whose (multiply) disadvantaged position enables them to analyse more profoundly white supremacy and heterosexism because their survival may depend on the understanding of these structures [Bar On 1993; Wylie 2003].⁴ Standpoint theories thus share with the politics of location the assumption that where we are and what we experience shape our thinking and knowledge making. But they differ from the politics of location by focusing not on individual but group locations; by insisting on the epistemic effects not just of social locations but of collectively achieved standpoints of oppositional consciousness; and by claiming that those who are similarly positioned and achieve a common standpoint produce more legitimate forms of knowledge [Collins 1997]. These are also the grounds on which standpoint theories have been criticised. Critics have alleged that they unduly homogenise women who allegedly share a common 'standpoint' and consciousness and ignore their multiple and contradictory locations and geopolitics, and that they are overtly optimistic that those who are marginalised have privileged insights and can articulate less distorted knowledge [Hekman 1997]. Spivak, for example, holds the opposite view that the 'subaltern' cannot speak, or rather, that she cannot be heard because what 'we' in the centre hear has nothing to do with the lives and concerns of the subaltern.

In comparison with a politics of location, standpoint theories have thus been perceived as more closely linked to identity politics and less able to capture relative mobility and multiply-placed and multiply-linked subjectivities [Kaplan 2000: 177]. However, like the advocates of a politics of location, proponents of standpoint theory have more recently highlighted the necessity to theorise experiences that arise from and give rise to oppositional agency. Paula Moya, for example, argues that social locations 'profoundly inform the contours and the context of both our theories and our knowledge... [without having] epistemic or political meanings in a self-evident way' [Moya 1997: 135-6]. Moya takes up Satya Mohanty's argument that it is not experiences as such but the kinds of interpretations that women make of them that have explanatory value. Experiences are 'inescapably conditioned by the ideologies and "theories" thorough which we view the world' [Moya 1997: 136-7]. Activism is considered one principal generator of alternative constructions and accounts.

Moreover, Nancy Hartsock and Dorothy Smith, early proponents of standpoint theory, now agree that an analysis of relations of power (a central aim of standpoint theorists) can never end with the actors' perspective. Power relations can only be reconstructed on the level of society as a whole [Hartstock 1997; Smith 1997]. As Collins has argued, ideas that are validated from different perspectives generate the most objective accounts [Collins 1989 as cited in Hekman 1997: 353]. This ties in to another important theme in feminist epistemologies and methodologies that bears on the politics of location, namely the commitment to dialogue and dialogic epistemologies in making and assessing knowledge claims. Researchers in gender studies often aim to achieve a dialogic approach in which equal salience is given to all voices within a research situation, including 'a dialogue with the aspects of "otherness" within the self' [Henderson 1992: 146]. Both kinds of dialogue can only be approximated when we manage to account for, contextualise and represent our own locations. As Moya put it, 'because differences are relational, our ability to understand an "other" depends largely on our ability to examine our "self"' [Moya 1997:125-6].

Dialogue among knowledge producers has long been at the heart of the scientific project. But feminists have argued that it can only be fruitful if knowers are differently positioned. Thus Longino [1994] suggests that ongoing criticism of provisional and approximate knowledge claims should be not so much a conversation among members of the same epistemological community but must incorporate different locations within or between epistemic communities – otherwise dialogue is monologue among the same. Haraway states this succinctly, saying that it is because the knowing self is necessarily partial she must enter dialogue and see things 'through somebody else's eyes: to translate knowledges among very different - and power-differentiated - communities' [Haraway 1991: 193]. Thus we can consider the practice of addressing the politics of location as one prerequisite for enabling dialogic epistemologies.

Outlook

In this chapter I have advocated the feminist epistemic practice of addressing the politics of location in the research and writing practice (not only) of Central European feminists. Drawing on a wide range of feminist theorists, including Adrienne Rich, Donna Haraway, Chandra Mohanty, Avtar Brah and Rosi Braidotti, I have delineated a psychosocial and an epistemological dimension of the concept, and specified a number of conceptual categories that need to be addressed in order to specify how the structural effects of one's location(s) get embedded in one's epistemological practice. These categories include the location of the knowing subject in terms of social parameters of inequality, subject positions, and desires and investments for the inquiry of one's psychosocial positionality, and the choice of sites of research, and the use and relations of categories of knowledge for the investigation of one's epistemological manoeuvres.

Taking an essay by Kobena Mercer as an example, I have shown how the acknowledgement and theorising of Mercer's ambivalent structure of feeling with respect to images by Robert Mapplethorpe can force reflection and a more 'holistic' interpretation and evaluation of the author's own emotions, Mapplethorpe's artistic strategy and relationships, and the politics of representation. Addressing his simultaneous complicity and rejection as a reader of Mapplethorpe's art leads Mercer to a relational and dialogic understanding that resists closure and is not integrated, compartmentalised or indifferent.

I have further outlined similarities and differences between the politics of location and related concepts and theories of knowledge. Inquiring into the politics of location is consistent with and can build on the practice of addressing the politics of representation, i.e. specifying the strategies and regimes that enable representation and credibility in a given context. But the practice does not necessarily align its proponents to standpoint theorists, who focus not on the epistemological effects of social locations as such but on collectively achieved standpoints, and tend to assume the epistemic privilege of those who are marginalised.

Finally, attending to the formative aspects of one's location can be considered as a prerequisite for achieving dialogic epistemologies – if the inquiry is thorough and systematic, and self-protective closures can be discarded. As Caren Kaplan has

observed in gender studies ‘[q]uestions of location are most useful ...when they are used to deconstruct any dominant hierarchy or hegemonic use of the term “gender”. Location is not useful when it is construed to be the reflection of authentic, primordial identities that are to be re-established and re-affirmed’ [Kaplan 2000: 187]. This warning is relevant in the Central and Eastern European context: while a move for embedded and embodied perspectives is necessary to combat the hegemony of Anglo-American women’s and gender studies and what Griffin and Braidotti [Braidotti 2002: 2] call the ‘one-way lines, from West to East, from the Anglo-American alliance to (the rest of) Europe’ of travelling knowledges, a feminist politics of location must resist the construction of homogenised locations and remain committed to the exploration of multiple, relational and mobile positionalities and knowledges.

Notes

¹In general terms the politics of location require an interrogation of the location and position of knowers. In order to highlight the processuality and provisionality of positions (and locations) many theorists prefer

² More critically Kaplan notes that Rich failed to simultaneously interrogate global inequalities between feminists and inequalities between white women and women of colour in the US. ‘Locked into the conventional opposition of the global-local nexus as well as the binary construction of Western and non-Western ... [s]he deconstructs the equalisations of “global feminism” ... by homogenising the location of “North American feminist”’ [Kaplan 2000: 166].

³ In subsequent work Probyn has distinguished the ontological aspect of the self or ‘the ways in which we go about our everyday lives’ [Probyn 1993: 1] from the epistemological understandings of the self defined as ‘a mode of theory that problematises the material conditions of those practices’ (ibid.). Probyn argues that ‘the ontological [moments of experience] must be met with an epistemological analysis’ [Probyn 1993: 4]. Carl Mclean has outlined how the distinction between the ontological and epistemological has helped him to conceptualise a Black male-identified feminist location as a process of reflexivity and ongoing introspection. Such introspection addresses ‘difference via experience as a site for deep theoretical elaboration’ [Mclean 2002: 51] and seeks to account for ‘the multiplicitous [sic] desires and discourses that run through a theorised and lived sense of experience’ [Mclean 2002: 50].

⁴ In her insightful review of feminist standpoint theories Wylie [2003] also addresses the debate of whether standpoint theories are epistemological or methodological theories, a debate that I will not go into here.

Literature

- Ahmed, S. (2003). Feminist visions and visionary feminism. *The European Journal of Women's Studies* 10 (1): 107-111.
- Anthias, F. (2002). Beyond feminism and multiculturalism: locating difference and the politics of location. *Women's Studies International Forum* 25 (3): 275-286.
- Bar On, B.-A. (1993). „Marginality and epistemic privilege.“ Pp. 49-82 in L. Alcoff & E. Potter (eds.). *Feminist epistemologies*. London: Routledge.
- Brah, A. (1996). *Cartographies of diaspora. Contesting identities*. London: Routledge.
- Braidotti, R. (2003). 2003 Summer School: New European identities and mediated cultures: revisiting the politics of location. Noise central coordination, Utrecht University.
- Braidotti, R. (1994). „Sexual difference as a nomadic political project.“ Pp. 146-172 in *Nomadic subjects: embodiment and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Callaway, H. (1992). „Ethnography and experience: gender implications in fieldwork and texts.“ Pp. 29-49 in J. Okely & H. Callaway (eds.). *Anthropology and autobiography*. London: Routledge.
- Cheng, S.-J. A. (2001). „Weaving intimacy and reflexivity: the locational politics of power, knowledge, and identities.“ Pp. 181-199 in G. Currie & C. Rothenburg (eds.). *Feminist (re)visions of the subject. Landscapes, ethnocscapes and theoryscapes*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Clifford, J. (1989). Notes on travel and theory. In J. Clifford and Dhareshwar V. (eds.). *Traveling Theories, Traveling Theorists*. *Inscriptions* 5: 177-188.
- Code, L. (1993). „Taking subjectivity into account.“ Pp. 15-48 in L. Alcoff & E. Potter (eds.). *Feminist epistemologies*. New York: Routledge.
- Collins, P. H. (1997). „Comment on Hekman's "Truth and Method: Feminist standpoint theory revisited": Where's the power?“ *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 22 (2): 375-381.
- Duran, J. (1998). *Philosophies of science/ Feminist theories*. NY: Westview Press.

- Flax, J.(1992). „The end of innocence.“ Pp. 445-463 in J. Butler & J. Scott (eds.). *Feminists theorize the political*. London: Routledge.
- Griffin, G. and R. Braidotti (2002). „Introduction: Configuring European Women Studies.“ Pp. 1-28 in G. Griffin & R. Braidotti (eds.). *Thinking differently. A reader in European women’s studies*. London: Zed Books.
- Haraway, D. J. (1991). „Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective.“ Pp. 183- 201 in Simians, cyborgs, and women. *The reinvention of nature*. London: Free Association Books.
- Hartsock, N. C. M. (1997). „Comment on Hekman’s “Truth and Method: Feminist standpoint theory revisited”: Truth or justice?“ *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 22 (2): 367-373.
- Hekman, S. (1997). „Truth and method: feminist standpoint theory revisited.“ *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 22 (2): 341-365.
- Henderson, M. G. (1992). „Speaking in tongues: Dialogics, dialectics, and the black woman writer’s literary tradition.“ Pp. 144-166 in J. Butler and J.W. Scott (eds.). *Feminists theorize the political*. London: Routledge.
- hooks, b. (1991). „Choosing the margin as a space for radical openness.“ Pp. 145-153 in b. hooks. *Yearning*. London: Turnaround.
- Kaplan, C. (1996/2000). „Postmodern geographies. The feminist politics of location.“ Pp. 141-187 in *Questions of Travel. Postmodern discourses of displacement*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Kitzinger, C. and S. Wilkinson (1997). “Theorizing representing the other.” Pp. 3-23 in C. Kitzinger & S. Wilkinson (eds.). *Representing the Other: a Feminism and Psychology Reader*. London: Sage.
- Longino, H. E. (1994). In search of feminist epistemology. *Monist* 77 (4): 472-186.
- Lorenz-Meyer, D. (2003). „The ambivalences of parental care among young adults in Germany.“ In K. Lüscher & K. Pillemer (eds.). *Intergenerational ambivalences: A new perspective on parent-child relations in later life. Contemporary perspectives in family research* 4: 223-251. Elsevier Science.
- Mani, L. (1992). „Multiple mediations: feminist scholarship in the age of multinational reception.“ Pp. 306-322 in H. Crowley & S. Himmelweit (eds.). *Knowing women. Feminism and knowledge*. Cambridge: Polity Press ve spolupráci s The Open University.
- Mclean, C. (2002). „On a black male-identified feminist location.“ In *The Feminist Epistemologies Collective* (ed.). *Marginal Research: Reflections on Location and Representation*. LSE Gender Institute Research in progress series 2: 43-51.

- Mercer, K. (1993). „Looking for Trouble.“ Pp. 350-359 In H. Abelove, M. A. Barale & D. M. Halperin (eds.). *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Merriam Webster Dictionary (2003). Keyword 'Location', available online <http://www.m-w.com>.
- Mohanty, C. T. (1992). „Feminist encounters: Locating the politics of experience.“ Pp. 74-93 in M. Barrett & A. Phillips (eds.). *Destabilising theory: Contemporary feminist debates*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Moya, P. M.L. (1997). „Postmodernism, 'realism', and the politics of identity: Cherrie Moraga and Chicana Feminism.“ In J. Alexander & C.T. Mohanty (eds.). *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*. New York: Routledge.
- Probyn, E. (1993). „Introduction: Speaking the self and other feminist subjects.“ Pp. 1-6 in E. Probyn. *Sexing the Self. Gendered Positions in Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Probyn, E. (1990). „Travels in the postmodern: making sense of the local.“ Pp. 176-187 in L. J. Nicholson (ed.). *Feminism/postmodernism*. London: Routledge.
- Rich, A. (1986). „Notes towards a Politics of Location.“ *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose, 1979-1985*. New York: Norton, s. 210-231.
- Smith, D. E. (1997). „Comment on Hekman's 'Truth and Method: Feminist standpoint theory revisited'.“ *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 22 (2): 390-398.
- Spivak, G. C. (1988). „Can the subaltern speak?“ In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (eds.). *Marxism and the interpretation of culture*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education.
- Wylie, A. (2003). „Why standpoints matter.“ Pp. 26-48 In R. Figueroa & S. Harding (eds.). *Science and other cultures. Issues in philosophies of science and technology*. New York: Routledge.
- Yeatman, A. (1994). „Postmodern epistemological politics and social science.“ In K. Lennon & M. Whitford (eds.). *Knowing the Difference. Feminist Perspectives in Epistemology*. London: Routledge.

Feminist Critique of Progress and Modern Science
in the Work of Anna Pammrová

Jiřina Šmejkalová

Writing about women intellectuals in East and Central Europe from a feminist perspective, let alone about the history of their attitudes toward, and place in, the history and philosophy of science,¹ is always perilous. While the names of some of the leading activists of the women's movement in the region have at least made it into the canonical feminist textbooks and encyclopaedias, a number of women thinkers and intellectuals from the "Other Europe", most only available in the local language, are still underexposed and thus largely unknown to the local as well as international public.² Moreover, we still lack basic historical accounts of women's histories in the region itself. No matter how compilatory or descriptive, such studies would provide a framework of reference for a more sophisticated story of the kind which (as the historian Joan W. Scott puts it) "is no longer about the things that have happened to women and men and how they have reacted to them; instead it is about how the subjective and collective meanings of women and men as categories of identity have been constructed" [Scott 1988: 6].

If at least overview of the history of East European women were written down and preferably published by respected publishers it would allow us to move beyond the endlessly repeated (always presented as highly "innovative") points about, for example, Minerva, the first girls' high school established under the Habsburg monarchy. In other words, we would be able to stop reinventing the wheel and would be free to start discussing issues and raising questions rather than summarising facts. Until that time, however, all our writing about selected issues of the feminist intellectual tradition in this part of Europe will always run the risk of being de-contextualised, and indeed suffering from a lack of comparative perspective.

In full knowledge of these risks, this essay is an attempt to offer a possible alternative view of the topics of "women scholars" and "institutions." By looking at the texts of the today nearly forgotten Anna Pammrová (in my opinion one of the most challenging and original Czech feminist thinkers of the beginning of the 20th century), I will address some of the issues her work has raised, and offer a re-reading of her thoughts in light of the contemporary feminist critique of progress and modern civilisation. This textual exercise, however, has far reaching consequences as it allows us to rethink the locally quite popular argument about "Western" feminist theory being "imported" into the East European academic and intellectual context. Instead of a conclusion, I will suggest that the concepts "scholarship" and "institutions" may need to be redefined in order to prevent the exclusion of major contributions of women intellectuals to the history of ideas and science.

As noted above, the name Anna Pammrová (1860-1945) cannot be found in any recent locally or internationally produced textbook of intellectual or cultural history, let alone any history of philosophy or history of science. It seems to be rather symptomatic of the situation in the Czech cultural context that this woman is locally known mostly – if at all – as a close friend of one of the leading male poets of her generation, Otakar Březina. Much of what we know about her comes from her often highly polemical correspondences with this poet. It is worth quoting Ivan M. Havel, who noted in the introduction to his samizdat edition of Pammrová's letters to the Havel family that “[H]ad it not been for an accidental meeting of Anna Pammrová with Otakar Březina (...) in the fall of 1887, hardly anyone would know her name today” [Holman 1992a: 125].³ To paraphrase Ivan Havel, had it not been for my meeting Petr Holman, a Březina scholar, in the fall of 1993 in Evanston, Illinois, who drew my attention to the unique personality of Anna Pammrová (and I thank him for this), the following lines would never have been written. The only Pammrová texts available in a recent Czech edition are fragments of her diary notes on Březina and some of her letters issued in professional periodicals with Holman's help in the early 1990s [Holman 1992a: 123-137, Holman 1992b: 393-409]. Only very recently has her autobiographical text “Antieva” appeared in local bookshops [Pammrová 2003]. Her own ideas still remain on the margins of national and international scholarly interests as her major texts are still unavailable in modern Czech editions or in translation.

Pammrová's work could certainly be examined in the context of the leading European critics of the self-confident civilisation optimism and positivistic science, such as Schopenhauer, Rilke, Bergson, or the Czech authors Deml and Březina. Her life philosophy emphasised spiritual experience over rational knowledge and warned against the trap of the mechanical alien bureaucracy of institutions and its insensitive treatment of nature. This attitude was by no means unique among the intellectuals of her time. The horrors of World War I, along with the signs of a deep social and economical crisis, drew many of the disillusioned European artists and thinkers into the realm of spiritual esotericism. What was unique about Pammrová, however, was that she was persistent in maintaining an explicitly feminist position, and it is from this position which she thought and wrote. To summarise the wide range of her thoughts and views is no easy task. She discusses the inability of language – in the sense of a given symbolic order – to articulate experiences which are specific to women; she is searching for the primary pre-symbolic existence of an original female consciousness, which she locates in the era before the myth of the lost Paradise, and develops a critique of the Bible to support her arguments. One of her main points was that all written texts created by humankind,

whether of a scientific, theological or literary nature, participate in a false construction of femininity, which becomes imprisoned specifically in those systems which created it. This prefabricated picture of femininity is imposed on every individual woman.

Her published work includes six books, and I would like to call attention to the following books in particular: *Alfa, Embryonální pokus o řešení ženské otázky* [*Alfa. The Embryonal Attempt at a Solution of the Women's Question*] from 1917, the book *O mateřství a pamateřství. Podivné úvahy Anny Pammrové* [*On Motherhood and False Motherhood. The Strange Thoughts of Anna Pammrová*] from 1919 (originally written in German), and *Zrcadlo duše* [*Mirror of the Soul*] from 1945. She also completed several editions of Březina's correspondence and occasionally contributed articles to journals. It must also be noted that Pammrová's diaries and letters are full of bitter complaints about her difficulties locating the right publisher for her unique texts. For example, in 1908 she noted in her diary: "A publisher from Leipzig just sent me back fragments of my thoughts, with the argument that they do not fit into his editorial direction. Of course! They go beyond all directions. (...) I started writing in order to uplift a downcast woman and now it seems that I myself, while being left without any support, am falling down under the ground ..." [Holman 1992a: 125]. As a result, she also left behind thousands of pages of unpublished poetic, philosophical and theosophical texts, including her own autobiography and diaries, which are currently located in various state as well as private archives around the Czech lands.

I would like to focus on two of her texts, *Notes Unreadable I and II*, which by 1890 were already finished but which were not published until 1936, in Brno. Although in this limited space I can only make a few comments on her ideas, the title of these two volumes already suggests some of her streams of thought. According to Pammrová, formalised symbolic rules – as represented in institutionalised education, academia, reading and writing of any kind – destroyed the human capacity to feel, to see, and to experience. Positivistic science, and the self-confident civilisation it produced, is part of this order and moreover participates in its reproduction. She labelled her *Notes* 'unreadable' as she believed that the existing language – in the sense of the dominating symbolic order – was incapable of grasping and articulating a woman's unique – that is her own feminine and feminist – ideas and thoughts. Pammrová was bitterly aware of the key position of textuality, of the ways ideas and statements are structured, and of what almost one hundred years later Barbara Johnson called the "warring forces of signification within the text itself" [Johnson 1980: 5].

The theme of language as a power-based organiser of gender relations is indeed a topic whose traces can be identified in the work of a number of contemporary feminist thinkers. One of the most notorious examples is the writing of feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray, who thinks along lines strikingly similar to Pammrová. According to Irigaray, the uniqueness of femininity that patriarchy has suppressed consists of a specifically feminine language characterised by an absence of reason, meaning and order. This is not, however, a simple traditional reductionist approach to a women's bodily determination resulting in women's inability of rational thought. Irigaray interprets the famous Lacanian statement "woman does not exist"⁴ in the sense that a woman exists outside metaphysics, and cannot be subject to the order of the bridging verb "is". The word "is" represents one of the major topics of Irigaray's writing. Irigaray finds the question "what is woman" to be a "metaphysical question to which the feminine does not allow itself to submit". Any attempt to define the feminine is trapped in the "general grammar of [western] culture" (Derridean Western metaphysics) which governs institutions, the economy, and the philosophical tradition, including the concepts of male and female.

Similarly, Pammrová offers a sharp and merciless critique of all the available tools of representation of femininity, of which the languages used in traditional (Western) narratives of science, philosophy and literature (including the narratives of the Bible) are among the least reliable. She sees modern civilisation, and the femininity constructed by it, as being in deep crisis. This crisis, according to Pammrová as well as many contemporary feminist theoreticians⁵, starts with the process of naming. "Why does the concept of a 'human' [člověk] not have a feminine grammatical form?" she asks, "for a typical woman devoted to a man, there is a characteristic neutrum available = das Weib! What was the original world's task, assigned to the entire female sex, before it was violently adapted by a male mind?" [Pammrová 1936: 31, author's Italics]

Pammrová sees the language and commonly available conceptual frameworks, including the scientific ones, as being totally inadequate for expressing any issues related to women. The consequence is always exclusion: a woman who resists following the pre-defined rules will always remain located "outside the order". "If a woman is excluded from the order given to all the creatures on this earth, there is no other pathway for her but the one which a man never wanted, could not or will not take! Yes, this pathway leads to the realm of concepts, into which he can never see, no matter how engaged he might be." [Pammrová 1936: 23-24] In other words, a woman in Pammrová's terms exists in

a world unreachable to men. He has no chance to join her world, since “he remains stuck in a devil’s trap, for he included the subservience of the woman into his code of law: he led her through the ages along blood-stained steps, commanded meekness, abnegation of freedom, he taught her obedience and passivity, while he himself was driven by pride and the desire to acquire everything he saw” [Pammrová 1936: 42].

It is almost as if many of Pammrová’s points have been re-written by Irigaray, though, of course, in the more complex, rhetorical style of post-modern philosophy: “ ‘She’ is indefinitely other in herself. This is doubtless why she is said to be whimsical, incomprehensible, agitated, capricious, not to mention her language, in which ‘she’ sets off in all directions, leaving ‘him’ unable to discern the coherence of any meaning. Hers are contradictory worlds, somewhat mad from the standpoint of reason, inaudible for whoever listens to them with ready-made grids, with a fully elaborated code in hand. For in what she says, too, at least when she dares, woman is constantly touching herself ... One would have to listen with another ear, as if hearing an ‘other meaning’ always in the process of weaving itself, of embracing itself with words, but also getting rid of words in order not to become fixed, congealed in them.” [Irigaray 1985: 28-29]

According to Pammrová, the notion of femininity, as a construct disciplined and “improved” according to male rules, established itself in all available written records which were supposed to be devoted to the so-called enlightenment of humankind. Scientific and anti-scientific works, religious as well as anti-religious texts, fiction and non-fiction, i.e., all written texts that currently exist, give a false image of women. Such an image, Pammrová claims, is the total opposite of what woman is as she was created.

Irigaray, drawing from the history of 20th century philosophy and science, was able to take this point further. Compared to Pammrová, she is less interested, for instance, in an explicit critique of the ideas of canonised philosophers and their misogynist intentions, but rather looks for what underlies their thinking about and through women, and asks why their work takes certain directions and not others. She re-reads the Western philosophical tradition (Descartes, Kant, Marx, Freudian psychoanalysis) in order to see how they locate the grounds of knowing in the transcendental structures of the subject.⁶ Following Derrida’s concept of *différance*, Irigaray asks what the position of woman in this tradition is. Woman is neither something nor nothing, she is not “there” in the texts or their contexts, but neither is she altogether absent. She connects the openness of the female body with the inability of cultural grammar to fix woman in one place: “Woman has not yet taken (a) place ... [she]

is still the place, the whole in the place in which she cannot take possession of herself as such ... she is already scattered into x number of places ... and these are the basis of (re)production – particularly of discourse – in all its forms.” [Irigaray 1985: 277]

Lacking the Derridean conceptual apparatus, Pammrová took what was for her the next logical step after her critique of the existing symbolic orders, which was to search for a different place for woman, for a “substantial female principle”. The idea of identifying the essential or universal principle of femininity as an alternative to the dominating order is by no means a new one. In one form or another it had been on the agenda of numerous feminist thinkers, from Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir to, later on, Carole Gilligan. This same search which occupied Pammrová was, in a variety of forms, also the focus of Euro-American feminist debates on essentialism, which culminated in the 1980s [see, for example, Spelman 1988]. Even Irigaray, whose texts in translation entered the Anglo-American theoretical context at the end of the disputes about essentialism in the late 1980s, was unable to escape accusations of essentialism, mostly because of ignorance of her specific intellectual background. These disputes, which to a certain extent generated a new, and, as Judith Butler claimed, an equally dangerous and fundamentalist focus on the category of gender, were seen by many as a way out of the binary male-female sex opposition [Butler 1990]. Even when the essentialism discussions had almost died out, some distinguished feminists still argued that “taking the risk of essentialism” was necessary because the ongoing feminist political struggle required a more or less single concept of woman to be placed at the centre of the movement. As Gayatri Spivak, a scholar of Indian origin, claimed, a performative fight against essentialism can only legitimise the reluctance to overcome differences and a capacity to challenge ‘white hegemony’.

As if foreseeing some of these arguments, Pammrová was convinced that a ‘substantial female principle’ must have preceded the contemporary concept of ‘woman’ which horrified her in scientific as well as popular texts. She asks “who is to blame for the negative construction of our identity?” Unlike many feminist theoreticians, Pammrová does not situate the disappearance of this transcendent, true and essential femininity at the point when Christian civilisation emerged, instead locating this major dramatic turnover before the establishment of the myth of a lost Paradise. According to Pammrová, the crisis of humankind and the consequent subversion of original femininity emerged when a community began to be governed by bodily, pleasure-seeking desires and avoided the original system controlled by fluid intuitive principles.

It is not hard to see that the persistent call for the “essence” and “substance” presented by Pammrová as a counter-discourse was to a certain extent a direct product of the same discursive rules of the symbolic order of “Western” civilisation for which she sought an alternative. In effect, her contemplative feminist attempts involved a number of more general paradoxes which await any dissident experiment that revolts against the existing dominant order. Either one lives by the rules and risks losing one’s own identity, or one takes a counter-position, though this often merely reproduces the rules of the game established by the rulers. An attempt to construct a completely new system often leads to complete misunderstanding and to isolation. At the same time, any contemporary criticism of her “essentialism” must consider the intellectual as well as the political and institutional context that she operated within. In other words, for her as a rather isolated thinker, the turn to something “beyond” and “before” the actual experience of the current world as she knew it was perhaps the only way to take sides, to define her location, and to preserve the integrity of her own philosophical system.

Pammrová’s work occasionally bordered on a feminist theology.⁷ When she turned to a critique of the Bible she saw a major resource of evidences proving her ideas about Western civilisation. She examined the fallacy of “Moses’ commandments and restrictions” and challenged the very idea of the law and of the imposed order as being the main organisational principles of society. She saw in these principles pure expressions of Moses’ “all-male dictatorship” which was driven by “a belief in unconditional recognition and practical obedience to an instruction”. She addresses the Biblical patriarch in these terms: “from your superhuman word and work never came your expected redemption ... you were not a friend to woman’s light [...] the destruction of femininity was persistently accelerated in women by an enacted offence.” [Pammrová 1936: 22] As a result, most women “were born unwelcome, growing up in an environment inadequate for their tomorrow’s endeavours and needs, without a free view beyond the existing borders of manners and habits; they were deceived and were skilfully deceiving themselves; they might have been complaining, being bored or wear themselves out beyond their limits, but they never tried to stand up for themselves” [Pammrová 1936: 23].

An adequate discussion of all the major themes and questions raised in Anna Pammrová's work more than a hundred years ago would certainly warrant a book-length study. All I can do in the space I have left is to make a few additional remarks on her narrative style. It is generally known that one of the key targets of feminist academic criticism in the last decades of the previous century was the de-personalised discourse used in scientific and academic writing, dominated by the pluralis majesticus in the position of the narrative subject. Pammrová's texts are all written entirely in the First Person; her narrating subject does not hide behind any undefined abstract "us" or "we". She is not speaking for anybody but herself, while often explicitly expressing her anticipation of hostile reactions to her controversial position. She writes almost without references and does not rely on any "higher and wiser" canonised authority, though the occasional original quotations in her Czech texts show that she was fluent in at least Latin, German and French.

In order to offer a concluding illustrative example of her attitudes, I would like to return to her already mentioned deep intellectual friendship with the Czech poet Otokar Březina. Their relationship was so close, and the originality of her work so baffling to her contemporaries, that she was accused of relying on Březina to produce her peculiar style. For those not familiar with Czech cultural and intellectual history, it must be mentioned here that in the local context Březina, a passionate reader of Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, represents an author "of never-ending secrets and heights" (to quote the famous Czech literary critic Arne Novák), an author of perhaps the most spiritually-oriented, subjective, emotional and sensitive poetry in modern Czech literature.

In 1930, shortly after Březina's death, in spite of her extreme sense of loss Anna Pammrová wrote the following rather callous lines about this man:

"What were the roots of Březina's writing? He was born a sensitive man. But schooling had a devastating impact on him: it destroyed his sixth sense ... He read too much, and was driven by an attempt to build at all cost some sort of synthesis of everything he had swallowed ... That was impossible! He did not 'live' in a real sense of the word, not for a single day. He was just considering – comparing – inferring. An experience was always only a pure derivation for him ... He fell in love with abstractions, and tried to decorate them poetically, so that by way of speculation he could escape himself."
[Holman 1992b: 395]

To see Březina as a poet who lacked sensitivity and who was obsessed with speculative rationality went against everything ever written locally about his work. Perhaps her evaluation of Březina represents the essence of her own work: formalised symbolic rules (as represented in institutionalised education, science, writing and reading) has the power to destroy human senses and the capacity to feel, to be sensitive, to have emotions at all, and to “live”. “Abstraction”, in other words, allows us to “escape” ourselves and to lose our own identity.

Although today much of Pammrová’s thoughts might seem naively radical or even fundamentalist, some of the issues she explored would be explored again by later generations of feminist thinkers. These include: discomfort with a language based on patriarchal rules of order and hierarchy; suspicion of the achievements of progress and civilisation; criticism of the construction of gender in the writing produced by Western scholars and men of letters, including the literature of science and the Bible; and consequently the search for an “original” female principle which has been overlaid by numerous historical constructions of femininity, which have resulted in women suffering across time and space.

Her work also generates further questions concerning the history of the so-called first and second waves of Euro-American feminism, its academic forms, and particularly its reception in the post-1989 East European context. One of the arguments which accompanied the Czech post-1989 anti-feminist hysteria – disseminated in the media as well as some serious professional periodicals – was the “importing of American feminism” into the East European intellectual and public space. The “horrors of feminism” were in many cases constructed as an aggressive ideology coming from the “other world” and which was therefore alien to the lives of local women.⁸

At the same time, the process of integrating East European issues into the existing canonised “Western” feminist scholarship was far from easy. This “sisterhood trouble”, as I would call it, has been only recently recognised by some of the leading feminist academics. For example, Joan Scott noted that in the 1990s Western feminists constructed a “presumed superiority” to Eastern European women by offering them “what they called (in the singular) ‘feminist theory’ ... as the solution to their problems in the post-communist era.” [Scott 2003] In other words, an assumption was created according to which the “West” was the producer of the “theory” and the “East” was supposed to provide the empirical data⁹. According to Scott, this East-West differentiation has its roots in the different histories of feminism in the East and the West

in the 1970s, but I would add that it resulted from the entire Cold War Euro-American discursive history of social sciences and humanities. The consequence, however, was that it overshadowed what Scott calls “reverberations” in feminist theory, a process resembling Jim Clifford’s idea of “travelling theories”.

Scott provides as an example Julia Kristeva, a philosopher who is Bulgarian in origin and is considered one of the leading representatives of the so-called “French feminism” even though her work has been deeply influenced by her interpretations of Bakhtin. (I would just note that this Russian theoretician did not become popular in the American academic context until the translations of Michael Holquist appeared in the 1980s;¹⁰ Kristeva would have worked on his texts in the Russian original much earlier than that.) Scott emphasised that Bakhtin developed his historicised version of structuralism while following the structuralist semiotics of Jurii Lotman and Roman Jakobson, and she comes to the somewhat general conclusion that “(w)hat came to be called French feminism, then, was crucially influenced by philosophical movements opposing communism in the ‘East’...” [Scott 2003: 15]. Although a deeper knowledge of East European intellectual history would perhaps allow Scott to rethink the idea of putting Bakhtin, Lotman, and Jakobson under the unifying label of “communist opposition”, I would suggest taking her point even further. Identifying “East European” roots in contemporary “Western”, and therefore already canonised, feminist writing is just the first step towards challenging the East-West feminist division, as well as the aforementioned “superiority” over the East European feminist tradition. The next step, I would suggest, is to “excavate” those original local women thinkers who strove to develop their own explicitly feminist contribution to the gender sensitive view of the world.

Assuming that some of the leading themes of contemporary feminist theory could already be identified in the work of a local thinker nearly one hundred years ago, what then is the real story of the “importing of feminist theory”. On what grounds can we talk of the political and intellectual “backwardness” of Eastern European women, an argument which emerged in some of the first accounts of local women’s issues presented by representatives of “Western”, and particularly American, feminist scholarship? I would argue that an in-depth knowledge and indeed a serious incorporation of the “local voices” into the existing global feminist theoretical canon would challenge not only the existing discourse of the above-noted “superiority”, but could also reshape mainstream European women’s history and feminist theory as we know it. Hopefully it would also prevent intellectual patronising of the regional gender-focused scholarship in the future.¹¹

My final remark is devoted to the topic of “institutions”, and Pammrová’s specific relation to them. It is important to note that institutions are not innocent, gender-free social formations. As Joan Scott puts it: “Since all institutions employ some divisions of labour, since the structures of many institutions are premised on sexual division of labour (even if such divisions exclude one sex or the other), since references to the body often legitimise the forms institutions take, gender, is in fact, an aspect of social organisation generally.” [Scott 1988: 6] In other words, the minute we start dealing with institutions we are also addressing the problem of gender, and even more so in the case of the history of institutionalised scholarship and science, which has until very recently been practically inaccessible to women. After all, uncovering the ways in which gender considerations structure social organisations has been on the agenda of feminist social sciences for decades.

In this context it must be stressed that Pammrová created most of her unique work in isolation, deliberately avoiding participating in any institutionalised form of research or scholarship, not to mention institutionalised feminist politics. Such a persistent rejection of the local feminist political agenda may come as a surprise if we consider that unlike, say, the French or American activists, the local feminists of her time who were involved in the negotiation process of women’s place in the local social and political public arena understood feminism to be more of a spiritual and intellectual than an explicitly social agenda. For example, Anna Honzáková, one of the leading figures of local feminist politics, contributed the following definition of the “women’s question” to *Ottův slovník naučný* (the Czech equivalent of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*):

“ ... Emancipation has its psychology. The women’s question has developed now for several generations but [...] every woman goes through this genesis inside herself on and on, quite intensively. The women’s question is perhaps the most difficult social problem, because the women’s movement is not caused only by economical and socio-political issues. The main driving force behind it is its internal, deep and painful conflict, which often winds through the entire life of any individual woman like a bleeding scar, and arises because everything that runs through her soul, her ideals, her attempts to resolve other problems - those which nobody can escape - is always faced with the hard rock of misunderstanding.” [Ottův 1908: 806]

One can say that women's issues, and consequently a local version of feminism, was understood primarily as a spiritual matter, as the enlightenment of the soul, and only secondarily as a matter of social and economic change. To put it in other words, Virginia Woolf's woman needs "a room of one's own" and her own financial resources in order to be free. Czech women claimed the freedom of the spirit and access to education as a guarantee of their freedom. Local women, perhaps more than anywhere else, saw the struggle for their place in the institutions engaged in the reproduction of knowledge as a priority.¹²

At the very point when the very first women had finally managed to overcome at least some of the barriers, built up over centuries, between themselves and academic institutions, Pammrová – an apparently highly intellectual and well-read woman – intentionally avoided joining in. In fact, the cornerstone of her philosophy was to not reproduce the existing institutionalised social operations through her own participation. Technically, there would have been no reason why a woman of her credentials and knowledge could not have held one of the few scholarly posts which gradually became available to women in the 1920s and 1930s. Nevertheless, it was precisely when many other learned women were negotiating their place in the public sphere and struggling to win the first institutional positions that Pammrová spent much of her energies criticising and opposing the very principle which was the foundation of the world women were striving to enter.

To put it in rather simplified terms, her ideas, as well as the way in which she chose to generate them, represented a subversive voice deconstructing (in a slightly wider meaning than the strictly Derridean term) what we would today call the "male-dominated order" of society and its modes of production and reproduction of "scientific" knowledge. At the same time, she could also be seen as someone who was undermining/deconstructing the very early modern feminist political subject, which, despite defining itself in opposition to the dominating order, did de facto do everything to penetrate the establishment. Though her anti-establishment radical attitude may appear as not being a particularly constructive one, it could even be said that paradoxically enough Pammrová's persistent essentialist philosophical position allowed her to anticipate and foresee the post-modern and deconstructivist trends in contemporary feminist theory and activism.¹³

We can make sense of the way in which she rejected not only male-dominated institutions but also the feminist opposition to them (which she saw as merely a product of the same male-dominated order) if we appreciate that the substantial female principle she was looking for bore no relationship to the femininity of her contemporaries. She was not concerned with the “oppression” and “liberation” of particular groups of women defined in concrete social or racial terms. Her ideal female principle was something which might have existed before civilisation, and before the construction of femininity that civilisation produced. At the same time, the ideal feminine principle was a vision – no matter how utopian – for the future. This might have been one of the many reasons why she remained marginalised not only by the dominating institutionalised structures of scholarship and science but also by the representatives of the local feminist political movement, much of which she openly criticised. Her story thus forces us – among other things – to re-think the definition and consequently the relevance of the basic categories of “institutions” and “scholarship” for the analyses of not just women’s history, but also of the history of ideas and intellectual achievements generally. Such redefinition is needed if we are to avoid the risk of excluding some of those who might have made a major contribution without actually fitting into the existing categories.

Notes

¹ Feminist history and philosophy of science is still more or less a tabula rasa with respect to the region of East and Central Europe, whereas in the Euro-American academic context it has been a growing field at least from the early 1980s. See, for example, the today nearly seminal work of Donna Haraway *Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science* [Haraway 1989] and *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: the Reinvention of Nature* [Haraway 1991], in which she provides a profound feminist perspective on the textual construction of “nature” in a variety of narratives, from academic texts to the personal notes and correspondence of leading natural scientists. For concise accounts of the field, see [Harding and Hintikka 1983], [Lykke and Braidotti 1996], [Jacobus, Keller and Shuttleworth 1990], [Keller and Longino 1996].

²It is nearly impossible to identify a code according to which editors and authors of such canonical works select those names to be included and excluded. For example, *An Encyclopedia of Continental Women Writers* [Wilson 1991] refers to Eliška Horelová

or Jana Moravcová, but Němcová's first name is misspelled as "Boena", and, for example, Milena Jesenská is not mentioned at all. Also, the editorial policy of even the most prestigious presses towards the contributions on related matters is sometimes a mystery. To use a personal example, my own contribution on "Feminism: Eastern Europe" published in the grandiose four-volume Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women's Issues and Knowledge [Kramarae and Spender 2000] is also full of spelling mistakes because the publisher never sent the final version of the submitted text for me to proof.

³ Pammrová's letters to the Havel family *Dopisy Anny Pammrové rodině Havlových* was to be released as part of the *Edice Expedice*, a samizdat publication project of 1979 by Václav Havel and his collaborators, including his wife Olga and brother Ivan. Holman claims that the volume was issued by *Expedice* as an off-series edition in April 1982. According to the director of the archives of samizdat literature *Libri prohibiti* Jiří Guntorád (E-mail 17.9.2003), the "publication" of the text was delayed after a massive attack on samizdat activities in 1981, and it was later taken over and issued by another edition, *Petlice*, run by the writer and journalist Ludvík Vaculík in 1983. Ivan Havel himself in an online discussion (17.9.2003) confirmed that the letters were issued in an off-series edition with the hope that by not including publication details in the book itself attention would be diverted away from the samizdat activities of his family. See also the bibliographical handbook [Hanáková 1997].

⁴ For an introduction to the feminist perspective on Lacan, see [Grosz 1990].

⁵ See, for example, a brief but convincing account of related issues in [Riley 1990].

⁶ For a more detailed discussion of Irigaray's reading of the Western philosophical canon, see, for example, [Chanter 1995].

⁷ For accounts of recent developments in this field, see, for example, [Armour 1999] and [Chopp and Davaney 1997].

⁸ On the topic of the post-1989 media construction of "feminism", see [Šmejkalová 1998: 16-19]. On the gradual modification of gender stereotypes as constructed by the Czech media in the 1990s, see [Havelková 1999: 145-165].

⁹ I can only contribute a personal remark here, by noting that contrary to the "Western" feminists, whom Scott criticised, she herself expressed a deep interest in the East European issues by the time I met her in 1991. She later organised a focus group at Princeton IAS which included a number of women scholars from the region, and became actively involved in the gender studies programme at the CEU. Nevertheless, the unfortunate part of the "superiority" package she is referring to is the fact that without a well established "Western" scholar (such as herself) who can generate

enough visibility, some of the issues of the East European intellectual tradition and its relation to contemporary feminist theory would have remained hidden for much longer. Paradoxically, these were issues which had been considered self-evident by many intellectual women of the region for a long time.

¹⁰ See, for example, [Holquist 1981].

¹¹ See [Šmejkalová 1995: 1000 – 1006].

¹² For example, K. Johnson Freeze, in her essay “Medical Education for Women in Austria: A Study in the Politics of the Czech Women’s Movement in the 1980s”, argues that it was Czech women who paved the way towards medical education for women throughout the Habsburg Monarchy.

¹³ For recent discussions of feminist subjectivity in relation to the political issues, see, for example, [Braidotti, 1994] and [Butler and Scott 1992].

Bibliography

- Armour, E. T. (1999). *Deconstruction, Feminist Theology, and the Problem of Difference: Subverting the Race/Gender Divide*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. and J. W. Scott (1992). *Feminists Theoretize the Political*. New York: Routledge.
- Braidotti, R. (1994). *The Nomadic Subject: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chanter, T. (1995). *Ethics of Eros: Irigaray’s Rewriting of the Philosophers*. New York: Routledge.
- Chopp, R. S. and S. Greeve Davaney (eds.) (1997). *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Grosz, E. (1990). *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Hanáková, J. (1997). *Edice českého samizdatu 1972-1991*. Praha: Národní knihovna ČR.
- Haraway D. (1989). *Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York: Routledge.
- Haraway, D. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: the Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.

- Harding, S. and M. B. Hintikka (eds.) (1983). *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science*. Dordrecht; London: Reidel.
- Havelková, H. (1999). "The Political Representation of Women in Mass Media Discourse in the Czech Republic 1990-1998." *Czech Sociological Review* Vol. VII.
- Holman, P. (1992a). "Březina očima Pammrové." [Březina through the Eyes of Pammrová] In *Nad meditacemi věků, Sborník k 110. výročí narození Josefa Kratochvíla*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita – Státní vědecká knihovna.
- Holman, P. (1992b). "Březina v dopisech Anny Pammrové Marii Ježkové." [Březina in the Letters of Anna Pammrová to Marie Ježkové] *Česká literatura* 40 (4): 393-409.
- Holquist, M. (ed.) (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays / by M. M. Bakhtin; translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Irigaray, L. (1985a). *This Sex Which is Not One*, translated by Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Irigaray, L. (1985b). *Speculum of the Other Woman*, translated by Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Jacobus, M., Keller, E. F. and S. Shuttleworth (eds.) (1990). *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science*. New York; London: Routledge.
- Johnson, B (1980). *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Keller, E. F. and H. E. Longino (1996). *Feminism and Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kramarae Ch. and D. Spender (eds.) (2000). *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women's Issues and Knowledge*. New York: Routledge.
- Lykke, N. and R. Braidotti. (1996). *Between Monsters, Goddesses, and Cyborgs: Feminist Confrontations with Science, Medicine, and Cyberspace*. London: Zed Books.
- Ottův slovník naučný [Otto's Encyclopaedia] (1908). Vol. 26. Praha: J. Otto.
- Pammrová, A. (1917). *Alfa, Embryonální pokus o řešení ženské otázky [Alfa. The Embryonal Attempt at a Solution of the Women's Question]*. Klatovy: Höschl.
- Pammrová, A. (1919). *O mateřství a pamateřství. Podivné úvahy Anny Pammrové [On Motherhood and False Motherhood. The Strange Thoughts of Anna Pammrová]*. Klatovy: Höschl.

- Pammrová, A. (1945). Zrcadlo duše [Mirror of the Soul].
- Pammrová, A. (2003). Antieva. Tišnov: Sursum.
- Pammrová, A. (1936). Zápisky nečitelné. Brno: „Za lepším životem“.
- Riley, D. (1990). "Am I That Name?" Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Scott, J. W. (1988). "Introduction." In Gender and the Politics of History. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Scott, J. W. (2003). "Feminist Reverberation." *Difference: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13 (3): 15; based on JWS keynote address at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women held on 7-9 June 2002.
- Spelman, E. V. (1988). *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Šmejkalová, J. (1998). "Strašidlo feminismu v českém 'porevolučním' tisku: úvaha, doufejme, historická." [The Monster of Feminism in the Czech 'Post-revolutionary Media: a Hopefully Historical Essay] In Havelková H. and M. Vodrážka (eds.) (1998). *Žena a muž v médiích*. Praha: Nadace Gender Studies.
- Šmejkalová, J. (1995). "Revival? Gender Studies in the 'Other' Europa." *Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 20 (4): 1000 - 1006.
- Wilson, K. M. (ed) (1991). *An Encyclopedia of Continental Women Writers*. Chicago, London: St. James Press.

Contributors

Alice Červinková is a junior researcher at the Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic where she works at the National Contact Centre – Women and Science. Her work at the Centre as well as her research concentrate on the issue of young people in science. She is a doctoral student of sociology at the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University. Additionally, her research also concentrates on the issue of women in the arts and science social studies.

Etela Farkašová is Associate Professor and since 1998 the Head of the Department of Philosophy and History of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. She teaches epistemology, feminist philosophy and gender studies. She is co-author of the monograph “Theory of Knowledge” (1980, 1987). In the last decade she has published mostly on feminist epistemology, the relationship between philosophy and literature, and on culture and globalisation. She is also an author of fiction books. She is co-founder of Femina – Club of Slovak women writers and of Centre for Gender Studies at the Comenius University. She is member of the Committee of Slovak Philosophical Association, the Association of Slovak Writers, Slovak PEN Center, NEWW (Network East-West Women), IAPh (International Association of Philosophers) and also of several committees and commissions for science and culture in Slovakia. She has published nine books of fiction and two books of philosophical essays.

Marcela Linková is a junior researcher at the Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences CR and the co-ordinator of the National Contact Centre – Women in Science. She is the co-ordinator of the Central European Centre for Women and Youth in Science funded by the European Commission under Framework Programme 6. She is a member of the Czech research team of the IWAVS international comparative project studying the issue of domestic violence. In her research work she concentrates on constructions of gender identities, feminist epistemologies, the position of women in science and violence against women from a gender perspective. She publishes on the position of women in science, feminist epistemologies and gender mainstreaming in R&D institutions.

Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer is Assistant Professor in Gender Studies at the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University, Prague and teaches sociology and social psychology at the University of New York in Prague. She is co-author, with C. Born and H. Krüger, of *Der unentdeckte Wandel. Annäherung an das Verhältnis von Norm und Struktur im weiblichen Lebenslauf* (Berlin: Sigma, 1996) and has published on intergenerational relations and justice, and gender equality in the context of EU integration. She is currently expert evaluator in the project of establishing a ‘Central European Centre for Women and Youth in Science’, funded by the European Commission.

Jan Matonoha received a masters degree at Philosophical Faculty, Charles University, and since 2001 a postgraduate student at the Department of Czech Literature, Philosophical Faculty, Charles University. In his doctoral thesis he examines linkages between discourse, gender and textuality. Since 2003 he has been employed at the Institute for Czech Literature, Academy of Sciences CR, where he participates in a Literature as Text between Texts grant project funded by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic. He teaches at the Department of Czech Literature, Philosophical Faculty, Charles University, and at the Centre of Gender Studies at Faculty of Humanities, Charles University. He is currently on a twelve-month postgraduate study at the Department of Slavic Studies at the University of Glasgow.

Mariana Szapuová is Assistant Professor at the Department of Philosophy and History of Philosophy, Philosophical Faculty, Comenius University, Bratislava (Slovakia). She teaches feminist philosophy, epistemology and feminist science criticism, prepares and conducts courses on gender studies. She publishes on feminist philosophy and feminist epistemology. She is the President of the Club of Feminist Philosophers and a member of Gender Studies Centre at the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava. She has participated on many international programmes, workshops and conferences on gender issues and feminist theory.

Jiřina Šmejkalová is currently a Senior Lecturer in media communication at the University of Lincoln, UK and a Visiting Research Fellow of the Institute for Sociology of the Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic. Her major research interests include contemporary cultural and intellectual history of East and Central Europe and issues of gender with special reference to the transitional societies and cultures. She is a member of a number of professional organisations (AHA, SHARP) and a member of expert team of ERICArts, Bonn. She is a graduate of Charles University, held her postdoctoral ACLS fellowship at the University of California in Santa Cruz, and was a Fellow of Collegium Budapest and IFK in Vienna. She taught at the Charles University, Northwestern University, CEU in Budapest and the University of Durham. In addition to a number of articles in professional journals (Signs, Journal of Cultural Policy, Libraries and Cultures, Czech Sociological Review) her publications include *Kniha: K teorii a praxi knižní kultury* [The Book. Towards the Theory and Practice of Book Culture], Brno, Host, 2000.

Index of names

Index of names

Ahmed, Sara 81
 Bakhtin, Michail 107
 Benhabib, Seyla 28-29
 Bleier, Ruth 44
 Bleuler, Eugen 83
 Bordo, Susan 62-63
 Braidotti, Rosi 76, 81, 90
 Březina, Otokar 99-100, 105-106
 Butler, Judith 103
 Callaway, Helen 77
 Clifford, James 79, 107
 Code, Lorraine 76
 Collins, Patricia Hill 86, 89
 Darwin, Charles 44
 Derrida, Jacques 102-103, 109
 Daston, Lorraine 69-71
 Flax, Jane 76-77
 Foucault, Michel 27-28, 60
 Grosz, Elizabeth 27, 30-31, 60
 Harding, Jan 31
 Harding, Sandra 16, 30, 32-34, 49, 68, 76
 Haraway, Donna 29, 31, 33-35, 76, 81, 89-90
 Hartsock, Nancy 89
 hooks, bell 79
 Hubbard, Ruth 44
 Irigaray, Luce 30, 101-103
 Keller, Evelyn Fox 43
 Kristeva, Julie 107
 Kuhn, Thomas 27-28, 40
 Lepervanche, Marie de 27, 31
 Lloyd, Genevieve 46, 61
 Lyotard, Jean-François 29
 Mapplethorpe, Robert 82-86, 90
 Mercer, Kobena 77, 82-86, 90
 Mohanty, Chandra 79-81, 88, 90
 Nelson, Lynn H. 49, 51-52
 Probyn, Elspeth 80-81
 Rich, Adrienne 78, 86, 90
 Scott, Joan 98, 106-108
 Smith, Dorothy 30, 89
 Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty 86, 88, 103
 Tanesini, Alessandra 29, 49, 60
 Williams, Raymond 83

Index

- activity; masculine 31, 44
- aesthetic objectification of black body 83
- AIDS 82, 85
- allocation of research funds 32
- ambivalence 83-85
- androcentrism 27, 43, 49-51, 76
 - androcentric biases 43-44, 49, 51
- anti-feminism 106
- the Bible 101, 106
 - critique of 99, 104
- body 61-66, 78, 82, 102, 108
- Cartesian dualism 61, 63
- class 78, 85
- cognition 28, 33-34, 45, 51, 60, 62-67, 69-70
 - agent of 62-63
 - limits of cognition 65
 - situatedness of 33, 62, 65-66, 69
 - subject/object of 58
- communism 107
- community; scientific 13, 19, 21, 28, 35, 69-70
- crisis 29
 - social and economic 99
 - of humankind 103
 - of reason 58, 62
 - of representation 86
- cyborg 81
- data 48-49, 65, 68
 - evaluation of 32
 - interpretation of 43, 49, 66, 69
- deconstruction 12, 26, 29, 31, 35, 42
- desire 81-85, 87, 90
- dialogic epistemologies 77, 89-90
- diaspora 79
- différance 102
- dichotomous thinking 61
- discourse 12, 17, 26-30, 43, 65, 76, 86, 91, 103-105, 107
- dominance
 - of paradigm 27
 - male 12, 46, 51
- education 100, 106, 109
 - higher 16, 48
 - scientific 45, 77
- emotions 58-59, 62-66, 77, 83-84, 90, 105-106
- empiricism 63
 - feminist 10, 33, 51
 - post-positivist 76
- Enlightenment 40, 58
 - of humankind 102
 - of the soul 109
- episteme 27-29
- epistemology 59, 62, 71, 76
 - dialogic epistemologies 77, 89-90
 - epistemological anxiety 62
 - epistemological ideal 62
 - epistemological relativism 67
 - feminist epistemologies 41, 48, 51-52, 61, 71
 - transitive epistemologies 33
- essentialism 103-104
- Central Europe 77, 90, 98
- evolution 41, 44, 49
 - of science 45
- femininity 15, 46-47, 59, 101-104
 - construction of 100, 106, 110
- feminism; second wave of 41
 - American 106
 - Central and Eastern European 106
 - French 107
 - Western 106
- feminist reflection of science 41-43
 - liberal 43
 - radical 43
 - typology 43
- feminist standpoint theories 10, 17, 76-77, 87, 92
- feminist theology 104
- fetishism 83, 85
- Habsburg monarchy 98
- gay 83-84
- heterosexism 88
- impartiality 33, 47, 70

- inequality 90
 - gender 20, 44
 - legitimation of 44
 - social 78, 82
- language game 28-29
- language 11-12, 28, 35, 46-47, 49, 58, 79, 81, 98, 100-102
 - sexualised 47
- lesbian 78, 88
- location 27, 77-83, 85-87, 89, 91
 - individual 76
 - social 66-67, 76, 81, 88, 90
- marginalisation 18, 82
- masculinity 16, 46-47, 59, 61
- media 78, 106
- migration 79
- methodology 50-51
 - crisis of 60
 - feminist 76
- Minerva 98
- moral philosophy 70
- Moses 104
- neutrality 40, 42-43, 58
 - of values 58, 63
- object; observed 29-30
- objectivity 33-35, 43, 45, 47, 58, 60, 62-64, 66-70
 - ontological 70
 - non-perspectival 70-71
 - perspectival 71
 - strong 68-69, 71
- paradigm 26- 27, 62
 - scientific 31, 35
 - transformation of 33
- passivity; feminine 31, 44
- patriarchy 101
- perspective
 - masculine 32
 - partial 34-35, 67
 - plurality of 66
- philosophical tradition 40, 101-102
- politics
 - feminist 78, 108
 - of location 76-80, 85-88, 90
 - of marginality 85
 - of representation 77, 84, 90
- positionality 65, 71, 77, 80-81, 83, 85, 90
- positivism 63
- post-colonialism 79
- power relations 11, 77-80, 89
- prejudices 15-16, 18, 33, 43-45, 49, 51, 69, 77
- race 78, 83, 85-86
- racism 83-85
- rationality 16, 35, 40, 42-43, 45-46, 58-65, 69, 71
 - reason 40, 58-65
 - autonomy of 58, 62-64
 - crisis of 58
 - disinterested 49
 - dual 59
 - feminist critique of 59
 - masculinity of 46, 61
- reflexivity strong 68
- relativism 34, 65, 67-68
- religion 78
- representation 20, 29, 45-46, 66-67, 77, 82, 84-87, 90, 101
- self-reflexivity 35, 77, 87
- self-representation 87
- semiotics 65, 107
- sex differences 16, 44, 49, 51
- sexuality 46, 78, 82, 85-86
- supremacy white 86, 88
- situated knowledge 16, 34-35, 65-69, 71, 76
- situatedness
 - social 17, 33, 67, 69
- spectator 84
- standpoint theory 16, 33-34, 65-69, 71, 87-90
- stereotypes; racist 84-85
- structuralism 59, 107
- structure of feeling 83, 90
- subjectivity 34, 59, 64, 69
 - nomadic 81
- subversion 12, 87, 103
- symbolic order 65, 99-100, 103-104
- textuality 100
- unpaid housework 48
- World War I 99

