

CZIBERE, IBOLYA PHD

czibere.ibolya@arts.unideb.hu

assistant professor (University of Debrecen, Institute of Political Science and Sociology, Hungary)

“Even history has forgotten to write the story of women”¹

The way of women’s study to institutionalization



Abstract This study presents discourses and phenomena whose results have induced the examination of the history of women, eventually the need to discover the conflict and differences between women and men. All these have led to the methodology and examination of the differently developed identities. The institutionalization process of women’s studies has promoted the emergence of the concept of social gender; gender is also a methodology to examine the domination forms created by men and women, also to examine the differences between those forms. This methodology can be used for examining their forms of connection to power as well. The way of thinking in social genders has led to historical epistemology, that is, to that theory of knowledge, with which we can understand what formation can serve the survival of a given – the forms of genders – cultural form. The study analyses those phenomena that feminist history have ignored, because mainly women’s identity and their development have been examined; and those phenomena that have resulted in neglecting important issues, like: how women have determined their identity in regard of religion, race etc. At present, the discourse is in process along the so-called, ‘autonomy or integration’ debate, which debate is one of those important characteristics that form feminist studies; in fact, they only strive for recognition to elevate relevant feminist research into academic levels.

Keywords types of feminism, feminist historical science, women’s studies, social gender, women’s movements

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¹ Lajos Kiss’ quote (1966): Life of Poor People. Művelődés Nép Tudományos és Ismeretterjesztő Kiadó, Budapest, pg. 275

1 Discovering women for history – feminist aspirations in the tense of ‘unity and diversity’

Do women have history? This question originally emerged as the title of a volume edited by SCOTT (2001a) calling attention to the problems of disparities between men and women and between women and women, and also to the representation of these disparities. During its long history, feminism has been struggling with the controversial consequences of disparities that arise, on the one hand, from the fact that feminism denies the idea that women would form a group based on one common biological property. In their reasoning, anatomy does not mean fate, “our mind, soul and citizenship do not have gender”. On the other hand, they have started national and international political movements for the right to study and work, for the right to vote, and for the right to reproduction claiming that ‘something’ connects them, and not only the common experiences of exclusion determine women but the similar social and psychological ‘feminine’ characteristics as well. The feminists’ effort to discover women for history reaches far and it is a complex and controversial process. The mystery of parity-disparity creates a tension that the feminists have been facing for a long time when they claim equality with men. Historians who have aimed to improve women’s situation have searched the past for centuries to find model personalities depending on age and purpose, for example, women scientists, women writers, women artists, women politicians. They have collected stories that can refute the theories about the incapability of women declared in descriptive literature or law books. “When the argument was about education, feminists presented excellent examples to prove that learning did not distort femininity and – more radically – gender has nothing to do with how the brain works. When women demanded civil rights during the democratic revolution in the 18th century, they pointed out women with political abilities like queens or Jeanne d’Arc stating: they should not be deprived from political rights because of their gender.” (SCOTT 2001a, 11.)



Could be there a general, common identity for women if their life conditions and meaning of deeds are fundamentally different from the similar features of the modern women? Feminist history and history of feminism focus on such unanswered questions, as whether the group of women is a unique or radically complex category, whether women belong to a social category that existed before history or it is created by history. The politics of feminism turns to ‘women’ and act in the name of them as if they formed a permanent and easily distinguishable social group, as they should be compacted into one coherent political movement. Thereby, feminism’s history is the decrease of differences (class, race, gender ethnicity, political religion and socio-economic status) in order to form a common female identity (usually against male domination). As long as feminist history serves the political objectives of feminism, it takes part in the creation of this essential, common female identity. However, feminist history analyses the conditions that create or do not create common female identity in a way: it examines the different environments women lived in - and their effects, and whether women accepted or refused those behavioural rules that societies set up. The results of the examinations showed fundamental differences between the identity attributed to women and identity recognised by women. These identities change over time and are different in every society; moreover, they change in the case of the same woman depending on the environment. The extremely great historical and cultural differences between women apparently make it impossible that history should treat this social group as a homoge-

neous group, even the differences have a history that can be examined. These differences are created in a specific environment, and “(...) the differences create such relations that are usually hierarchical in the groups, and make it possible to ignore complexity, contradiction and inner inequalities. How and to what extent the differences work (with multiple references and metaphorical associations) is a question that can be only answered in each example.” (Scott, 2001a. 9.). In this sense, the history of women does not mean the examination of oppression or heroism, it rather means the exploration of how the gender differences were used for different social and political legitimations and for the formulation and rejection of different social norms. In agreement with Scott’s view, the research should not aim to eliminate differences but to discover and understand them. The feminist history has considered women to be an existing social category before history; nevertheless, it has also proved that the existence of this social category changed along with history. “We are to realize that if we write women into history, it would necessarily bring about the re-definition and expansion of traditional definitions with historical importance, as well as the framework of personal and subjective experience, public and political activities. It is not an exaggeration to say that despite the uncertain initial steps, this methodology re-writes not only women’s history but history itself.” (GORDON-BUBLE-SHROM DYE 1976. 89.).

In the 60’s, historians who researched women aimed not only to demonstrate women’s presence in the events that formed history but also to find proof that women took active part in these events. According to them, if women’s subordination was assured by their invisibility, then historians can stimulate emancipatory processes with works on social struggles and political achievements that make women visible. By exploring stories about women’s activity, these historians not only presented new information but also created a new point of view and approach regarding what we consider history. “When the question arose, why these facts were ignored and how these can be understood today, history became more than fact-finding. Since the new approach to history depends on the historians’ point of view and the question they raise, the process of making women visible was no longer a simple search for new facts. Rather, it became the exposure of such new interpretations which not only offered new understandings of politics, but that of the changing significance of family and gender.” (SCOTT 2001a. 13.). With all these, historians provided empirical evidence for the persisting differences between women thus refuting feminism’s right of a requisite for the homogeneous female unity. Therefore, the history of feminist movements can be mainly interpreted in the context of the tension between unity and diversity. This conflict is exemplified by the documented feminist conference held in France at the beginning of the 20th century, which was deeply divided by the class issue. The debate broke out because a proposal was submitted that demanded a day-off for maids; it was rejected on the ground that the maids would work as prostitutes in their free time. As a result, socialist accused feminists that they only stood for middle-class women. Those who considered women as a homogeneous group and feminism as the movement of every women responded, that since there were no two female genders, there could not be a bourgeois and a socialist feminism at the same time. Here the issue arose that solidarity might never be established between women belonging to different classes.

However, the feminist movements of the second half of the 20th century organised their debates and clarified their messages along diversity, that is, they recognised the problem of class differences. A good example was shown for this, when in the USA, Afro-American women took up using the term ‘coloured women’ at the end of the 1970s to emphasise that feminism was so obviously “white”. They claimed that race cannot be separate when it comes to interpreting female

experience, therefore, irreconcilable differences exist between white and non-white women, their different needs and interest make establishing a common program impossible. To illustrate this, Scott presented a speech made by an African-American poetess in a conference in New York in 1979: 'If white America's feminist theory does not have to deal with the differences between us and the differences in oppression resulting from it; then how you would deal with the fact that those women who clean your houses and take care of your children while you are taking part in a conference about feminist theory are mostly poor and coloured people. What theory is behind racist feminism?' (SCOTT 2001a. 17.). By the end of the 20th century, the approaches to diversity became an important analytical category of feminism, which provides a new type of interpretation framework since it interprets the differences and different identities between women in relation to certain circumstances and history. As seen before, the history of women is one of those topics that history has recognised since the 1970s. This short period can be divided into 3 phases and cognitive models (PETŐ 2001). The compensation phase or separation school advocated the writing of 'her story' instead of 'his story' and fought for women's visibility and that history would ever bear women in mind. In this regard, it was time to change Virginia Wolf's famous statement ("For most of history, Anonymous was a woman"). Works appeared in this phase that dealt with the biography of famous women. It was easy to research these women – successful in men's world too –, since there was a relatively rich source of material available. Pető includes those topics in this phase that deal with the history of women's institutes, women's education and their right to vote, furthermore, works dealing with women's employment, world of paid work and being at home, or issues of family and reproduction. The criticism of this conception is rooted in "that any personality or historical deed becomes positive and significant because of being a woman or done by a woman" (PETŐ 2001. 43.). The second phase is the so-called contribution school that examines women within sociohistory as a separate social group and it uses the methodology of sociohistorical schools like sociology and ethnography. Its significance is that it focuses on a particular social group within sociohistory. These two schools led to the institutionalization of women's studies. By the beginning of the 1980s (third phase), the term, social gender emerges, which is also a methodology to examine the forms of domination created by men and women, what differences determine these, and how they relate to power.

2 "The best that has happened to women in science is the birth of women's studies"²

2.1 Social genders in public discourses

The beginning of the conceptual etymology of gender relates to de Beauvoir who first separated analytical and political use of biological and social gender in his work with his famous statement (one is not born to be a woman, but becomes one) (BEAUVIOR 1969). The primary aim of the gender concept was to question the validity of those theoretical explanations that traced inequalities between genders back to nature, that is, to biology and consequently considering them unchangeable, fatal and deterministic. The differentiation based on gender is a universal phenomenon just like the labour division between genders, yet determining the content of

² Shulamith Reinharz's thoughts. In "It is important to have our own home" – Andrea Pető talks about women's studies with Professor Shulamith Reinharz. Saturday 22 November 2014

divided tasks differs in each culture (Magyari-Vincze quotes OAKLEY 2006). The emergence of this concept was a great step in terms of the development of paradigms that critically analysed women's disadvantageous positions and subordinated status. "But why did not the sense of gender mutuality arise? Why does one member of this relationship consider himself absolute essential rejecting every kind of comparison to his correlation and determining that otherness as a very different being? Why do not women doubt the sovereignty of men? None of the subjects considers themselves inherently or spontaneously unimportant; One is not determined by Other by supposing itself to be the Other, it is just the opposite: One determines it as the Other by supposing itself to be One. In order to avoid reversal from Other to One, it is necessary for the subject to be subordinated to this unknown point of view. "But how come that the woman is willing to get subordinated?" (BEAUVIOR 1969. 13.). This question was formulated in this from in 1949. The duality of genders, as every duality, had generated significant conflicts by that time and these conflicts caused significant changes in the public awareness in the first half of the 20th century. Beauvoir illustrated this with Bernard Shaw's well-known saying: "The white American who has doomed Negros to clean shoes comes to the conclusion that these people are not suitable for anything else.". Beauvoir claims that this creates a regularity, when a person or group of people are kept in inferiority, eventually that person becomes inferior indeed. The relevant question arose whether it should stay this way. In America, in the 1940s, most men considered women's emancipation as a threat to men's morals and interests. Some men were afraid of female rivals as a statement published in one of the contemporary newspapers proved it. A university student claimed, "every female university student, who is going to be a doctor or lawyer, steals a place from men" (Beauvoir, 1969). It is nothing more than men's unwavering belief in their prerogatives. Nonetheless, the idea already arose that the process of emancipation might damage not only economic interests. In general, one aspect of oppression is that the oppressor benefits from oppression so that even the most miserable can feel themselves superior. As de Beauvoir said in this example: in the southern states of the USA "a poor white" could be consoled by at least not being a "dirty nigger", while the rich whites could exploit this kind of pride of the poor; similarly, in this period resulting from oppression "even the most middling man could imagine himself as a semi-god compared to women". Still, in the 1940s in America, most men did not enforce their social advantages openly. They did not claim clearly that women would be inferior since democracy permeated them more than questioning the theory that every human being was equal. At the same time however, while men treat women with benevolence and assume same interest, they claim the principle of abstract equality, yet they do not acknowledge detailed equality in practice. Therefore, as soon as men are in conflict the situation changes, men thematise practical inequality and formulate a rule to reject theoretical equality. Certain situations prove this, for example, when a man claims that his wife is worth no less just because she has no job or does not work, since housework is just as important as any other job. Yet, when they start quarrelling, the first thing the man cries out is "you would starve to death without me!". In other words, a situation emerges wherein most men honestly proclaim equality between men and women, as well as state that women have not a thing to demand, claiming simultaneously that women can never be equal with men and women futilely demand that. One of Judith Butler's thoughts may explain this phenomenon (1990): "the relationship between masculine and feminine cannot be represented in a marker economic system, in which the masculine represents the closed circle of marker and marked. Fairly controversially, de Beauvoir foresaw it coming in her work of 'The Second Sex' when she argued that men cannot settle the issue of women since they would have to play both roles of judge and litigant" (BUTLER 2006. 55.)

2.2 *The social gender in academic discourse*

“According to feminist science interpretation, science and scientific observations have been established on an ideological (sexist) basis that were previously assumed as objective and accepted. Scientific statements are based on one-sided observations, and draw conclusions and generalize over the whole society as well as explanations for power relations, only based on men’s experience. This ideology has permeated everything and it is present everywhere, ensuring more advantageous positions for men, while ignoring the real values, needs and skills of women. The male-dominated research has distorted reality. They have not accepted problems relating to women authentically as women have been considered emotion-controlled. Only men can be the bearers of real creation and knowledge who are capable of independence and objectivity.” (THUN 1996. 410.). The category of social gender is such an organizing principle that determines the genders’ relations to each other and to the world as well as to their environment too. Moreover, in Thun’s opinion, this is the organizing principle of a particular culture in terms of what power, scope of action and privileges it guarantees to the individual through the determination of social institutions. She regards knowledge and science to be such power factors and privileges, and she considers social determination of knowledge as well as the politics of knowledge and the idealistic nature of it - as basic issues of feminist research. Feminist research places women into the focus of research, just as it examines power relations from the point of view of the subordinated and oppressed; meanwhile it analyses the gender order of a role in the reproduction of social inequalities, which structures situations and experience on individual level (MAGYARI-VINCZE 2006). The research of social gender draws the attention to two things. The first, ‘gender’ is a central category structuring social inequalities, which determines chances for life and the range of available social positions, that is, the relationship of genders has a hierarchical nature on a social level (BELINSZKI 2003). The second is that the relationship between social gender and biological gender is complex; therefore, it is impossible and misleading to identify biological differences with different social behaviours, or to trace inequalities to biological roots. Consequently, the social gender can also mean that information about women is the information about men as well; examining one of the genders includes the examination of the other. It rejects the idea of considering spheres separate as means of interpretation, maintaining the idea that separated examination of women would perpetuate the myth that experience of one gender does not or only marginally relates to the experience of the other gender. The term of social gender also denotes the social relationships between the genders. Its usage openly rejects biological explanations such as the one that finds a common ground in the different forms of women’s inferiority by that, that women are able to give birth and men have greater physical power. Instead, gender becomes the indicator of cultural construction – the indicator of such socially created theories that designate the proper female and male roles. Thus, it appears that the subjective identity of women and men has only a social origin.

The social practice of critical-theoretical basis of gender-specific differentiation comprises moral-philosophical core values such as equality and justice, as well as the demand for the enforcement of universal human rights and moral rights. Accordingly, the presence and extent of discrimination against women in every sphere of life – including private life – are examined, wherever the existence of male-female relationship makes it necessary. Academic disciplines (like gender-oriented sociology, science of economics, law, philosophy and ethics, political philosophy, literature, neuroscience, psychology, linguistics, pedagogy, history, anthropology etc.) that examine and criticize relationships between genders are formed in accordance with the field of manifestation, types and tools of gender discrimination.

The formation of feminist research is the part of a widely interpretable, critical socio-scientific theory (THUN 1996). It primarily raised questions from the perspective of power, economic situation, and how it embedded into historical background, then it deducted the conclusion that power relations and ideologies -ubiquitous in the whole society - prevail the same way in the scientific research like in any other social medium. According to Thun, this view challenged the status quo that so strongly permeated the world of science promoting the epistemological breakthrough that was later unfolded by postmodernism.

2.3 Women's studies, gender studies – in higher education

Women's movements initiated significant changes in institutions of higher education as well, with a continuously increasing influence on the public life in universities. Women's studies was created in the American and Western European universities in the 1970s and 1980s, and later social gender studies was established, whose departments and research centres emerged as the result of a unique development process. The feminine scientific approach arrived in higher education from outside. In reaction to civil movements, feminist-minded professors and students criticized the content and methods of education at universities, emphasizing that higher education was an exceptionally influential intermediary and conservator of the patriarchal establishment by interpreting and representing science unilaterally and exclusively. The emergence and spread of women's studies in universities and different researches took place in cascading phases of development. In the first phase – the so-called 'science without women' –, women were basically excluded from both the subject and practice of science. In the second phase – the so-called 'add women and shake them together' – women appeared as the subject of the scientific analysis. This had great importance because women stepped out of invisibility and became the subject of scientific researches with the help of being the subject; nevertheless, the statements and methods of researches still reflected male bias. In the third phase, women appeared as part of the problems concerned or as a kind of subordinate group. In this phase, the emphasis was on finding and analysing the obstacles limiting women's and ethnic groups' scope of motion in a society that was fundamentally and palpably characterized by the general and systematical discrimination of women embedded in a historical perspective. All three phases lack an essential change of attitude that would investigate society or scientific phenomena through women's experiences (THUN 1996). That is why, the fourth phase is important, which finally "interprets women within their own system of interpretation, starting from their own experiences and using their own concepts." This is the phase when being a woman and experiencing as a woman are in all respects considered values as well as authentic. Women's studies as an official scientific field developed in the USA and Great Britain in the 1960s and, as seen before, the concept of social gender became its central organizing principle. Experiences and thinking of women that developed during history became the subject of women's studies, which is necessary to correct the distorted androcentric interpretations of human behaviour, culture and society. Through this, women's studies refuses the rigidity of traditional categories and labels, while it insists on the flexibility of interdisciplinary approach.

The University of California in San Diego launched the first officially recognized program of women's studies in 1970. In Europe, women's studies first appeared in the western countries in 1970s as part of the woman's rights movement. In university courses, the disciplines hosting women's studies were sociology, history and literature. Today, women's studies is widespread everywhere in a broader sense within humanities and natural sciences. Examining the ins-

titutionalization process of women's studies in Europe, four phases of development can be distinguished. In the first phase – the so-called activist –, women's studies are embedded in the facultative subjects of a key science. In the second phase, women studies is an independent discipline, wherein universities offer general and thematic courses, which brings forth a sort of interdisciplinary-coordinated course. The third phase is dedicated to becoming more professional when an independent teaching faculty and departmental staff are appointed and postgraduate courses are launched. In the fourth phase, the phase of autonomy, women's studies is a recognized field of science with the same level of autonomy, same financial background and the same degree-granting accreditation like the faculty of any other field of science. SILIUS states that (2003), the institutionalization of women's studies is the most difficult where "typically, structures are rigidly fragmented to fit certain fields of science, where the level of university autonomy is low, and where a severe political opposition towards woman rights movements exists. (...) The modular structure of different university degrees, the possibility of interdisciplinary approach, as well as the doctrinal and financial support of state feminism (politicians of equality and/or female politicians) facilitate the institutionalization of women's studies" (SILIUS 2003. 61.). The institutionalization of women's studies has not yet been fully accomplished in any country, only a few countries have an independent faculty led by a women's studies professor. Remarkably, women's studies is probably the only subject in higher education that has been institutionalized entirely by women – female academicians have fought for the development of the subject, feminist female researchers have launched the first courses and women have fought for the discipline to be accepted by universities. In Katalin Koncz's summary, women's studies is "(...) the feminist science of describing-analysing women's situation. In an approach of science history, it is a stage in the organization of disciplines of a feminist perspective into an interdisciplinary science. Many consider sciences and arts cultivated by women as parts of women's studies because they contain concepts about the world formed by women. The subject of its examinations is the female gender, although it eventually collides with men, in every question during its analysis. (...) Although women's studies is aware of this, it 'only' focuses on understanding the female gender's status and only includes men in its examinations as a basis for comparison. Thus, it tries to pay back those debts of science, which make the process of scientific understanding more complete by unfolding women's actual status and mapping the reasons for their discrimination" (KONCZ 2005. 126.). The experience of developed countries shows that the institutionalization of gender studies provides a number of advantages on one hand, as material resources get allocated for financing, and a considerable infrastructure (courses, specializations, professorship, and so on) gets built around it. On the other hand, its development has taken a path which has closed it up," meaning that researchers of this topic have remained among themselves. They discuss their research results in isolation in the women's section of conferences, they publish one for the other in their own professional journals, and consequently, the published information hardly finds its way to a wider audience. On one hand, this means the construction of a narrow scientific perspective; on the other hand, it carries the political risk of giving an impression of an interest representation embedded in science, or in other words, researches dealing with women or social genders are easily accused of misandry, especially if aimed at examining and proving social inequalities. All this has been formulated along the 'autonomy or integration?' debate, which is one of the most important characteristics that form feminist studies, and its most vital goal is to actually gain recognition for feminist researches amongst academic societies. Integration strategy aims to introduce women's point of view and the perspective of relations between genders to every

discipline and academic program, in a way that it highlights sensitivity towards differences and inequalities between genders and highlights gender awareness during the discussion of every social problem. Still, the arguments raised against integration are warning that feminist research will or may lose its radical potential due to its integration into a conservative institution. That is why, autonomist strategy is more desirable which attempts to create independent programs. This is none other than the strategy of establishing a new type of discipline and academic structure, which questions the traditional establishment of universities. The main arguments put forward against autonomy point out the dangers and negative consequences of ghettoization and the stigmatization of committing misandry.

2.4 Research methods and epistemology of women's studies

Feminist theories and research methods have endeavoured to deconstruct the previously uniform social category of 'the woman'. In consequence, a revolutionary conclusion have been reached – which therefore causes a lot of controversy – that states "one can reach more realistic knowledge and describe reality more precisely if one examines women's cultural and social statuses in a way, that as a starting point, one assumes that there are differences between women and so there is heterogeneity. We only get a real image of ourselves if we examine the roots of these differences together with the consequences in the cross section of different social definitions. Women's studies claim to have great importance of coefficient consequences rooted in gender affiliation and in belonging to an ethnic or social group" (THUN 2002. 2.). Different theories have emerged over the years connected to gender-based research methods. HARDING (1987) assumes that these should be investigated on three levels, from three viewpoints: research methods, research methodology, and epistemological questions. One determinative idea for researches highlighted the perceived experiences of women, and the most appropriate ways for that are the so-called qualitative methods. The criticism of this approach articulates the importance of quantitative methods (among others), because through quantitative methods, information and data expressing the social occurrence and distribution of an examined problem can be exposed to show its importance. According to these arguments, statistics often have a greater convincing power than narratives that investigate reports. The third approach assumes that the combined application of the two methods is the most efficient.

A significant issue in the methodology of gender-based researches is how to formulate our questions, how to use our methods and how to use the results of our research. Researches of this kind usually ask questions in connection to women and the hierarchical relationship between genders, and the questions are drawn from real life and examined from the subordinate's perspective. However, such a research may not necessarily intend to make theories, but instead to draw attention to social problems connected to the investigated phenomena, to react and suggest solutions to them. It is essential that the created knowledge should have a direct social benefit, it should bring a change into people's lives through pointing out, for example, how hierarchical relationships could be turned into partnerships, how social exclusion or gender-based (and other kind of) discrimination could be eliminated. HARDING (1987) analyses three major gender-based epistemological branches: the empirical, the standpoint, the postmodern feminist epistemologies. According to her statements, the empirical branch developed during the period when the question of how to create their legitimacy among sciences stood in the centre of feminist researches. Among their principles, she mentions the pursuit of objectivity, neutral

data acquisition and showing the truth from women's point of view. The attitude according to which feminists can describe women's experiences better just because they experience the same events was called a naive concept by Harding. Perspective epistemology sets the Hegelian explanation in the centre, which claims that scientists and researchers dealing with women in subordinate situations are capable of identifying the problems because they achieve it from a privileged situation in some respect. This situation is the perspective of the subordinate subject, who, due to their situation, has a clearer view on reality than the one in superordinate position, and therefore not interested in changing the status quo or in recognizing the injustices of the world. Harding's third group is dedicated to postmodern epistemologies. This school eradicates the objectivist idea of scientism in the way of questioning the possibility of a universal, the existence of absolute truth, and explains that feminist knowledge is just another one of reality's possible representations. As a result of all this, a question (later answered by HARAWAY 1991) arises: the question of why the feminist knowledge would be any better, any more valid or any more legitimate than any non-feminist or even masculine knowledge about the same topic (e.g. considering relationships between genders). HARAWAY (1991) starts her argument with stating that the dichotomy between objectivism and subjectivism should be resolved. Because, she believes that the fact that we always perceive reality from a certain position or, in other words, subjectively does not necessarily mean that we could not be objective as well; therefore we may be capable of arranging our knowledge in relation to all other kinds of knowledge. In addition to these, the contrast of relativism and absolutism should also be resolved because we do not build our knowledge on the approach of one or the other; instead, we always produce partial, localized knowledge. Haraway's opinion therefore is none other than the epistemology of partial perspectives that reinterprets both subjectivity and objectivity, defining this latter clearly as the only possible localized knowledge, which is responsible and at the same time accountable compared to the principles that it clearly expresses and raises awareness for them. Many people say that this type of epistemology combines the immobility of scientism with the social responsibility for the generated knowledge most effectively.

Summary

Overall, research results employing feminist epistemology have created woman-based science. The thesis of the determining role of gender affiliation has entered the organizing principles of science from the point of view of both researcher and researched. As THUN (2002) summarizes it, “(...) women's and gender studies has performed three 'great tasks' during the past twenty years.

a) It has corrected the fact-findings of social sciences, humanities, even natural sciences to some extent, also corrected theories about 'the human being': it integrated women's knowledge about themselves and the world as a part of scientific discipline. b) It has done enormous exploratory work, created a system of new data sources about women's role and status in culture and society – as a result of historical and comparative researches. c) It has created a new scientific paradigm, a new framework for interpretation and reference. Thereby, it has modified and creatively improved the scientific thinking in structure as well as in content. It has not only expanded traditional, 'masculine' science, but pulled down its rigid framework and intended to recreate it in a polyphonic way, that is: to integrate and broadcast the values accumulated by gender and

women's studies to other fields of science through interdisciplinarity" (THUN 2002. 3.). Studies about women legitimize certain dialogue methods about women and relationships between genders, and they increase women's chances to live in a society that considers gender equality discourse and practice as natural and normal. According to SCOTT (2001), the phrase 'social gender' is a synonym for the word 'woman' in its simplest usage. In some cases this wording, although it only faintly refers to certain analytic terms, in fact marks the acceptability of this field of science from a political perspective. In this case, the usage of the phrase social gender serves as an indication of the scientific basis for a work, because social gender is more neutral and objective than 'women'. "Social gender is easier to insert into scientific terminology, thus it becomes separated from the feminist policy often believed to be shrill. What is more, it does not carry the inevitable declarations of inequality and authority, and it does not specify the offended party. The usage of the phrase social gender signifies a phase that can be formulated as the period of the feminist science seeking for its rightful academic place in the 1980s." (SCOTT 2001. 130.) *

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