INVENTING ENLIGHTENMENT'S GENDER.
The representation of modernity in dispute.

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Francisco de Goya, Caprichos 6 (1799)
Nadie se conoce / Nobody knows anybody
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door
Judith Anna Vega
geboren te Amsterdam in 1956
I dedicate this book to my father, Abraham Vega. He has never known how many motives of my life have been designed by him. They concern love as well as knowledge. His murdered family and friends have lived on in my memory. Trying to fathom their suffering and what caused it taught me sensitivity to the language of power and the power of language.
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Introduction.

In the philosophical and cultural controversy between modernity and postmodernism one often gets the feeling that 'modernity' is being reduced to an implausible simplicity. This book is an attempt to counter that reductionism and the resulting opposition. It does so with feminist motives. Feminist philosophy has become divided against itself along lines which may be misbegotten from the view of its proper concerns. Instead of having feminism drawn into either of the 'grand narratives', I will employ its proper well-tried strategy of re-interpreting and replenishing the canon of texts involved. The Enlightenment has been made to pose as providing the foundations of modern thought and hence is subject of my study of what exactly is being 'invented' under this title.

In this book, feminist scholarship on Enlightenment thought is reviewed, and placed within the context of the debates on modernity versus postmodernity. I propose some novel conceptual perspectives from which to understand Enlightenment's wrestling with the problem of gender. The result is a history of discourses, rather than a history of ideas. The entanglement of 'modern women' in modern politics, society, and aesthetics is described, and various configurations of the modern representation of gender, and the representation of gender in modernity, result. In the first chapter several theoretical issues that arise in interpreting the Enlightenment from a feminist perspective are addressed. Most of these relate to two questions: first, how to make relevant for feminist concerns the notion that we narrate, not find, history, and second, how to grasp the vital motives of critique pertaining to the project of Enlightenment. The chapter concludes with reflections on a notion of feminist politics which does not simply duplicate the identity politics ensuing from modernity's powerful domain of the 'social'. The subsequent chapters are essays on respectively natural rights theory and in particular Thomas Hobbes; Enlightenment's salons and art idioms; eighteenth century civic humanism; David Hume as the founding father of the Scottish Enlightenment; and finally Immanuel Kant.

The novel conceptual perspectives proposed allow for arguing that in many instances, so-called 'postmodern' themes show up in the texts of the Enlightenment. I will focus on concepts which from postmodern views are not usually associated with the Enlightenment, like irony, contingency, and style, as well as representation in constructionist, not just depictional sense and from nominalist, not just realist concerns. The essays address diverse ranges of thought and various lines of argument, but eventually are principally concerned with reflecting on issues relevant to a feminist political philosophy. 'The Enlightenment' turns out to offer astute reflections on such issues, and sometimes where they are probably least expected, as with Hobbes, republicanism, and Kant. Enlightenment thinkers were hardly oblivious to the notion that the personal is political. This study, then, turns against reductionist depictions of 'the' Enlightenment as a discourse of foundationalist epistemology, dualist codes, abstract universalism and rationalism, and narrowly conceived of identity politics - representations which appear merely to serve heroic counter-assertions. This study invites reactivating the motives of criticism pertaining to
Enlightenment thought, while granting the rightness of several critical motives guiding postmodern philosophy. It is a philosophical inquiry into a 'contingently determined' problematic of modern gender, in which irony rather than dualism characterizes knowledges about gender, and in the face of which a feminist conception of politics is to counteract the defining powers of 'the social' with respect to identity and knowledge.
Chapter I. Inventing Enlightenment.

1.1 Inventing Enlightenment, or: forward to the past.

The concept of modernity pervades present-day philosophical debate, referring to a complex problematics with aesthetical, ethical, political, and epistemological dimensions. The concept could gather several contestants courting or ridiculing it, even if, as has been often remarked, it has no one point of reference, nor one single meaning. Its intriguing lack of identity may be the very reason for capturing such a large amount of attention. Employing it may involve a descriptive or a critical intention. It may denote the description of a historical period, an attitude toward ethics or toward aesthetical production, a certain socio-political order, an epistemological paradigm, or a cultural diagnosis of present or past times - an indeterminacy which it shares with its counterterm: postmodernity.¹ Modernity, as we have come to know and use it in academic argument, has been constructed and given meaning through a large quantity of readings of the assumed 'founding texts' of modernity. In these constructions, 'modernity' and 'Enlightenment' are virtually synonymous terms. Although it usually is assumed that 'the Enlightenment' provides the parameters of what we know as 'modernity', the Enlightenment, of course, consists of largely diverging bodies of texts, which in turn have received diverging interpretations. Having the Enlightenment pose as modernity merely begs the question.²

Apart from a problematical choice of period, text, and interpretation, we are not even sure what systematic structure of meaning we are looking for. While there is no clear textual point of reference for 'modernity', neither is it clear what it should mean 'to be modern', to have a modern attitude or a modern identity. Again, 'to be modern' may indicate a set of values, a date of birth after 1700, a rational personality structure or - quite contrary - one which continually faces disintegration, or simply an attitude towards whatever counts as 'past'. In formal, as well as substantial respects, 'modern identity' is unlikely to offer anything but retreating horizons. When modernity is not to be 'found', it is, apparently, being invented, over and over. Let's inject gender here. A tenacious question keeps turning up among authors on modernity: how does 'modernity' relate to 'women'? Modernity is anything but indifferent to gender. In modernity, and to further modernity, a lot has been written about gender, and more specifically about women. There is, moreover, hardly a modern discourse from which gender is absent. Reading the texts from the

¹ For discussions that explicitly address definition problems with regard to the concept of modernity, see e.g.: Williams 1987; Habermas 1980, 1981a, 1985b.

² Still more unsettling, the eighteenth century might be qualified, as Stephen Toulmin (1992) does, as the period in which the 'scaffolding' of modernity was broken down - not erected. He thus disqualifies even the minimalistic identification of modernity as having been started off in this historical period.
canon of Enlightenment philosophy, one cannot escape noticing that a desire for 'modern women' has pervaded and steered philosophical and other cultural discourses from the seventeenth century onwards.

One might say that in the very juxtaposition of the words 'modern woman', the aporia of modernity is revealed. To be 'a modern woman' apparently signifies something quite different from merely being a modern human being: the phrase somehow suggests an extra qualification besides living in modern times, or/and according to modern precepts. The 'modern woman' was and is an indetermined subject. She stands for something, but hardly in a descriptive way. Hence the experience that 'to be a modern woman' may function as a regulative (though virtually empty) ideal for thought and action, as well as a guarantee for total confusion as to principles and goals, and for conflicting feelings and actions. One handle on understanding the disturbing way women 'stand for' in modern philosophy is found in feminist histories of modern thought. Several studies in this field show that modern philosophy is not realistic when it comes to representing women. Feminist historical interpretations have argued that 'woman' in modernity has drifted away from 'iconic' to 'symbolic' representation, or has increasingly been represented in tropical language. There is a second circumstance, partly connected with the former, which may further explain the confusion: modern philosophy's remarks on women, or more generally on gender, are mostly scattered over all kinds of discussions - which has provided the very reason for the widespread practice not to judge these remarks as seriously influencing the bodies of thought students of philosophy have to study. These combined factors of symbolic or tropical representation and scattered, piecemeal knowledge cause to conclude that to talk about women implies problematics far beyond those of female identity in a narrow sense. Studying gender in modernity's texts one is left with the impression that from them, rather than an 'identity politics', a disparate ensemble of remarks touching on the issue of gender transpires. The modern woman is not so much 'found' - e.g. as equal or different with respect to 'man' - as 'evoked': conjured up in discussions not so much directly about her, but about contiguous subjects of modernity. The 'modern woman' is hard to catch, for she mainly appears in the traces of other problematics. Although most feminist judgements on modern philosophy claim otherwise, neither woman's identity nor her absence seem to characterize modern thought: instead we may say that she is metonymically discussed. All sorts of key terms which in early modernity were used to design contexts, social homes, for the modern subject - like sociability, sentimentality, rationality, civil society, etc. - turned out to be as many invitations to discuss gender.

The present study can be described as a search for the philosophical genealogy of this 'modern woman'. That is, I do not aim to identify her more truthfully, but to trace the manifold

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3 See e.g. Landes 1988 and 1992, Riley 1988, Young-Bruehl 1989, Geyer-Ryan 1993, Buci-Glucksmann 1994. A brief elucidation of my specific use of the concepts: in 'iconic' representations of women the reference to empirical female subjectivities may be contested but is not itself relinquished, while in 'symbolic' representations this very referential labour is not in order.
proposals modern philosophies bothered to make about her. I will explore political, social and aesthetical dimensions of the interplay between modernity and gender. These dimensions have generated specific discourses on the representation of women. The broad subject of this study, then, is the conjoint representation of modernity and gender, in Enlightenment as well as present-day texts. This poses a simultaneously historical and systematical problematic, in which modernity, gender, and representation are the key-concepts. It presents us with a polylogue of authors 'then' and 'now', with authors as well as readers unsure whether their texts reflect or construct their subjects.

To inquire after the relationship between 'modernity' and 'women' leads one to methodological problems of establishing meaning: how and where should we look to find the 'modern moments' in the history of women? In this first chapter I want to survey several methodological issues which arise when pretending to feminist renderings of modernity.

In undertaking the search for the philosophical genealogy of 'modern woman', this study will stumble into several of the traps sketched above - like assuming certain texts of a certain era to represent fragments of her story. I do take the period of the Enlightenment to introduce the problematic of modernity; I do assume certain writers to represent this problematic. The traps are there, set by a historiography which claimed the Enlightenment as starting modernity, and by the texts of a canon of philosophy which, in existing in academy for two hundred years, has structured our thinking on, and knowledge intuitions of modern wo/men. (Which, by the way, will not prevent me from occasionally tresspassing against the conventions of the canon.) However, this study does not claim a more accurate location of the meanings of modernity in time or text, through the study of gender. It joins in the debate with a contrary aim. It is to deny that the semiotic field surrounding the word 'modernity' in present debates - feminist and non-feminist - springs naturally from its supposed origin in Enlightenment texts. The sources have no power of expression but through their representations. This simple insight urges, as 'original stories' about modern women (or modern genders) have been construed from the texts of early modernity, or the Enlightenment, to keep rekindling the narrative activity around these sources. This type of return to the sources, however, is meant to intervene in, not contribute to, the current reification of 'modernity': the awe for its founding force with respect to current thought and life.

The study of 'modern' ideas on gender invites us, using the happy formulation of William Connolly (1974), to activate the 'contestability' of the concept 'modern'. Although there have been feminist contestations of the concept of modernity, what is contested mostly is not the concept, but its valuation. While in most of the usual epistemological, historiographic, or normative evaluations of the term the latent associations the concept calls up are left intact (like foundationalist epistemology, ethical universalism, abstract rationalism, identity politics), there has been a lot of
disagreement on how to value them. Feminist theory has in fact shared several assumptions with received academic opinion on modernity. The emancipatory meaning and value of modernity have been contended in feminist and non-feminist comments alike. The tenor of the feminist ones may be emancipatory in an 'Enlightenment' sense, drawing on so-called 'Enlightenment values' as human-identification, equality, rights, and rationality; it may be 'emancipatory' in an 'anti-Enlightenment' sense, drawing on so-called 'anti-Enlightenment values' as woman-identification, difference, care, and emotion; and third, it may be postmodern in an 'anti-Enlightenment' sense, proposing presumed anti-Enlightenment concepts like anti-humanism, deconstruction, locality, irony, and style, and relinquishing notions of a progressive emancipation. Different as they may be, these positions tend to have one assumption in common: the identity of 'Enlightenment'. I propose to keep on our agenda a question which Kant has formulated: "What is Enlightenment?". Enlightenment is pervasively presented as a historical fact determining philosophical discussions and limiting actual post-Enlightenment life. Even postmodern philosophy behaves, in spite of itself, as if Enlightenment is some empirical fact, to be attacked as it stands with the oppositional paradigm of a discursive New World: an oppositional, post-modern position that has no repercussions for the past as we found it. In the discourse of the open endings, of the end of finality and closure, we seem to be left with stern beginnings. Postmodernists like to present themselves as innocent bystanders 'finding' history, bystanders who may subsequently choose to make it into their adversary or ally. This particular trap is one that the study at hand aims to avoid. Postmodern critique of Enlightenment or modernity tends to work with a realist assumption about the process of signification. The meanings attached to the very texts thought to represent modernity's program are presented as mirroring or echoing the introduction of or counterpoint to certain philosophical and practical problematics: their guilty origin in empirical, textual history is proven over and over again.

This study does not intend to join one of the sides on this battlefield, for it does not assume that there exists a historical dictate by 'the Enlightenment' which eventually decides the systematical problems which gave rise to the battle. The possibilities are not exhausted by having oneself 'blackmailed' into being for or against Enlightenment, to use the expression of Michel Foucault (1984) (for slightly different purposes as he intended it). Curiously, postmodernism has neglected to consider its context - modernity - as a text. The discursive opposition to the modern

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4 This of course leaves a fourth possibility: to be postmodern in an 'Enlightenment' sense. This, now, may sound as an improbable position, but it may in fact be a rather adequate typification of the project I want to undertake in this book. The declared 'postmodern' nature of concepts like 'particularism', 'contingency', or 'aesthetical politics' becomes a problematic claim in the light of my rereadings of Enlightenment discourse.

5 His question was launched again into philosophical discussion by Foucault. Some contributions to the discussion: Foucault 1984, Habermas 1985a, Hiley 1985, Dreyfus and Rabinow 1986, Flax 1987, McGowan Tress 1988. See also Vega 1990a.
worldview should rather, following its own claims with respect to method and history, imply reflection on the possibilities in re-presenting history. A postmodernist attitude need not mean developing a new body of 'anti-Enlightenment thought' as the alternative to modernity. I suggest not to adopt the terms of a heroic and somehow radically novel counter-discourse, but to express 'something like' postmodernism by gathering new descriptions of the representations of gender in Enlightenment texts. (This, of course, is often already implied in feminist historiography and criticism of philosophy.) Such a descriptive disposition might replace what we may dub the structuralist attitude of most critical theory, feminist and postmodern theory included: the need to utilize history for ever new proposals for the one true structure, or grammar, of either suppressive or progressive development with respect to some or other historical subject - analytical proposals necessarily implying and fixing a clear normative evaluation of the nature of this or that suppression. Capitalism, patriarchy, and perhaps even colonialism, may in the last decade have lost much of their invocatory powers in this respect, new concepts seem to have replaced them: foundationalism, universalism, modernity itself. Resisting this mood, the turn to description may serve 'contesting' modernity by adopting a more discursive approach.

My proposal for a descriptive turn is meant to come to terms with the perspectivity of knowledge claims, with the problem of deciding on meaning. It is partly indebted to discussions from systematical philosophy, where insights into the perspectivity of truth have been traced to such diverse sources as the works of Friedrich Nietzsche and Charles Sanders Peirce and the problem of undecidability of meaning has been discussed from Hans Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics to Jacques Derrida's reflections on signification, as well as to discussions from the philosophy of history in which the discursive nature of the writing of history has (again) been put on the agenda by e.g. Hayden White, Paul Ricoeur, and Frank Ankersmit. For another part it is indebted to the increased unease within feminist studies with its own grand theories. In women's studies, whether due to the need of its academic justification or to the need of a transparent grip on the experience of patriarchy, we still find - in its empiricist as well as in its postmodern branches - the stubborn tendency to represent history or philosophy "through a finite, linear discourse", so that "what happened" becomes constituted as one sort of event, or set of events, rather than another." (Rigney, 12) Description, then, as it is employed here, should on the one hand be distinguished from the pretensions to pre-theoretical factual description in certain scientific practices. On the other hand, it should circumvent what Sandra Harding (1990) has dubbed 'interpretationism': the strong relativism implied in 'granting every one her/his version of whatever happened'. These extremes, in fact, presuppose similar views on language, with language either

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6 A similar reproach to historiography has been made in various formulations. Thus, Gombrich (1967) criticizes art history for being under the spell of Hegelian 'ordering principles', 'structural unities', and 'key causes'. Foucault (1971) puts the genealogical approach over and against historical approaches searching for 'original identity' and 'monotonous finality'. For related discussions of speculative historiography and the 'covering law model', see Ankersmit 1986.
posing as a neutral medium mirroring the world, or as being at the free disposal of autonomously and authoritatively speaking subjects. My descriptive turn is meant to counteract both by observing issues of epistemic irony, contingency, and representation theory. I will discuss these issues below.

The proposed accent on description thus has a threefold purpose. First, discouraging coherence claims in representing the sexism of modern philosophy where these imply the editing away of alternative readings; next, replacing the notion of a modern realist identity politics with insights into the metonymical discussion of gender in relation to other key-concepts of modernity; finally, making way for reflection on whether we want to see the historical texts as such or the processes in which they have been represented as perpetrators of sexism.

1.2 Modernity and feminist hermeneutics.

The concept of modernity has, of course, been contested in several respects: in fact, not much is left of being 'modern' as an honorary title. Jacob Talmon has traced conceptions of both liberal and totalitarian democracy to Enlightenment thinkers; Adorno and Horkheimer argued the dialectic inherent in modern rationality; Zygmunt Bauman sees the Holocaust, not as the antithesis to, but as the very product of modernity. These authors, in various ways, thus pinpointed a violence typical to modernity - within its very terms. Similar concerns have been expressed by feminist critics. They have focussed on a pervasive, rigid conceptual dualism as characteristic for modern discourse and as the source for violence towards and discipline of women. Feminist critics have re-presented modernity as an era in which women are either absent or represented as instances of Woman. There exists a tenacious image of a modern body of thought - in feminist, non-feminist, and anti-feminist tenors - in which the opposition of woman-man is suggested to run parallel with dichotomies like nature-culture, private-public, emotion-reason, body-mind, disorder-order, passive-active, and all supposedly due to Enlightenment philosophy. The critique hence focusses on the problem of the exclusion of women which results from modern hierarchical dichotomous thought, and predominantly concentrates in the feminist critique of modern rationality. While the critique depends on its diagnosis of dichotomous modern discourse, to be blamed for the exclusion of women, I think questionable the very diagnosis of a dichotomous modern discourse,

7 Feminist theory here appears to be under heavy influence of the dominant social philosophical critique of modernity - the critique of modern rationality generating its own type of violence in giving rise to instrumental reason which came to dominate or colonize the very employment of reason. The feminist version of the critique of modern reason appears predominantly to result in normative proposals to amend reason by 'mixing' it with its dualistic counterconcepts, like emotion or body. It therewith keeps functioning in the realm of cognition or psychology. Given the problematic of contested signification and endless appropriation of the mentioned concepts, I think it to the point to argue a consistent discursive turn for the feminist critique of cognition.
and would rather elaborate on the possibility of another approach, in which not exclusion, but
certain features of the inclusion of women are responsible for specifically modern disciplines of
gender. The image of dichotomous thought does not necessarily follow from the philosophical
texts from early modernity. All mentioned conceptions can be seen as being connected to gender
in a much more capricious fashion than the feminist critique of dualist thought suggests. It is not so
obvious that Enlightenment texts ‘found’ their ideas on gender in a dualist mode of thinking. While
gender does form a constant inquietude and hence an object of discipline and aggression, this
inquietude may be related to a specifically modern problematic of contingency, rather than
foundationalism. (I discuss this problematic in § 1.4. In that context I will again raise the question in
what sense one could assert the existence of a typical modern violence to women.) The
Enlightenment might have to be invented all over again.

Quite different impressions of the meanings of traditional dichotomies to modernity are at
our disposal. Hannah Arendt and Judith Shklar, for example, have commented on the modern
vicissitudes of dichotomies like nature-culture, or natural-social. Arendt (1963) has claimed that
modern conceptions of history differ from the classical ones in characteristically seeing most
events as cultural and social, that is, under the reign of history, instead of as natural, that is, under
the realm of the unchangeable. Nature, it seems, has increasingly disappeared as an explicable
category. In a similar fashion, Shklar (1990) has drawn attention to the relationship between
misfortune and injustice, the balance of which in modern times has been gradually decided in
favour of the weight of the experience of injustice. Modern human beings see ever more
problematic events as having social origins, by which these are taken out of the realm of fortune
and into the realm of distributive justice, and thus, of human action. So, according to these
estimations, dichotomous thinking has decreased relevance for an understanding of the
experience of modernity. We may try yet another formulation: fortune has become integrated in
the experience of the social, whether in the form of the Smithian ‘invisible hand’, or the Hegelian
‘cunning of reason’. Nature and fortune are not so much denied or suppressed, as feminist and
postmodern diagnoses have it, as dissolved into the expanded categories of the social and the
political. Concurring with these observations, one of the theses in my study is that in modernity,
woman is associated less with nature, than with culture. Put differently, nature and fortune,
because of their gender connotations interesting themes for a feminist political analytic, can be
seen, not as being ‘repressed’ in modernity, but as having become contested subjects within the
field of modern political representations.

Another example of a problematic dichotomy supposedly characterizing modern thought
is the one of reason-emotion. Contrary to rationalist feminism, which defends claims to objectivity
and reason, postmodern and ‘difference’ feminisms claim that the rationalism inherited from the
Enlightenment is a suppressing and excluding device to the subjects of modernity, especially to
non-whites and non-males. In a sense, the process they describe might be dubbed a dialectic of
Enlightenment: rationalism has, notwithstanding its own claims to emancipatory intents, turned into an anti-emancipatory device - in this case not so much because of the growing dominance of its technocratic or instrumental variants (as was assumed by critical theory), but because of its basic assumptions in the field of cognition. Rationalism, the complaint goes, works from a cognitive heuristic which denies emotion, body, nature's subjectivity, private experience, and the like. Accordingly, 'emotion' is a concept which, by this critique, has been rashly associated with oppositional discourse, a feminist manoeuvre akin to the romanticist one (although the latter did not always associate it with a discourse critical of norms of masculinity, on the contrary).

The recourse to rationality is indeed problematic as the concept has been given a lot of meanings - philosophical and common sense - and appears to be able to refer simultaneously to very different procedures and practices. Furthermore, and contrary to counterposing emotion to rationality as guiding an alternative normative orientation, feminists have shown how claims of rationality veil, or interlock with, the 'darker' undercurrents of the struggle to see dominant gendered subjectivities affirmed. While the classical social philosophical quarrel concerns the rightness of emancipatory claims of 'modern rationality', feminists might ask whether we agree with the existing descriptions of these claims, and continue dissecting how these have represented some emotions as rational and not others. The recourse to the concept of emotion is equally problematic, first, because of its presumed status as an alternative to an analytical-critical attitude, and, second, because of the conceptual realism implied in the appropriation of its unhistorical

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8 Thus, we might add, the 'communicative' notion of rationalism, though pretending to be a new formulation of the critical potential of rationalism, cannot be a solution to a rationalism-gone-wrong, because it is likewise liable to the deforming assumptions of rationalist cognitive theory. I will not expand here on the possible reconciliability of feminist critical theory and Habermasian communication theory. See for discussions of this project e.g.: Benhabib and Cornell 1987; White 1988; Fraser 1989; Soper 1989. The theory of communicative action has been seized upon as an alternative to reigning Weberian and Frankfurter conceptualizations of rationality, as well as a broadened perspective on the domain of politics, being allied with conceptualizations of the public sphere and citizenship. It appears to suit well feminist attempts to broaden the scope of the concept of politics, as expressed in formulations like 'sexual politics' and 'the personal is political'. I nevertheless think that the concept of representation is a more attractive concept for a feminist approach of public and cultural life, than the concept of communication. Communication assumes the demonstration of opinion, representation is interested in the ways in which opinions refer; communication is directed towards reaching agreement, representation is directed towards understanding how shared imageries arise. What is more, the analysis of representation is not dependent on counter-factual premisses about some telos inhering in human language, and hence less prone to bouts of disappointment. See also Vega 1994. In § 1.5 I will discuss the suitability of the concept of representation for feminist social (political, cultural) theory.

9 Again, these are not exhausted, or even well approached, by critical theory’s differentiation between instrumental and communicative reason, which is meant to conserve the qualitative difference between economics and politics, not to answer for gender connotations with rationalities.

10 Likewise, practices of equality may be experienced as eliciting struggles akin to those described by René Girard's concept of 'internal mediation' (which should conceptualize a specific violence pertaining to modernity's intersubjective action) - in this case intuited as a modern foundation of the struggle against women. See also Vega 1992.
status: 'emotion' too easily figures as an 'eternal idea' to be rediscovered. While emotion has been recruited for a feminist 'anti-politics' in the face of a supposedly dominant modern discourse, sentiment or emotion are concepts used in a positive normative sense by at least the philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment. With them, meanwhile, the recourse to emotion has a conservative intent, their theory in fact resembling a proto-type of later prescriptive psychoanalytical theory - a therapeutical, not a critical approach of the social. It is precisely the relationship between promoting emotion as a critique of Western discourse, and emotion as a key term in this very Western discourse which should be understood. On this point, feminist critique and feminist discipline lie uncomfortably close together.

None of these concepts commend a feminist variant of diagnosing a 'dialectic of Enlightenment': there is no dialectic, no useful terminology of two oppositional terms which can cast the problem of gender in modernity. Instead of dualisms or dialectics, a new catchphrase is needed that circumvents the vicious circle of essentialist connotations a feminist analytics of modernity is prone to enter. Concepts like nature, fortune, reason, and emotion, because they all function as indexical signs to gender, invariably pointing to some intuition of gender, are, so to speak, subject to a 'politics of metonymy', whether of a feminist or anti-feminist persuasion. In consequence, we can discuss the continguities of meaning between these concepts and gender, but to claim property in one of these concepts has long since been an expired or lost cause by the sheer quantity of such claims.

Contrary to the still dominant image of a dualistic modern thought, a genealogical study of the modern woman can acquaint us with a quantiy of proposals for and perspectives on understanding her. Many of these have drifted out of sight or have not been (recently) formulated. But it increasingly turns out that it is untenable to view this multiple parentage (to stay in tune with the organicist metaforic of genealogical historiography) as categorizing itself neatly into private versus public identities, spectators/readers versus actors/authors, emotionalists versus rationalists. If we want to calibrate feminist political theory according to the present-day intuition that modern femaleness never had a moment to realize itself, it is "pertinent" to write and read other stories, more stories. If, to paraphrase Bruno Latour (1991), woman has never been modern, this at most means that she cannot be recognized as definitely joining one or other side in a

11 On how institutions, and human communities, forget and remember, see Douglas 1986. "(T)he mirror is a poor metaphor of the public memory. ... When we look closely at the construction of past time, we find the process has very little to do with the past at all and everything to do with the present. Institutions create shadowed places in which nothing can be seen and no questions asked. They make other areas show finely discriminated detail. To watch these practices establish selective principles that highlight some kinds of events and obscure others is to inspect the social order operating on individual minds. Public memory is the storage system for the social order. Thinking about it is as close as we can get to reflecting on the conditions of our own thought." (69/70) See also Kofman 1993, on the phenomenon of forgetting in the processes in which metaphors become utilized as analytical concepts.
modernity defined as ruled by dichotomy.

To be sure, this study is not the first to remark on the possibly untenable image of an Enlightenment philosophy in which dichotomies are ordered in a parallel fashion, or which is dualistic in principle. Several authors, among them Sylvana Tomaselli (1985), Janet Todd (1986), Ursula Jauch (1988), and others discussed in the following chapters, have tried to alter the terms of the debate on Enlightenment. Their studies question the feminist paradigm of the dualistic origin of women’s asymmetrical position, or women’s suppression. Together, these developments already make it clear that the history of modern women cannot be cast in a singular scheme. Joan Scott, in a now classical essay first published in 1986, called for reflection on the analytic categories used in feminist historiography and refusal of explanation in terms of binary oppositions.

We need a refusal of the fixed and permanent quality of the binary opposition, a genuine historicization and deconstruction of the terms of sexual difference. We must become more self-conscious about the material we want to analyze. We must find ways (however imperfect) to continually subject our categories to criticism, our analyses to self-criticism. (1988, 40/41)

Feminists, like other historians, necessarily are simultaneously reader and author in their dealings with history. Which implies that the ‘great narrative’ of Enlightenment thought, as worded by postmodern thinkers, is simultaneously object and product of postmodern philosophy. It is an account of the homogeneity and monumentality of modern thought by - among others - feminist authors. This is the trap the ‘postmodern author’, this self-willed *contradictio in terminis*, has dug her/himself. Women fit neatly in what we might call the heuristic paradox of postmodernism. Where they are researched, they are already assumed. This paradox possesses "a certain pertinence" for the study at hand, in pointing out the (im)possibility of having modern women becoming the subjects of their own story - to borrow an insight of Gayatri C. Spivak (1987) (while appropriating it for a modern-western-european subject's sake). 12 The reading of history should not turn us into his slave; nor can it easily be turned into a herstory. In the study at hand the feminist context in which texts from the Enlightenment are nowadays read is understood as a text itself: that is to say, as part and parcel of the process of the feminist signification of history. After all, the feminist reader of historical texts confronts a complicated complicity in establishing evaluations - normative or otherwise - of the texts. The readings offered here of Enlightenment texts include the discussion of received - modern or postmodern - feminist opinion on these texts. This discussion is not intended to conclude in rejection of some and acceptance of other views; I do not disagree with most existing interpretations (their diversity itself precisely constitutes the problem). It rather

12 Spivak 1987, 246: "a text about the (im)possibility of ‘making’ the subaltern gender the subject of its own story seems to me to have a certain pertinence."
implies embarking on an inquiry into the problem of fundamental undecidability - from a philosophical standpoint - of textual meaning. As indicated above, the struggle, not just over the right interpretative procedure, but over the very possibility of agreement on description may be the quintessential problem of modern hermeneutics - and especially for a feminist hermeneutics trying to avoid the traps of the disciplining impact of the feminist will to know. An impact which is effective not just vis-à-vis sexism but also vis-à-vis feminism itself, and which, furthermore, awakens us to the shakiness of the foundation of the opposition between these camps.

Feminists have to work within the typical modern tension existing between the critical impact of the courage to know (Kant) and the disciplining impact of the will to know (Foucault). Although sometimes assumed to be implied by the latter insight, distrusting the will to know does not require saying goodbye to reflection, or philosophy. We do, however, need other approaches to reflection than only the classical mirror of realism. Reflection can also be performed by multiplying or displacing the meanings of this 'original' modernity. In this optical manoeuvre we need not sense lying or distortion, nor the pure amusement suggested by the fair's house of mirrors: it only demands a perspective on representation different from the realist one. Representation as well as reflection have usually been understood as heralds of a Cartesian subject-object model of epistemology. But neither reflexivity nor representation are necessarily bound to presuppose subjects who autonomously find truths in a world of texts and other objects that passively yield their significations.

As alternatives to the notion of dualist thought, I have proposed a descriptive turn which is to launch the inquiry into the metonymical discussion of gender in modern texts. In the next paragraph, I will propose one more conceptual alternative and discuss the notion that irony, rather than dualism, rules modern discourse. In § 1.4 I will continue with discussing the notion that contingency, instead of foundationalism, may be the characteristic ground of modern dealings with gender. In § 1.5 I will return to the issue of various applications of the concept of representation in feminist critique. Finally, in § 1.6, I will address the significance to any feminist study of modernity of its novel category of 'the social'.

1.3 Undecidability, irony, ambivalence.

As said, this study does not aim to offer a new, more consistent interpretation of Enlightenment texts, but proposes to give plural alternative representations of the sexism of modern philosophy. The proposed descriptive turn is meant to confront the problem of undecidability. I will neither elaborate here on philosophical discussions from semiotics or hermeneutics, nor gratuitously

13 Libido scienti (the lust for knowledge, see also Cassirer 1951, 14) and sapere aude (dare to know) both being, of course, characteristic Enlightenment slogans.
evoke free floating meanings and knowledge claims. I will make the rather limited or specified
claim of relating the problem of undecidability to intuitions of the ambivalent and ironic features of
modern linguistic practices. Irony has been specified by authors like Hayden White and Richard
Rorty as, respectively, a mode of writing and reading history, and a posture with respect to the
social and intellectual order one lives in. While White envisions an ironic way of understanding
diachronic processes, and Rorty an ironic attitude towards synchronic order, both employ the trope
of irony as a way to address the "potential foolishness of all linguistic characterizations of reality,"
(White 1973, 37) - which is an expression of the wariness triggered by the notion that it will be
impossible to solve truth claims in a medium other than language. Irony here does not (just) refer
to a style of writing intentionally chosen by an author. The intuition of undecidability has by these
and other authors been translated into adopting an 'ironic attitude' with respect to interpretation.
The word 'foolishness' may be a bit too flippant, but formulations exist for the intended issue that
do not so much remove truth claims from the hermeneutic field, as dislodge their epistemological
status. For this option on hermeneutics, we may follow Donna Haraway's felicitous formulation of
irony as being

about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, about the
tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and
true. (1991, 149)

This formulation of the ironic attitude comes very close to the one about the ambivalence of
language of Zygmunt Bauman. Ambivalence, the possibility of assigning an object or an event to more than one
category, is a language-specific disorder: a failure of the naming function that language
is meant to perform. .. And yet ambivalence is not the product of the pathology of
language or speech. It is, rather, a normal aspect of linguistic practice. It arises from one
of the main functions of language: that of naming and classifying. .. Ambivalence is
therefore the alter ego of language. (1991, 1)

Both formulations intend to rehabilitate language as the vehicle of the conscious communication

14 "The trope of Irony, then, provides a linguistic paradigm of a mode of thought which is
radically self-critical with respect not only to a given characterization of the world of experience, but
also to the very effort to capture adequately the truth of things in language". (White 1973, 37)

15 "The ironist .. is a nominalist and a historicist. She thinks nothing has an intrinsic nature, a real
essence, .. The ironist spends her time worrying about the possibility that she has been initiated
into the wrong tribe, taught to play the wrong language game. .. [Ironists] do not take the point of
discursive thought to be knowing, in any sense that can be explicated by notions like "reality," "real
essence," "objective point of view," and the "correspondence of language of reality." They do not
think its point is to find a vocabulary which accurately represents something, a transparent
medium." (Rorty 1989, 74/75)

16 Benhabib 1991 employs a similar notion of irony as Haraway's in her proposal to replace the
happy, synthetical ending in Hegelian dialectics for an awareness of the unending irony of history.
and theoretical articulation of the insecurity or non-finality of knowledge and judgement, in the face of the supposedly 'modern' need to have language order, solve, conclude. Both irony and ambivalence point to the simultaneous existence of non-compatible assessments of reality without there being a common denominator to be found or reached. These formulations, however, could suggest that irony or ambivalence are general, formal traits of language, effecting all speaking subjects alike - one more way of pointing out the hazardous condition of subjectivity. More interesting for the study of discourse, and more readily implied by Rorty's than White's angle, is subsequently to suspect that irony and ambivalence are bound up with political turns, intentions, competing truth claims. This is to see irony and ambivalence as linguistic phenomena functioning within and dependent on a social field of power relations.

To be sure, most authors do see irony and ambivalence as social, not extra-social phenomena. They do intuit a correlation between linguistic undecidability and the effectuation of social power. Haraway appears purposively to locate irony on the side of critical method, instead of arrogance. Bauman employs the notion of ambivalence to describe the 'other' of the modern condition, something modernity eagerly wants to eliminate. If anything falls short, it is that they have rushed from epistemology to sociology. Having assessed the epistemological significance of irony and ambivalence, both authors do not hesitate to turn this ironic epistemology into the distinct foundation of critical knowledge. This urge to appropriate has become widespread in the field of critical discourses on gender. For reasons apparently similar to those motivating Bauman's diagnosis, and in line with the notion that women have been 'excluded' from modern thought, several postmodern French writers have presented 'woman' and her connotations as the 'other' of modernity. Ambivalent and ironic language is then dictated by the modern condition of femininity itself: it has, in this view, a sociological basis, or can at least be correlated to social asymmetries. Feminists have often presented the 'modern woman' as having ambivalence at the core of her conceptual existence: she never simply fits in the categories of modernity, its ideals of equality, of citizenship, of discourse. The concept of the 'modern woman' is, in the light of the supposed modern inclination to universalize, felt to be itself a 'language-specific disorder'. While these French writers seem to applaud women's ironic linguistic condition, the feminist sceptics appear rather to deplore it. Anyhow, if modernity does effectuate a vertiginous condition of female subjectivity, rather than her 'elimination', it is not to the point to state that woman is modernity's 'other', let alone to appropriate irony or ambivalence as catchwords for the critique of modernity. The linguistic handle on the complex of modernity, control, and gender cannot be as clearcut as that. Its bounteous production of knowledges has proved modernity a particular fruitful era for generating an ironic condition of knowledge, but this hardly implies positions of either exclusion or

17 Feminist critics have pointed out that by this manoeuvre, they once again affirm modern thought, rather than formulate an alternative to its received representation of gender. See e.g. Jardine 1985. See Hutcheon 1994 for a synthetic discussion of the several modes of existence of irony.
subversive irreverence. If irony and ambivalence are granted epistemological status, they should rather serve as tools of an analytic of modernity, than of an anti-modern ethics. It need again be stipulated that the grand theory of postmoderns does not necessarily serve a feminist analytic of modernity.

Modernity has been defined by Bauman and his French kindred spirits by the (negative) desire to suppress the not-orderly and ambivalent. This is a rather reductionist conclusion from the intuition of the ironic and ambivalent nature of language. It eventually subscribes to a view of language as reflecting the hierarchies and classifications authorized in advance by a social order. Language then is a mere symptom or messenger expressing the exigencies of a modern pathology. But there is too big a leap between stating that ambivalence issues from clashes between the (enabling) power to speak and the (subjectifying) naming power of language, and stating that modern women are modernity's 'other', and consequently suppressed from the modern view. Intuiting the complexity of the naming-process implies resisting the identification of the violent effects of modern language in a unitary mechanism, in exclusion from apparently orderly and clearcut dominant classifications within available dichotomies. Modern language on gender is rather characterized by the range of its innovative powers and capacity of associating with any available discourse. Contrary to having been excluded, women have been subject to an ironic knowledge, to irresolvable conflicts between incompatible modes and contents of knowing. To this type of irony, nothing intrinsical honourable nor jocular inheres; it does not serve some substantive judgement on modernity's wrongs but requires a certain sensitivity in respect of describing women's discursive presence.

In short: instead of judging irony and ambivalence either as formal traits of linguistics, or as belonging to a counter-discourse to modernity, here they will be conceived of as belonging to the modern politics of representation. In contradistinction to what is claimed by our postmoderns, there is a (positive) desire in the very heart of modernity aiming not to exclude, but to create and mould: the desire for 'modern women'. A desire producing a complex network of discourses on gendered existence on which relating modern events and experiences is radically dependent.

1.4 Contingency, particularity, disorder.

Feminist theories of history have remarked on the pervasive association of women with nature, instead of with history or culture, in the theory and practice of historiography - which hence perceives women not to be susceptible to historiographic interest. Joan Scott has formulated the notion of the exclusion of women from modernity's history of categories like civilization and

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18 See e.g. Blok 1994 for the notion that in the historicist tradition, women have been associated with nature and hence treated as a non-subject for historiography.
universal humanity as follows:

The form that [historical] knowledge has taken - the remarkable absence or subordination of women in the narratives of the 'rise of civilization,' their particularity in relation to Universal Man, their confinement to studies of the domestic and private - indicates a politics that sets and enforces priorities . . . naturalizes certain categories, and disqualifies others. (1988, 9)

It has in the last decade become a commonplace in much feminist theory to state that women represent the non-universal and the non-orderly in western philosophy: they represent the accidental, the incidental, the contingent. Modern political philosophies are seen to contribute to women's representation in the margins of, or even beyond, western humanity. The directly normative judgement on modern thought and its negative connotations with contingency is expressed in present-day feminist derision (or applauding) of terms like the 'disorder of women', 'unruly practices', and the like. Although these normative approaches work with an important intuition, the resulting picture smoothes out various other intuitions about the ways gender may be signified and experienced. Kathleen Jones (1993), for instance, has drawn attention to the ambiguous association of women with authority and order as well as with anti-authority and disorder in modern democratic politics. Bourgeois democratic discourse has entertained an ideology of the expansive, limitless, unbounded self which viewed authority as such with suspicion.

This unbounded and disorderly self, of course, was the self-made, self-sufficient man.

The threat to masculine, democratic selfhood was represented as the threat of limitations on freedom and autonomy, the threat of castrating, female authority. (82)

Thus, while in certain respects one may tend to think of authority as having been heavily connoted as masculine, what has also been seen as masculine is an unbounded, unconfined, 'free' self as exemplary of an anti-authoritarian, democratic personality, with women representing its confining, hindering antitype. The modern democratic discourse on order and disorder has been thoroughly gendered, masculine projections on women going both directions.

Above I have passed in review some estimations of the ways terms like nature, fortune, and disorder - usually associated with women - have in modernity somehow been recast to fit a proper modern ontological perspective on men as genuinely social, historical, and even democratic beings. Our problem appears to be that in the process, the relevant categories have neither become neutral with respect to gender, nor in any clear-cut way 'feminized'. What is needed is to newly direct attention to the intuited problematic, that is, to the significance of contingency in living gendered modernity. Apart from smoothing out ambivalences, the received picture of female unruliness appears to produce too narrow a view of what is at issue. This type of interpretation has skipped a much broader problematic of the relation between gender and contingency present in modern philosophy. It turns out to be not so much the category of 'women',
as 'gender' which has been associated with the problem of contingency and its typical modern relevance, that is, with the possibilities of modernity as well as with its frustration.

While nature and fortune in modernity may have ceased to constitute unquestioned limits of human agency, this does not mean that the category they signified - contingent existence - is no longer central to modernity. On the contrary, contingency is a central feature of the conceptualization of modernity - as its simultaneous precondition and limit. Contingency is a philosophical theme with growing importance from the seventeenth century onwards, which keeps associating in some way or another with gender. The status and meaning of contingency form the hinge point between the possibility and impossibility of modernity. The problematic of contingency covers the whole problematic of the possibility and impossibility of engineering a modern society. Contingency is the denominator of the specific problem of modernity: in which ways can or cannot human action make the world? We should discriminate between two meanings of contingency which together illustrate its centrality to modernity: enabling and impairing contingency. First, chance or accidentality, as opposed to the premodern category of predestination or extra-human determination, provides the very possibility of human action. Contingency here refers to the possibility of (or even a circumstance necessitating) making, resulting in undetermined, voluntary or involuntary human action as opposed to that which is determined by God, nature, or fixed social order: destination rules out contingency. Contingency sets off the freedom of the artificial, engineered world of modernity. It is the precondition of human action; it stands for all that is neither necessary, nor impossible. Second, contingency may refer to that which is not to be made, for all that escapes human control - it then stands for the failure of the engineering of the world by men. In this sense, contingency represents the limits to efficient and successful human action, the very impossibility or sheer absence of total control. Chance, as opposed to the ordered and controlled, unmakes human action, and as such hinders the modern project in its most characterizing pretensions. If contingency is modernity's foundation, it is its ceiling as well. Modernity destines its subjects to act, but to renounce control.

This double imperative leads a way into the specific modern scenery in which gender has to be depicted. The notion of contingent action, when transposed to linguistics, evidences that modern signification of gender comes about from contingent grounds. The contingent basis of meanings of gender should then be understood in a more radical, epistemic sense than substantive associations of women with unruliness or disorder suggest. For this general, agonistic notion of contingency let us turn to Foucault:

The forces operating in history are not controlled by destiny or regulative mechanisms, but respond to haphazard conflicts. . . Chance is not simply the drawing of lots, but raising the stakes in every attempt to master chance through the will to power, and

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19 For the several meanings that may be attached to 'contingency', see Pocock 1975, Mapel 1990, De Mul 1994.
Contingency, then, does not imply gender significations to be arbitrary or a gambling chance; rather, it connects modern gendered existence to ineluctable strategy and struggle - the struggle to arrive at some modern subjectivity or other. It is not, to straighten out Foucault, just a will to power which provokes the modern risk society; it is also the courage to know about gender which plunges one into hazardous games.

Contingency thus is an important *leitmotiv* of modern philosophy in general, and associations between contingency and gender as well as the contingent ground of gender significations keep forming constant elements of modern approaches of gender. Like gender, contingency may be understood as a concept with heuristic value, rather than one pointing to substantive meanings responsible for the exclusion of women. In the following chapters, several 'Enlightenments' will be scrutinized for their representation of this problematic. For liberals, modern contingency is brought into vision through thinking up the state of nature; for republicans, it is bound up with either the market or politics, bringing decadence, waste, and usurpation, or simply forming the stuff politics is made from; for the Scots, it runs social life as an invisible hand, a simultaneously salutary and alarming state of affairs. As the theme of contingency eventually allows for negatively as well as positively charged associations, prior to normative conclusions we need more descriptions of the various contiguous relations it entertains with gender. Researching the configurations of contingency and gender in modern thought allows for postponing and complicating the normative evaluation of modernity, while preserving the intuition that insecurity is the highway along which modernity approaches gender.

In modernity, contrary to its emancipatory pathos and hence often to the bewilderment of 'modern women', fear of and aggression to women abound. These practices of violence are neither left behind in the premodern realm, nor necessarily a sign of survival of premodern attitudes, but may be seen as part and parcel of the modern experience. Postmoderns have asserted a violence inhering in language as such - the excluding and ordering nature of any use of language reveals its disciplinary principle. Above I have tried to reassess this intuition by relating modern language on gender to epistemic irony and contingency. Modern experiences of gender deal with discourse, multiplying and behaving like a political trollop. Various feminist authors have discussed practices of modern aggression to women in terms of a masculine ego-formation mirrored in modern ideals of cognition. However, as broached above, this critique on the level of psychology, or cognition, cannot fully discount the complex of contested signification and various appropriations of meaning in which the experience of modern gender comes about. Feminist assessments of modernity face problems of knowledge, next to problems of cognition. Pathologies of masculinity in the field of cognition, and cultural forces legitimating and favouring not to know (about the history of representations of gender) are in league to prevent a modern democratic *habitus* of accountability in respect of such utterings to arise. One can indeed 'say no matter what' on women, from this
perspective not the pernicious consequence of some foolhardy relativism often assumed to ensue from the critique of modernity (the reproach to postmodernism that there ‘anything goes’), but of lacking clues about the representational histories and embeddedness of one’s utterings - an ‘organized’ amnesia (in both meanings of ‘naturalized’ or ‘appearing organic’, and ‘structuralized’) which turns modernity into a risk society for women. Attempting to render either psychology or language relating to gender subject to public or merely intersubjective debate, might unleash all sorts of agonistic forces due to modernity’s contingencies. The very problem of contingency of signification, connected with the struggle between the will not to know and the courage to know, may be seen to constitute the vantage point for apprehending a violence pertaining to modernity. We may even venture that radical contingent modernity has varied and modulated the potential for violence towards women: discipline and aggression may ensue both from violent processes of cognition and from women's discursive unsafeness, or discursive vulnerability. Discipline - the inclusion in social practices independent of the use of physical violence - is synonymous with linguistic violence, and the will to power exerted "to master chance" with respect to gender will take the form of the will not to know (about sexism).

If modernity revolves around the ambiguous problem of contingency, one might deduce that a typical modern fear of women exists which is symptomatic of a general anxiety about being modern. To be sure, modernity is not only fearsome: modern human beings may as well welcome contingent existence for its promising and pleasurable possibilities. Feminism's main problem may be how to protect and revive modernity's potential, not for satisfying the will to power or knowledge, but for counteracting the very fear of linguistic contingency with respect to gender, that is, for rewarding the courage to know.

1.5 The concept of representation.

In this study the concept of 'representation' is relevant in substantive as well as methodological respects. The first respect is the most obvious, and concerns the representation of modernity as the thought experiment that aimed to create modernity, and in the process triggered new, modern conceptions of gender. As has become clear from the discussion above, the study at hand contests the contents of the current representation of modernity. It does so by looking at the ways in which its authors invented its gender, be they authors 'then' or 'now'. Second, this study attempts to further elaborate on the issue of representation. My discussion of modern representations of gender will not principally be concerned with representations in the sense of contents of depiction, or the Darstellungen of gender. It will be concerned rather with the specifically modern modes of representation gender has been thought to be subject to. In other words, it studies the modes of its desired Vertretung: political, social or aesthetic; descriptive or
symbolic; realist or nominalist; consigned to some or other societal domain, etc.. It is this matrix of modes and locations of the representation of gender, rather than gender-images, that is explored in this study. I will return to the German words for representation later on.

Thus, 'representation' forms the vantage point for an intervention in feminist theory. At issue is the sociological, or 'topographical', approach in which the respective societal 'domains' of the private, the social, and the political provide the sites to which the representation of gender is confined. Instead of such a sociological approach, the approach of representation argued here aims to redirect the discussion of women and modernity from the problematic of social domains ('where' is she to be found?) to a problematic of linguistics ('how' is s/he to be found?).

In feminist studies, as in cultural studies at large, the word representation usually refers to practices which claim to give copying accounts of reality.\(^{20}\) The critique of the 'paradigm of representation', often used as one more synonym for modernity, then points to the fraudulent contents of representational claims. It counters that representational practices are no representations of facts, but fictions of facts; no copies of pre-existing realities, but ideological constructions. Representations of women have been directed and dominated by a male gaze and a patriarchal obsession with ownership: they picture women who are manipulated within male narcissistic fantasies, women who are available to men. Depictions and descriptions of woman, women, and the feminine, have been instruments for the objectification of women. Representations of women mirror false images of women.

Because of this reception, the concept of representation has had a bad press in feminist theory. Representation has been seen as the cause of fixed images of women, sexist by consequence. It has been identified as the conceptual tool of a male-dominated culture, picturing women from a masculine vantage point. The critique of representation has thus been identical to the critique of sexism. I want to propose an approach of the concept of representation different from the one usually met with in feminist theory. Representation can be conceptualized, either in a theory of pictoriality, as in the sketched 'critique of representation', or in a theory of action. Because the latter moves representation from the realm of expression to the realm of action, it broadens the range of applicability of the concept of representation in feminist theory. Representation, then, concerns actions, of feminists and non-feminists alike. From this

\(^{20}\) Compare Rosenau's helpful definition: "re-present - the underlying assumption of modern representation that it is possible to present something over again, to replace one object (concept, person, place, or time) with another, without loss of content or violation of intention. The post-modernists say this is impossible." (1992, xiv) Woolgar also states that representation, when categorized along with dichotomies like fact-value, belongs to the side of 'facts': "The standpoint of essentialism finds support in the idea of representation. Representation is the means by which we generate images (reflections, representations, reports) of the object 'out there'. Representation is axiomatic not just to science but to all practices which trade upon an objectivist epistemology." (1988, 30) For a (halfway) attempt to understand feminist approaches not as opposed to, but as forms of representation, see Stanley and Wise 1993, 216-219.
perspective, political, social, as well as aesthetical representations of gender are subject to the activities of production and reception, rather than to formal structures of ownership in the meaning of their contents.

Hanna Pitkin's study of the concept of representation opens up such a perspective by combining notions on representation from aesthetic and political theory. The definition she starts with has, in fact, little to do with mimetic realism. The word representation, literally meaning 'making present again', has, according to her, generally meant "the making present in some sense of something which is nevertheless not present literally or in fact". (1967, 8/9) The concept thus formulates a paradox of something being simultaneously present and not present, a paradox of presence and absence. The concept explicitly entered political theory in the seventeenth century with Hobbes' discussion of it in *Leviathan*. Pitkin distinguishes representation as *Darstellung*, comprising descriptive and symbolic ways of 'standing for', from representation as *Vertretung*, referring to the activity of representing in the 'acting for' someone or something else.

Her approach lends itself surprisingly well to classifying feminists' problems with the representation of women. Feminist critique has tended to focus on the *Darstellung* of women, that is, on images of women and on the symbolic status women have been relegated to. What has been criticized is the content of images, the meanings pictures and texts 'possess'. First, modernity has been criticized for its descriptions of women, producing false naturalizations of 'women' and 'the feminine'. Modern representations of women, or of gender-related themes in general, have not been realistic, the argument goes. Female experience has been silenced, real women have been absent. Numerous feminist cultural studies testify to this critique. Secondly, modernity has been criticized for the ways it has symbolically represented itself, providing us with an abundance of gender-related metaphors in which modernity and its cultural, social, and political orders are represented. In symbolic representation, representation does not claim a description of what it represents: the symbol does not describe but evokes the represented. Here, the feminist critique does not so much concern the absence of realism: it rather concerns the gendered character of modern perceptions of existence in general.

Thus, Christine Buci-Glucksmann (1984) highlights the ways in which 'the feminine' acts as an 'allegory of the modern' in the later works of Walter Benjamin. To Benjamin, prostitution is a metaphor for modern labour in general, and the female body, as the ultimate market good, the symbol for the grip of market morality on modern economic as well as cultural life. Similarly, the modern city with him does not illustrate the orderly, purposive ideal of a 'masculine' modern knowledge, but an opaque, 'feminine' labyrinth, in which it is easier to stray, than to reach one's purpose. Alice Jardine (1985) has drawn attention to the ways in which the French critique of modernity utilizes the 'repression' of 'the feminine' in modernity to present itself as its 'feminine' alternative. 'Woman' here symbolizes, not modernity, but postmodernity. According to these

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authors, the modern as well as the postmodern representation of femininity is manifested in *optima forma* through the female representation of (post)modernity. Feminist studies of political theory, by e.g. Hanna Pitkin (1984) and Carole Pateman (1988), have pointed out similar representational practices. Politics has in the course of political theory's history been described in manifold gendered metaphors. There has been the male founder, symbolizing the abrupt creation of harmonious community; fraternal citizens; paternal rulers; maternal politics, ranging from the Spartan mother in Rousseauan republicanism to the caring, (over)protective mother of the welfare state. There are also the female symbols of anti-politics, representing eruption and contingency, like Circe, Fortuna, Ariadne, the coquette, and, later on, a usually male symbol: the romantic rebel-at-heart, who, of course, feels provoked by a 'female' discipline. A specific critique can be formulated with respect to the "graphic politics" (Landes 1992) through which the modern public sphere was provided with specific symbolizations of femaleness, in the statues and other visual imagery of the modern public sphere. Modern publicity empirically excluded women, but promoted itself through symbolizations of them.22

Modernity, indeed, has been seen as gendered in rather general terms, already in the early articulations of its characteristics in the Enlightenment. The Scottish Enlighteners have thought of the social as - rightly - feminized, republicans saw it as - wrongly - feminized. This type of 'grand narratives' symbolically gendering modernity is one manifestation of the problem broached above of the - either positively or negatively valued - associations of modern contingency and gender.

The critique of *Darstellungen* of women has resulted in two feminist reactions. In the first, representation of 'real' women is the key-word. The objection to representations of women is that 'she does not speak herself'. There is no correspondence between portrayal and reality, which has to be corrected. The gap between male gaze and women's experience should be sealed by allowing women to speak for themselves. This feminism utilizes itself a realistic or mimetic concept of representation. In the other reaction the key-word would be 'post-representation'. 'Woman' does not exist, the argument goes, so she cannot and should not be represented. Not 'real women', but the gap that always exists between pictures and their living referents should be represented. Feminists should make explicit the nonsensical contents of formerly assumed correspondences. Let me dub this the nominalist position. Both strategies with respect to representation deal with the question to what or whom sexist or feminist images refer. Their quarrel shows the traces of the 'sex-gender' debate: is gender representing a sex 'really' existing somewhere, or does it merely refer to variations on its own theme? But whether fact or fiction is claimed, both strategies may claim to produce 'other', non-sexist contents. In neither view is the appropriation of contents of representation necessarily all that problematic. The predominant style of reception still contends

that pictures and texts 'possess' meanings. A nominalist is not necessarily an ironist. The critique of Darstellungen is countered with a novel production of Darstellungen: the answer is found in a flowering feminist industry of representations.

Meanwhile, however, if not all representations of women are male projections, a new problem has emerged. In the feminist alternatives, correct representations are distinguished from fraudulent ones through the confidence, or lack of it, in their authors. The adequacy of the contents of representations is decided on by providing them with new authors. The problem has not been solved, but passed on. Next to pictorial representation which revolves around contents, around what is represented, the issue of spokespersons is also a problem of representation par excellence; who represents the female 'we', or the female 'I', for that matter? Here representation as Vertretung appears: not what is represented, but who represents, and how; not just the represented, but the representative and her representative action become subjects of reflection. Representative action consists in the continual mediation between representative and represented. Pitkin emphasizes that, considering its inherently paradoxical program, representation does not truly occur if the represented is mimed exactly, or where we expect decisions based on 'true' scientific expertise. The act of representing is on the contrary characterized by the necessity to time and again form judgements on what should be represented, and make choices in what should be done. The process of representation as 'acting for' is principally indeterminate, as manifold factors and voices influence it. In political respect this may be obvious: demands of voters, parties, constitution, the personality of the representative, claims of diverse professions, etc. will all contribute to the process of political representation. But also in aesthetical respects the concept of Vertretung offers a better approach to modern perspectives, as the - by now probably outdated - notion of art as authentic expression. An aesthetic theory which approaches representation with, e.g., Peircean philosophy of language, has in fact abandoned the Darstellungs-approach of cultural representation.

Susanne Kappeler (1986) has drawn attention to a similar problem of representation as activity in her study of pornography. Feminists have, she states, concentrated on the content of pornographic representations of sexuality, forcing them to arbitrate between pictures of 'correct' and 'wrong' sex. Kappeler points out that the objectification of women in pornographic pictures does not constitute the essential problem: it is typical pornographic practice to show women in the position of a strong, dominant 'subject'. The meaning of pornography, as in representation in general, should be looked for in the relationship between author and spectator or reader. "Representation is not so much the means of representing an object through imitation (matching contents) as a means of self-representation through authorship". (53) Kappeler insists on locating the meaning of pornographic images in the masculine subjectivity expressed in them: "Culture .. is patriarchy's self-image". (53) We may, however, locate the search for their meaning one step beyond the author's self-expression: in the measure of identification of the spectator which is
dependent on his/her relation to the author. Images and texts do not 'have' meanings: these arise within a complex network of self-representations and interpretations, by authors and readers.

Pitkin has shown, in her discussion of Hobbes' notion of representation, that seeing a person as a representative implies seeing her as an artificial, or fictive person, instead of as a natural person. To represent is to personify, to 'act'. Actions are practices of representation, not of ownership. To Hobbes, the words and actions of a representative are necessarily not 'her own'. Her action, linguistic or otherwise, is detached from notions of natural property. One is not the author of her own representative action, which is by definition always authorized from elsewhere. In the representative we meet another modern subject than the so often criticized western subject who is 'owner of himself', who follows the liberal paradigm of identity. 23 Not the natural human being, but his absence is the measure of representative action. Contrary to a familiar feminist anxiety, Pitkin's discussion of representation shows that to abandon mimetic fictions does not imply the disappearance of female subjects. They have become, on the contrary, representing actors. Instead of being dependent on it, female agency pre-eminently arises beyond mimesis. Representation as action merely leaves behind the idea that our utterings come from 'within', and instead assumes them to come from language. If we depart from the assumption that language usage does not confirm our autonomous authorship, but our position as a representative of something, then the democratic degree of our actions will only have increased, not diminished. The concept of Vertretung is, after all, intrinsically bound to democratic practice. The less we think that the female 'we', or the female 'I', lend themselves to univocal Darstellung, the more we should highlight the action aspects of representation. The Vertretungs-approach of representation fits well the feminist critique of essentialism and identity politics.

The combined insights of Pitkin, who highlights political theory's contribution to representation theory by seeing representation as an 'acting for', and of Kappeler, who draws attention to the aspect of self-representation within representation, rendering it sensitivity to unequal power positions in its production, can be applied to representation by human beings as well as by images, and provoke discussions on the possible receptions of 'feminist' and 'non-feminist' representations alike. The critique of sexism is in this perspective far from being precluded; it is, though, being complicated which can, of course, only render it more to the point. The analysis of language games is redirected from a quest for true and false subjects, towards the principal possibility of exposing authors as readers of the world, and vice versa. 24 To formulate this in terms of the study of Enlightenment: rather than attempting to establish the sexist meanings of proposals for modernity by deciding 'what' they say 'about women', I will attempt to judge 'how' 

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23 See the chapter 'Gender - The sexual politics of a word' in Haraway 1991. She discusses this theme, in the context of her discussion of the several conceptualizations of the gender division (which, by the way, has for a long time been feminism's proper representational issue).

24 Some of the material in this section has been published previously in Vega 1994.
significations of gender can be seen to come about in various discursive associations, and now and then resign to author and reader becoming indeterminate entities.

1.6 The gendered social.

Modern democratic societies are, compared with classical, premodern, or totalitarian ones, characterized by their differentiation of state and society. Social philosophers have often singled out the domain of 'the social' as modernity's most characterizing product. Hannah Arendt may be called their spokeswoman:

society, that is, .. that curious and somewhat hybrid realm which the modern age interjected between the older and more genuine realms of the public or political on one side and the private on the other. (1965, 122)

.. the emergence of the social realm, which is neither private nor public, strictly speaking, is a relatively new phenomenon whose origin coincided with the emergence of the modern age and which found its political form in the nation-state. (1958, 28)

Next to having been judged modern, this social realm has often been negatively evaluated. It is said to be the home of the masses, to mark the decline of political passion in favour of an interest in private daily activities, to be in a standing need of diagnosis of its pathologies.

The social, privileged object of social philosophy - modernity's philosophical discipline par excellence - is demarcated in two directions: on the one hand it is to be distinguished from the political, on the other from the natural. Beyond both demarcations solutions are being located, but - in the mentioned approaches - the social itself seems to constitute a tenacious problem, a domain with little hope for redemption. This section offers a reflection on how the conjunction of the social, political, and natural figures in feminist theorizing. In relating the stories of modern woman, the social, being the category proper to modernity, deserves special attention. One cannot escape locating 'modern gender' with respect to the social domain. Meanwhile, both politics and nature keep competing for attention.

The social is close to being, next to the denominator of social philosophy, also the denominator of feminist philosophy. The main feminist stake in the social lies in its virtues as a prolific analytical category. The word 'social' has, first of all, been essential to the notion of the construction of womanhood. It indicates that woman is not born a woman, but made one. A neutral

25 The social-philosophical and practical-political debate on the 'resurrection' of 'civil society', kindled by developments in former Soviet, Eastern European, and Latin American countries, has been one way of putting this insight again on the agenda of social philosophy and practical politics. Literature on this subject abounds, see for example: Keane 1988, Seligman 1992, Cohen and Arato 1992.

26 Next to Arendt, see e.g. Wolin 1960 (esp. ch. 9), Donzelot 1984, Honneth 1994.
subject is socialized into a female gender; the social denotes the construction, or production, of femininity - of the category of women itself. If modernity is about engineering, woman is one of its success-products (although its market value fluctuates). Women belong to the social, the man-made (or woman-made), not to the natural world. 'Socialization' denotes something bad if it is associated with moulding women into society's status quo; it denotes something positive when it points to the 'culturality', the susceptibility to change, of gender. 'Women' may either have mainstream societal, or feminist value. Thus, the concept of the social answers to the descriptive as well as the critical moments of feminist discourse: it serves the diagnosis as well as the critique of modern gender.

While the former application accentuates the disparate production processes of 'women', feminism has also seized on the concept of the social in its topographical sense. Feminist philosophers might see, and have seen, the social as a terrain full of promises for women, rightfully signifying the quintessence of modern democracy. Pace Arendt's diagnosis of the 'anti-political' character of the social, according to feminist historiography the social opened up a field of activities and relationships in which the abstract principle of right is complemented by substantial intersubjective action. From its emergence in the nineteenth century on, the 'women's movement' has only in part been politically directed in a narrow sense; it has quite literally been predominantly a social movement. The social, in opposition to democratic politics, has offered women a public home, a terrain of activities; a terrain, furthermore, on which they, at first glance, appeared to be more welcome than on the political one. Women have, from all political directions, been more clearly addressed as representatives of the social, than as political subjects. (And already in the eighteenth century, gender is discussed in close connection with sociability. The assumption of the theoreticians of sociability is that the social order is dependent on, or a correlate to male-female interaction.) As far as these approaches indicate that the social enables a female vita activa, the concept assumed a central place in feminist normative discourse. In this perspective, the social does not counteract public life, but furthers it. Women are agents within, not just products of, modernity.

It has, meanwhile, often been noticed that the descriptive, critical and normative utilizations of the social easily conflict and produce an eternal tension within feminist theory between the notion of women's moulding by socialization and the ideal of their vita activa, between their determination and their freedom, between the insistence on being made a woman and the denial of the categorical existence of woman. The focus on the social explains woman's objectification, as well as her subjectivity, though only alternately. The rise to dominance of the social, in its various industrial and topographical senses, explains, in different wordings and in agreement again with an Arendtian diagnosis, modernity's success in constituting women as a mass - though not on the whole a willing one. Women have become a category moulded into a mass, and conversely only able to assert itself as a mass, or collectivity. It is this theoretical
impasse which in turn provoked the deconstructionist answer which only recognizes a purely idiosyncratic type of identity. Feminism either represents a women's movement countering - or organizing a new - socialization, or a critical stylized practice undermining modernity's massification. Or, in wordings that again enact a dialectic of modernity, the social elicits a dialectic in which feminism turns modernity's proper domain into the very basis for redressing modernity's production of 'women'. The 'social' may indeed be perceived as exhaustingly covering feminism's raison d'être.

What about politics, then? Of course, ' politicization', like 'socialization', has negative as well as positive connotations, and produces similar theoretical tensions. Conceived of as either the domain of the state, or of the public sphere (in which citizens are supposed either to support or counteract government policy), it has had a rather immediate normative application. Radical feminist political theory (whether by Kate Millett, Catherine MacKinnon, or Carole Pateman) has insisted - convincingly so - on the intertwinemment of politics and sexuality in state and public sphere, criticizing the 'narrow' approach of politics in reigning political science, or the ideal-typical public in theories of civil society. Their notions are (more or less unwittingly) supported by an ample historiography (whether of an Althusserian or Foucaultian kind) on the several 'politics of the personal' conducted by modern states. In these approaches, modern politics appear to have contributed in a mainly negative, disciplining sense to gendered subjectivity. Politics here is a concept used for illustrating the hold of patriarchal culture. It is intuited as either a domain breeding discipline, or an alienating production process. We find the word 'political' very positively connoted in the promise of a feminist politics, and then the topographical as well as economical associations with 'politics' are abandoned for a 'broad' conception of politics as any kind of contesting activity. Meanwhile, whether negatively or positively charged, politics is - rather conventionally - seen as a byproduct of social power. Politics face the social either as a hostile 'domain' from which management and discipline of the social are to be expected, or as the simple result of a socially rooted struggle over subjectivity. Even if politics have, for internal purposes, been conceived of in its broad sense, a less secondary view of its relation to the social has not followed through. Politics are approached from a sociological bias: it is supposed to reflect some 'truth' extracted from the social.

By now, feminist politics are seen to have suffered under the very notion of the socially based identity of women - see the debates on whether or not feminist politics depend on acceptance of a 'really existing' category of women. Doubts on this point have led 'difference' in time to succeed 'identity' as the proper ontological ground for a feminist politics (which, by the way, parallels developments in the broader field of the theory of democracy). Simultaneously, the notion of women's constitution as a 'mass' has given way to the notion that modernity did not constitute 'women' as a mass, but rather induced a true diaspora of gendered meanings. As Denise Riley
puts it:

The dizziness induced by seeing "women" named from the political left or the right in a morass of opinion, journalese, sociological observation, or family-policy statement, will be familiar to anyone immured in libraries and archives. (1992, 122)

It is generally left undecided whether this new insight corresponds to new empirical developments in society or is due to improved hermeneutical dealings with the same sources that formerly were read as producing massification of gender, that is, whether the character of modern gender has changed at some point in time, or was grasped inadequately all along. (It could also again illustrate an irony residing in the texts.) Usually it is presented as simply resulting from developments internal to feminism (due to criticisms which complicate intuitions of gender on the basis of class, colour, sexual or national identity). While the catchword is no longer identity but difference, politics is still seen as a derivative of socially constituted subjectivities. The prolific uses that feminism could make of modernity's concept of the social have enabled this to turn into the sole foundation of a feminist politics; in other words, the hold of socialization notions of gender (or even: the successful scientification of gender), has somehow led to a depoliticized understanding of feminist politics.

'Politics' has been understood as a domain either to be entered or resisted, or as the ensemble of all actions that happen to be the performative effects of feminist subjectivities constituting a political field in their sudden capacity of autonomous agents. The political is either as a domain strictly demarcated from the social - where sexual politics construct social identity, or is seen to be the mere effect of agency sprung from the social - with feminist politics then being made up of anything a feminist chooses to do. Politics is either a bad or a good thing, precluding or resulting from female agency. Politics, then, somehow gets lost as a theoretical perspective that could furnish feminism with a resource for normative judgement. It eventually is the social which provides the normative ground for political action, with a socially generated subjectivity informing political action. Feminism, of course, is felt to 'be' thoroughly about politics, but grasping the adequacy of feminist political practice has often been felt to be dependent on sociological insights. One might, however, be both nominalist and feminist, that is, combine the notion that 'women' exist as a linguistic category with the notion that this insight does not endanger but forms precisely the basis for feminist politics. It then is imperative to transcend 'social realism', with its vulnerable view of authorization, and to try figuring out what exactly feminism is to reap from modernity's enabling contingency.

To this end, we are to note that the observations above find counteraction in another important denominator of feminist politics. Feminist analytics dispose of a powerful tool in the slogan 'the personal is political', which traverses and complements both economical and topographical approaches. The slogan restores to feminism a certain theoretical independence of the power social identities exert over politics - which is the ultimate problem Arendt attempted to
pinpoint. It replaces the puzzlement about a theoretical impasse on how to conciliate incompatible truths about women with an inquiry into the modern politics of representation. It addresses the intricacy of the representation of experience in terms of modernity's domains. The slogan cleverly avoids an essentialist approach of gendered life as socially 'rooted', stressing the contingency and modulation of discourse. It manages to bypass moot normative choices for the proper domain for the good life. For social and political theories like liberalism or republicanism, the normative alternatives often appear to be dictated by an internal logic of their theories. They are trapped in having to locate freedom in either private or public, either social or political, either aesthetical or political life. Feminist political theories building upon these heritages often end up in similar deadlocks. The slogan outwits such self-imposed reductionism, and serves a feminist heuristic capable of exposing sexist a priori's in the very demarcations. Its equation is as bold as it is ambiguous, and displays acute insight into an ironic modernity; it thus challenges to inquire into linguistically mediated experience of identity or topographically allotted existence.

Through the slogan feminism recovered a trait of modern political theory that may allow for circumventing its sociological deadlocks. If feminism's social activity is about realizing competitive knowledge claims in the context of a scientized social life, then its stake in the political may be designated as those moments in which a sensitivity to ironic linguistic practice instead of scientific criteria is preserved, and an awareness of the necessity to act and decide in the face of undecidability is articulated. If feminism can be said to have been predominantly a social movement, it is not just that it has been primarily oriented towards the social domain, but that it always risks gravitating towards social passions (affirmations of one or other content of subjectivity) instead of a political one. If feminism wants to delineate a specific conception of 'the political' in the face of the gravitational forces exercised in modernity by 'the social', this passionate sense of the political could appeal to, and be taken as the denominator of, a feminist approach of politics. It will be feminism's counterbid to modernity's troubled desire for 'modern women'. Political passion, then, entails the safeguarding of reflection on and balancing of the relation between the contingent linguistic foundation of feminism's proper assertions (as well as those of relevant others), and feminism's predicament to enforce, on this very basis, authoritative positions from which the struggle for social recognition may be joined.

As has already been touched upon, with respect to the demarcation of the social and the natural, science figures as an important actor in the politics of representing gender. Modern science makes it its business to inform after, fragment, and re-construct wo/man as a natural and social phenomenon. Science is a social practice exemplifying a politics of construction merely by being

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27 See e.g. the discussions provoked by the work of Jean Bethke Elshtain, or 'conservative feminism' in general, or the 'Antigone discussion' with contributions by Elshtain 1983, Dietz 1985, and Hartouni 1986, in which the positions, represented a bit crudely perhaps, boil down to having a female world of private values deliver the model for a public world, or vice versa.
what it claims to be, by 'being in action', by its 'will to know'. It is not merely actor among others; it has a privileged position in setting the parameters of the knowledges informing the representation of gender as natural, social, or political. Recent feminist science studies have translated the so-called 'sex-gender debate', on the ways 'social' gender refers to 'natural' sex, into a debate on the representation of gender as a natural or a social category. "Biology has tended to denote the body itself, rather than a social discourse open to intervention." (Haraway 1991, 134) Donna Haraway has with her work on biological science forever changed our perception on the problematic relation of sex and gender, which for a long time has dictated the terms of feminist theorizing. As 'biological sex' can no longer be comprehended as the counterpoint to cultural construction, but should be understood as being shaped and known through the discourses of natural science, we have become acquainted with the insight into the impact of the 'scientifization' of modern life on modern representations of gender. The 'naturalization' of gender has taken place within these contexts of the production of scientific stories on organisms - animal, personal and social.28

Meanwhile, modern science is not the sole pretender to possession of our bodies and minds. We may remark that gender has not become an object only of scientific knowledge and that scientific regimes of knowledge are not the only organizing devices of modern knowledge. Haraway's insight into the ways in which modern scientific knowledge on nature has shaped the representation of gender may be extended to a similar project undertaken by modern philosophy (or, for that matter, by literary projects, or popular politics). Philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries precedes scientific practice in producing knowledge of modern subjects. Political and social philosophy have coined the 'nature' of modernity, while, interestingly, foregoing the later scientific claims to factual truth.29 Modern philosophy up to the end of the eighteenth century does employ explanation as a mode of knowledge, though not by appealing to 'facts', but rather by appealing to 'fictions'. It has literally invented natural men as the main agents of political theory. Subsequently, its main project was squeezing these modern subjects into modern society. It is this combined philosophical and scientific program intending the invention of a natural modernity, which informs feminist theory. The shift within current feminist theory from explanatory or positivist discourse to argumentative or illustrative discourse, seems to reflect a movement in reverse compared with this historical succession of styles of reasoning. The mode of theoretical discourse of postmodernism appears to have a surprising affinity with Enlightenment philosophy.

In the face of the invention of a natural modernity, feminist theory has proclaimed as its project, to borrow a formulation of Haraway, to contest the naturalization of gender in multiple


29 Of course, it has often been demonstrated that science provided models for argument, as e.g. natural science is said to have done for Thomas Hobbes. In chapter II I will argue that natural rights philosophies can be read as 'foundationalist' theories, epitomizing the cliché of modern thought's epistemology, as well as narrative approaches of human life.
contexts of knowledge. However, we should acknowledge the extent to which regular modern science and philosophy themselves have been programs which culturalized nature in order to invent 'modernity'. If we want to make visible the complex complicities between feminist theory and regular political, social, and scientific theory, we need further reflection on the conceptual matrices within which modern regimes of knowledge invented gender. Hence, feminist theory might proclaim as its project to contest the naturalization, as well as the socialization, or the politicization of gender.

Denise Riley (1988) thinks that the category of the 'social' itself became 'feminized' from the eighteenth century onwards. It became the object of research and engineering; it became the Other for modern man, who faced the social as something to study and mould, and who constructed his a-social (political, scientific) subjectivity accordingly. Her analysis of the 'feminized social' certainly holds a point in several respects. However, modernity's compulsive gendering is not exhaustively captured by the singular phenomenon of the feminization of the social. Rather, all mentioned categories of modern existence were conceptualized in ways that tried to account for (read: invent) the gendered meanings that complicated all attempts to represent human accomplishment as artefact. Tracing the manifold inventions of modern subjectivity, in which gender gyrates, induces dizziness. Modern wo/man was from the beginning a monster in gendered respect, constantly trying to get a grip on a gendered identity that could dissolve as soon as s/he changed philosophical perspective, or domain, or mode of representation. Modern humanism appears to have been a counter-factual notion from the beginning. Modernity has been a roller coaster to gendered subjectivity, as it has been to several other elements of identity. Trying to realize a 'sexually democratic humanism' (Riley) is not so much a question of opposing an easily traceable male-identified humanism. It rather denotes the project of establishing continually the meanings that float in the intricate fabric of modern times, which cross perspectives, domains, and genders, use several mechanisms of representation, and constantly escape final definition.

Gender's typical modern connotations stem from its becoming cast in terms of the political and social philosophy from the seventeenth century onwards. Representing modernity meant inventing modern humans (generic, masculine, and feminine), alongside modern politics, society, and art. Modern humanism has, in fact, gendered its generic 'man' from the word go. Its agenda dealt with hybrids, gendered/generic beings, rather than universal Man. What would or should modern men and women be like in the modern state and modern society? In which senses do we think them properly represented as gendered? What origin or telos should we subsequently provide them with? As I stated above, this study will not be principally concerned with the Darstellungen of gender. Rather than gender-images, the Vertretungsmatrix of modern modes and

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30 That no generic humanity is at the core of modern thought, is a point easily passed over by authors like Stephen Toulmin and Bruno Latour, who both still think in terms like 'human' versus 'nature', or 'human' versus 'things', when characterizing and dissecting modern thinking.
locations of the representation of gender is explored in this study.

The most provoking contribution of Riley’s study of the category of gender in modernity is possibly her notion (which I formulate in my own words) that it is not the ‘naturalization’ of gender, but rather its ‘culturalization’ or ‘socialization’ that forms the quintessential problem of modern thought and life to feminist theory. Perceiving gender to be an artefact, instead of a natural category, is therefore not the solution which delivers a one-way ticket to feminist utopia or a normative alternative. Far from being a solution, it formed part of the new problem. The notion of gender as an artefact was implicated in the very beginning of modern constructions of gender.

Keith Baker (1990) has formulated the change that the revolutionaries of the French revolution tried to establish in terms of their theory of representation. They were employing a tradition of thinking about representation that had taken shape in the last decades of the ancien régime and changed the concept of political representation into one of ‘social representation’. Baker sees this social representation as centred around the aim of representing social interest on a local or provincial level. I want to expand Baker’s notion of the change of the vocabulary of political sovereignty and identity into one of social interest to a broader notion which encompasses not only interest, but rather the more general problem of the representation of modern identities in the social field. This broader notion of social representation, and the general intuition that a characteristic problem of modernity lies in its ‘socialization’ or ‘culturalization’ of gender, together start off the elaboration in the following chapters of a perspective on modernity in which the representation of gender is carried out on the different levels on which artefact was thought to play a role: politics, the social, the personal, aesthetics.

1.7 Recapitulation and introduction to the following chapters.

Let me briefly recapitulate the above and state step by step the general motives guiding the following essays on Enlightenment discourses. I have addressed the presumed opposition between modern and postmodern concerns as a product of certain hermeneutic partialities, viz. a peremptory reading mould for ‘modern philosophy’ which has it caught in repetitive narratives varying the theme of its dualist structure of thought. ‘Modernity’ is a token singular, nowadays functioning largely to provide a contrast to postmodern theory, and having become a code-word for what actually is a heterogeneous ensemble of diverse philosophical proposals for understanding and organizing complex democratic market societies. I have ventured that the ensuing receptions of ‘modernity’ which either seek to embrace or supersede it both miss the clues the very texts of the modern canon - traced to Enlightenment sources - provide for debates analogous to those generated within present-day postmodernism. In order to circumvent either
'grand theory', a space has to be cleared for addressing the ambivalences pertaining to modernity's proper texts.

Postmodernity's (equivocal) claim to have 'bent gender' appears to be heir to long-standing philosophical efforts to board signification processes of gender which neither have an ulterior foundation at disposal, nor can be arbitrarily engineered at will (that is, which are 'contingently and agonistically determined'), and which face the epistemic irony resulting from modernity's proliferation of knowledges about gender. The claim, meanwhile, forms a rather oblique variant which tends, in the wake of the postmodern celebration of 'local knowledges', to disengage its subjects from the very heterogeneous matrices of modern life postmodernity professes to have reconquered on the 'grand narrative' of - particularly - Enlightenment. Postmodern critique has itself turned into a 'metadiscourse' subordinating and disparaging philosophical conceptualizations and critical assessments of multifaceted experiences of dominance in interlocking - rather than severed localized - practices, domains, and styles of knowledge. Revisiting Enlightenment may serve to safeguard various astute conceptual frameworks for and criticisms of these experiences. An inevitable 'metonymical labour' is performed in representing 'modern women' which evidences the societal and linguistic bondages of the representation. The profuse history of precisely this labour reveals, and can foster, an ongoing invention of ourselves as indeterminate albeit historically engendered subjects.

The mentioned clues accounting for 'postmodern' moments within modern texts then concern: first, the problematic of contingency, with respect to the conditions and possibilities of social life and of signification processes of gender; second, the problematic of a modern epistemic irony, here mainly relevant to knowledge accounting for and embedding experiences of gender; third, the problematic of representation in the sense of Vertretung, that is, a concept of representation which does not denote a 'mirroring' of reality, but the very paradoxical process inherent in re-presenting a world which simultaneously does not already exist somewhere 'beyond' the representation; fourth, the problem of the gravitational forces exerted by modernity's 'social', which have specific relevance for feminist theory, and moreover pose the concomitant task of tayloring a conception of politics to feminist interest in articulating critical knowledges in the face of the defining powers of social identities and dominant social and scientific regimes of knowledge.

In thus theorizing a contingent problematic of modern gender, no longer bound up with a critique of dualist thought, we are invited to inquire into - as I have dubbed it - the modern politics of metonymmy gender is subject to, describing the ironic nature of modern knowledge, keeping alive a feminist political passion.

In Chapter II an alternative account of classical liberalism - usually seen as the exemplary discourse of western foundationalist universalism and scientized politics - will be presented. I will discuss the first indications of gender changing from a presumed natural category into an artefact
of modern political life. The development of modern natural rights and contract theory that started with Hobbes and Locke will here be understood as implying the development of modern theories of representation. Natural rights theory of the seventeenth century emancipated the body politic from notions of an either organically or divinely ordained society. It is argued that as the commonwealth is perceived as an artefact created by individuals conceived of as equal, the subjects which subsequently will inhabit the commonwealth are conceptualized as artefacts themselves. To Hobbes, the theatrical component of political representation is to rescue us from the nightmares of modern contingency.

I will conclude that the 'naturalist paradox' that from necessity informs natural rights theories proceeding from the notion of the state of nature, leads contract theory into theorizing implicitly or explicitly the contingent and artificial character of notions of gender.

In Chapter III I will address the configuration of aesthetical and political representation with respect to modern publicity. The notion of aesthetics is here disconnected from its standard opposition to politics, an opposition which leads some writers to make 'aesthetics' carry connotations of privateness and individual authenticity (Habermas), and other writers to make 'aesthetics' a means for escaping political theory, based since modern times on notions of mimesis and identity (Ankersmit). In this chapter, either 'alternative' is annulled by denying an original opposition of aesthetics to politics in modern political thought or practice, and by drawing attention to the several modes of representation that may inform either domain, instead of being confined to either 'aesthetics' or 'politics'. (The very notion of 'domain' itself being undermined by this operation.) The history of modes of representation is intertwined with the history of gender.

I will discuss the political practice of the salon and the cultural practice of rococo, both exhibiting characteristics usually associated with an 'aesthetical attitude'. I will reconstruct these combined practices as a 'privileged example' - from a feminist perspective - of a systematic-philosophical proposal for civic representation. In this reconstruction aesthetical modernity is seen as acquainted with postmodern alternatives to the 'identity-politics' of modernity, although this is done by way of pointing to a political practice of representation in the heart of this very modernity.

In Chapter IV I will discuss the alternative discourse of modernity which eighteenth century republicanism offers to sentimentalism. Present-day feminist historiography has castigated republican idiom for its repression or forgetfulness of private and bodily experience. However, in eighteenth century feminist texts, we find a translation of this discourse into a feminist discourse, which, while associating with republican idiom, is sensitive to and critical of the stern republican

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31 See Holland 1990, 12, on 'privileged example'; also Nauta 1984 and 1995 on 'exemplary situations' for social philosophy.
The main handle of this republican feminism on the republican perspective on modern politics, is the notion that republicanism does not carry the private to the political as sentimentalist discourse does: it proceeds the other way around and carries politics to private experience.

This clear break from the tenacious view on the direction of modern political representation, which is commonly assumed to proceed from the representation of private interest in the political domain, means an important turn towards a feminist intuition of political representation. Feminist republicanism was capable of developing a thoroughly political perception of gender.

In Chapter V David Hume's groundwork for a critique of rationalism will be discussed. In Hume's view, neither politics nor reason do or should determine social existence. This presents us with several intriguing questions. What happens when Reason is dethroned and emotive action takes its place? Will it turn out to be obvious that a new emancipation, a sceptical critique, and feminism appear in sight? How exactly does the emotive turn change the subject? What sentiment about - and in - modernity is conveyed in his texts? What happens when visions of gender are not excluded from philosophy, but are on the contrary conceived of as forming the heartbeat of the social; when, in other words, the representation of gender is conducted on the terrain of the social - as distinguished from the private or the political?

While appearing to have affinity with current feminist proposals, in this chapter Hume's contribution will be located in the descriptive value it has for understanding modern social life, rather than in any normative allure of its ‘social representation’ of gender.

In Chapter VI I will discuss several feminist receptions of Immanuel Kant. Kant is usually seen as the representative of a male modernity par excellence, an evaluation that squares rather well with the general philosophical consensus on the content and meaning of Kant's work. Nevertheless, in feminist debate sometimes a different Kant emerges. We can by now discern two paradigms in which feminists may read Kant. I will confront the several feminist critiques of Kant with Hannah Arendt's reading of Kant's aesthetical theory (the third Critique) as potential political theory.

I will conclude that paying attention to the ways awareness of gender oils the mechanisms of Kantian thought makes us susceptible to the social, ethical and aesthetical dynamics his work addresses. This insight allows a feminist reading of Kant, not in the terms of fixed dualisms of higher and lower forms of ethics, aesthetics and citizenship his work is usually associated with, but in terms of an attempt to conciliate political and aesthetical procedures of representation.
Chapter II. The Political Representation of Gender. Natural Rights Theory.

2.1 Nature found or staged. Foundationalism or narratio?

Natural rights theory is usually seen as the theory *par excellence* working with foundationalist argument with regard to political society. Classic liberal contract theory has, according to this reception, projected a universal humanity, characterized as consisting of originally (naturally) free and equal individuals, into modern times, in order to explain and legitimize a democratic approach of sovereignty. The notion that natural rights theory, and hence classic liberalism, is the exemplary discourse of western foundationalism rests on two (in fact contrary) arguments: first, that it developed parallel with and fed on the 'scientific revolution' and was modelled on scientific discourse to fit political philosophy's pretensions to scientific - that is, a pre-eminently modern - status; second, that it postulated abstract characterizations of human existence in order to provide a legitimation of a society rationally ordered according to universally valid rules. Especially for *Thomas Hobbes* (1588-1679) it has become a philosophical commonplace that he aimed to model his political theory on natural science which subsequently accounts for his mechanistic philosophy.

I want to argue that the typification of modernity's exemplary political theory as presenting us with foundationalism and universalism overlooks the multi-formity of natural rights theory's fictional representation of the 'natural' human order. Natural rights theory need not be understood as (only) feeding on the scientific model of argumentation. It also feeds on prior traditions of humanist rhetoric and the narration of history. There are, in fact, several ways to understand the message the invocation of the state of nature carries. Being linked to diverse theoretical paradigms, the concept of the state of nature comes to be a multivocal device. Next to being read as representations of humanity's single root, states of nature may be read as being inhabited by a chaotic population, which appears, on closer scrutiny, hardly fit to illustrate some single universal human origin. Natural rights philosophies can be read as 'foundationalist' theories, epitomizing the cliché of modern thought's epistemology, as well as 'fictional' studies, providing narrative approaches of human life. From the latter approach, state of nature theory can be thought of as an offshoot of the genre of the political novel, having more affinity with, e.g., *Thomas More's Utopia* (1516, first English transl. 1551), than with post-Enlightenment political science. Put differently, instead of only reading state of nature theory as an *explicatory* discourse, with its foundationalist and legitimizing pretensions, it may as well be read in its *descriptive* mode, occupied with narrating a 'philosophy fiction' of modernity. States of nature, then, are stages, and modern human beings their *dramatis personae*.

The natural rights tradition does concentrate on the problem of origin - although the word

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'descent' would probably be more accurate. It does try to back political and social history with anthropological argument, a procedure close to the pitfalls of essentialism where it becomes a diligent search for true human nature. But, first, these arguments about origin do not necessarily read as would-be 'mirrors of nature' in the way of later realist fashion. Realism is probably a phenomenon to be traced back only to the nineteenth century. It has been pointed out that in its realist aspirations nineteenth-century historical thought was precisely objecting to the irony and skepticism of Enlightenment reflections on history and culture. (White 1973) Second, contrary to what the typification 'foundationalist theories' suggests, they do not only address an issue of diachrony - that is, of the maturing of mankind through its development from an original state of nature towards civil society, an approach fitting the image of state of nature theory as a precursor of later scientific 'evolutionary anthropology'. (Argued by Lemaire 1986) They address a synchronical issue as well: if civil society is to gather and order difference, how and where can we discern, describe and name the relevant differences? Of course the theorists' arguments lead to all sorts of normative and ideological convictions.³³ But, stripped from their normative conclusions, instead of a proto-scientistic 'evolutionary anthropology' these texts lay bare a 'gay science of anthropology'. This is not, like the former, about ontological truths, human origins, or progress: it inventorises the fantasies, fears, hopes, and needs the prospect of modern social life calls up and whatever points of support for any of these can be found in Christian, Antique or other literary traditions, or in accounts of the explorative expeditions into Indian cultures. It aims to create, by means of a fictional anthropology, a historical perspective on the modern subject - this most cherished artefact of modernity. We may dub it a genealogical history of this subject - a history confronting the absence, not tracing the essence, of its identity. Feminist critique of classic liberalism has predominantly been directed towards its foundationalist attributions. It has concentrated on the mechanisms of exclusion implied by the foundationalist approach of political order and action. The critique of its 'scientific' ideas on mankind may be summarized as pointing out that the universal individual turned out to be a European man, in democratic theory as well as practice: classic liberalism, in lightly assuming the universality of warring or possessive, and in general the self-interest seeking characteristics of human existence, offers few handles on female existence or feminist political and social theory. Its critique of how its universalism implies the exclusion of women concerns their exclusion from the postulated equality, or alternatively the exclusion of their difference by the very assumption of equality.³⁴ Put differently, feminists have criticized the state of nature both as a factual and as a counterfactual situation: it is criticized

³³ See Schochet 1975 for an excellent analysis of the possible backgrounds or applications of theories of the state of nature: anthropological, ideological, normative.

³⁴ For example Cavarero 1992 on natural rights theory: "Women are either excluded from knowledge, rights and politics, or else admitted and homologized." (39)
alternatively as a bad description, or a misbegotten ideal. They have argued that, in e.g. Hobbes' case, the premise of mutual war denies the existence of other, equally 'natural', styles of conduct; or that the presupposition of universal natural equality is a useless myth, unable to deal with the noises of social or cultural inequality that inevitably will intrude on it.

Both forms of criticism boil down to pointing out that classic liberalism insufficiency deals with the empirical world, that it obfuscates its very empirical realities. They thus are part of an important, broader body of critique dealing with the very empirical bases of state of nature narratives. Several interpreters have endeavoured to demonstrate that depictions of the state of nature actually represent, not an abstract universal ontology, but existing and circumscribed social realities. Confining ourselves to Hobbes, they have found his state of nature to represent respectively capitalism (MacPherson 1962), patriarchy (Schochet 1975, see also note 35), and the non-European, 'uncivilized' world (Lemaire 1986). However, if we stress the narratio quality of this type of political theory, the questions whether the narrative concerns fictive or real situations, or which reality dominates the picture, are oblique. We are then not dealing with positivist historicist documentaries, but with a novel genre of political novels, mediating whatever fragmentary knowledge of what is with intuitions about the ought of an as yet unknown future of modern times. With regard to a 'novel', one does not 'choose' its true relation to 'reality' - although one doubtless may establish the way empirical issues have been fictively transfigured.

The focus of the feminist reception of natural rights theory has usually been on tracing the measure in which classic (and modern) liberalism has been influenced or determined by remains of patriarchalism in political thought. I will first comment briefly on this attempt to expose classic liberalism's 'foundationalism'. Contrary to the notion that liberalism's effort at foundation has been tainted by traces of prior patriarchalist theory, one can defend the position that the problem signalled lies, not in a 'fraudulent' foundationalism, but in the very 'foundationalist' assumptions introduced by classic liberalism. The problem may be formulated as a problem of the logic of classic liberal thought, as a problem inhering in its - itself unfailingly 'modern' - argumentation from naturalism. A stubborn feminist commonplace exists that the quintessential problem of modern philosophy has been to - inconsistently - think of women as naturally different from men. But the early texts are aporetic, rather than inconsistent. It is a recurring point for discussion in modern natural rights theory whether the gendered characters should be seen as falling under the regime of natural equality, or instead as belonging to that of natural difference. On the basis of the hypothesis of the state of nature, of arguing from the natural origin of human beings, men and women may as well be thought equal, as different. The concurring notions that men and women may be naturally equal or naturally different together may be dubbed the naturalist paradox. A paradox which could not have not been a residue from

patriarchalism - the 'ancients' argued not from abstract nature but from social or cosmic hierarchy - but which is unique to the attempt of the 'moderns' to do political theory along new, secular lines.

It is this naturalist paradox which underlies the debate on equality versus difference within feminist debates from the eighteenth century onwards. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries women's movements have pleaded both positions (as did their anti-feminist counterparts, to complicate matters further). Meanwhile, though struggling with the same paradox, these later debates are no copies of early-modern natural rights argument. Instead of finding the picture reproduced, there seems to be a difference in the sense that something has been lost, as nineteenth century contenders translated the naturalist paradox into a struggle over natural gender identity, and the analytical paradox was fixed (and hence lost) in the process of making it into an issue of political struggle. I would claim that in the texts from the natural rights tradition the paradox is not so much solved by choosing one side or another and accordingly fixing some essential (gender) identity, but that the mentioned naturalist paradox keeps forming a part of an investigation into an even more embracing paradox. The human artefacts which political philosophy wanted to project into modernity were to be provided with some kind of historical context or origin - with a story about where they, or rather the very idea of them, originated from. The naturalist paradox with respect to gender becomes part of the problem of developing an understanding of the 'engineerability', or artificiality, of human life while simultaneously accounting for a descent of these conjured up figures. It is meaningless to say that women are excluded from the deliberations of classic liberal humanism: its philosophers on the contrary work with a postulated facticity of 'woman', already a paradoxical one, but not yet colonized by modern society's juristic or moral laws, or massifying history.

Liberal foundationalist argumentation thus is ridden with paradox from its beginning. It is, then, interesting to focus on the way the 'naturalism' of liberal humanism detaches itself from the reproach of scientism and itself opens up the possibility of an entirely different, and non-foundationalist reading: one in which we see nature not as postulated, but as continually staged, under ever different directions. The argumentative form chosen by these early theories of modernity to envision modern politics is not necessarily or merely serving explanatory purposes. Were nineteenth century contenders backed by the new phenomenon of scientific knowledge claims, bringing nature to politics by assembling 'natural facts' to inform political and social order, the early theories employed a narrative style to get their message across, and proceeded in the opposite way. To them, the natural still was political; nature was expressly construed from the standpoint of politics.

Let us juxtapose this genre from early modernity and texts from postmodernity. Linda Zerilli (1991) has interpreted Monique Wittig's novel Les Guérillères (1970) as belonging to the political theory tradition which works with "narrative invocations of life before contract", her fiction is "a form of political theory "by other means"." (7) Whereas, she states, the stories about the state of nature in contract theories either repress information on what gendered social order they implement, or assume
a naturalized category of sex, feminist theory or fiction should reveal the construction of the facts of sexed bodies. Les Guérillères, according to her, is to be read as an intervention in and challenge to traditional "foundationalist fictions of political narratives". Zerilli states that Wittig, through choosing a warlike narrative form and the untraditional narrative strategies of "displacing the unitary status of the speaking subject" and "disrupting the reader's sense of linear time and place", undoes "the univocal character of patriarchal narratives" (9). Furthermore, Wittig thus realizes a more thorough deconstruction of gender-identities than feminist counterbids to patriarchal fictions in terms of gynocentric selfrepresentations, or 'rememorations', which in fact continue in the same genre of foundationalist fiction. Wittig's writing does, however, suggest that there is pre-social, pre-gendered subject, that "women's history has been completely invented" (14), and eventually an unambiguous communal memory of oppression in the idiom of 'slavery'.

Zerilli argues the usefulness of a feminist narrative project employing feminist political imagination and foundationalist fictions of 'life before contract': it enables us to challenge traditional historical accounts of the past, discount the extent to which the category of sex is a linguistic one, and gives "the power to envision and create what might be." (16) This very formulation, however, indicates that, for all its innovative and explicit feminist accomplishments, Wittig's kind of feminist political fiction can be characterized, probably as a challenge as to its contents, but nevertheless as working within and elaborating on the genre of early modern fictional political theory.

Women and men are main characters in the state of nature, as staged by natural rights philosophers from the seventeenth century onwards. They people the state of nature next to, and sometimes outplaying, the characters of caretakers, protectors, children, practitioners of sexuality, fathers, mothers, cattle, invaders, kings, slaves, servants and others - and sometimes confusing several roles. Relating the fiction of the state of nature implied exploring the intuition that 'the' human being is not receptive to being formulated 'in essence'. According to Hobbes it did not make sense to talk about a human universality, other than by referring to a general existence of passion among human creatures. But this mere recording of a universally shared drive cannot account for substantial social exclusions of the type ascribed to foundationalist discourse on society. As the story unfolds, it becomes increasingly clear how little substantial let alone normative information this category of universal passion conveys with regard to the realities and particularities of human lives. Because of gender and its kindred or concurring identities, because of the different life-projects individuals design, the objects chosen for passion can differ greatly. Furthermore, human passion is necessarily articulated in language, therewith acquiring its characteristically human expression. Thus, for Hobbes, the only universal human feature to be recognized is linguistically mediated passion. And language, of course, distinguishes human life from animal life in producing differences, in their turn responsible for a discord which hinders the human 'multitude' from realizing its grammatically singular form.36 The faults

36 Hobbes discusses the concept of 'multitude' in e.g. Philosophical Rudiments, in: English Works.
ascribed to foundationalist discourse - whether forcing universality of values, goals, or conduct, or implicitly calling into being categories of socially insignificant 'others' - do not inhere in the narrations of nature: at least the Hobbesian one on the contrary shows how these come about only with the erection of a commonwealth - where natural language is to bow to grammar, thereby enabling and sanctioning civil life, 'unity', 'cohesion'.

Hence, in substantial respects, humankind could only be approximated: by invoking specific representations of the roles of the pre-political human being: the human-in-plurality, the human-in-multitude. The project of inventing natural human identity, to which the hypothesis of the state of nature was instrumental, has never been extricated from a specification of human identities. More precise, the narrative demonstration of the natural basis of a modern humanism would relegate the formation of human identity to the social contract. Prior to construction there was deconstruction. As narrative strategies, the states of nature do not found human identity, but rather offer catalogues of the artefacts the modern world would have to reckon and deal with. Here the complex problematics of modernity and the modern subject find their genesis. To drive home the point for (post)modern feminist political theory: the 'founding texts' of modernity are groping around on the new terrain of the artificiality of the genders that will inhabit the times its authors aimed to modernize.

I want to elaborate on this line of argument by discussing Hobbes' approach to 'the body politic' (§ 2.2), his nominalism and the moments his work professes a 'linguistic turn' in political theory (§ 2.3), his dealings with the problem of contingency in human life (§ 2.4), and his problematics of representation: the representational perspective to be discerned within contract theory (§ 2.5).

2.2 Hobbes: the body politic.

It is Thomas Hobbes who exemplifies the onset of modern thought in his reflections on the political quality of the body.

Nature .. is by the Art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an Artificial Animal. .. Art goes yet further, imitating that Rationall and most excellent worke of nature, Man. .. (T)he Pacts and Covenants, by which the parts of this Body Politique were at first made, set together, and united, resemble that Fiat, or the Let us make man, pronounced by God in the Creation. (1651, 81/82)

Here, nature does not function as a legitimizing foundation of the social order: if anything can be regarded as a founding principle, it is God - or man, when we talk civil society. Men are not like nature, but like God, who made nature. The credo 'let us make man' expresses the analogy between a nature created by God and a political order created by men, or, men as created by men. Men are

vol. II, 72n; De Corpore Politico, in: English Works, vol. IV, 126; Leviathan, 220.
artificers, as well as artefacts.

In *Leviathan*, Hobbes plays with metaphors: the cybernetical is a metaphor for the organical, and *vice versa*. The Leviathan, as the human body, is a mechanism of moving parts: "seeing life is but a motion of limbs, .. why may we not say, that all *Automata* have an artificial life?" Automata can be seen as somehow alive, just as life can be seen as mere automatic motion. He intimates analogy, rather than mimesis between nature and politics. And it is not man standing for nature; what is represented in metaphor - the metaphors of cybernetics and nature - is order, rather than men.

In his interest in men as producers and in men's products we may situate the quintessence of Hobbes' philosophical humanism. He is interested in civil order, rather than in nature; in civic law and right, rather than in natural law and right. On the other hand, his interest in men as products, as 'made', leads us to the anti-humanist, or more precise, constructionist features of Hobbes' philosophy. It leads our attention away from man as a founding subject, producing a state as a projection of his natural human self, and directs it towards the notion of men as objects of political intervention and construction. Power lies not just in 'men themselves', it exists as an independent field of research.

"Besides, I speak not of the men, but of the Seat of Power." (Hobbes 1651, 75) In his introductory pages to *Leviathan* Hobbes has invited us to think of politics in analogy with nature; from the preceding pages, his dedication of *Leviathan* to sir Godolphin, it becomes evident that he does not intend this project as a naturalization of politics. The problematic of the body politic attunes us to the primacy of politics, over and against supposed non-political domains of nature or knowledge, in Hobbes' thought. It is not men, the incidental holders of authority positions, that are central to his discourse, he warns, but the place that has to be occupied by politics, in the construction of the commonwealth, and, we may add, in our knowledge of social life. We can distil from his intuitions of the body politic interesting food for thought with respect to the concept of 'embodied thinking', which currently pervades postmodernist and feminist language. According to Hobbes, the body does not generate language of its own accord, and it certainly does not dictate values (like good and evil; justice and injustice). Solitary man, unacquainted with language and hence sociability, cannot know values: only social man does. There is no language based in the body, only civic language: the language of social (= grammatical) rules, of the law. The natural body has needs, but no language,

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37 Tuck treats the lack of interest in *ius naturale* as a feature of Renaissance humanist thought. "What was important to (humanist lawyers) was not natural law but humanly constructed law: not natural rights but civil remedies. .. (T)he humanists were interested mainly in the laws which human societies imposed on themselves - the *ius gentium* or the *ius civile*, both bound up with civilisation." (33/34) He does not pursue this line of thought with respect to seventeenth century Hobbesian theory. Wolin remarks that Hobbes was not primarily a product of the scientific revolution of the early seventeenth century, but of the humanistic renaissance of the sixteenth century. (1970, 13)

38 "Justice, and Injustice are none of the Faculties neither of the Body, nor Mind. If they were, they might be in a man that were alone in the world, as well as his Senses, and Passions. They are Qualities that relate to men in Society, not in Solitude." (Hobbes 1651, 188)
other than the unreflected utterings of mental discourse. Language does not present, but re-present bodily existence. Our embodiedness cannot guarantee truth, as long as it functions outside the realities of civil life. Embodied existence is what the social order will have to mediate. The natural body will have to become a political body in order to be capable of representing itself, or will by definition become one in doing so. It only 'speaks' or 'communicates' if it succeeds in understanding itself as artificial body. If nature insists on 'being itself', it denies the representational act implied in expressing itself through language. What is more, according to Hobbes, this is tantamount to performing a self-effacing, life-threatening anti-politics, because the natural body, to survive at all, is dependent on its location in a political context. The body politic stands for the necessary substitution of the natural body for an artificial body no longer subordinate to the fuss, bother and danger of nature's solitude, but subject to the possibilities granted by becoming a political agent.

Within feminist philosophy a project of 'embodied thinking' has been proposed over and against traditional Platonic and Cartesian philosophy, and often including opposition to classic liberal, or 'modern' thought. The body, in dualist thought, is shown to be shorthand for the realm of emotion, instinct, passion, value, women. (See e.g. Bordo 1987; Scott 1988; Braidotti 1991) To position a philosophical notion of 'embodied thinking' as counterbid to an 'unembodied rationalism' of classic liberal thought might, however, run into self-defeating conclusions if it is blind to the problematic of representing bodily nature as addressed by, for example, Hobbes. His work turns out to alert to a peculiar difficulty in formulating the project in opposition to 'modern thought'. The proposed notion itself is, in point of fact, closely allied to Enlightenment notions themselves. Londa Schiebinger (1989) argues that up to the Enlightenment, women could consistently symbolize science and knowledge because it was the soul that was thought of as feminine and hence male scientists could seek to unite with her in creative union. From the second half of the eighteenth century, (medical) science started to sex the body and see causality between body and psyche, and physical difference came to account for and legitimate social difference. Thomas Laqueur (1990) has argued that a 'one-sex model' from antiquity, in which woman's body was no ontologically distinct category and gendered selves lived a nuanced cultural history, that is, a model that saw no intrinsic relation between gender and body, prevailed up to the Enlightenment. "Historically, differentiations of gender preceded differentiations of sex." (62) Naturalistic views according to which the body could convey culturally relevant information - on human, or even gendered existence - were developed only in the course of the eighteenth century. Natural rights theorists had to account for a gendered cultural order in the face of an original state of genderless bodies. 39 According to Laqueur, the articulation of the modern two-sex model in which "the

39 Authors from all political persuasions could indeed subscribe to the (Hobbesian) principle of sex equality according to natural law. Laqueur's thesis is nicely illustrated by the words of a Dutch conservative author on Batavian civil rights, Dirk Hoola van Nooten (1747-1808). He wrote that, although natural rights are equal for all and do not give men any rights above women, because of social experiences with gender difference, "civil law has called into being the natural distinction between men and women." 1793, 140.
battleground of gender roles shifted to nature, to biological sex" (152) was not due to science, to specific discoveries of biological facts - its "context was politics" (152). As Chris Schilling (1993) comments, it was only "during the eighteenth century [that] it gradually became taken for granted that the body provided access to uncontestable knowledge about both individuals and society." (44) There thus exists a specifically modern project of embodied thinking, enmeshed in scientific and political attributions of (gendered) meaning to, and from, body - a project from which the feminist one will have a hard time to extricate itself. When Hobbes casted the 'communicating' body within a public and linguistic context, he astutely grasped the imperative parameters for a modern political philosophy - in distinction to either a political or natural science - of embodiedness.

Besides challenging the naïveté of introducing an unmediated bodily existence into political order, Hobbes' reflections invite elaborations of the tasks which the body poses for politics, complementary to those traditionally recognized: next to seeing the body as invested with sovereignty or as the legitimation of interest, it is, by Hobbes, invested with vulnerability. Hobbesian theory is not an unlikely reservoir for formulating a "politics of need interpretation", in which "the focus of inquiry is not needs but rather discourses about needs" (Fraser 1989, 162). Of course, Hobbes never envisioned the possibility of a solution other than the one of a single political centre arbitrating and authorizing such interpretation. A Leviathan cannot double for a democratic welfare state. Nancy Fraser (1989) astutely comments that in the modern welfare state for the political interpretation of "runaway needs" - needs broken free from naturalized definitions within economic or domestic discourses and thus from de-politicization - the historical specific arena of 'the social' is the necessary condition. Social or public arenas have to be constructed to provide new homes for the runaway needs where they can find novel, political articulations. Therefore, "a focus on the politics of need interpretation requires a model of social discourse". (164) This is not a Hobbesian option, as in Hobbes' self-proclaimed 'civil philosophy' there is no ground for a social, only a political discourse. Nevertheless, he does state the problem and necessity of 'de-privatizing' the body's vulnerability and indigence: the problem of constituting bodily existence as a political existence.

To prevent seeing Hobbesian 'bio-politics' as effectuating only privatized 'docile bodies', it is further necessary to stay attentive to, first, his own theory of both language and politics as acts of representation, and second, the 'missing domain' in Hobbes' thought of the social, which may, potentially, counteract the privatization or depoliticization of knowledge of the body. To formulate these two points as a single problematics: we should inquire into the conceptual possibilities of social representations of the body, whether generic or gendered, his work offers.

2.3 Narration and nominalism.
It has often been demonstrated that science provided models for natural rights argument, as e.g. natural science is said to have done for Thomas Hobbes. This philosophical commonplace (especially so from the side of postmodernism) is, however, subjected to frequent interventions. Next to the alternative theoretical traditions addressed in § 2.1, Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer (1985), in their comparison of Hobbes and Boyle, also argue for a rather different characterization of Hobbes' position. They defend the view that Hobbes aimed at a very different philosophical practice than did the natural philosophers, and disagreed with the scientific procedures practiced by the experimentalists.

But this community was not a society of philosophers. In abandoning the philosophical quest, such a group was contributing to civil disorder. It was the philosophers' task to secure public peace; this he could only do by rejecting the boundaries the experimentalists proposed between the study of nature and the study of men and their affairs. .. It was fitting that philosophical places should have masters who determined right philosophy, just as it was right and necessary that the commonwealth should have such a master. .. Hobbesian philosophy did not seek the foundations of knowledge in witnessed and testified matters of fact: one did not ground philosophy in "dreams". (337-339)

They conclude: "Knowledge, as much as the state, is the product of human actions. Hobbes was right." (344) They do assume Hobbes to be a foundationalist, though not in the established ways of science.

Although he has often been presented as one, in his discourse on men Hobbes does not present himself as a political scientist, nor has his argument to be presented as foundationalist. Hobbes, while often seen as a theorist who wanted to develop political science on the model of natural science, explicitly proposes an approach to the knowledge of human beings from a linguistic turn-like perspective. Men are phenomena to be read, like texts, and should be read instead of texts on men. Men should not be 'known', in the sense in which scientific idiom would pretend to knowledge, but be 'read', and be governed on the basis of a wisdom acquired about them, which proceeds by a, virtually proto-romantic, hermeneutics of horizon-merging.

That wisdom is acquired, not by reading of Books, but of Men. (1651, 82)

He that is to govern a whole Nation, must read in himself, not this, or that particular man; but Man-kind: which though it be hard to do, harder than to learn any Language, or Science; yet, when I shall have set down my own reading orderly, .. the pains left another, will be onely to consider, if he also find not the same in himself. (1651, 83)

The work of John Locke (1632-1704) too can illustrate how the idiom of natural rights theory cannot somehow be assimilated to the scientific idiom of the founding facts underlying social organisation. For example, Locke seeks recourse in hermeneutics, not in facts, when in Two Treatises of Government (1690) he ridicules "this strange kind of domineering Phantom, called the Fatherhood"
(1965, 179) which looms over contemporary political philosophy. He does not counter the argument of Robert Filmer (1588-1653) in Patriarcha (1680) on the inferiority of women by claiming that 'woman is not' like Filmer says she is: he does not insist on factual equality but instead pleads interpretative inaccuracy. No realist feminism is to be recognized in the Lockean attack on patriarchalism: not the real meaning of womanhood, but its representation is disputed. He claims that what Filmer says she is, is not said in the text he uses; he disclaims that Filmer had found textual evidence for his opinions, in this case in the Bible. He utilizes a textual strategy to make his modernity happen.

Sheryl O'Donnell (1979) has, in deviation from common feminist reception in the eighties, drawn attention to the rhetorical stance of Locke's work. Concentrating on An Essay concerning human understanding, in which Locke "abandons the rhetorical stance of authority used by many earlier philosophers" and is "(w)orking in terms of exploration rather than declaration" (152), she thinks that "(t)he immediacy, flexibility, and intimacy which characterized Locke's rhetorical style appealed to many Restoration and eighteenth-century women of thought" (153). Her approach counteracts the later feminist receptions of classic liberalism.

Locke's work, in fact, offers a beautiful example of non-foundationalist argumentation with respect to gender-discourse. He does not dismiss the Bible as a crucial text, but on the contrary scrupulously deconstructs authoritative claims to women's subjection on the basis of it. The reproach to Locke of foundationalism in this respect has been based on his formulation "there is, I grant, a Foundation in Nature for it" in discussing the wife's 'ordained' subjection to the husband. The reproach is simply odd as it passes over the many prior pages in which Locke labours this deconstruction. It isolates this part of the sentence from the context of argumentation, which expressly dismisses the deduction of human norms or laws from a 'curse' laid upon women, who may well seek remedy for the merely foretold (not ordained) sorrow and pain, God by the way having declared his Wrath against both men and women, and His words in any case being a rather far cry from granting seventeenth century political or familial authority to men. Finally, the reproach fails to notice and discount the subtle use of the indefinite article - Locke speaks of 'a' foundation in nature for the "Laws of Mankind and customs of Nations" which ordered the challenged subjection - an indefinite foundation is no foundation but merely one rhetorically established reference among others, a fact inseparable from values.

To argue for reading natural rights theory in a narrative, instead of foundationalist, mode finds support in the theory of signification to be found in this political theory. Hobbes' well-known nominalism forms a complication to first, his reception as a scientist of politics, and second, his reception as a foundationalist theoretician. As with his political theory, his theory of language invites being read in different ways. It has been argued that Hobbes had a simple theory of meaning, with words reflecting the mind's ideas - a typical seventeenth century approach that has long been superseded by our philosophies of language in which thought and language are more sophisticatedly related. But also
might be emphasized how his views of language and of politics are closely related, yielding a still relevant view of public discourse that cannot be summarized as serving the identity discourse often assumed to underly his authoritarian politics. In the realm of civic concerns, Hobbes approaches language as a practice of active representation, in which meaning is determined by a multitude of factors.

The names of such things as affect us, that is, which please, and displease us, .. are in the common discourses of men, of inconstant signification. .. And therefore in reasoning, a man must take heed of words; which besides the signification of what we imagine of their nature, have a signification also of the nature, disposition, and interest of the speaker. .. And therefore such names can never be true grounds of any ratiocination. No more can Metaphors, and Tropes of speech: but these are less dangerous, because they profess their inconstancy; which the other do not. (1651, 109-110)

When language pretends to mirror, Hobbes warns, it is least to be trusted. Men do not find in nature the categories which underlie social preferences. In the lines quoted, the representational problematic inherent in language-use is outlined, and worded as a problematic of Vertretung, not of Darstellung with a facile recourse to pre-subjective language. The words for self-representation especially appear least to be in controlled ownership, the representation of one's affects sentenced to untransparent discourses, social and subjective significations treacherously confused. Here, tropical language is brought into line with speech in general: Hobbes grants that metaphors do possess the virtue of being more straightforward than other practices of name-giving in revealing language's genuine, that is representational character. On a normative instead of analytical level, Hobbes judges the metaphorical use of words to be an abuse of language. In several places Hobbes warns against the use of tropes, because they "openly professe deceit" (1651, 137). In "Councell, or Reasoning" metaphor must be painstakingly avoided: to openly profess inconstancy in matters of debate relevant to public knowledge would be "manifest folly". Interestingly, Hobbes does not neglect the politico-ethical edge to men's linguistic predicament: we must be aware that in using language we do not reflect but represent the world, and we must never, in representing, intentionally mislead. In representing the world, we contribute to its meaning and thus its construction, which, however, also implies that we should not construct it arbitrarily. Hobbes intimates an imperative of accountability here, which excludes 'saying no matter what'. Put differently, while representation is aligned to construction, construction without representation must be out of the question.

Naming and identifying are thoroughly social actions, for they do not follow some spontaneous signification of nature. Men as language-users not only differ from animals because with

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40 Compare Hacking’s (1975) discussion of Hobbes' theory of language. Observing that Hobbes' "work on language is not peripheral to his 'republic'" (24), Hacking thinks that Hobbes' analysis of signification "is a shift to a communication-oriented behavioural theory of meaning." (22). I want to expand his remarks into a comparison of the ways in which Hobbes sees language as well as politics as problems of representation.
language they generate faction; they also differ from them because in employing language they actively construct their world. In civil life, language does not mirror a pre-linguistic reality: it calls its social reality into being.

I know that Aristotle in the first booke of his Politiques, for a foundation of his doctrine, maketh men by Nature, some more worthy to Command, .. others to Serve, .. as if master and Servant were not introduced by consent of men, but by difference of Wit. (1651, 211)

Hobbes' insistence that men do not simply find true categorizations, but rather actively make truth, does not just apply to the objects of social philosophy, but to those of natural philosophy as well. He does not offer a scientific solution to the nominalist condition, but an authoritarian one.

But no one mans Reason, nor the Reason of any number of men, makes the certaintie; no more than an account is therefore well cast up, because a great many men have unanimously approved it. And therefore, as when there is a controversy in an account, the parties must by their own accord, set up for right Reason, the Reason of some Arbitrator, or Judge, to whose sentence they will both stand, or their controversie must either come to blows, or be undecided, for want of a right Reason constituted by Nature; so is it also in all debates of what kind soever. (1651, 111)

Social reality is a linguistic product, as is natural reality. Just as lay-men consent to social meanings, so do scientific researchers consent to meanings through their, as Hobbes claims, rather shaky procedures of verification (see the above quoted argument from Shapin and Schaffer). True and false, like master and servant, are attributes of speech, not of things. Nothing in Hobbes' work, we may venture, precludes the addition of 'man' and 'woman' to his nominalist statements, in which speech, not nature, attributes meaning.

Nevertheless, feminist criticism has often argued that modern contract theory yields its modernist conventionalism to naturalism, and its nominalism to a concocted realism, when it comes to position women. Hobbes in some places allows masculine prerogative to have a 'natural' basis. Should we conclude, then, that men and women 'in the last instance' are categories whose real essences are found in nature? Do these passages signify that 'in the end' Hobbes' approach of a politics for modern times is useless for feminists? I hesitate between two answers. On the one hand, it may be countered that such contrary perceptions seem to necessitate acceptance of the notion that natural rights theory opens up the simultaneous possibilities of two modes of reading it: one leading to foundationalism, another to narratio. On the other hand, we could remark that the very possibility apparently opened up by the text itself to read in it simultaneously existing divergent ontologies of gender, places the text outside foundationalist discourse. In § 2.4 and 2.5, I will further argue that we

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41 The most challenged passage being "men are naturally fitter than women, for actions of labour and danger". (1651, 250) However, as the context of this remark is Hobbes' discussion of the heritage of power either by 'express words', 'testament', 'custom', or in the absence of all these, the passage may be seen to underline how Hobbes sees gender differentiation as a problem emerging only where contracts become an issue. See for further discussion § 2.5.
may pursue Hobbes' occasional arguments that in gender-difference 'nature' is mirrored, while continue to assume the nominalist and constructionist perspective to apply to the category of gender, for his 'nature' is hardly a founding order, but figures as the realm of contingent existence without authority.

2.4 Authoritarianism and contingency.

In the dedication preceding the text of Leviathan, Hobbes announces his theory to aim for a middle of the road between "too great Liberty" and "too much Authority". The absolute contingency of the human condition which underlies the world according to Hobbes is responsible for Hobbes' conviction that authoritarian rule will ward off the dangers ensuing from men's enmity. The ultimate reason for obeying authority lies in the necessity to counteract contingency; absolute rule is no goal in itself, but rather a solution for want of alternative. Authority is the opposite here not of civil liberty, but of an ontological liberty understood as a specific feature of the modern condition - one stuck between the possibilities of and the limits to human engineering. A contingent condition, that is, which may have for its effect that, in the end, no one authorizes anything. Authority, and finally authoritarianism, is the Hobbesian answer to the contingent conditions of modern human action.

Meanwhile, the contingent condition of modern human life does not only invite conceptualization of authoritarian rule. Although Hobbes is often presented as the philosopher of authoritarianism, he has also been portrayed as the philosopher who has put human fragility and vulnerability at the center of his thought. (An ambiguity of position, by the way, which he shares with

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42 Hobbes, in his reflections on the differences between contingency, necessity, and freedom, remarks on the way in which contingency is often used to describe events or things of which the causality is not so much absent, as unknown. Not knowing their necessity does not, he argues, imply refuting their necessary occurrence, their causation in an unperceivable way, and so there is no logical opposition between contingency and necessity. Men's own will (which in itself is not willed by men) necessitates his - voluntary - actions. Hobbes might here unwittingly illustrate the quintessence of the modern problematic of contingency, caught between the enabling of and limits to engineering: unknown causation cancels demarcations of contingent and controlled occurrences. Likewise, voluntary human action may well be judged as necessitated, because enabled or steered by a non-voluntary cause. (Unwittingly, because Hobbes himself of course recognizes God as the last necessitating 'cause'.) See: 'Of Liberty and Necessity: a Treatise etc.', in: The English Works of Thomas Hobbes, vol. IV: "Now when I say the action was necessary, I do not say it was done against the will of the doer, but with his will, and necessarily, .. consequently every voluntary action was necessitated" (260); 'The Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance, etc., in: idem, vol. V: "a man was free, in those things that were in his power, to follow his will; but that he was not free to will, that is, that his will did not follow his will" (50-51). Compare also 'Of the Liberty of Subjects', chapter 21 in Leviathan: "Liberty and Necessity are Consistent: .. Actions which men voluntarily doe; which .. proceed from liberty; and yet because every act of mans will, and every desire, and inclination proceedeth from some cause, .. proceed from necessity. .. to him that could see the connexion of those causes, the necessity of all mens voluntary actions, would appeare manifest" (263).

43 See Jones 1993, chapter 2, for a similar argument. Compare also Pitkin's notion that
his predecessor in *realpolitisches* theorizing, Machiavelli.) Hobbes' treatment of the problematic of the body reveals a two-sided obsession. First, Hobbes is obsessed with discord: the discord between all which is unavoidable, as there cannot be a multitude which is not divided by an amount of 'private opinions'. A third term, the law, is needed to found a public opinion, and thus make the multitude into an actual singular. Next to the unavoidable discord between all, the body is also divided against itself. Through its passions, it puts itself in constant danger. The natural body cannot exist but as a body politic in order to survive and not become a 'carcass'. Hobbes' second obsession ensues directly from the first one, although it appears to be a bit out of tune after having represented bodies as automata or machines. Discord is such a threat because of men's bodily vulnerability. Danger to the civil order is, for Hobbes, not principally a problem of 'foreigners', but of modern citizenship itself. Civil society is not just attacked from 'outside' by 'strangers', but also - and as seriously - from within. In the state of war, everyone has a right to anything, "even to one anothers body". (1651, 190) "Bodily Fear" is the principal reason that people obey the laws. Hence, the politically most instrumental passion is fear: it inclines men least to break the rules. (1651, 343)

Hence, if Hobbes' *Realpolitik* concludes to an authoritarian solution, it hardly represents macho-politics. Fear, to Hobbes, is no sign of weakness or lack of character, but an understandable and respectable 'civil passion'. Fear is equated with love, in the sense that both mean: to honour and value. To value men's dignity, and accordingly human life, is essential to Hobbes' society, and this provides his political theory with a moral theory. Care, far from being relegated to the private sphere, is a task for the political realm. In this respect, the Leviathan is no stranger to either the civic humanist or the Burkean outlook on politics. The natural rights option is supplemented with an awareness of the substantive responsibilities of politics in view of the moral or bodily fragility of the represented (however authoritarian or conservative an elaboration this politics of care is given). Civil society implies the recognition of other people's subjectivities and may turn the fear between all into a respect and love for one's fellows. In foregrounding human fear and vulnerability, and understanding these as belonging to the complex of love, Hobbes shows himself to be a humanist, not just in a philosophical sense, but in a political sense too. Civil society should not just ward off the dangers of discord, by any (authoritarian) means available, but establish concord. The contingencies underlying modernity can

representative authority to Hobbes means having the right to perform actions as well as having the responsibility for the action. (1967, 18-20)

44 Di Stefano (1991) argues for seeing Hobbes' thought as reflecting a masculinist orientation to social life. She elaborates on Wolin's thesis that Hobbes stands in a tradition of 'epic political theory', to conclude that 'competition is an essential feature of epic heroism... It is this competitive and individualist quality of action... which marks Hobbes' own approach." (97) I agree with her estimation that Hobbes envisioned a 'risk-society', but think that there is a 'double vision' implied in this attention to 'risk', in which competitive individualism is weighed against provisions of justice and care as counterparts in the conceptualization of political order.

45 "To shew any signe of love, or feare of another, is to Honour; for both to love and to feare, is to value". Hobbes 1651, 153.
lead either way. *Leviathan* does not so much testify to the need or necessity for a firm foundation of the political order, but rather to the absence of such foundation for human action, creating the *horror vacui* of modern politics. By default of a foundation for human action, Hobbes searches in the principle of representation of the people by the sovereign, and the sovereign's responsibilities ensuing from this legitimating principle of representation, the guarantee for a political orientation towards justice and care. In chapter 30 of the *Leviathan* Hobbes discusses the responsibilities inhering in "the office of the sovereign representative": the sovereign should "cause Justice to be taught", through doctrine as well as example.

One might remark, however, that although in Hobbes' world view the body and its indigence have great centrality, and do inform the problematics of authority, it does neglect the differences between bodies. In view of the state of war, after all, "there is not always that difference of strength or prudence between the man and the woman, as that the right can be determined without War". Hence, a Hobbesian authority, while being erected in view of the general needs of the human body, has no business addressing bodily differences: it is impotent with respect to this feature of nature. But let us try another formulation: Hobbes' viewpoint that bodily differentiation is irrelevant to the legitimation or tasks of political arbitration, stems from his notion that there exists no natural foundation which could direct the translation of bodily differences into social values. As the human body possesses neither 'identity' nor essential 'difference' in the state of nature, nothing 'authorizes' its specified position in the social order but convention, that is, contingent circumstance.

One of feminism's most pressing concerns should be addressed when discussing the issue of finding authoritative solutions to the 'discord' or violence among human bodies. Hobbesian theory does provide an interesting conceptual apparatus to address sexual violence. His notion of the inevitability of civil authority in view of nature's contingencies leads Hobbes to draw the conclusion of a social contract for which the difference between consent and coercion is hardly relevant. Because of the perpetual threat of war where all are equal and equal author, that is, where political sovereignty is absent, the commonwealth by acquisition (by force) is as legitimate as the commonwealth by institution (by peaceful consent). This Hobbesian qualification that to contractual society the difference between force exercised by coercion and by consent is not decisive has not been lost on feminist diagnoses of modern society. In attempts to conceptualize the structural character of violence against women, feminists have shown legal or conventional demarcations between the realms of freedom or consent and force or coercion not to be applicable. Consent, in radical feminist as well as Hobbesian approaches, is not a concept bound up with democracy, but rather one that simply upholds whatever authority exists.⁴⁶ From this perspective, contract (whether of marriage, labour or politics) is indeed a

⁴⁶ See also Vega 1988 and 1995, where I argue, against radical and liberal feminist approaches of sexual violence, for a reappraisal of the concept of consent in comparison with the concept of self-determination, as the former can address more adequately the complexity of heterosexual power situations for women.
poor response to a life or dignity structurally threatened anyway. The feminist amendment to Hobbes' diagnosis is, of course, that the initial war of every body against every body all too often turns into a war of men against women. But feminist analysis concurs again with Hobbesian theory in its insistence that male violence towards women is not a natural, but a social fact - a problem of cultural representations of gender. Whether or not in the state of nature there is a generic, undifferentiated violence 'between all', there is a cultural and social contract to be held responsible for the differentiation or gendering of violence.

This notion that it is the social contract which generates gender-differentiation, is shared by feminists and Hobbes. As with Hobbes, in feminist theory the category of 'women' is judged uninteresting as a 'natural category'; it only appears in its specific massified meaning after contract. From that moment, the authority over children no longer belongs to the accidental caretaker, and the heritage of power or property becomes disputed between fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. The contract appears to function as a black box as warring bodies enter it, but 'women' come out of it.\(^47\) For women the contract offers, in point of fact, no real escape from contingent life, on the contrary. It is on this point that feminist theory has elaborated on Hobbes. To women, leaving nature and joining culture is not a solution, but a whole new problem. The moment they quit being natural persons and become social beings, the moment they should become subject to political representation, a paradoxical thing happens, which undoes the protection they might expect from an authority installed by contract.

Although Hobbes' contract approach is not at odds with (postmodern) feminist notions (no 'natural woman' enters it), it can insufficiently account for, and thus is a poor conceptual perspective for, the pressing issues for feminist social theory. Feminist theory, then, should investigate authority from both Hobbesian perspectives: not just as resulting from an authorization by contract, but also as resulting from the process of representation.

\(^47\) Although slightly different assessed, this does take the social contract to be a 'sexual contract', the concept introduced by Carole Pateman (1988). She has argued that the overthow of patriarchalism involved by natural rights theory resulted, not in the aspiration to power of a proclaimed abstract humanity, but in a new regime of masculinity in which no longer fathers, but brothers posed as representatives of humanity. (See also Flower MacCannell 1991) Modern women may certainly and exceedingly experience their symbolic order as a brotherhood. I do, however, think that between the regimes of the father and of the sons, state of nature theory constituted a period of 'philosophy fiction', in which, as in later psycho-analysis, the situation or processes preceding the moment of silent consent with society's rules were explored. Depictions of the state of nature then are inquiries into what we may call classic liberalism's version of the imaginary - to Freud the pre-oedipal state. Instead of victorious grown-up males, we find humbling accounts of modern humankind in the infant state. What is tested are men's emerging aspirations and desires to become kings or rulers of their own lives against the reality principle. Hobbes' majesty the baby is an anxious warrior, Locke's royal baby is an unrestrained interest-seeker; their states of nature relate of 'wild', pre-symbolic subjectivities not yet adapting to or negotiating with social and legal realities, and at a loss what to do with still nonsocialized genders. In an inversion of Lacan, we may even say that 'woman' only comes into existence when the symbolic order is enforced.
2.5 Female homo or persona. Contract or representation?

As has been mentioned in chapter I, Hanna Pitkin (1967) has pointed out that Hobbes finds an alternative to contract theory in his discussion of representation. The legitimization of modern politics is not just found in the social contract, but also in the notion of representation. These alternatives provide quite different options for feminist theory. The perspective from contract theory assumes the existence of natural persons who consent to the transfer of their natural rights to an authority wiping out their endangering natural differences. The perspective from representation theory, on the contrary, does not assume a natural identity underlying political subjectivity. It requires to expressly distinguish 'human beings' from 'persons'.

Hobbes' analysis of representation proceeds from the notion of a person, to a distinction between 'natural' and 'artificial' persons, and finally to the classifying of a representative as a kind of artificial person. (15)

Hobbes characterizes a natural person as someone whose words and actions are considered 'his own', and the artificial person as someone whose words and actions are not owned by himself, but by someone or something else. The natural person is an owner, or 

actor, acting by authority. Next to the modern notion of the natural person, who is a possessive individual, we thus have the modern notion of the artificial person, who is an acting agent.

The word 'actor' links political to theatrical, instead of natural, performance. Compare Hobbes' succinct statement: "So that a Person, is the same that an Actor is, both on the stage and in common Conversation; and to Personate, is to Act, or Represent himselfe, or an other" (1651, 217). All action is representation, and in all representation fiction is implied - the fiction inhering in the assumption of one's words and actions being authorized from elsewhere, and the fiction inhering in the definition of a person. Hannah Arendt (1963) formulates this distinction between the natural and the fictive person as one between homo and persona. She mentions the political metaphors in eighteenth century French revolutionary idiom which were derived, not from organicism as in the next century, but from the theatre - like 'tearing off the mask of hypocrisy', or 'tearing down the façade of corruption'. She comments on these metaphorical politics of the democratic revolution by discussing the etymology of the Latin word persona. Originally, it signified the mask actors used on stage.

The mask as such obviously had two functions: it had to hide, or rather to replace, the actor's own face and countenance, but in a way that would make it possible for the voice to sound through. At any rate, it was this twofold understanding of a mask through which a voice sounds that the word persona became a metaphor and was carried from the language of the theatre into legal terminology. The distinction between a private individual in Rome and a Roman citizen was that the latter had a persona, a legal personality. Without his persona, there would be an individual without rights and duties, perhaps 'a natural man' -
that is, a human being or *homo* in the original meaning of the word, indicating someone outside the range of the law and the body politic of the citizens, as for instance a slave - but certainly a politically irrelevant being. (106-107)

The concepts of ownership and natural persons are to contract theory what the concepts of acting and artificial persons are to representation theory. We already saw that the first idiom falls short when it comes to a feminist understanding of women’s predicament in modern times. The question for a feminist political theory is whether it should not abandon casting modern women within the naturalistic play of ‘equality versus difference’, and instead inquire whether modernity’s ‘women’ are more adequately to be conceptualized as *homo* or as *persona*.

It has been argued by feminist theoreticians that in seventeenth century contract theory, women are mere "auxiliaries to the commonwealth". In Hobbes’ depiction of contractual societies, women have hardly ever signed this contract: "for the most part Common-wealths have been erected by the Fathers, not by the Mothers of families." (1651, 253) According to Hobbes, it is expressly not ordained by nature, but a conventional practice that women do not enter positions of command. Conventions, of course, possess the virtue that they can be changed, but precisely for this, the contract appears to be an impotent means. It is meant to fix some things, not to provide a process in which they can be altered. In the Hobbesian version, it is remarkable that the veil of ignorance, which according to present-day political philosophers should allow for a just approach of political distribution, is not present before the establishment of a social contract, but on the contrary seems to stand for an ignorance introduced by the contract. Contracting into civil society wipes out whatever plurality of claims exists, creating identity out of multitude. In Hobbes’ state of nature, human beings are not at all ignorant of the differences between them: it is the conception of the contract which veils the problematic of differential positions vis-à-vis power. The Hobbesian contract announces women’s political invisibility by henceforth neglecting their specificities and interests, like all other specificities and interests, for that matter. In signing a contract, one’s original idiosyncracy gets contaminated by the supposition of a natural authorship common to all. This supposition, in turn, gets entangled in the naturalist paradox, requiring a decision on the misbegotten dilemma in which identity women should authorize: as human beings, or as women. A decision out of nowhere, as to (Hobbesian) nature, such identity or difference had been unknown, or at least unfixed.

Thus, contract thought stops where the important questions begin. From the perspective of representation, however, feminist theory can take up a far more promising point. Again, Hobbesian theory provides an interesting conceptual apparatus for feminist theory about gendered existence. Taking modern politics to occur in the field of representation, instead of revolving around contracts, involves the perception that it is not nature (in whatever guise), but culture that is accountable for problems of unequal citizenship. From the perspective of early modern political philosophy, the problem for modern women lies not in their ‘naturalization’, but in their facing an inescapable
'culturalization', that is, in their very existence as artificial persons in civil society. Modern subjects trying for their representation struggle with floating constructions of gender, which will unremittingly defy attempts to get a grip on them, as they naturally belong to the realms of contingency and freedom, instead of necessity or determination.

Classic liberalism calls into being two perspectives on democratic politics, or modern authority: they can be understood as an identity politics (whether practiced by the state or by 'new' social subjects), or as a politics of representation. Representative authority is Hobbes' most elegant solution to the specifically modern problem of the contingent basis of human action. Through becoming subject to, and of, political representation, we handle the exigencies of life in modernity. This conceptual framework allows us to see that, if injustice to specific subjects occurs, we must not blame some original position or carried identity that seems to attach to them, but the measure of their admittance into the processes of representation. Through contracts identities are generated; they are expected to mould 'unfounded' subjects into the social order. 'Contracts' thus invent nature and fixate the principles of reality. One contracts as a citizen, mother, female labourer, or wife: narrow identities unfit to answer for the complexities which will be encountered in the situation ensuing from the contract. 'Representations' allow us to start from the opposite direction: they are the practices through which democratic reality principles are either constituted or criticized. If women experience insufficient justice, or are insufficiently cared for, this eventually is because they are insufficiently perceived as authoritatively representing the world, others, or themselves - and not inherent in their accidental contractual choices: the result of one or other specific position as mother, academic, or cleaner. Hobbes lends us the means to formulate the specific tragedy of modern women: they are vulnerable members of the civic order where they have insufficient grip on the 'artificiality' of their persons. Where this is the case, they continue, as it were, to stand with one foot in the state of war. Their lack of civil status does not lie in their not being considered 'human', quite the opposite, as in modernity they are being considered homo. But neither their humanity, nor their contractual activities, are endowing them with sufficient political relevance. Shaky citizenship lies in the lack of control over linguistic or political practices of representation that would enable individuals to join in the theatre of political life.

In the next chapter, I will address the eighteenth century attempt to depict theatrical practices of representation as the opposite of political, bourgeois representation. We will encounter non-feminist as well as feminist sides in this controversy. It is precisely the 'theatrical' component of representation which comes to be constructed as abandoning us to the nightmares of modern contingency, instead of as rescuing us from it, as Hobbes intended it.
Can a history of modern women be devised from a consistently political or public perspective? Joan Scott (1986) has remarked how "political history .. has been the stronghold of resistance to the inclusion of material or even questions about women and gender" while "(g)ender is one of the recurrent references by which political power has been conceived, legitimated, and criticized", and "(p)olitical history has, in a sense, been enacted on the field of gender." (1070; 1073; 1074) In the previous chapter I have argued that - at least Hobbesian - natural rights theory draws the understanding of gender into the domain of systematical political theory. In this chapter I will look into some possibilities for writing a history of modern women employing the categories of political theory. Joan Landes (1988) has endeavoured to "reconceptualize the problematic relationship of women to the modern public sphere from the standpoint of politics itself, rather than from the family or economic relations." (2) Her work takes issue with Jürgen Habermas' reconstitution of the category of the public sphere which, on the one hand, has alerted us to the existence of a political life beyond the state and therewith offers a significant vantagepoint for reconsidering the history of modern women and feminism, feminism being "as much a creature of the public sphere as of the other "categories" of modern society." (7) But on the other hand, Habermas' category has excessive utopian overtones and is incapable of addressing the problem of structural exclusions from this sphere of politics, certainly of women. In order to argue the pervasive gendering of the modern public sphere, Landes focusses, among other things, on the position of Enlightenment's salons. These had features in common as well as some that conflicted with both monarchical and bourgeois public spheres; they also engendered distinctive social and discursive practices directed by women, testifying to "the existence of performative and vocalizing roles for women." (23) By concentrating on "a reconstruction of public-sphere theory from the vantage points of women and feminism" (8), Landes has made a fundamental contribution to an understanding of women's history from the perspective of political theory. Below I will further elaborate on such an approach and attempt to unravel in which respects the by now classical Habermasian approach is flawed when it comes to reconstruct relevant themes for a feminist political history.

Habermas has attempted to construct the outlines for the project of modernity from a rather specific view of 'the' exemplary situation of the modern project: he has historically reconstructed an original practice of a modern democratic public sphere as a situation of intersubjective and potentially universal communication. A continuity in argument exists between his historical reconstruction in the early work The Strukturwandel der öffentlichkeit (1962) and his systematical-philosophical exposition of a communicative rational Diskurs in Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns (1981).48 A vital point

48 In the rest of the text I will refer to the English translations The Structural Transformation of the
is how he understands the specificity of the ensuing 'exemplary situation' in the light of alternative exemplars of a 'public sphere' touched upon by himself. A further pivotal issue is how he reconstructs the contribution and importance of the respective social spheres or 'domains' and types of knowledge and argumentation (Diskurs) of modern society to a present-day understanding of emancipatory citizenship.

Let us sketch history as it enfolds in The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. Habermas uses the word 'representative publicness' to describe the display of power under the ancien régime in which representation has a 'top-down', instead of a 'bottom-up' direction. While Hobbes, as we saw in the previous chapter, theorized not just the social contract underlying the modern state, but also modern political representation as posing the problem of unifying a warring multitude, during the ancien régime this problem was by-passed, not confronted. Absolute monarchy did not worry about how to represent the people through government: it had the reverse problem of representing its sovereignty to the people. Its representatives were to carry signs that symbolically invoked the presence of political authority: personal attributes indicating the status of the representative of monarchical rule. As Habermas states, here Repräsentation occurs without Vertretung. Power represents itself to the people, instead of consisting in the representation of the people. His concept of 'representative publicness' has a second premodern characteristic: power, exercised through ritual or demonstration, does not constitute some social sphere or domain entailing an opposition to a 'private sphere'. Its 'publicness' does not consist in it being composed of private individuals assembled together for a common purpose, but exists in acting out a symbolical representation of power. It is only after the organisation of professions into 'civil society' that "the genuine domain of private autonomy" will begin to relieve and oppose state power. (1989b, 12)

Habermas continues to sketch an organic history of the growth of the modern 'bourgeois public sphere': it develops from the 'literary public sphere'. This concept refers to the coffee houses, reading societies, and salons that had developed in several countries of Western Europe in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Even before the control over the public sphere by public authority was contested and finally wrested away by the critical reasoning of private persons on political issues, there evolved under its cover a public sphere in apolitical form - the literary precursor of the public sphere operative in the political domain. It provided the training ground for a critical public reflection still preoccupied with itself. (1989b, 29)

Thus critical debate ignited by works of literature and art was soon extended to include economic and political disputes, without any guarantee (such as was given in the salons), that such discussions would be inconsequential, at least in the immediate context. (1989b, 33)

According to Habermas, the literary public sphere should be seen as an immature stage of and

training ground for the modern public sphere, in which politics is to be the proper domain of public deliberations. He has thus given a historical reconstruction of the modern public sphere that simultaneously serves as the 'exemplary situation' of modern democratic publicity. The content and outlines of this exemplary situation inform his utopian hopes for a resurrection of democratic publicity which will cure the political crisis of legitimation in present-day democracy.

Habermas resumes the line of reasoning of which the general themes were developed in his early study in his later systematical-philosophical work The Theory of Communicative Action. Discussing the differences between expressive and other knowledge claims, e.g. moral-practical ones, he characterizes aesthetical statements, which belong to the expressive realm together with 'therapeutical utterings' and 'erotics', as follows:

(T)he type of validity claim attached to cultural values does not transcend local boundaries in the same way as truth and rightness claims. (1984, 42)

With expressive speech acts the speaker refers to something in his subjective world, and in such a way that he would like to reveal to a public an experience to which he has privileged access. (1984, 326)

The reasoning in the 'training ground' of the literary public sphere is one that is "still preoccupied with itself" and "inconsequential"; in a similar fashion expressive linguistic acts are characterized as relating to the subjective, instead of social world. They are not socially but innerweltlich orientated. This is the reason why aesthetical criticism cannot serve as a model for other types of knowledge claims, the moral-practical ones. Habermas further entrenches its singularity by stating that the domain of aesthetics cannot, like the moral-practical and cognitive domains, be characterized as a Diskurs; because of the ideosyncratic nature of aesthetical utterings, this domain can be defined only as Kritik. The communicative aspect it of course still possesses, is theoretically discounted as follows.

However, there are contexts of action that do not primarily serve the carrying out of communicatively harmonized plans of action (that is, the purposive activities of the participants) but make communication possible and stabilize it - for instance, chatting, conversing, and arguing - in general conversation that becomes an end in itself. In such cases the process of reaching understanding is detached from the instrumental role of serving as a mechanism for coordinating individual actions, and the discussion of themes becomes independent for purposes of conversation. I shall speak of "conversation" when the weight is shifted in this way from purposive activity to communication (1984, 327)

In this citation, the subjective orientation of expressive language-acts is supplemented with further characteristics which in his earlier work were associated with the literary public sphere. Aesthetical presentation is aligned with the inconsequential communication named 'conversation', and dramaturgical action is differentiated from communicative action in concerning self-presentation and

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49 The German has a perhaps less overtly narcistic although equally a-social characterization for this reasoning: "das noch in sich selber kreist".
favouring expressive above illocutionary language, reminiscent of similar formulations with regard to the characteristics of the literary public sphere.

Habermas introduced his concept of the public sphere to distinguish it from civil society's traditional or liberal realm of activity - the 'market', and meant it to be a critical concept simultaneously with respect to authoritarian states and modern market-dominated societies. It was supplemented and sustained by his elaboration of the concept of 'communicative rationality'. Together these were to offer a new perspective on emancipation over and above left-wing pessimism, embodied in the works of the Frankfurter Schule, about the extent to which 'the market' and its attendant 'instrumental rationality' have come to 'colonize' all realms of modern life, economic as well as cultural and daily life.

Whereas Habermas lets communicative rationality outgrow literary publicness, and opposes political to aesthetical representation, these assumptions are problematical in historical as well as systematical respects. A critical review of his categories can result in providing philosophical support for the intuition that the 'dialectic of Enlightenment' which through the ascendance of technological reason undoes the emancipatory potential of reason, does not only inhere in the opposition between instrumental or technological versus communicative rationality, but could ensue from within the very practices of communication. This turns the intuition of communicative rationality as a Diskurs, sustaining an emancipatory vision of universal and egalitarian communication, into an intuition of communicative rationality as discours, enabling to understand the mechanisms of exclusion and thus impairments of emancipation inhering in modern practices of communication themselves. I will proceed to question the mentioned assumptions from three angles.

First, we may disagree with the approach of the literary public sphere as an 'inter-stage' between feudal and modern public domains. There are two aspects to be discussed here. For one thing, Habermas’ view of the ‘immature’ character of literary publicness - a stage democracy will gradually outgrow - stifles the empirical historical struggle of bourgeois publicity to subdue and conquer (certain forms of) literary publicity. Landes (1988; 1994) has argued how he thus disregards the relevance of the history of the public sphere to a feminist political history. We will turn to Rousseau whose writings testify to a distinctly agonistic and gendered history of the modern public sphere. Two options on representation here surface, which were to express either male or female modes of public existence. (§ 3.2) Next, we may question Habermas’ reconstruction of literary publicity as an immature stage of modernity and emanating from a sphere of private experiences, as it suggests an organic view of the development of social life. We may, alternatively, approach it more consistently from a social perspective, and look into the way it bears witness to the early mutual permeation of public sphere and market. For neither are the practices of the literary public exhaustively described exclusively in terms of the category of the public sphere. At this point it is necessary to differentiate between forms of literary public spheres, and address the specificity of the salon among them. On the one hand, this was a probably more traditional form of publicity as it was more closely related to the
'visual' or 'iconographic' culture of monarchical 'representative publicness' (Landes 1988; 1994); on the other hand it has connections to modernity's political as well as economic histories. Closely associated with the salon was rococo art, which can be and has been characterized as initiating a form of art suited to the developing modern market.

Hence, we can approach the salon practices and rococo aesthetics both from the perspective of the forum and from the perspective of the market. Seen from the first perspective, the literary public sphere confronts us not just with a diachronical problematic from the history of the public sphere: it can function as a critical concept both vis-à-vis authoritarian states and the very concept of the bourgeois public sphere. Seen from the perspective of the market, the salon practice, accompanied by an art practice which signalled the onset of market-oriented public art, can, again, function as a critical concept with respect to the established mode of democratic communication. Although theoreticians of civil society have enlarged upon the apolitical or antipolitical imago of the market, in this form it provided democracy with an intellectual surplus in furnishing reasoning citizens with novel (aesthetical) modes of reflection on public and private experiences. I will return to this double relationship of the salon to modernity in § 3.5.

Second, we may question the way in which in Habermas' works the 'aesthetical' and the 'political' have been opposed as types of critique. In the heart of eighteenth century aesthetics itself, we find styles of representation a hotly debated issue - a debate in which the positions can easily be aligned with the operative political camps. As already stated, the salon practice of public debate associates directly with rococo practices of aesthetic representation. Rococo's counterpart was neoclassicism, usually seen as proclaiming republican values. The eighteenth century battle between rococo and neo-classicism translates into a battle about political representation. In other words, within aesthetical representation several options on representation and language can be discerned, which also exist as political options on representation. Both the aesthetical and the political options were, furthermore, entangled in a sexual politics. The eighteenth century battle around representational style and sexual politics bears comparison to the present-day battle between 'modern' foundationalists and 'postmodern' nominalists. In § 3.3, the way the Enlightenment battle is embedded in a broader epistemological dispute on realism versus nominalism will be addressed. In § 3.4 I will discuss how the respective representational styles were 'sexed', and what this teaches us about Enlightenment's assumed foundationalism.

Focussing thus on style we need to inject a third metaphor into the established analysis of modern civil society in terms of market and forum. I propose the metaphor of the theater, likewise derived from an urban and civic practice perceived in the eighteenth century to be central to discussions of politics as well as gender, and as such covering broad issues of style: dramaturgical, aesthetical, communicative. In the preceding chapter I already addressed the long-standing philosophical inclination to conceptualize citizenship in dramaturgical terms - the citizen as persona. In the eighteenth century specifically, the old philosophical concept of theatrum mundi, once meant to
point out how men are mere puppets in a world directed by God, gets ample elaboration in terms of secular political theory. In the debates on politics and theater all kinds of representational issues focalize. Rousseau's writings, to be discussed in the next section, preeminently exemplify the entanglement of dramaturgy, politics, and gender. The opposition of dramaturgical and communicative action clouds its very share in the gendering of citizenship, and dissolves in view of the signification to citizenship of style. The gendering of aesthetical and communicative styles will be addressed in the other sections. The metaphor of the theatre draws attention to what we may call 'the semiotics of modern citizenship', and may be imperative to understand the ambivalent relation of modern women to democratic participation.

Thirdly, we may question - in connection with the two preceding remarks - the underlying normative notions of modern democracy that accompany Habermas' view on modernity. Most models of democracy derived from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries presuppose a natural self-interest, which re-emerges in communication in the form of opinions to be negotiated in a democratic decision-making process. The natural self can thus realize itself thanks to modernity's democratic proceedings - an expressionist humanist politics as one way of giving meaning to the phrase 'the personal is political'. The conventional philosophical notion of modern democracy assumes a self-serving, or self-contented, democratic position. It has as heir today's notion of identity politics. Notwithstanding the common sociological dismissal of the salon as democratic precursor, the salon might, in its philosophical idiosyncrasy, be conceived of as providing an exemplary situation for a model of democracy in which a democratic attitude is meant to evolve around self-representation rather than self-presentation - whether of individual or collective subjects. Its communicative processes are instrumental not to the realization but to the staging of self. Without the assumption of a self-interest unmediated by social discourses - or of democracy as realizing citizen as homo - democratic processes are no longer guided, or charged, by the question how selves may be realized, and instead can become tailored to accumulate understanding of the rich metaphorical embeddedness of their naturalized identities. In § 3.6 I intend to recover the possible significance in systematical-philosophical respect of a practice that was, after all, much referred to and hotly debated in eighteenth century texts addressing issues of publicity and gender.

First, I will address the way bourgeois publicity did not simply 'grow' and 'mature', but was rather conceptualized through a struggle against an opponent: the salon. Which concept of representation was to suit a modern democratic representational politics?

3.2 Rousseau: mimetic versus discursive publicity.

The comparison between politics and theatre was, of course, not lost on an eighteenth century
observer, used to the ceremonies, rituals, processions, dressing up, in short, the display of the royal court in Versailles. Politics was theatre, political life under the ancien régime was theatrical. Still, when Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) in his Lettre à d'Alembert sur les Spectacles (1758) attacks the contemporary theatre, this is not just or even mainly because he associates it with the theatrical features of monarchy. He does not attack the theatre as such, but a specific manifestation of it. He is not concerned with theatre versus (modern) politics, but with a certain politics of modernity within the theatre. The text illustrates how in the eighteenth century the theatre elicits discussions on citizenship and style, how discussions on artistic representation have paralleled discussions on political representation. The theatre is itself staged as a forum through which to address the propriety of alternative public styles: sociability, sentimentality, classic virtuousness, in the process of becoming assigned to their proper societal domains, are as yet the candidates for civic roles. 'Personality' has still to become the romantic category within a 'jargon of authenticity'. Put differently, a citizen was to impersonate - to become persona as opposite to expressing 'personality'. To discuss politics through the theatre makes politics a matter of impersonality rather than personality, of managing distance rather than expression.

On the face of it, there could be an interesting ring to Rousseau's complaint that the present theatre is reigned over by a culture of intimacy misplaced in public, and is conducive to a sentimentalization of the public sphere. The complaint turns out, though, not to favour a more representational and less romantic-expressive public culture, but, on the contrary, to discipline the dramaturgical potential of citizenship. While fighting the sentimental (alongside the sociable) citizens, he himself engenders public romance where he creates a male civic 'personality', through which specific normative convictions about masculinity become naturalized: elegance, softness, and love are to be alien to it.

I think very little better of Racine's heroes, of those heroes all gotten up, so mawkish, so tender, who, with an air of courage and virtue, provide us only with the models for the young men of whom I have spoken, given over to gallantry, softness, love, to everything which can effeminate man and mitigate his taste for his real duties. The whole French theatre breathes only tenderness; it is the great virtue to which all the others are sacrificed (1985, 117)

The text presents us with one of the most vicious attacks of the eighteenth century on the public existence of women. It addresses all kinds of association between public activity and women, as, according to him, any public presence of women produces a directly emasculating effect on men, and on society in general. It contains Rousseau's infamous exclamation that it is all very well for a

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50 Compare Sennett's critique in The Fall of Public Man (1978) of the extent to which the nineteenth century culture of intimacy colonized the public sphere, undermining the dramaturgical know-how necessary to conserve a public culture dependent on expressing oneself through masks, where respecting mutual distance and mastering the art of entertaining impersonal relations is imperative to constitute mutual bonds. Rousseau, however, does not call for valuing the dramaturgical principle of public life: he values certain roles over and above others.
monarch to reign over men as well as women, as both only have to obey, but "in a republic, men are needed." (1985, 101) The text is concerned with the presence of women in public, as well as the women-initiated public domains like the salons, and the literary representation of women in the spectacle. Female public presence is thus attacked in the most general sense, and comprises such diverse phenomena as women attending the theatre (the spectacle will arouse emotions they cannot handle), the gatherings of men and women in salons (the men will end up resembling women), and women having opinions they share with more than one or two other women.

The phenomenon of women giving opinions on matters of cultural and academic knowledge, even happens within representation, on stage; the very practices of representation appear to encourage women to voice what is not theirs to voice. Women should not be represented as opinion leaders, because they should not represent opinions.

On the stage it is even worse. Actually, in society they do not know anything, although they judge everything; but in the theatre, learned in the learning of men and philosophers, thanks to the actors, they crush our sex with its own talents, and the imbecile audiences go right ahead and learn from women what they took efforts to dictate to them. .. Look through most contemporary plays; it is always a woman who knows everything, who teaches everything to men. (1985, 49)

The women-initiated publicity of the salon is depicted as a practice effectuating emasculation. The gathering of men in men-only societies can accordingly simply be defined by Rousseau as less harmful. The contents of the respective practices described differ, as even Rousseau reluctantly has to admit, in no way significantly as both lack virtuous or inspiring activities.

(E)very woman at Paris gathers in her apartment a harem of men more womanish than she .. But observe these same men, always constrained in these voluntary prisons, get up, sit down, pace continually back and forth to the fireplace, to the window, pick up and set down a fan a hundred times, leaf through books, glance at pictures, turn and pirouette about the room, while the idol, stretched out motionlessly on her couch, has only her eyes and her tongue active. (1985, 101)

The circles of men doubtlessly also have their disadvantages; what that is human does not? They gamble, they drink, they get drunk, they spend the whole night; all this may be true, all this may be exaggerated. There is everywhere a mixture of good and evil, but in different degrees. (1985, 107)

The quotes provide us with interesting stills, informing an attentive reader of differences that possibly do exist between female salons and male societies. Though the salon, in the first citation, is depicted in the mode of a silent movie, with the intention of portraying something dreadfully boring and idle, we can easily imagine a lively conversation or witty remarks passing between the participants in the

51 Allan Bloom's translation has "thanks to the authors", which should be "thanks to the actors" ("grâce aux acteurs").
gatherings. Sauntering, touching objects, being surrounded by art and literature, do not hinder, may
on the contrary stimulate, the exchange of ideas or impressions, or simply signify casual
togetherness. The last sentence is revealing: language and eye-contact form the bottom line of this
laid-back communication. Why is there a larger degree of evil in the salon's mode of communication?
Why is alcohol abuse a less damaging drug than intoxication by (body) language? Aristocratic or
classbound idleness is not Rousseau's complaint here; both stills depict idleness, only 'in different
degrees of mixture of good and evil'. This is not about class or economic utility. This is about feeling at
ease with an intersubjective acting owing to language. The salon's attendents seem immersed in
language, in signs. Subjects and signs, subjects as signs, roam around, happily submitting to life
being a play of establishing meaningful relations between signifieds. Signifiers have themselves
joined the world of the signifieds - testifying how any experience of life and subjectivity takes place
within language. To Rousseau, this hermeneutic world is a threat. Signs are too generously produced
and distributed, given over to the arbitrariness of signification, in what seems a linguistic economy of
waste. Man is more woman than she, he has too profuse a text - this is overuse of the available
signs. What is judged idle - socially inutile and detrimental - is these people's language: it does not
favour order and thus unleashes disorder: grammar has been replaced by semantics and semiotics.
"Never has a people perished from an excess of wine; all perish from the disorder of women" (1985,
109) The male companies, conversely, are depicted as if doing without, or at least with sparsely
distributed, language of whatever kind. One seems to have drastically economized on the script. It is
as if the men are immersed in a world of pure, immanent practice, innocent of recognizing the floating
of signs between them, or, to their benefit, having drowned the obtrusiveness of the linguistic world in
alcohol. Rousseau appears to heave sighs of relief when not detecting any self-conscious
performance or staging of self and others, or any investigation into the uses of signs: communication
will not slide further and further into representation.

When women assume directing capacities in communication, men will be reduced to mere
actors, bound to excess of text - and subsequently loss of self. The complaint issues from Rousseau's
anxiety about the staging of gender, but it does contain a message that is not to be dismissed easily.
In civic styles, much more is at stake than the formation of public opinion politically empowering
citizens with respect to the state. Citizenship is radically dependent, not just on being provided with a
state-independent 'space' or forum, or on having a market generating interests, but on being actually
performed, that is: on style. Existing as a citizen is not a constative, juristic category, but a
performative act. Being it is doing it. Rousseau's republican concerns with citizenship lead him not

52 Allan Bloom's translation has turned the noun into an adjective: the French has "un sérail
d'hommes plus femmes qu'elles". Bloom thus softens the substitution into similitude.

53 One is tempted to observe, after Charles Sanders Peirce's distinction between modes of being,
that these men will resign to any erupting disaster, enduring it by 'wrapping their cloaks about them'
 'brute forces' merely acting upon them can no more than 'strike them down', while they dread signs,
which 'are' by virtue of connecting, are 'living intelligence', and hence can 'injure' them.
only to juxtapose 'virtue' next to 'rights', but also 'style'. This is the ground on which citizenship is manufactured, and thus the exclusion from it. He has grasped the linguistic predicament of modern citizenship, which discloses its transformative potentiality not just with regard to the political, but - and much more unsettling - with regard to the social order. And this alerts to the grave importance of empowering women in precisely this respect. There is no political naïveté in drawing style in the foreground of feminist theory or practice.

We can safely state that women, with Rousseau, represent a (faulty) modernized public sphere as such: being new icons in it, with him they come to symbolize it. This becomes the quintessential issue for modern democracy à la Rousseau. Women do not simply unjustly represent and are unjustly represented as public actors: content or Darstellung - just or unjust representation - is only one of the problems here. Women stand for a more substantial danger than venturing possibly wrong public opinions: they illustrate a wrong conception of the whole business of representing.

Representation is not, at least not in the sense of implying choice in the fictive rendition of life, what Rousseau has in mind when he himself pictures the ideal public sphere. He has no view of publicity in which anything or anyone has the choice of being re-presented: publicity should consist of presenting nature as Rousseau has ordained it to be. He is well aware of this activity of naturalizing; he does it on purpose. As is clear from his Discourse on the Origin of Inequality (1755), Rousseau does not believe the sex-difference he wants to install in society to be an original natural one. Society serves the unique purpose of installing a 'natural' reality; the social has the convenient capacity to mimic and this mimesis should be steered towards halting the growing representational character of publicity in modernized times - the threatening perplexity of modern politics, started off by women claiming specific authorities. Of course, in not claiming nature to be a realistic referent in this mimesis, reference does constitute an intricate problem to Rousseau. The text constitutes the self-representation of a masculinity caught between the patriarchal order of the ancien régime and the need to transform this order into one which guarantees the naturalization over and against the imminent staging of male public sentiments. Modern man can no longer appeal to a self-evident, fixed organic order; his referent now is the fantasy of a kind of cyborg social - an 'organized' modernity.

Whether it is his fear of women that rouses his fear of representation, or whether his fear of representation kindles his fear of women is hard to decide and probably not crucial since both themes are identical symbolically and sociologically in Rousseau's anguished discourse on modernity. Rousseau's aim here is to prevent representation from making a difference: even if the exclusion of women from the public sphere is judged not to be a natural device, it belongs to political ethics because women who pose as anything else than mother and mistress of the house, imitate men. "If she has a husband, what is she seeking among men?", (1985, 88) Rousseau wants to know. She might, to venture an answer, follow the male model, as men follow her model in women's salons. In both cases, the fantastic capacity of representation would be explored, and mimesis abandoned.
If the timidity, chasteness, and modesty which are proper to them are social inventions, it is in society's interest that women acquire these qualities; they must be cultivated in women.

Whether this impression comes to us from nature or education, it is common to all the peoples of the world. Everywhere, it is seen that, when they take on the masculine and firm assurance of the man and turn it into effrontery, they abase themselves by this odious imitation and dishonor both their sex and ours. (1985, 87, 88)

Rousseau, in the formulation of Landes, "ties the subjection of modern women to an implicit opposition between old and new forms of representation". (1988, 67) Women are not just perceived by Rousseau as new icons in the premodern, symbolic representation characterizing the ancien régime (as conceptualized by Habermas), who have relieved the father-king as the central icon in monarchical publicity, while surreptitiously continuing its politics. They are perceived as introducing a new type of representation, giving public life a linguistic twist and transforming it into a discursive one far more self-conscious with respect to representational production than either monarchical or Rousseauist public practices could bear.

Whereas Habermas describes the enfolding democratic public sphere as an increasingly discursive one, holding the promise of emancipatory bourgeois universal communication, to Rousseau this discursive democracy holds opposite possibilities with regard to the representation of its 'natural' subjects. He alerts us to the struggle between the options that will unfold in the course of shaping democracy. With Rousseau, there is no natural maturing of democratic publicness, no immanent telos in the history of democracy. He perceives it to be the history of a gendered battle between different options on publicity, communication, and representation.

3.3 Realism, nominalism, and love.

Feminist theory today has been characterized as commuting between realist and nominalist attempts to come to grips with its very subject: the category of 'woman'. The differences between modern and postmodern feminism are traced to, respectively, the notion of a normative emancipatory feminist strategy to reach realistic descriptions of women by women themselves ("a useful corrective to the "generic human" thesis of classical liberalism", Alcoff 1988, 421), and the notion that "the category "woman" is a fiction and that feminist efforts must be directed towards dismantling this fiction." (Alcoff 1988, 417) However, we appear to find a reenactment rather than a critique of modernity, as the very founding discourses of modernity are entangled in a similar opposition. Enlightenment texts themselves provide an analogous discussion on how to approach gendered subjectivity and experience. In the eighteenth century a controversy over language can be recognized which boils down to a debate on realism versus nominalism. The positions in this debate adopt several views on gender, as they regularly illustrate the problem of linguistic reference with examples taken from male-
female relationships, such as presumed gendered practices of language usage, the meaning of love, and of female or male identity. The respective positions cannot be unequivocally politically assessed, as e.g. early-feminist or anti-feminist. But these discourses do reveal that the problem of linguistic reference is assumed to be implied in the discussion on the position of women and in a judgement on the role of women in furthering the modernization of society.

Habermas states the realist position on language of the eighteenth century in his depiction of the bourgeois public sphere:

The bourgeois public's critical public debate took place in principle without regard to all preexisting social and political rank and in accord with universal rules. .. Public opinion was supposed to do justice to "the nature of the case". For this reason the "laws," which it now also wanted to establish for the social sphere, could also lay claim to substantive rationality besides the formal criteria of generality and abstractness. (1989b, 54-55)

As the literary public sphere has also been characterized by Habermas as one which does not take into regard social and political rank, the specificity of bourgeois rationalism starts in mid-sentence, from "in accord with universal rules". The belief in a universalizing potentiality of rationalism is here linked to realist, or naturalist, claims: universal rules of communication are to empty out language of social determinations and do justice to "the nature of the case". Thus, realism is allied to a specific side in the social and political spectrum: a democratic, critical public sphere. However, claims to a realist representation (of "the nature of the case") were, of course, themselves politically contested: they could side with rather diverse social and philosophical views, witness e.g. the case of Edmund Burke (see the next chapter).

Nominalism has been equally promiscuous from a political theoretical viewpoint. One may for example, on the basis of nominalist insights into processes of signification, draw a conclusion about normative convictions as about the necessity of universalist meaning to guide modern communication. Neither a philosopher of rationalism, nor an advocate of republican publicity, David Hume did hold a view on language which, although starting from a nominalistic philosophical conviction, results in the normative endorsement of universalist meaning: "The intercourse of sentiments, therefore, in society and conversation, makes us form some general unalterable standard." (1748/51, 228) In the previous chapter we saw that Thomas Hobbes translated what was according to him the nominalist linguistic condition of mankind into the authoritarian settlement of correct meanings. Normative convictions as to the indispensability of communicative 'laws' in order to establish substantive rational communication may come from diverse political camps, but unite in their shared concern for a modern social equilibrium. This 'social realism', as we may dub it, which relies on unequivocal linguistic procedures for establishing meaning in civic culture in order to transcend social difference, is neither inherently 'democratic', nor 'critical' as the examples of Hobbes, Burke and Hume illustrate. Several commentators have noted that realism is best characterized as a style of representation which wants us to forget the very act of representational performance. (E.g. Bryson
1981, 9: "The realist text disguises or conceals its status as a place of production of meaning.") The amnesia of 'social realism' (whether of authoritarian, conservative, bourgeois or commercial persuasion) with respect to the precise social origin of its rules of communication is what a 'social nominalism' would have to counteract. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the proceedings within the salons best illustrate such a position that is nominalist in an epistemological as well as 'public' sense.

Friend and enemy agree in judging language the central preoccupation of salon activities. While the salon retains the visual, or 'iconic', or 'dramaturgical' features of monarchical publicity, its oral and reading culture make it into a 'discursive' public sphere. In the salon, as in bourgeois publicity, language and communication organize publicity. But the salon is not just centred around texts and speech in the material sense: it gives a truly linguistic turn to life. Processes of signification form one of its main interests. Instead of accepting existing definitions and identities, the salonnière and her guests play with meaning, searching for adequate expressions. Their preoccupation with language conveys the intuition that existing notions and words forcibly classify reality, and that these are susceptible to de- and re-construction of meaning. Dorothy Ann Liot Backer (1974) sketches a seventeenth century salon practice as follows:

The most refined ladies of all spent hours splitting hairs over the twenty kinds of sighs (the sigh of love, the sigh of friendship, the sigh of ambition) and the forty kinds of smiles (the smile of the inviting eye, the toothy smile, the disdainful smile) .. They endlessly classified their sentiments" (163)

The précieuses liked coining new paraphrases for old words. Pregnancy became "the ill effects of lawful love" (163), teeth were "the furniture of the mouth" (9), their hats "affronters of the elements" (168), dreams the "fathers of metamorphosis" (165). Their speech mannerisms were their answers to the banalities of life and language - the latter effectuated by the purification of language by the early seventeenth century poets, the famous early salon Hôtel de Rambouillet, and the Académie Française (see also Nicolson 1960; Damave 1986), the former consisting of the harsh and dirty facts of contemporary women's lives. Their endless classifying of sentiment and experience, irrespective of dominant meanings of words, was not just 'entertainment' - it had a social background and political meaning. The précieuses were "tired of being a woman" (17), their neo-Platonism formed the mould for their disgust of childbirth, motherhood, the contempt of men, sex, and love in its conventional forms. Their efforts at linguistic games constituted "an experiment in civilization" (110), "a social adventure" (292). The précieux style was a way of trying out self-definitions, like "a mask worn on occasion but not defining the lady's whole self" (16).

Préciosité was part and parcel of a period of general discursive change, but its position is marked by specific ambivalences. While belonging to a discours of 'resemblance' - the early modern linguistic order of knowledge organised around metaphor and analogy - it at once was a hyperbolic turn within this very order of knowledge and a counterbid to the objectifying language promoted by the
Erica Harth (1992) points out that the seventeenth-century elusive and allusive mannerist style was responsive to the contemporary political climate in which being evasive about authority in a formal (signature) as well as substantive (style and content) sense was necessary. Over and above these codes of secrecy, women confronted the humanists' dictum of female modesty - to be learned, but not to display this learning. If the salonnières chose, they were also sentenced to the dramaturgical mode of being - their becoming persona was socially conditioned as well as critically processed, an ontological given as much as an epistemological policy. In Harth's study the diverse levels of compromise in the salonnières' proper writings are unraveled. She also emphasizes the salon's minimal social effectiveness compared to the successful dissent by the academies, and warns of endowing the salon's conversations with an idealized subversive freedom beyond restrictive decorum. Then again, she also deduces from their writings and their contemporary reception that the salonnières' words were subversive - they discussed "radical alternatives to prescribed roles, such as trial marriage, divorce, regulated pregnancies, and parity in sexual relations" (43). The salon's dissenting ideas on gendered subjectivities were probably more subversive than the new expertise offered by the academies, also with respect to the interests of the state, while for this very reason and safeguarding of the very existence of the salon, such knowledge was to be developed "within the limits of orthodoxy" (62).

Harth explicitly dismisses a possible likeness to postmodern antifoundationalism as in fact the salon knew highly regulated as well as purposefully limited conversation. She also argues that the salons lost out to the academies precisely because these were more successful in allying knowledge and power, establishing procedures and agendas as aids to their form of "euphemized" knowledge, resulting in "a liberty of dissent within established bounds" (63). Harth rightly admonishes us not to overestimate the salon's power of dissent and to note the gaps between discourse then and now (e.g. the precious women's embracing of the Cartesian dualism of mind and body), but I do want to maintain that Harth too rashly dismisses the transhistorical comparison as "moot" (41). There is no identity, but there is analogy, and the various studies of the salon provide us with a history of modernity in which its onset is beset with struggles over language, knowledge, and political and gender subjectivity still often neglected as forming part and parcel of its very history.

The tradition of préciosité was inherited by the eighteenth century salon, although it probably lost its extreme mannerist forms, while the range of topics discussed broadened, and especially in France the salons, rather than universities, became the vehicles for spreading Enlightenment culture. To the standing subjects of literature, love, and gender roles were added the arts in general, the sciences, religion, and philosophy (Backer 1974; Baxman 1983; Damave 1986), and also politics and economy claimed attention (Damave 1986, 132): the whole domain of modern publicity was surveyed. While organisation of space, topics, and language did differ - among coexisting salons as well as at different points in time, a continuous thread connects the salons of both centuries: an - either positive or anguished - reception of women's representative roles in terms.
of style and dramaturgy.

The *salonnière* has been criticized for being too consequently a philosopher. Put differently, she is a philosopher counteracting the naturalizing tendencies of contemporary philosophy - like De Sade at the end of the eighteenth century. She is too rational, in not accepting the self-evidence and naturalness of emotions. She is reproached for newly conceptualizing sentiments and feelings.

Their approach to poetry was straightforwardly utilitarian. It had to entertain them, make them feel important, give them hope of happiness. .. they did not expect real sentiments. Theirs was a rough world .. And yet, though their poetry was heartless, the main topic of the précieuses was the heart. They examined the forms of love with the minutest attention, subdividing its categories inexhaustibly, never tiring of the intricacies and paradoxes of a feeling they were starving for. (Backer 1974, 18-19)

A seventeenth century author, the ambivalent salon-attender and libertine 'natural moralist' Saint-Evremond, notes:

> These false finicking women have taken all that's natural out of love, thinking to give it some more precious quality. They have taken all the sensitivity out of the heart and put it in the head, and converted emotions into ideas. (Quoted by Backer 1974, 219)

These *salonnières*, indeed, do not want "to do justice to the 'nature of the case'". They want to counteract love's very 'natural' image, and expose its status as a concept, open to definition and contestation - the concept thus shown to be a sign, signifying and signified in specific, gendered, social realities. They thus contribute significantly to a broader unrest during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with respect to the survival probability of love, the moment it loses its self-evident meanings. Love itself is seen to be endangered by the growth of critical inquiry into its conventions - that is, its linguistic existence: its existence as a concept existing as a sign.

In a translated essay *On the history of the female sex* in a Dutch spectatorial magazine, the author sighs that, "when unlawful intercourse between both sexes becomes general and hence less offending .. Nothing but the naked word remains of love". (1796, 370)\(^54\) The concerns with language's imminent promiscuity of moralists fearing future decay of morals and love return as life buoys in discourses concerned with the present decay of love in women's lives. Only an unchaste approach of the word love could ever change women's realities: even the moralist feminists are destined to be linguistic libertines - to loosen the general term from a decreed reference to one actual, universal experience, and to accept that the word itself only abridges (and hence impedes), not provides

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\(^{54}\) See: 'De geschiedenis der vrouwlyke sexe'. The journal only mentions that the compiled articles are translated from English. The translation could be from various similar titles published at the end of the century. It may be an edit of William Alexander's *The History of Women*, 1779 (further editions in 1782, 1796). Perhaps it was even translated from identical German titles like C.G. Lenz's *Geschichte des weiblichen Geschlechts*, 1792?, or Christoph Meiner's *Geschichte des weiblichen Geschlechts*, 1788-1800. (Neither is available in Dutch libraries).
knowledge of experience. It is feminism's fate to side with a social nominalism, to stage concepts like 'woman', 'man', or 'love' as 'mere words', in order to show, and exert, the representational productivity that appertains to each of their meanings. Feminist moralism attempts to salvage and protect otherness - women's otherness and exclusion from law - replacing law (linguistic and legal) with ethics - a feminist ethics of love. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) follows the salonnieres' lead in her social critique of love: "To speak disrespectfully of love is, I know, high treason against sentiment and fine feelings; .. To endeavour to reason love out of the world, would be to out Quixote Cervantes, and equally offend against common sense; but an endeavour to restrain this tumultuous passion, and to prove that it should not be allowed to dethrone superior powers .. appears less wild." (1792, 93) D.A.F. de Sade (1740-1814), neither afraid "to out Quichotte" nor to wildly offend, will eventually drive the point home: as love is subject to a stubborn social denial of its status as a contestable concept, it should sensibly be forgotten about by women. It is, indeed, only a word: we'd better dispose of it and get ourselves another. The linguistic market offers alternative goods to consume. "O voluptuous young women .. Fuck, divert yourselves, that's the essential thing; but be quick to fly from love. .. I repeat it, amuse yourselves; but love not at all; nor be anymore concerned to make yourselves loved." (1795, 285/286)

Rousseau characteristically treats the subject simultaneously as one for general ethico-political and masculine concerns. To persistently and almost exclusively stage love as does the contemporary French theatre, is not to mirror people's concerns, but on the contrary to produce the exaggerated concern with love on the side of the public. "(A) stage whose sole interest is founded on love" produces a "contagious passion".

The sweet emotions that are felt are not in themselves a definite object, but they produce the need for one. They do not precisely cause love, but they prepare the way for its being experienced. They do not choose the person who ought to be loved, but they force us to make this choice. (1985, 51)

To include moralistic admonitions within the depiction of love is no solution to mimetic sentimental behaviour, as the force of the very theatrical depiction of love overpowers a reasoned reception of it. With respect to the growing cultural exploitaton of the realm of personal emotions the concept of autonomous rationality is powerless. Working at the expense of moral and political concerns, a sentimental theatre is conducive to a sentimentalization of the public sphere - and a sentimental republic is none at all. The mimetic mechanisms of the cultural politics of emotions will dialectically bring about the decline of public reason and civic virtue. Furthermore, amidst his own pedantic and disciplining remarks on women, he worries about an imminent objectification of women, about their dignity in love, and about the superficiality and demise of all passion if drowned in this ritual repetition and massification of emotion.

Instead of gaining by these practices, the women lose. They are flattered without being loved; they are served without being honored; they are surrounded by agreeable persons
but they no longer have lovers .. is there a question of love in all this tedious jargon? Do not
all those who use it use it equally for all women? (1985, 104)

Now Rousseau has rightly observed the rather perplexing linguistic trap, or irony, of modern
cultural politics in that it has become difficult and perhaps impossible to clearly discriminate between
reflecting on and obsessing about love, between politics and pathology in this respect. But he ends up
simultaneously suppressing both aspects of love's staging. The target here is not building a sexually-
democratic public sphere, able to provide a forum also for topics like love and gender, but on the
contrary preventing the representation of categories like these, as this impedes their naturalization.
His target is to ward off any potential public power of women, a "power over the audience" mirroring
the - postulated - power "they have over their lovers". (1985, 47) Rousseau immediately connects his
cultural critique to the undesirable representation of women and women's concerns. Love is not to be
represented, as this will inevitably involve representing women's realm. When he writes that 'talking
about' women, their charms and talents, is tantamount to slandering them, it is because this will
endanger or even destroy the very concept of 'women'. Women should neither be objectified, nor
subjectified. Put differently: women's objectification is to be redressed not by having them talk
themselves, but by altogether avoiding talk that somehow presents female subjectivity. Love, like
women, should 'be', not be re-created. Rousseau seems to warn against it, but eventually aims to
recover eternal romance, not the republic. Rousseau's republic actually favours pathology over
politics: the solution to women's objectification or commodification is that 'woman' has to remain a
"celestial object" (1985, 47), a Platonic category not fit for empirical representation.

Gender and its associated themes in the classic texts of modernity are nowadays often represented in
terms of sociology, as problems shoved back and forth between domains like private and public, or
nature and culture, or reason and emotion; but in Enlightenment texts they are often intuited and cast
as problems of signification and linguistic reference, of the chaos modernity was creating in the field
of signification. The problem with Enlightenment, then, is not dualism: love representing emotion, the
private sphere, or whatever 'other' of logos, philosophy, rationality, politics - with the romantic result of
love becoming the supreme handle on the 'other' of modern doxa. The problem Enlightenment
confronts is signification - and here no romantic counter-doxa can help out. Considering gender
appeared to immediately remind modern mankind of the nominalist human condition - the linguistic
saturation of the modern universe, putting up for grabs all signification, colonizing all conceivable
experience, till even men, women, and love are mere words.

Not just the salon illustrates how women's vocalizing roles in society were framed as offending
against the rules of realist, objectifying language. In the eighteenth century Dutch Republic, probably
like elsewhere, several genres of popular discourse existed which were prone to ridicule, or simply
address, women's speech as 'chattering' or 'prattling' - not unlike more serious works of philosophy,
for that matter. Here, women of the popular classes turn out to share with elite ladies the terms of reception of their dealings with and in language. This is a genuine topos of women's modern history: chatter - the presumption of insufficient realist referentiality in women's speech.

3.4 Classicism, rococo, and democracy.

Political and aesthetical representation are closely interwoven issues in the eighteenth century. The eighteenth century battle over the public sphere has its parallel in the battles over aesthetic representation. Put schematically, the exuberant, 'feminine' style of Rococo art occupies in aesthetical respect the position which the women-directed salon has on the political level; the austere 'masculinity' of Neoclassicism is easily associated with the revolutionary eagerness to translate the purity of the natural sovereignty of the people into a straightforward model for modern democracy - a masculine public sphere modelled on the antique polis.

Rococo has been characterized with catchwords like: ornamental, asymmetrical, unrestrained, hedonistic, frivolous, elegant, playful, witty, voluptuous, amoral, subtle, decorative, graceful, a-logical, artificial, erotic, pornographic, organic, harmonious, employing serpentine or curved lines, and as symbolizing femininity. Neoclassicism, in contrast, has been seen as: austere, symmetrical, harmonious, virile, serious, dreaming classic perfection, venerating the antique, simplicity, sobriety, uniformity, natural, harmonious, employing rectilinear, unbroken contours, and as symbolizing masculinity. The general idea appears to be a gendered dualism of artificiality versus naturalness - already offering, by the way, an interesting deviation of the conventional dichotomy: woman-as-culture here meets man-as-nature. But what exactly is subject of gendering here? Is it either the contents depicted, or the styles of the paintings, sculpture, or architecture that are unambiguously sexed, aesthetics again fitting the diagnosis of a binary modernity? Could we locate a political or public significance of these aesthetics beyond a gendered typification of their stylistics?

Hugh Honour (1968) mentions the "semantic jungle" the art historian has to deal with in describing Neoclassicism, and points out, for example, the simultaneous political appropriations by oppositional camps of works of Neoclassic art. He knows, however, no reservations in defining Neoclassicism in a clear-cut, and gendered, opposition to Rococo.

a wind of change began to sweep through the Parisian salons, freshening up their close and perfumed atmospheres, smoothening out Rococo curves and curlicues, blowing away the delicately fragile ornaments, .. all the posturing Commedia dell'Arte figures and other exquisite frivolities and perversities which had delighted a fastidious, over-sophisticated society. (17)

Honour is definitely sexing these arts' identities; a labour which is at times, but not substantially, sustained by eighteenth century statements on the gender of these art conceptions. He tirelessly
illustrates the clash between the concurring conceptions of art with flowery and gendered adjectives. The missionary zeal of the critics was now focused not only against Rococo subject matter with its hedonistic and licentious overtones, its fêtes galantes and scenes of casual dalliance suggestive of the boudoir and feminine voluptuousness, but also against all those sensuous qualities on which Rococo art was based. (19)

The rather belligerent rhetorics in which he typifies Rococo of course hardly matches the supposed cool, dignified classical ideal. Then what, to paraphrase Freud, do men want? Let us scrutinize the image of a history of successive, essentially gendered stylistics.

It is generally agreed by art historians occupied with the eighteenth century that Neoclassicism shaped itself in opposition to Rococo art. Nevertheless, several among them throw doubts on whether the difference can be decided in terms of conventional stylistics. Robert Rosenblum (1967) emphasizes that sharply defined typifications of both art forms are problematic. For one thing, many works of art are ambiguous or eclectic. And, contrary to a familiar cliché, thematical content does not constitute a discriminating criterium. Themes taken from antiquity are to be found in 'Rococo' art as well as in 'Neoclassicism'; neither is eroticism an exclusively rococo theme that would suggest a dividing line between this and Neoclassic art.

The popular image of Neoclassic art too often tends to see it as inert in theme and dryly imitative in style. This "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" were as abundantly contradicted in Neoclassic art as in classical art itself - indeed, even more so. Around 1800, at the time of the most profound historical transformations of public and private experience, the classical world could be moulded to meet demands as varied as French Revolutionary propaganda, Romantic melancholy, and archeological erudition. (10)

Addressing the range of thematic interest in works considered as Neoclassic, he discerns categories like the 'Neoclassic Horrific', 'Neoclassic Erotic', 'Neoclassic Archeologic', and Neoclassic Stoic'. Conversely, reference to antiquity is no property of Neoclassic style: the antique was searched for nightmarish, romantic, and erotic themes subsequently depicted in Rococo style.

Neoclassicism often poses as Enlightenment's genuine aesthetics, matching a philosophical approach of knowledge and politics in foundationalist terms. Its aesthetics, however, do not give rise to a thus formulated correspondence. In discussing a specific, ambiguous painting by François-André Vincent, Rosenblum gives a characterization of Neoclassicism that illustrates one decisive caesura, not in thematic or stylistic respect, but rather in the general aim of representation in the eighteenth century. The painting offers

a pictorial demonstration of Neoclassic idealist art theory, which .. would maintain that the ideal perfections of art must be achieved by selecting the most beautiful component parts from the imperfect realities of nature (23)

Likewise, Ernst Cassirer (1932) states about the aesthetics of classicism: "They all strive for simplicity, propriety, and "naturalness" of expression, but they derive the standard of the natural
without doubts or scruples from the world in which they live; they base this standard on their immediate environment, on habit and tradition.” (293-4) The formulations are reminiscent of my discussion above of Rousseau's manoeuvring of political representation into a solid blueprint of a purposefully manipulated nature. It is this socially steered nature that informs the mimetic style of representation in the aesthetical as well as in the political sense. Rococo is described as representing an organic, for voluptuous nature; neo-Classicism is thought to represent a naturalist, for ordered nature. We do not here encounter an Enlightenment striving for a social which subjects and conquers the natural. There is no opposition between nature and culture operative between these representational styles, but two proposals for the simulation of reality - regardless whether it is named natural or social.

Rosenblum identifies a development in eighteenth century art which does mark a break in iconographical choice of imagery in favour of the idealization of classical heroic virtue and a classicization of religious virtuous messages. But, up to Jacques Louis David's full-blown synthesizing of Neoclassicist form and classical virtue in the Oath of the Horatii, this development had not yet been confined to either Neoclassicism or Rococo style of painting. It culminated in 'Neoclassic Stoic', rather than springing from this particular stylistics itself. While "(f)rom the mid eighteenth century on, a new moralizing fervor penetrated the arts, as if to castigate the sinful excesses of hedonistic style and subject that had dominated the Rococo," this "didactic mode may be traced back, broadly, to the growth of bourgeois audiences and, more narrowly, to the emergence in eighteenth century England of such moralizing popular arts as the prints of Hogarth and the novels of Richardson." (50) Rosenblum uses the concept 'moral paradigm' to characterize the new development. Art aims at teaching moral lessons, becomes a didactical enterprise promoting virtue. As his mentioning of Hogarth, who is well catalogized as a Rococo artist, may indicate, no style rupture is necessarily implied. Neither is iconographic content definitely favouring, as could have been assumed, male public roles: the classical past did provide material of female heroism for an iconography in which women represented diverse exemplary public virtues. This moralizing paradigm did change the subject, however, in developing a normative, utilitarian view on the connection between artistic and social order. Ronald Paulson (1983) similarly addresses this particular connection, especially with respect to the artistic representation of the - presumably - unprecedented event of revolution, which was predicated on "the feasibility of altering political action by the action of art" (3).

Rosenblum's and Paulson's analyses do indicate that in the course of the eighteenth century, a transformation in artistic representation occurred in the sense of a self-conscious turn towards symbolical representation. That is, it translates its self-appointed social task not so much in some faithful descriptive approach of social life, but rather in symbolic depiction. Paulson also emphasizes the symbolic bricolage within the art of the revolution, freely borrowing from antique, Christian or other elementary cultural stereotypes. He chooses a psychohistorical approach to argue the ways representations of revolution are to be seen as works of symbolization - the French
Revolution, in its violent and chaotic uprisings, provoking reactions in the diverse aesthetic registers of the beautiful, the sublime and the grotesque, and in diverse styles including 'the picturesque' and Goya's 'rococo'. Eventually, however, their studies conventionally affirm Neoclassicism's unique position in the newly established modern matrix of political and aesthetical representation: its privileged aesthetical role in the symbolic creation of precisely a positive political self-image suited for a stable modern public sphere. I want to probe further into Enlightenment's juxtaposition of art and politics, and its parallel histories of aesthetics, politics, and gender.

The relationship of Rococo to modernity may be illuminated by pointing to current philosophical estimations of the Baroque, the art movement from which Rococo sprang. Apart from referring to a specific period in art history, Baroque also stands for a specific mode of representation employing paradox, illusonism, preciousity, the thematics of melancholy and so on. (...) (T)he adjective 'barocco' was used from the time of Saint-Simon to refer to whatever was bizarre, strange, or shocking. (Hampton 1991, 3)

The significance of the ways modernity relates to Baroque modes of representation has not been lost on present-day philosophers and aestheticians. Christine Buci-Glucksmann (1984), Gilles Deleuze (1988), Frank Reijnders (1991), and Omar Calabrese (1992) have addressed ways in which Baroque aesthetics inform or illustrate current rationalities, subjectivities or cultural artefacts, whether designated as 'modern' or 'postmodern'.

Buci-Glucksmann typifies baroque reason as "the Reason of the Other." (39) It is a paradigm of thought and writing which recurs in the work of nineteenth and twentieth centuries artists and authors, Walter Benjamin posing as the foremost philosopher of baroque reason. Its 'Other' stands for the strange, the uncanny, that which hides behind the façade of modern rationality and linear representations of history: the disillusions, shocks, paradoxes, and ambivalences inhabiting the modern world. As Adorno puts it, 'the rebus' is the model of Benjamin's philosophy. Baroque stages the states of emergency history calls forth, the sovereign's violence asserting itself against catastrophe, the despotic, not the emancipatory, side of politics. Its art is centred around allegory and Trauerspiel - "the language of a torn and broken world." (70) Baroque theatre employs allegory to "stage the very action of representation" (71), stages grief and mourning through allegory in "a play of representation upon representation" (68). Baroque iconography, in contrast to "the beautiful totality of future classicism", "(t)hrough a veritable fragmentation of image, line, graphic art and even language .. brings on stage the reverse side of assertive humanism" (70), presenting human being as enigma, alienated, confronted with destruction, death, decaying body. This is an "overembodied universe" (136), "bringing into play the infinite materiality of images and bodies", making it conceivable "that a ratio should be stylistic and rhetorical, that it should be permanently at grips with its theatricization and dramatization, that it should act itself out in 'bodies'." (139)

The idea of 'progress' in modernity is governed by the plenitude of reality: the plenitude of
the 'great classical form', of a fulfilled meaning of history corresponding to reality, of Truth as a system and of the Subject as identity and centre. In opposition to this, the baroque presents from the beginning quite a different, 'postmodern' conception of reality in which the instability of forms in movement opens onto the reduplicated and reduplicable structure of all reality: enchanted illusion and disenchanted world .. (134)

At least in Benjamin's appropriation of baroque reason, the 'feminine' becomes a prime metaphor for the elusive, labyrinthical, excessive, the non-essential, non-identical. 'Woman' in diverse guises appear as allegories of modernity.

Deleuze discusses Baroque as a code-word for a philosophy of art, culture, and even morality. It is an attitude towards the world in which the one, universal standpoint (belonging to a theological paradigm of supremacy) has been left in favour of living within an infinity of ways to inhabit the world - an ontology presented in Leibniz' theory of monads and by Baroque's vision of movement, light, and space. Baroque presents us with the inflected, pleated, curved lines of folds instead of rectangularity; with sight depending on light from openings to the outside and aided by mirrors (an optics exemplified by the camera obscura) - an illumination which serves to enable the inhabitants to see the inside, in contradistinction to having the inside spied on from the outside; and with a horizontal organisation of coexisting floors instead of a vertically progressing universe like a stairwell (transforming "the cosmos into a "mundus"", as Deleuze puts it, 29). Finally, Leibniz' monadology formulates a philosophy of Baroque as a transition period in which classical reason is defeated by divergences, discords and the divination of "incompossible" worlds. Monads have no direct road to harmonic contact with each other; like Baroque interiors they have neither doors nor windows, their Baroque dance expresses irreducible mutual distance. But all compossible monads include a single and same world not existing outside of them, and they have indirect contact in sharing the expression of this same world. Morality has to issue from the calculus, or exploration, monads face of an infinite series of choices, a proliferation of principles, while in their universe either external determination of acts of the will, or eternal damnation other than by their own 'laziness' or narrow-mindedness, are absent. Whereas Baroque comes to a new harmony with extraordinary accords, (our) neo-Baroque has come to the "emancipation of dissonance" and "dissipation of tonality" (82), harmonic closure yielding to polytonality and polyphonies.

The Dutch art historian Reijnders universalizes the signification of Baroque by projecting it onto a general problematic in the history of art. He draws attention to the affinities between eighteenth century views on the status of Baroque as an opponent of 'real art', and debates on the lack of identity of present-day art.

Unlike art, the baroque is missing an identity which has to be defended: the baroque had not invented itself. But the baroque does have a proper domain: she has the role of spying on art. (8, transl. by JV)

'Genuine' art, according to Reijnders, has introduced the Baroque as her negation and threat.
Art manifests itself as post-baroque; she enforces a rupture and introduces a 'tabula rasa' to all forms of art. (21, transl. by JV)

If real art represents truth, Baroque is senseless, excessive, theatrical and unreal. Baroque makes no secret of the fact that art re-presents.

Calabrese, finally, chooses the term 'neo-baroque' to characterize the prevailing cultural production and taste of our time. He identifies certain morphological principles, form characteristics, of style as either baroque or classical, classical taste being strongly oriented toward stably ordered, secure correspondences, and baroque being typified by "categories that powerfully 'excite' the ordering of the system, that destabilize part of the system by creating turbulence and fluctuations within it and thus suspending its ability to decide on values." (26) Present-day baroque is an aesthetics of repetition, polycentrism, of the autonomous creativity of the fragment, operating on boundaries. Neo-baroque constitutes a "quasi-representation", corresponding "to the more philosophical sense of the indefinite, and which also includes, as its goal, the 'rendering' of that which cannot be represented." (159) At the same time, one may question "the extent of the real intellectual risk involved". (195) Calabrese suspects that neo-baroque taste is not genuinely subversive, avant-garde, or 'revolutionary': it does not necessarily "upset categories of value" (66) but rather seeks social acceptability. Calabrese draws the epistemological analogue to his contraposition of the aesthetical models:

Whereas an irregular system of value judgements exalts the subjectivity and relativity of the judges, classical value systems tend to minimize the role of the judging subject, and to search for an objective *quid* in the things themselves. .. Crisis, doubt, and experiment are features of the baroque. Certainty is classical. (193)

It is interesting that these philosophers suggest the Baroque - equally often associated with the pompous grandeur of monarchy, with humbling, intimidating architecture, with the death-obsessed pictography of its visual arts - as the analogue for postmodern times. Rococo, the later phase and lighter variety of the Baroque, does appear as a much more suitable candidate for such an exercise in comparison of representational orders. Because of its opposition to Neo-classicism, it has been reconstructed as a critique of modernity, like Baroque, an anti-modern 'empire of the senseless'. Its historical meaning has likewise been found in its significance as an "anti-style", that is, one which "dared to see something absurd in the pomposities and grandeur" of seventeenth century monarchy. (Levey 1966, 15) Despite the similarity in adjectives used to describe Baroque's and Rococo's artistic manifestations, the political and philosophical analogy, then, is bound to break down. First, Rococo parts company with Baroque in being so deeply entangled in gender connotations, both in its eighteenth and twentieth centuries' reception. Second, its significance lies neither in being a proto-

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55 To quote the suitable title of Kathy Acker's postmodern, or anti-modern, punk-styled novel. See also Vega 1994.
postmodern precursor nor in providing an ‘antithesis’ to modernity. Rather, it partook - however much contested - in the very conceptualization of modernity. There is a specifically modern political edge to its specific representational mode - its aesthetics witness and express the novel duplication of politics in the court-state and the urban public spheres. Whereas Baroque is bound up with the history of the state, as pointed out by Buci-Glucksmann, Rococo is bound up with the history of civil society - whether its market or forum. It is a representational style in its own right, a novel exploration of space, more precise: of the possibilities of interaction and coordination within a space embodied with egalitarian albeit differentially situated elements. In the words of Norman Bryson (1981) addressing the Rococo style of J.-B. Chardin's paintings:

Chardin's problem is to present areas of traditionally high focus - for example, eyes, fingertips, fabric, reflections - as unfocussed or at the same degree of indeterminate focus as the other areas the eye usually ignores - walls, floors, all the dull, flat surfaces. every inch of the canvas evenly attracts our attention. Although in Chardin we still perceive depth, because the composition is rigorously 'democratic' and the quantity of information transmitted by each area of the painted surface is more or less equal to the quantity transmitted by every other area, the space already comes forward to meet the plane of the signifiers - there is no dominant object to detain us in the virtual space.

The signifier is rendered visible instead of played down in favour of the signified - Rococo exposes representation's active work-in-progress, its having been produced and its forming a process in which the spectator is challenged to 'figure' the signified which is not already heavily charged with signification. It is in these respects, rather than in some ascribed gendered essence of its content or style, that Rococo gets involved with the history of the modern public sphere. Bryson's work on Rococo is helpfully suggestive of the outlines of a sexually-democratic public sphere: let us inspect one more aesthetical politics.

Rococo demands vision to be pluralistic, multi-focussed, withholding easy categorization of space and meaning. It does not confront it with a picture suggesting overview, recapitulation of reality in metaphor, or a clearcut story suggesting narration of a finite sequel of events. It postpones centring of focus: the viewer's gaze is not directed by a guiding perspective vanishing point. Its pictorial content is exuberantly dynamic, or rather: restless; nowhere there is stasis, only movement momentarily frozen in the act, the spectator's gaze not allowed to stay fixed on clearly outlined images but directed ever on through the play of serpentine lines, contiguous colours and bodies-in-motion to the next impression of 'what happens', trying to fathom what there is to be perceived and remarked. The principle of exactness of recording is played down in favour of the sketch and admittance or even summoning of the act of interpretation. It does not orient judgement on classificating rules but on the changeable perspectives, multi-dimensional depth of events. Its sexuality is not the twisted, convulsive one of Baroque, nor the regulated, rigidly heterosexual one of Neoclassicism. It does not obsess with death, like the first, nor moralizes about erotics, like the latter. The ruin from the Baroque
is replaced by the incomplete, unfinished image of the Rococo sketch.

Like Reijnders' Baroque, Rococo art constantly reminds us that art concerns acts of representation. It makes the spectator aware that the production of meaning takes place 'within' the representation; it does not suggest that signification somehow comes 'from the outside', an outer reality recurring in the depiction. But it utilizes a more frivolous, less weighty symbolic style than its predecessor; its contents are flippant, not morbid; the mourning of loss is replaced by replenishing life with experience and imagination. Like Deleuze's Baroque, it addresses the adequacy of postulated concepts of harmony, predicated on law- or norm-induced consensus between autonomous units, but it lacks the rather desperate features of the monad's solitary attempts at society. In its graveness and social and human anguish, its "funereal solemnity" (Rosenblum 1967, 28), Neoclassicism might be esteemed a truer successor of the Baroque than Rococo. In contradistinction to Neoclassic Stoic, Rococo aesthetics has no historicist, naturalist, or otherwise realist claims. Its art is unambiguously fiction, not artefact posing as reality. It has no intention of deluding the spectator into mistaking the Darstellung for any originally realist point of reference, suggesting a copy of an original, exemplary reality. Despite the classicist's claims to the contrary, rococo is more true to a genuine political motive of modern representation than Neoclassicism is. Rococo provides an aesthetical analogue of democratic political representation, as a counteroffer to a mimetic aesthetics in this field: a democracy of non-essentialized difference; a thoroughly open, optimistic, constructionist approach of intersubjectivity; style and form becoming the angle for surpassing (not causing) superficiality by enabling to address the very ground on which citizenship or public performances on the whole are signified. On the level of the content of its images, it signals an unabashed anti-realist attitude, often neglecting social settings, offering no social decor at all, sometimes giving non-naturalist depictions of 'social' scenes, but always bluntly refusing to invite a confounding of the representation and 'the real'. In this sense, on the level of its signifying devices, social orientation abounds in this aesthetics, precisely because of its anti-realist attitude: it works at unmasking naturalizing practices. These devices signal a deep distrust of the promise of competence of a nostalgic or rule-abiding social/natural engineering.

Again there is a replay within Enlightenment of the present discussions between modernists and postmodernists, rather than an opposition between characteristics of Enlightenment and postmodern discourses. The above-mentioned analyses of eighteenth century art together reveal that the Enlightenment controversy over art was not so much about whether or not descriptive Darstellung should be foregrounded, but about the precise symbolical Darstellung of the social world. Both Neoclassicism and Rococo recognized the illusionary quality, the flawed pretensions of an assured, decisive modern humanism. But where the one repines at it and reveres some lost symbolic past, the other gaily affirms its 'Other' and recuperates on its very ground beyond the façade.
3.5 Aesthetical judgement: market and forum.

Habermas has stressed the continuity between the 'literary public sphere' and the 'representative publicness' of the ancien régime.

The public sphere in the world of letters (literarische Öffentlichkeit) was not, of course, autochthonously bourgeois; it preserved a certain continuity with the publicity involved in the representation enacted at the prince's court. (1989b, 29)

At the same time, like many other authors, he associates one of the 'literary public spheres', the salon, with one particular aesthetic representational style - that of rococo:

(T)he style of the salon, like that of rococo in general, was essentially shaped by women. (1989b, 33)

He suggests that the combination of rococo and the salon is somehow predominantly a pre-modern phenomenon, as well as a 'feminine' style - apparently both in the field of aesthetics and of publicity. In contrast, Wendy Chadwick (1990) stresses the discontinuity between rococo and the court, and connects rococo to bourgeois social life and the market in the following way:

Instead of an art revolving exclusively around the court, the decorative style later known as Rococo also incorporated the interests of the urban nobility, as well as important commercial groups. The sumptuous, pleasure-loving art which resulted - with its curvilinear surface patterns, lavish gilding, dainty decorations of flowers and garlands, elaborate costumes, and stylized manners - gave visual form to feeling and sensation. (129/132)

Chadwick, relating rococo to the development of a modern, consumer-oriented market, thus sees it as a specific moment of modernity. In fact, the consumer-oriented aspect of its 'modern' identity has been espoused by theoreticians sympathetic as well as those hostile to rococo: Honour mentions rococo's "fashion-conscious mania for novelty." (1968, 14) A still more general affinity between rococo and the market may be suggested (following e.g. Hauser 1951): rococo erotic art, pre-eminently celebrating a buoyant, non-finite desire, can be typified as a high bourgeois art form - not of an either sentimental or frugal bourgeoisie, but one promoting "the rationality of unlimited desire" (to use the expression of Macpherson, 1973) - a principle likewise characterizing the modern market.

Public art is, in fact, becoming entangled with commerce throughout the eighteenth century: in the course of the development of the modern market art gets a novel 'decorative', commercial function. The modern concept of public art and the modern concept of the public sphere appear to have developed simultaneously - and therewith the liaison between the critic of taste and the politics practicing citizen, or in still other wordings, the uneasy relation and subsequent split between the modern 'spectator/reader' and the modern 'actor/author'.

Habermas' 'genuine' public sphere is presented as the political counterbid to the market in the realm of the 'social'. It is, in his view, a sign of the decline of publicness in modern times that the 'culture-
debating' public eventually evolves into a 'culture-consuming' public: the original public sphere is effectively colonized by the market for cultural goods.  

To be sure, at one time the commercialization of cultural goods had been the precondition for rational-critical debate; but it was itself in principle excluded from the exchange relationships of the market and remained the center of exactly that sphere in which property-owning private people would meet as "human beings" and only as such. (1989b, 164)

Once, then, rational-critical debate took place beyond the market, and belonged to genuine human beings, that is, to the citoyen, instead of the bourgeois. Habermas has accentuated the relation, and struggle, between politics and economy in the enfolding of - capitalist - modernity, generating 'improper' forms of public art, and a privatized consumption and discussion of culture versus socialized leisure activities, which neither have any bearing on public debate. This accent obscures the history that unfolded, on a combined political and commercial ground, of the struggle between representational styles, a struggle saturated with the problematic of the representation of gender.

Although seventeenth-century French writers celebrated "feminine reason," and writers from Corneille to Descartes admired female intelligence and perception, during the eighteenth century a critique of women became the basis for aesthetic judgements. Jean de la Bruyère (...) drew an analogy between a critique of women and a condemnation of make-up. Carried over to representation, such analogies became the basis for denouncing overly refined brushwork and immoderate pleasure in color. (Chadwick, 33)

Habermas' line of history of which the 'colonization of the public sphere by the market' forms the backbone, cannot account for the colonization of women's reason, cultural production, and place in public debate. These problems rather point to the demise of one representational style in favour of another. The structural transformation of the public sphere, then, is not just the story of the vicissitudes of capitalism, but also the history of a struggle on the very level of various - aesthetical as well as political - representational styles.

In Habermas' genesis of the modern public sphere, it comes about from 'private' beginnings in two ways. In one sense, it is accompanied by and dependent on the market, as an assembly of private persons guided by interests. In still another sense the public sphere is given 'private' origins. Habermas approaches the emergence of the salon from the point of view of the private sphere, providing the salonnières with an original 'private' identity. This perspective determines his view of the 'organic development' and maturing of modern publicness, and his specific assessment of the

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56 "When the laws of the market governing the sphere of commodity exchange and of social labor also pervaded the sphere reserved for private people as a public, rational-critical debate has a tendency to be replaced by consumption." (1989b, 161) "In the course of our century, the bourgeois forms of sociability have found substitutes that have one tendency in common despite their regional and national diversity: abstinence from literary and political debate." (1989b, 163)
characteristics of literary publicness. To repeat and complete a citation already included in the first paragraph:

(T)here evolved under its cover a public sphere in apolitical form - the literary precursor of the public sphere operative in the political domain. It provided the training ground for a critical public reflection still preoccupied with itself - a process of self-clarification of private people focusing on the genuine experiences of their novel privateness. (1989b, 29)

The 'original public debater' thus comes from an original 'private realm'. This suggests seeing the salon as an 'extended family', whose main function and significance accordingly is to "clarify genuine experiences of modern privateness" in a socially inconsequential setting. We might, however, turn to the other meaning of 'private individual', in which it refers to those operating on the market. The attendants of the salon debates then are operating in the sphere of cultural commerce and opinion; and these 'original public debaters' are ones intellectually capitalizing on the alternatives offered by cultural commerce at the time.

The public identities of these women and men sprang from the market of cultural goods, the products of which were discussed in the literary public sphere. They were public actors whose debating practices were called forth by the availability of art objects that were made for eliciting public estimation, opinion, and interference. From this changed perspective, it does not make much sense to characterize their reasoning as producing inconsequential reflections on the novelty of genuine private experiences. His 'private perspective' induces Habermas to see a cliché-version of Romanticism embodied in an eighteenth century practice. From the 'public perspective' we are presented not with a public-private dichotomy, but with a style of public reasoning related to the novel, commercial - dissemination of aesthetic experiences. In the case of rococo, aesthetic judgement was to address a self-consciously decorative, that is artificial, art, which caused the faculty of judgement to enter novel modes of reflection, to digress beyond the classical criteria for representing either the natural or the social world. 57

Habermas has constructed an original identity of the public sphere, mainly in opposition to the anti-political potential of the market. This is an opposition which demands deciding between 'proper' and 'improper' art, the appreciation of public art being divided according to on the one side economic and on the other cultural values - here public art becomes fellow traveller of the historical struggle between politics and market. In this framework of the opposition between 'genuine' public art and commercial production of art, public art has fallen victim to the colonization of the former by the latter. What this framework has disappear from sight is how the market of cultural goods has itself generated competing representational practices, and how by the same token, the public sphere is

57 Compare Levey's wording: "The canon of rococo realism - decorative realism - was to be clearly defined by Braque when he said: "A vase in one of my paintings is not a utensil which will hold water, but an object re-created for a new purpose." All the vases in the work of rococo decorators could not hold water for a moment; they have been re-created in art, and so has the water which flows like watered silk in rococo paintings." (1979, 19)
subject to being designed by different styles of representation of self and the world. Instead of the history of politics versus economics in the realm of cultural production, or of the history of private versus public on the level of social institutions, and inferring a history of gender from these histories of domains, there is a history to be told of the ways gendered tropes inform aesthetical and political designs, and determine the political potential of the various modern modes of communication. The history of the modern public sphere intersects with the history of aesthetical representation and its sexual politics.

Rococo art does not precede, but accompanies the development of a modern public sphere; neither is it antithetical to a modern - political - practice of representation. It competes with neo-classicism as an aesthetical model for the style of modern citizenship. In an important sense, it is the more adequate model for a modern view of political representation, which understands politics as an artefact. Rococo offers a view of a hermeneutic, instead of a foundationalist, social field, and one forming a bristling Dyonisac mass of forms and bodies. Neoclassicism wants an organized social field: we are not distracted in its clearcut categorization of emotion and desire. It is tempting to see prefigured in these aesthetical styles the Kantian practices of respectively judgement and cognition.

3.6 Sexually democratic publicity.

Rousseau grasps that modernity is bound to expose signification to infinite arrogation: use will become abuse. His insight into this dialectic of modernity can be seen to prefigure a subsequent (feminist) intellectual wrestling with on the one side the possibility it opens of pleasurable theatrical play with meanings - of gender and otherwise - and on the other the dizzying amount of scientific, political and dominant cultural discourses colonizing, disciplining, and dis-pleasuring such free play. But Rousseau’s fear itself contributes to shuffling away the very viability of the former option in modern publicness. It is this option which is illustrated by the salon and rococo - and hence both are equally misconceived as pre-modern or anti-modern. They constitute one of modernity’s temptations, one that is vulnerable to being mistaken for its double: an excess of signification which no longer digs up, but disciplines. If it looks like postmodernity, this very term has only highlighted a problematics characteristically present in the heart of modernity.

The practices of the salon are hard to fit into the eighteenth century philosophical categories of sentimentalism and rationalism. They can either be characterized as an unprincipled blend of both, or as simultaneously anti-sentimentalist and anti-rationalist. The salonnieres, if they can be said to endorse an ‘intercourse of sentiments’, represent a non-sentimentalist view of what is involved in the exchange of sentiments. Whereas the honnête homme neglected the extent to which, or simply denied that, his ‘communicative practices’ were saturated with representation, the salonière does not doubt the masquerading quality that all representation and linguistic utterings necessarily possess.
There is a cool, analytical aspect to the salon practice; an empiricism which does not rely on the self-evidence of experience, and a rationalism which is not guided by a linguistic realism. Patrick Brady (1984) formulates a useful insight in coining a new typification of epistemological attitudes, tailored to the contribution of rococo to eighteenth century thought.

The traditional division of the century into reason and sentiment is much less valid than a division into sensualistic empiricism followed by sentimental rationalism. (45)

If we follow this typification of philosophical positions, Rousseau's 'sentimental rationality' stands out as a reaction to the salon's 'sensualistic empiricism'.

The salonnière does not pretend to be realistic in an epistemological sense: in the salon one does not communicate in order to execute ultimate statements on being or on knowledge of the world. Representation here involves self-representation: it embodies a practice of communication as putting into language idiosyncratic experiences of social and private being. The salonnières' communication consists of a series of reports on an inner polylogue, which does not presume identity, but rather accepts the fact of neurotical existence. This communication avoids pretenses to final authority, and as such represents a radical sexually democratic alternative to bourgeois publicness.

We may, finally, reflect on an example of 'genuine' public art through which women are simultaneously presented in and absented from the public sphere. The eighteenth century public sphere is lavishly provided with artistic representation of women, in its public art. The republican monuments embodying female figures do not aim at giving expression to the 'iconic' public presence of women, but work at transforming this into a symbolic and metaphorical presence, delegating the deciphering of this symbolic existence to the individual imagination of the private men peopling the public sphere. An adequate characterization of this early practice of modern 'public art' taken from a study of contemporary public art:

Public art tends to repress violence, veiling it with the stasis of monumentalized and pacified spaces, just as it veils gender inequality by representing the masculine public sphere with the monumentalized bodies of women. (Mitchell 1992, 39)

In a formulation of Dorinda Outram, the political culture of the French Revolution used the physical aspects of gender as a crucial set of legitimating and delegitimating devices in the construction of the new public identity of the middle class. (1989, 33)

Women represent the public sphere, instead of being represented in it. This symbolic representation of women or 'the feminine' might be compared to the 'representative publicness' of the ancien régime

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58 See Brady, who attempts to establish the philosophical affinities of rococo aesthetic. "In the face of this rejection of both reason and sentiment in favour of sensations, there developed a coldly realistic view of reality accompanied by desperate or cynical attempts to compensate by a hedonistic aesthetic of frothy voluptuousness. It is this double character of the rococo aesthetic which provides the clue to an understanding of the relationship between atomistic empiricism and the rococo mode of vision." (1984, 49)
in the sense that once again the expression of power is attached to symbolic signs: there is no Vertretung by women, but a symbolic representation of women 'top-down', that is, dressed up with signs mirroring men's authoritative definitions of their relation to power. The monuments are signs of the authority ascribed to women in men's imaginations. Woman as symbol passively serves the free projection of men's fears and desires with respect to women.

If public art only symbolically represents women, femaleness, or femininity, it is truly premodern. Symbolic representation cannot guide modern political representation as in symbolizing the modern political dimension of representation is lost: it can induce no action of the represented, it does not open up a possibility of agency. This is the one aesthetical model of representation that can get no public scope of action. This mode of representation may truly be called 'privatized' or non-public, 'colonized' not by commercial interest but by rationalized phantasma. Monumentalized bodies receive only passive signification within private minds. They invite specific 'private activities' in a public space, a privacy that will act out an opposition, not to state power, but to those not in power.

Besides effectuating such privatized signification processes, these symbols of women dominating public space are fraudulent even with respect to the nature of symbolic representation, which should be characterized by relinquishing the claim to descriptive correspondence with the represented. These are doubly obfuscating symbols; they confusingly suggest representation through figurative reference, thus trying to shed their symbolic status. Unlike the representatives of the absolutist monarch, they suggest representing a power existing somewhere else, while having no doubts about the absence of such a real referent. Symbolic representation, clad in figurative form suggestive of realistic reference, purposively obfuscates the specificity of its work among the modes of representation.

I have attempted to assess modern politics through discussing the various representational attitudes that inform the configuration of communication, public sphere, and privateness. I have chosen to 'read' the history of the public sphere not in the framework of market versus politics, but as a history of diverse options on representation - whether aesthetical, linguistic, or political. From this vantage point, modernity turns out to be shorthand for a debate on, not a 'position' within, the interlocking of gender and publicity. Styles of representation appear to have been, and still are, decisive in the reception - and eventually for the realization - of women's public presence and performance. While in histories of the modern public sphere the aesthetical 'domain' has been constructed in opposition to a political 'domain', we have seen that when we juxtapose both in terms of representational practices both can be intuited as models for action, and thus provide information on the organisation of publicity. It is this juxtaposition which enables us to address the complicity of market, forum and theater in the political or public history of gender.
Chapter IV. The Political Representation of Gender. Republicanism.

4.1 Another Enlightenment, other subjects.

While 'the' Enlightenment, especially through its postmodernist reception, is still predominantly reviewed in terms of its liberal-humanist outlook, research into Enlightenment's political theory has a long-standing complement in studies of its civic-humanist, or republican, component. This 'other' Enlightenment focuses on civic virtues and active citizenship, instead of rights and interest-seeking individuals. It has been an intellectual inspiration to authors as different as Hannah Arendt, J.G.A. Pocock, and the greater part of contemporary social philosophers critical of liberalism, like Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, and Michael Walzer. It has also received feminist attention, which has served as an intervention in the standard feminist reception of an overall liberal-humanist Enlightenment, and produced novel accounts of the importance of gender in Enlightenment discourse.

Although it has the status of being the 'other' Enlightenment, and to feminism a certain attractivity seems to exist of political idioms not just centering on formal rights, but rather on the quality of citizenship and of social life, this did not automatically provide civic humanism with a more favourable feminist judgement. The feminist reception of republican thought, whether of a Rousseauan or Arendtian brand, has often professed profound pessimism with regard to the possibility of employing republican idiom as a resource for feminist theory or practice. Present-day feminist historiography and political theory have castigated republican idiom for its repression or neglect of private and bodily experience, evoking unembodied, literally 'self-denying' images of the good citizen. They have furthermore pointed out that the Aristotelian heritage leads, in a reversal of liberalism, to an excessive dedication to public action, guided, moreover, by imperatives of action representing macho values. Finally, they have investigated how, in the tradition of civic humanism, life's contingencies have been approached through the allegory of fickle Fortune, resulting in a political symbolics in which it is women who frustrate attempts to control. Republicanism thus epitomizes a list of complaints against modernity: its traditional anxieties are only fuelled by the modern obsession with the omnipotent, engineering powers politics ought to possess; it underlies or sustains modernity's egocentric, competing, controlling political and epistemological subject; and it is steeped both in an undisguised fear of and contempt for women.

Again, the main line of argument in this feminist reception concerns the exclusion of women from political theory and practice. I think that for eighteenth century republicanism a change of angle should be suggested. First of all one could emphasize that, contrary to a political exclusion of women, a debate arose on how to design a vita activa for women. Furthermore, its particular attention to 'chance', with its gendered connotations, also implies that the political problem gender constitutes is, willy-nilly, not outside its field of vision. In chapter II I discussed, and argued with, the standard complaint against liberal humanism that women here are either excluded from a seemingly
universalist humanism, or homologized to fit it. Civic humanism appears equally erroneously captivated with the concept of 'exclusion' of women. By way of either applying to, or reserving for them republican categories, women are included in its central concerns, and if thought necessary, accorded a differentiated existence within its terms.

There are further complications to the established feminist picture: republicanism did not only enable self-images of masculinity. At least at the end of the eighteenth century, this very republican idiom can be shown to function in far different and even opposite ways - it actually opened up feminist discourses. I want to survey three tenets of republican thought which enabled alternatives to precisely the challenged pathologies of modernity and masculinity. First, civic humanism counters liberalism's homo economicus with homo politicus. This entails a very different philosophical anthropology. It is concerned with the teleology rather than the origins of human and social life, it grasps subjectivity in mimetical and performativ e rather than expressive terms, and turns around liberalism's understanding of how to handle the configuration of social diversity and political equality. (§ 4.2)

Second, there is the consistent public perspective of republicanism, celebrating public virtues and civic participation instead of, or sometimes next to, accentuating individual rights and a self-fulfillment in privacy. Feminist receptions concluded either the exclusion of female virtue from this public approach, or the undervaluation of private virtue and values, that is, the subsequent privatization of female virtue and the growth of a discourse on domesticity. Republican idiom thus has rashly been assimilated to sentimentalist or certain christian discourses, and its central problem for feminism has been located in the hierarchical order republicanism assumes between the private and the public sphere. However, it is in the eighteenth century precisely the specificity of republicanism, the priority it gives to the public realm, which allowed the approach of female virtues in terms of public relevance, and as equipping for a female sphere of action, a female vita activa. The best known example is probably the 'republican mother', but conceived were also ones well beyond motherhood. And furthermore, a less 'sociological', or 'topographical', and more procedural theoretical profit was gained from republicanism's deep-seated passion for a politically understood life. We will see how republicanism's idiomatic and conceptual peculiarities provided, first, handles on arguing a feminist version of democratic public life, the styling of which was not dependent on some prior 'privatized' femininity, and second, a theoretical potential to 'politicize' femininity, and gender in general.

In its feminist reception, one recognizes the ambivalent presence in eighteenth century republicanism of its classical heritage. It has, so to say, internalized the querelle between the ancients and the moderns: it wavers between two impulses, one directed backward, one forward. On the one hand there is a Renaissance humanist impulse which relied on the authority of the classical examples, on the other a 'modern' republican impulse which could not but see modern human beings as destined to live active, as contrary to pre-modern ordained, lives. Both impulses are present in feminist republicanism: the first provided it in imitative fashion with authoritative role models, the
second provided it with a notion that 'gender' belonged to political, not ordained existence. (§ 4.3)

Third, instead of defining politics exhaustively as concerning the activities of steering, engineering, and controlling society, the tradition of civic humanism has conceived of politics as action, not control, and hence has built-in room for recognizing the contingent factors always confronting politics. The theme of contingency is, far from being denied, explicitly present within the republican tradition. It is recognized as part and parcel of life - political or otherwise. The classical hero struggles with and is crushed by fate - quite unlike his liberal, and present-day, counterpart who triumphs over difficulties. The question, again, is how this classical heritage was dealt with in eighteenth century civic humanism. We could conjecture that the classical theme gets entangled in the above mentioned 'modern impulse' to intuite a 'destination' to act. The imagery concerning the struggles with contingency is processed into a problematic of performative representation. I will discuss Mary Wollstonecraft's works to illustrate the significance of these themes in eighteenth century (feminist) republican ideas. (§ 4.4)

Furthermore, in § 4.5 it will be ventured that civic humanism provided its feminist adherents with an heuristic device that enabled them to carry politics to private and personal experience, and judge the private from a public, the personal from a political perspective, instead of vice versa as in liberalism. In what is probably the most drastic deflection from its present-day imago - it could be, and was, seen as a reservoir for conceptualizing a feminist 'politics of the personal'.

4.2 Sexing homo economicus.

Eighteenth century civic humanism can well be defined as the embodiment of a protest against the rule of homo economicus in market theory. It wants to purify politics of the dictates of the market. Its political approach of human nature, as a critique of the economical approach, has engendered both a certain type of social critique, and an awareness of the necessity to transcend particularist social positions in order to reach some sort of political association. Both characteristics of republicanism have had interesting results in the field of the critique of gender relations.

I will first concentrate on its applications as a self-critique of contemporary society. Eighteenth century republicanism forms an indictment against market society, its excrescences and its socio-political order build around the image of homo economicus. This being's artificiality and excessive needs are responsible for upsetting a true republican spirit which values frugality, equal citizenship, and public spirit. Market society leads to uncontrolled consumption and social chaos. Luxury is the main cause of an anti-political society which values arts and sciences more than social justice. Republicans see the market elbow out a viable public space; politics should deliver the solution to the contingent leanings of the social domain.
This is the way republican social critique was and is usually depicted. This same view of society, however, has been shown by feminist commentators to be expressed in an extremely misogynist discourse. It is not simply 'decadence', but women, femininity, and 'effeminacy' which are being attacked, the supposed 'critique' being exposed as a far more complicated, and thoroughly gendered, ideology of modernity. But then again, and in danger of being overlooked, this critical discourse of affluent society is not in some essentialist sense an ideology of masculinity. It has, on the contrary, also served as a critique of masculine prerogative, or of the ways a supposedly 'civilized' society is still inegalitarian in its attitudes towards women.

One nice example of the ways republican discourse could be employed for such a social critique - of the effects of the affluent European civilization on 'barbarian' people as well as European women - is offered in a Dutch text from 1793 by a vicar, Jacobus Kantelaar (1759-1821). His lecture (68 pages, 24 pages of notes not included, published by a well-known eighteenth century cultural association) explicitly addresses the relationship between enlightenment and women. 'Enlightenment' is used here, not as a typification of, but as a critical concept vis-à-vis existing, commercial modernity. His text is characterized by republican themes and idiom. Stating that contemporary society should be transformed from its barbarian state to Enlightenment, he writes that "refinement of manners has become the first cause of inequality between human beings". (28) For him this includes inequality between the sexes. While for Rousseau women are the instigators as well as scheming beneficiaries of luxurious and refined civilization, for Kantelaar they are its victims. Kantelaar comments on contemporary societies in the grip of opulence:

No colours are black enough, listeners, to paint the condition of women in such nations where Opulence has brought these fatal effects. The men, not knowing nor desiring happiness in marriage expect nothing of her, but satisfaction of their animal desires, for which they, just like the Savages, judge women to be solely created for. (33)

He judges his own society to be in a worse state than those of the so-called 'savage' people. No opposition is seen here between civilization and barbarism. Both repress (objectify) women. The histories of opulence and of barbarism are analogues: both represent decayed, cruel stages after former austerity and equality. The analogue is meant to teach humbleness to the so-called 'civilized' people. The society of luxury can, next to being compared to the 'barbarian' ones, also serve to illustrate the exploitation of those very savages. Both women and savages are the victims of European affluence.

You shiver, effeminate servants of sensuality, when you hear recounting the behaviour of savage peoples. .. And you do not realize that also your wife is only a slave to your passions, just like his; .. how many products of far away parts of this world, which you devour on a daily basis, are smeared with the blood of poor negro slaves, whose diligence brings you these very products. (46, italics in original)

Women and savages no longer represent decadence, they on the contrary represent the dire
consequences of a decadent social order for which European males are responsible. Kantelaar's republican vocabulary does ally with christian conservatism and contemporary anti-libertarian (in the eighteenth century anti-'sensualist') positions; it is also a cultural critique which in republican spirit states that the market neither liberates the world, nor women, and which sees sexuality as susceptible to criticism of cultural dominance. The critique of the market, economic liberty, and its 'decadent' results was not only cast in misogynist terms or as celebration of the austere life of the poor: it could be utilized to expose an inegalitarian and hence unjust gender as well as world order.

While Rousseau's criticism of the dominance of market discourse turns upon *mulier economica* as - to him - its most characteristic representative, Kantelaar identifies precisely *homo economicus* himself as its male, European agent.

I suggested another angle from which civic humanist thought can be seen to ally with feminist concerns, one that lies in its handling of the configuration of human equality and difference. How can human beings be made to bond over and against the forces that bring about diverse social identities? Is the republican insistence on the separation of economy and politics functional in mediating (social) difference and (political) equality? Republicanism is sometimes rashly assimilated to communitarianism for its lofty appraisal of the political bond. It has even become established opinion in social and political philosophy that the republican (Rousseauist) devotion to politics prepared for totalitarian conclusions and closed societies in later era's. The feminist-republican texts to be discussed in this chapter suggest a very different reception. Republicanism's political approach of human nature and its insistence on political solutions over and against economical ones imply an important intuition with respect to the relation between social diversity and political union. This is the intuition, not of the communal embeddedness of individual life, but, on the contrary, of the necessity to reach some sort of political association over and against the proliferation of social diversity.

The liberal version of the separation of economy and politics runs that political equality should abstract from social differences. These are legitimate in themselves, as they represent a natural individuality, and political equality is a mere corrective complement to them. Genuine human activity takes place in the social, not the political domain. In the republican version politics should undo social inequality as this forms a corruption of natural equality. The market once again generates and legitimates inequality, taking the place of hierarchical social ranking during the *ancien régime*. Social identities should not influence public performance. Hannah Arendt captured the intent when she dejectedly diagnosed "the invasion of the public realm by society" in the eighteenth century. (1963, 221) Politics should generate a type of action not dictated by market principles. Genuine human action takes place in the political, not the social domain.

*Hanna Pitkin* (1981) represented a broadly shared feminist intuition, when she criticized how republicanism's citizens "resemble posturing little boys clamoring for attention ('Look at me! I'm the greatest!' "No, look at me!")", and "have left their bodies behind in the private realm". (338)
Through the obsessive, exclusive focus on the distinction political life bestows on its devotees, classical republicanism constitutes macho-politics in denying private, bodily, vulnerable and uncompetitive existence a political life. On the other hand, Bonnie Honig (1992) claims rather different virtues for the - at least the Arendtian - insistence on the priority of politics. Behind it she conjectures an aversion to pre-political identities and redefines this potential as that of a 'performative politics'. "On Arendt's account, identity is the performative production, not the expressive condition or essence of action." (216) To Arendt, conceiving of an acting self implies seeing it as the site of an agonistic struggle which she "(sometimes) calls politics" (220). The acting self produces itself, instead of presupposing its proper identity. It is challenging to suppose that Honig's assessment of republicanism's priority with the political suits only too well republican practice during the transitional period that the eighteenth century Atlantic revolutionary era was. Revolutionary practice aimed at producing identities which could relieve monarchy's symbolic representation in the single body politic of the king and establish inter-subjective relationships in a political realm. Established social identities, whether from the ancien régime or the practices of commerce, were thoroughly distrusted. Antiquity, but also other historical periods, were searched for models for genuine political, or rather public, activity which could relieve monarchical publicity and constitute a genuine bonding of a humanity conceived of as egalitarian. While on the one hand the masculinist features of these identifications have been amply documented (see also § 4.3), on the other hand republicanism's recourse to history and example to find access to a substantially experienced citizenship provided an equally open and contested source for gender identifications, as did the appeal to life in a diversity of states of nature. Mimetic orientation, rather than an essentialist authenticity or expressive identity appears in this particular historical period to have guided one's sense of an acting self. The admonition "let us imitate the Roman ladies" by the republican activist Etta Palm-Aelders (whom I will discuss in the next section) illustrates this contemporary mode of performative identity.

### 4.3 Mulier politica, mulier clausa.

Feminist historical studies from the seventies and eighties about the eighteenth century European and American democratic revolutions have given pessimistic accounts of the impact of republican ideas of citizenship on the political position of women. They have especially pointed out the birth of the ‘republican mother’ as the privatized deformation of republican citizenship for women. The dominant conclusion emerging from these studies is that the republican image of public virtue, estimated highly by male revolutionaries, was not able to serve the feminist cause in an unmediated way. Studies of Linda Kerber (1980) and Jane Rendall (1985) have contended that eighteenth century feminists applied republican values to the domestic sphere, actively constructing a separate domestic sphere of republican motherhood in which the role of women was defined as a positive contribution to
public and social life. Joan Hoff Wilson (1976) concluded for the American Revolution that the ideology of 'republican motherhood' never led up to something comparable with modern feminism for its lack of public content. Ruth Bloch (1987) further argued the process of privatization in which at the end of the eighteenth century the conceptualization of virtue eventually disappeared as a political discourse to give way to protestant, sentimentalist, and Scottish views on virtue.

A related theme was explored by Dorinda Outram (1989). She observes the 'disappearance of the body' from the history of modern public space and restores the theme to her study of eighteenth century French revolutionary discourse. She traces republican accounts of public virtue and discipline of the passions to sixteenth century accounts of Stoicism. The classical Stoic discussions of the relative merits of involvement with and withdrawal from public affairs were in the sixteenth century narrowed and bent towards an exclusive orientation on action, involvement, and a stern self-control. This neo-Stoicism could legitimate the central role of force and discipline in the state, as well as creating an ideology of the self-disciplined individual. Neo-Stoic notions of the self joined other ideologies of the individual in a 'cult of the self' in which the urge to achieve self-sovereignty was fed through identification with heroes - whether the great men of antiquity or contemporary cultural and literary models.

(T)he main object was not antiquarian recreation of the Roman republic .. but the ability to personify virtue continuously and publicly. .. Solemn demeanour, courageous words, and reserve were .. the signs of the successfull ability to play out a role which compelled attention, created an audience, and validated the authority of the player. (78)

In the revolutionary struggle for autonomy, physical and psychic self-control, and heroic dignity, Outram sees prefigured the homo clausus who eventually reemerges as nineteenth century's middle-class self-image. Outram points out how this new Stoic ideal was applied to and used by men rather than by women. While the mythological canon did include many female heroes, it produced very different types of heroism for men and women: women reacted, rather than acted.

Homo clausus was not accompanied by mulier clausa. Whereas the male heroes emphasize their non-reactivity, their remorseless control over body and emotion, women, on the contrary perform heroic acts precisely because of their reactivity. They react with warm and generous outrage .. They also invest enormous energy in the act of perception. Their emotional capacity, contemporaries held, allowed them to see into things more deeply than could men, precisely because they were held to be less concerned about the maintenance of dignity .. In other words, in the Revolutionary mythology, women react, relate, perceive, involve; men cling to the heroic moments and postures of personification. (84)

Furthermore, being defined in terms of reactivity instead of activity, and heteronomy instead of

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59 See also Norton 1980.

60 A similar conclusion is found in Abray 1975.
autonomy, female action was deprived of public weight and dignity as defined by revolutionary heroic idiom. Eventually, "the middle-class revolutionary creation of political culture was to validate the political participation of men and culpabilize that of women". (156)

However cogent Outram's depiction of revolutionary imagery is, it surveys one side of the republican story - the masculine perspective on the republic - leaving out the active contributions to and uses made of the potential of republican public imagery and idiom by feminists, employing these for their own goals. Can the oppositions between activity and reactivity, reserve and passionate involvement, "male controllers and personifiers" versus "female feelers and doers" (85) also be recognized in their discourses? Or did feminist authors rather contribute to the construction of a new political individual in terms comparable to those outlined by Outram as accounting for heroic, Stoic manhood? Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), in A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792), champions the very republican ideal of contained, distant composure as an ideal of female dignity. It is the gist of her impatience with women's culture, with female practices of involved, physical, intimate mutual relationships, that these conflict with the republican ideal of fellowship. It repels her that women "should be more familiar with each other than men are": it is "a solecism in manners", "an insult to the majesty of human nature." (205)

To say the truth, women are too familiar with each other. .. Why in the name of decency are sisters, female intimates, or ladies and their waiting-women, to be so grossly familiar as to forget the respect which one human creature owes to another. .. Secrets are told - where silence ought to reign (205)

In short, with respect to both mind and body, they are too intimate. That decent personal reserve which is the foundation of dignity of character, must be kept up between woman and woman (206)

Dignified, controlled, reserved behaviour are wished for women, and these are conceived of as an application of republican ideals. The personal and political subjectivity of women conceived of by this feminist author is modelled on *mulier clausa*.

I will turn to the ideas of Etta Palm-Aelders (1743-1799) who drafted a feminist republicanism which can neither be subsumed under the idiom of republican motherhood, nor be seen as conforming to the republican image of a reactive and non-public female heroism. Her application of republican public ethos to women and to personal relations, and her evocations of classical and contemporary female heroes tread different paths - not so much into a disciplining state and self-disciplined subjects as into a republican society disciplining masculine behaviour in public as well as private contexts, and supplying women with the very public weight Outram sees being reserved for men.

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With Palm-Aelders, as with Kantelaar, it appears to be male morality which constitutes the problem for the republic: "you kept for yourselves all the conveniences of vice, .. you have given us all the difficulty of virtue as our share." (1791, 3) She summons men to take responsibility for their own virtues, with respect to their public as well as to their private lives, and for the virtues of others, public and private. In general, her republicanism focusses on a public ethos, rather than a public domain. She uses the vocabularies of rights and virtue alongside, combining them in a feminist version of democratic public life. First, she adheres to a conventionalist approach of natural rights theory, observes the partiality of natural rights and sees this as due to convention and power, not nature. She states that laws are in favour of men, not because they have somehow greater natural access to their principles, but "because everywhere power is in your hands." (1791, 2) On several occasions she has defended equal political liberty and rights for women, and claimed political equality for women who should be accorded a national education, be declared of age at twenty-one, be able to file for divorce, and have an equal share in inheritance. When it comes to applying the liberal notions of right, she does not distinguish between marriage and government, private and public spheres. Attacking the regulations on adultery, that allow men to have their adulterous wives sent to jail for two years and that expressly allow just the husband, not the wife to file a charge of adultery, she draws on the constitutional principles of natural rights theory.

Conjugal authority should be only the consequence of the social pact. It is wisdom in legislation, it is in the general interest to establish a balance between despotism and license, but the powers of husband and wife must be equal and separate. The laws cannot establish any difference between these two authorities; they must give equal protection and maintain a perpetual balance between the two married people. (1791, 39)

To her, the pursuit of freedom is not to show patience with the chance arrangement of societal spheres. Entering familial life cannot be the criterion by which the citizen stops being a persona, a legal personality, and becomes a natural human being without a specified juridical status, a homo. No opposition of nature/private versus society/public occurs to her. The just approach of distributing "equal and separate" power between the sexes, of endowing women with modern humanity, is the responsibility and the creation of the social contract. It is the contract which invents the natural rights and authority of persons.

Secondly, with regard to her utilization of republican idiom, her work does not unravel virtue into masculine and feminine attributes, and she is no stranger to the idea of armed civic virtue applying to all citizens. (Quite unlike Mary Wollstonecraft who "will have none of this; she wants the virtue without the qualification 'armed' and would excise the martial dimensions from Rousseau's vision." (Elshain 1987, 71)) We do not find in her work Rousseau's notorious Spartan mother, but she does claim classic civic virtue and heroism for women, citing examples of female heroism from classic antiquity as well as French and other national histories.

Palm-Aelders is known to have been the first woman who appeared on the tribune of the
Cercle Social in defense of feminist notions. November 26, 1790 she rescues a male orator who - unfortunately in a too clumsy way - tries to defend the cause of women by discussing whether women should have influence in the government, what kind of civic influence they should be accorded, and the creation of a magistrature executed just by women. When the irritated male audience in the Cercle Social obstructs his speech she intervenes by climbing the platform and asking them:

   Gentleman, can it be that the holy revolution, that gives men their rights, has made the French unjust and dishonest towards the women! You have listened with patience to the other speakers, why interrupt the one who speaks in favour of women?  

Notwithstanding the resulting applause the session closes, but she finds herself surrounded by women. She tells them: "now that the French have become like the Romans, let us imitate the virtues and the patriotism of the Roman ladies." The first sentences of her Discours sur l'injustice are set in the tone of militant female activity in the years after 1789 when several associations of 'Amazones' were established.

   You have admitted my sex to this patriot association of the 'Amis de la Vérité'; this is a first step in the direction of justice. The honored representatives of this happy nation just applauded at the undaunted courage of the Amazones in one of your departments, and allowed them to found a corps for the defense of the fatherland. (1791, 2)

After having cited such diverse examples of classic female heroism as the daughter of Cato, the mother of Coriolanus, the warriors at Salamis, the 'mother of Gracchs' Cornelia, the wife of Petus, the virgin of Orleans, and the reigns of Elisabeth in England and Catherine in Russia, she continues:

   But why search so far, when we have examples in our midst? The French citoyennes, your wives, your sisters and your mothers, gentlemen, did not they give to the universe a sublime example of patriotism, courage and civic virtues? Did not they promptly sacrifice their jewelry for their fatherland? (1791, 8)

She is the initiator in 1791 of the first women's club in Paris, which was preceded by 'Amazone's companies' in other French cities like Creil, Caen and Bordeaux. On April 1, 1792 she appears in parliament to claim the admission of women to civilian and military positions, "after a long eulogy of feminine virtues, after having maintained that women equal men in courage and talent, and almost always surpass them in imagination".

   While the idiom of - armed and civilian - civic virtue is thus considered equally important for women and men, difference does surface and occurs where she wants to guarantee women's authoritative power with regard to the styling of public life. Republican civic responsibility is the

64 Archives parlementaires, vol. 41, 63-64, April 1, 1792. Cited and translated in: Applewhite, Levy and Johnson (eds.) 1979, 323.
argument for establishing civic associations exclusively run by women. She seems to think it will strengthen the case for women's civic existence when it can be shown that they have a public task of their own. March 1791 she introduces an ambitious project launching a structure of women's organizations with their own public tasks of securing the republic through vigilance against the "enemies of liberty" and profiteers in its midst. (1791, 25-26) These women's societies should also be charged with the tasks of overseeing the establishment of wet nurses, of supervising public education, and of gathering "information on the conduct and the needs of the infortunates who request the assistance of the district." (1791, 26-28)

If republicanism was able to identify its enemy *homo economicus* as indeed male (§ 4.2), it was equally capable of having *mulier politica* accompany *homo politicus*. Palm-Aelders' rhetorical use of classical and contemporary female heroes did draw on the image of *homo clausus*, or rather *mulier clausa*. Her linguistic style in addressing her fellow citizens and in evoking female heroines from antiquity as well as historical and contemporary France is similar to that of the male revolutionaries. Its appeal appears to lie exactly in its power to command attention, respect, solemnity and dignified courage. Palm-Aelders wants to show that the priority with the public realm that a republican outlook implied was not conditioned by a heroic identification dependent on male examples. Her disparate examples of heroines cannot yield one specific directive for women's public performance; they rather evoke through literary and empirical example the possibility of female public practice. Her civic humanism complements her rights discourse in providing a legitimation of female authority from historical and literary example, in contrast to a modern abstract, systematical legitimation from democratic-juristic humanism. Empirical and literary female models inject opportunities for personal identification into liberal humanism's call to enter a transcendent, abstract humanity. This mixture may truly be regarded as an attempt at a 'sexual-democratic humanism'.

This is not to argue the existence of a feminist neo-Stoa. The work of Palm-Aelders in particular does not testify to any 'remorseless control over emotion'. It does, however, show that in Palm-Aelders' rhetorics both ancients and moderns are present. As to the first, two heritages from the sixteenth century here merge: the *querelle* between the ancients and the moderns is joined by the *querelle des femmes*, the confrontation between misogyny and feminism which has been a source for feminist notions of female empowerment from the Middle Ages and throughout early modernity. Its topics, the virtue and the political and intellectual authority of women, were the subject of "a battle of pens" which "created an intellectual tradition in which the memory of the feudal rule of women, and dimmer memories of women armed and warring, kept alive a notion of women's governing powers".

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65 Taking into account the pervasive obsession of the men of the Revolution with unmasking treason, intrigue and hypocrisy (themes always close to being thought of as feminine), this proposal of a female vigilance against the enemies of the republic may even be judged retrospectively as the chance of the century to dissolve the association of corruption and femininity.
Renaissance humanism continued to provide various resources for rhetorical strategies of a specific feminist nature, drawing on historical examples as well as arguments from natural law.\textsuperscript{66} Palm-Aelders' work can be seen as continuing in this tradition.

There are two further respects in which her work establishes a 'politicization of femininity'. In her proposals for women's organisations she does touch on the subject of maternal and rearing abilities of women. But no program for domesticity is offered here: happiness does not derive from the private sphere, but from political life, that is, to be more precise, a politically experienced life. Motherhood does not surface in her work as an imperative for action; it is not a moral or social vocation. When addressing herself to women, she consistently calls them 'citoyennes' or 'concitoyennes' - not mothers. To her, the female republican does not somehow represent the qualities of private life as opposed to those of public life. Her thinking is throughout focussed on issues of a political or public nature. Although her own lifestyle suggests otherwise, in her work Palm-Aelders is unambiguous in rejecting polite culture's alternative for publicity; she firmly denounces an ornamentalist, 'effeminate' culture supported by "French ladies". Instead of the contrast between ideals of domestic values and public life, a very different conflict is brought to the surface. She is dealing with two ideals of public life. The choice for women is one between the political styles of republicanism versus sociability. This general political conflict also triggers intra-feminist differences on how to style political life. On both sides sexist idiom struggles as well as allies with its very critique, and feminist appropriations keep colliding with either the republican denouncement of 'femininity' or sociability's approbation of 'feminine' style and values. This struggle for a 'feminist' public life illustrates, not the making of a privatized female citizenship, but the ironical political history of gender.

In still another, third, respect Palm-Aelders' republican perspective brings about a 'politicization of femininity'. The public perspective republicanism provides her with enables her to broaden the very application of the concept of politics, and to identify a specific relevance of this "broad concept" to women. The terrain of male-female relationships induces a widened range of politics women might engage in. She reports the existence of a different kind of politics women might foster. As it refers to the specific female struggle of coping with male power and arrogance, it reveals the notion of a politics not simply structured around the demands of the state or the social.

You have taken up the arms, gentlemen, and immediately the hydra of disgusting tyranny retired in the heart of its cave, where it waits for only one more blow to expire. We do not believe compared with you, gentlemen, to break the chains that hold us, to have need of more than the arms that nature gave us, talents, worth, virtue, and even that weakness that is our force and that made us triumph so often over our proud superiors. (1791, 6)

In § 4.5 I will return to this theme, and to the ways her work illustrates the proposed changes of angle

\textsuperscript{66} See for an exposition of its arguments Jordan 1990.
with regard to republicanism.

4.4 Contingency: from fickle Fortune to reactivating gender.

Classical liberalism has been held responsible for having a white, masculine human being posing as a universal one. Human origin, value, or telos have been measured along male standards. In natural rights theory, women appear to represent the particular and the contingent. In Chapter II I have tried to restate the problem of gender in natural rights theory, not so much in terms of the exclusion of women from presumptions about what is universal, but rather in terms of a persistent paradox in the heart of natural rights theory - the paradox that in nature a basis for equality as well as difference, for the universal as well as the non-universal, may be found. The central tenets of liberal-humanist assumptions about gender seem to be neither the exclusion of women, nor their masculinization; the naturalist paradox points not so much to some substantial idea about the female sex, but rather to the intuition of gender as a naturally contingent category. Hence I asserted that the real problems of gender natural rights theories are struggling with, are to be formulated in terms readily recognizable from a present-day perspective: what does gender represent, and who will represent woman?

While classic liberalism thus has (mistakenly) been assumed to underplay the problem of contingency, the presence of the theme of contingency in civic humanist thought has been more readily recognized. Several authors occupied with the history of civic humanism or republicanism have pointed out the centrality to this tradition of thought of the figure of Fortune. The goddess of chance in republican thought represents the corruption of free political action by historical or natural circumstance. The overall misogyny of republicanism has been illustrated by this insistence on the 'feminine' identities of categories like disturbance and anti-politics in these authors. In the eighteenth century, though Fortune has disappeared as a regular literal reference, the theme takes on specific translations cut for commercial society: Pocock (1975) e.g. thinks that she is exchanged for Circe, representing the insecurity of trade and commerce. This is not a mere replacement of symbols: it in fact signifies a major shift in the republican perception of the relation between politics and economy, and, in a broader sense, between politics, economy, and gender.

To the Ancients economy meant the sphere of necessity (or the oikos), which should, first, merely play an enabling role in respect of politics, and, second, not corrupt it by letting its private interests prevail over it, and hence be kept apart from it. To eighteenth century republicans economy has taken on the quite different meanings of the social question versus wealth, of poverty versus waste. It is no longer a matter of excluding a pre-political sphere of life, but of confronting the anti-political tendencies of the social realm, which therefore are to be put on the political agenda. The classical fear of the contingent has in modernity become focussed on wealth, decadence, and economic waste, in particular as embodied by the arts and sciences. Wealth and waste now
represent the threats of contingency, of upheaval, disorder, and disintegration to republican government. The associations between politics, economics, and gender get a far greater range than just the existential insecurities commerce calls forth. The entire category of the social appears to be "feminized". Arts, sciences and waste are equally thought of in terms of gender, as empirically or symbolically representing a problematic femininity. The theme of the disorder of women is still central to eighteenth century thought, but takes on even more comprehensive meanings, as it covers the perils of economy as well as the whole social realm. 'Fortune' has gotten new and specified societal meanings. Well-known examples in eighteenth century idiom are the coquette and the savante - zealously represented in republican idiom as economically dangerous or socially useless characters.

This outline of Enlightenment republicanism's dealings with contingency, has led feminist critique subsequently to direct itself, again, to its substantive translations into contemptuous or deriding images of women. However, this critique of republicanism's Darstellungen of women has not exhausted the significance of the republican preoccupation with contingency. Exactly in its struggle with the undetermined and unordered aspects of life lie various prospects for modern renovations of gender. We already saw that eighteenth century republicanism did not only have an anti-feminist tenor; the associations with contingency, like decadence, opulence, waste, and deteriorated ethics did not merely have feminine connotations, but were also perceived as political problems caused by male vice. As we will see in § 4.5, the abhorrence of corruption could likewise be employed to indict defective male behaviour. On the whole, feminist critique could utilize characteristic conceptions from the civic humanist tradition and draw on the very republican indictment of opulence and corruptive behaviour. (Vega 1989a, 1989b, 1991, 1996; Dekker et Vega 1997). Furthermore, it has been argued that within the civic humanist tradition, in texts of the Ancients as well as e.g. the work of Machiavelli, reflection on political community and order could well involve reflection on ambiguity, difference, and the insecurities of social, political, and historical life. (Pitkin 1984, Saxonhouse 1985) That is, the problematic of contingency and (gender) difference did not necessarily provoke either discipline or hatred of women, or in general fixed, negative representations of femininity. I first want to look into the ambiguous ways modernity's contingencies are valued, gendered, and adopted for feminist purposes in republican discourse. I will then inquire which traces exist in eighteenth century republicanism of the classical heritage of reflection on the problematic of politics and difference.

In chapter I proposed to discriminate between two meanings of contingency: impairing versus enabling contingency. In the first sense, it accounts for irrational obstructions of deliberated action, frustrates preconceived action, thwarts carefully devised plans. To eighteenth century republicanism, contingency in this impairing sense is thought to exist in two main circumstances: decadence, and corruption. These were attributed mainly, but not exclusively to female vice. When it comes to the fear for threats to a stable republic, there are in fact two recurring gender themes: effeminate posture, and male unruly practices. In feminist discourses both themes are explored, in this case as frustrations of the possibility of a responsibly and purposefully conducted life by women.
If dominant republican discourse traced chance to social, and gendered, origins, its feminist offshoot implicitly ironized its findings in identifying other, equally gendered, societal roots to problems of obstruction, frustration, and unwelcome chance in women's life. It thus turns symbolic women into real human subjects who can be irritated by, and suffer from, the ways their lives have to negotiate and juggle socially entrenched, gendered tropes. It also manages to divest masculinity of its dignifying attributes. The republic cannot be a feminist one - cannot be sexually democratic - as long as citizenship is not answerable for its gendered expressions, put differently, as long as men cannot be held accountable for their particular identities as men.

In its second sense, contingency - as opposed to destination - provides the very possibility of action. As - or as far as - modernity assumes human beings to be free, their acts determined neither by God nor nature, it has assumed the contingent onset of social life which allows for this very capacity for action. This enabling contingency is of course a vital ingredient of modernity's republicanism, its *homo politicus* being dependent on the recognition of, and estimation for the human potential for action. The civic humanist accent here lies in the intuition of the (public) world as a human artefact - made by human beings, although not necessarily controlled by them. While control is often presumed to be implicated by a modern attitude towards life's contingencies, acting might well be considered an equally suitable response. Contrary to control, it indicates an open process of production of the political, that is shared, world. It is precisely this insistence on a simultaneously undetermined and active subjectivity which feminist republicanism adopts. The result is not just the promotion of an active woman, a public female identity. What also transpires is an intuition that gender is part of the same conceptual context, the same contingent setting, as the establishment of political association. Alongside the general republican notion that the public realm and public identities are amenable to political, performative production, feminist republicanism entertains the intuition that the categories of femininity and masculinity are subject to performative action by either *homo politicus* or *mulier politica*. Contingency here surfaces not as mere fickle chance - gendered identity accordingly being an arbitrary and unamenable lot - but as the condition for an agonistic approach of gendered existence and identities.

In defending substantive public identities for women, feminist republicanism expresses its social passion; a political passion germinates as well, where it divines that the republican dealings with masculinity and femininity are historically as well as systematically contingent, and ironically processes the republican conceptual framework into a proper feminist one, putting the linguistic and bodily idiom of republican sexual politics to feminist uses.

This is not to suggest fully-fledged postmodern insights of eighteenth century minds. There is, however, more to the republican handling of social identities than Rousseau's monolithic conception of 'the people' would suggest. Eighteenth century republicanism, in fact, was about addressing the relationship between social identities and politics. Republican feminist discourse illustrates this in a
special way, as it introduced problems, not just of difference, but also of ambiguity into social philosophy. The work of Wollstonecraft, which will be discussed below, her *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), and *An Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution* (1794), is a case in point.

First of all, the Atlantic revolutions were, of course, a giant deconstructionist operation. The opponents of the revolution attack precisely the undermining of familiar social identities by the revolutionaries. It is most instructive to see Edmund Burke (1729-1797) enumerate the issues: property, gender and political authorship. The French revolutionaries want to diffuse proprietorial claims among the masses whereas "(t)he characteristic essence of property .. is to be unequal." (1790, 140, italics in original) He has famously stipulated that "(o)n this scheme of things, a king is but a man; a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal; and an animal not of the highest order" (1790, 171) The revolutionary landscape forms a "profane burlesque" rising from the "mixed mob of ferocious men, and of women lost to shame", who "have a power to subvert and destroy; but none to construct". (1790, 161) The revolutionaries support a political representation based on popular election, that is, election by regardless who. A government founded on the principle of equal natural rights is, Burke judges, one merely considering convenience, demonstrating the long-standing political vice of the inability to face difficulty. It calls into existence a society void of distinction: the problem lies exactly in the very unwillingness to distinguish. The revolution erases what is socially and mentally engraved, utterly neglecting to fill in the ensuing amorphous blank. It unleashes a representational activity which is in fact incapable to re-present, lacking any solid knowledge about who or what one acts for. One cannot represent what as yet has no firm ground, what has not been rooted in social or political experience. We may say that, in a philosophical sense, he simply supports a realist conception of representation. Burke judges the revolution to be only deconstructive. It is, hence, arbitrary government.

Those who endorse the revolution, on the other hand, of course point out the arbitrariness of the very identities under attack. The revolution wants to rewrite social and mental scripts, in order to give authority to what is hitherto denied the possibility of being represented. "Probably you mean women who gained a livelihood by selling vegetables or fish" (1790, 29), Wollstonecraft retorts against Burke's remark on the women lost to shame. It are precisely "hereditary distinctions" that obstruct civilization's grand task of "humanizing every description of men." (1794, 355) The revolution does not leave a void, but is a project of redefinitions; it fights, in its turn, the political void that arises from the mere representation of vested interests, whether economical, political, or sexual. It will alert to social difference by realizing a political association through publicity of government and consultation of the citizens (1794, Book V, Ch. 3), in the hope of having republican government to "be more than a shadow of representation" (1790, 61). There are further ways in which Wollstonecraft's work explores the possibilities for redefining social identities and social differences, their potential of being re-presented, especially those connected to gender: there is a subtext in her writings that
pursues the contemporary politics of tropes.

Elizabeth Young-Bruehl once remarked how "whole societies are presented as female" in revolutionary situations. (1989, 119) She did not implicate eighteenth century republicanism, but it is indeed a case in point, as it has identified as the main characteristic of the ancien régime its 'effeminacy'. This very political metaphor of gender also appears in feminist works: Palm-Aelders employs it once in a while, as do other feminist authors. I will discuss how it is taken on, and apart, in the works of Wollstonecraft. She adopts it, however with 'unorthodox' results, turning it into a feminist device. Her work breathes an awareness of the political sensitivity of language. In this feminist guise, the very political metaphorics of femininity effectuates a denaturalization of femininity - an anti-essentialist manner of dealing with the problem of gender. Femininity is presented as a political and linguistic, not a biological category. What is at stake is not a feminist appropriation of metaphors in the knowledge that symbols can be changed, that is, politically manipulated. Wollstonecraft appears to have grasped something very different, namely, that the merit of language is not first and foremost describing or recording reality, but that its most radical capacity is evoking it. The bottomline of her endeavour is close to being, not to show that femininity is 'different' from what contemporary discourses make it to be, but that it is nowhere but in language - and that this is what has to be demonstrated. The metaphorics of femininity is about to give way to a feminist linguistic turn.

In A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, all representatives of the ancien régime pose as women: the aristocracy, kings, the soldiers and officers of the standing armies, the clergy and their hierarchically organized colleges, sailors even. A subtle twisting of the regular discourse already appears: she traces, as it were, symbolic femininity to its real referents. The point here is not so much the 'effeminacy' of this particular society, as the fact that these men represent an 'enslaved' life, that is, blind submission to arbitrary hierarchy, servility, and having been "taught to please". "Where is then the sexual difference, when the education has been the same?" (1792, 89) Femininity is but a political code-word, and she is exasperated by a society in which about every conceivable human capacity is sexed. Not nature, but society, academic treatises on instruction, and philosophy have given "a sex to mind" (1792, 110), "a sex to virtue" (1792, 46, 75), to souls (1792, 130), as well as to body - as we may infer from her discussion of the physical discipline, and enslavement to their bodies, of women (1792, ch. 3). Both Vindications are imbued with irony; one example is her mocking of anti-feminists: "from every quarter have I heard exclamations against masculine women; but where are they to be found? If by this appellation men mean to inveigh against their ardour in hunting, shooting, and gaming, I shall most cordially join in the cry", to continue by commending women's exercise of reason and "imitation of manly virtues." (1792, 72) The meanings of masculinity as well as femininity are constantly and explicitly addressed and juggled with in Wollstonecraft's texts. Contrary to her reputation in many histories of ideas, she does not simply represent 'equality feminism', or humanism's trap in which women have no choice but to conform to men. She is not that enamored
with men or with what they represent. Speaking of the historian and publisher Catherine Macaulay (1731-1791), she remonstrates against Rousseau:

In her style of writing, indeed, no sex appears, for it is like the sense it conveys, strong and clear. I will not call hers a masculine understanding, because I admit not of such an arrogant assumption of reason. .. (1792, 180)

Indeed the word masculine is only a bugbear. .. (1792, 75)

She does reproduce contemporary idiom in calling the court "effeminate", but she juxtaposes it to Enlightenment's proper gender metaphorics, its allegories for the new spirit which will organize the body politic: reason, with "her captivating face", the "image of God implanted in our nature", and liberty, "with maternal wing" (1794, 295) - all women (as God seems feminized by association) staged immediately after one another. Monarchy's femininity repels; modernity's femininity tempts. Generally, her modernity has no single gender, symbolically or empirically: women and men are both variably complimented and attacked, and neither femininity nor masculinity are that applaudable. In asserting that women should aspire to become like men, while simultaneously jibing at masculinity, her own vocabulary is nothing but an attempt to linguistic resistance. At times, she explicitly revolts against gender identity as such: "The desire of being always a woman, is the very consciousness that degrades the sex." (1792, 174) But then again, they do exist - and indeed as women: "I really think that women ought to have representatives." (1792, 228)

Modern politics make her despond:

the very constitution of civil governments has put almost insuperable obstacles in the way to prevent the cultivation of the female understanding; - yet virtue can be built on no other foundation! (1792, 124)

Irony and ambivalence here truly are the epistemological tools of a feminist analytic of modernity.

Rousseau wants to expel femininity from the public realm. Burke thinks women are being reduced to 'animals' by the French revolution, and wants to protect femininity against the republican disdain for and aggression against it. Wollstonecraft wants neither exclusion, nor inclusion 'as a woman' - both will prevent women's "endeavouring to obtain solid personal merit" (1790, 24). In View of the French Revolution, she rather extensively comments on the person and conduct of Marie Antoinette. Proto-postmodern republican feminist meets ultra-feminine hedonistic French queen - an intricate confrontation. Here is a woman exerting an all too real, political power by 'always being a woman'. Wollstonecraft appears careful; there is not the sharpness of her attack on Burke in 1790, and she probably attempts to keep aloof from the defilement of the queen's person customary in republican quarters. She deals with her by - an operation familiar to her - unmasking romance as

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67 She is echoed by Denise Riley (1988), who observes that in modern history "the possibility of being 'at times a woman'" has been substituted by "eternal difference on the one hand, or undifferentiation on the other." Wollstonecraft appears to be ready to join Riley's call for "being 'at times a woman'", against "that unappetising choice between 'real women' .. or post-women, 'no-longer-women', who .. prefer evanescence." (6)
tragedy. If kings and women have in common that the one's authority and the other's sex will "ever stand between them and rational converse" (1792, 126), and both "the great and small vulgar claim our pity" for they have "insuperable obstacles to surmount in their progress towards true dignity of character" (1790, 29), what can "the unfortunate queen" (1794, 323) be other than a victim? Class and gender are impediments to true humanity. Hence, political power 'as a woman', like hereditary power, is immoral. Moreover, it is foreign to politics as such. Bewitchment, allure and seduction are too floating as to sustain serious affairs - whether of a personal or political nature. Wollstonecraft amply records the queen's beauty, bewitching manners, her "courty, dignified politeness" (1794, 322), she is indeed "a woman of uncommon address" (1794, 324), only to highlight the deception, artfulness, and dissimulation this posture carries. As, according to a conviction she holds throughout her work, all regimes of pleasure cannot exert but temporal powers, this one was effective in seducing regents and masses alike, as well as ineffective in securing a lasting basis of trust in the people. Politics has no business seducing; it ought simply to establish a firm constitutional and institutional ground for representation of the people, and forget about sentimental or sensuous appeal.

Wollstonecraft is not a classical republican: she hardly refers to antiquity, and when she does, is sceptical of its culture, social order, and heroism. She is, though, a civic humanist, being a true theoretician of citizenship, and her conception of politics directly belongs to the civic humanist tradition on this point. It is a narrow one: politics has to sober up, expel all stylistic devices alien to its essence. Both 'femininity' and commerce are detrimental to politics; all mere emotional appeal, all seduction, as well as 'negotations' styled after the market are contagions in the realm of politics. She abhors the comparison of politics with theatre, of life with theatre, for that matter. Political acting cannot be likened to either theatrical or economical acting, as it should follow neither scripts nor rules of calculation or profitmaking. Politics differ from either arts or market; it could most likely be compared to personal relationships as it ought to be build upon friendship among - or at least association of - equals. While she supports cultivating the arts and sciences, being the "arts of peace, that can turn the sword into a ploughshare" (1794, 296), she despises everything reeking of affectation in everyday human association. This impatience with society's veneer does not only ensue from an obsession with authenticity; there is also the critical motive of an aversion of how women are socially coerced to act - with no say in the roles. She thinks that the culture of politeness encourages disguise; besides a lack of authenticity, she espies a fear of uttering socially censured sentiments (1790, 5). She attacks contemporary pedagogy for girls on account of its encouragement of dissimulation: "Women are always to seem to be this and that" (1792, 173). Women are never 'undisguised', because socially coerced to speak as, and ever being spoken to - and loved - 'as a woman'. The way she uses it, femininity becomes indeed a political concept. It is a code-word for slavery, which in its eighteenth century application to one's proper, European society stands for servile, unenlightened behaviour. But with her, slavery also stands for something more radical: for being conditioned, for the power social identities have over politics. In other words, with her, femininity
also denotes the power the social has over political agency.

To her, representation ought to be innovative, ought to uncover new grounds and lend voice to what is either marginalized or 'massified'. There is an Arendtian ring to her ideas: if the social is what determinates human subjects, politics stands for human beings’ agency, which can free them from inherited identities and let them express their authenticity. The authenticity she is obsessed with is not some individualistic, ‘romantic’ one; one should on the contrary express one’s authentic humanity, stripped from all particularity, whether gender or class. Sentiment will be corrupt, unless bared of its particularist, cultural influences in order to express one’s humanity. This authenticity is opposed to identity: coquettes and virtuous women alike should exert themselves more to “forget their sex”, and quit "forever trying to make themselves agreeable." (1792, 276) Men likewise never forget women’s sex.

I have argued that it is hinted at in her work that meanings of gender represent nothing but the discourses they are formulated in, which invokes a postmodern view of signification. She is, though, straightforwardly universalist humanist in her notion of ethics, which ought to be the sole foundation of, and will only be possible with, republican politics. If representation ‘starts from nowhere’, has to start beyond the already-present, fixed positions of political power, it does have a clearly circumscribed orientation: ‘innovative representation’ ought not to lead to identity politics, but to a humanist politics cleared of the impairing impacts of identities - where language no longer merely evokes (social identities), but enables (a political, reflective humanity).

We already witnessed how her stylistic, ‘colloquial’ irony develops into a philosophical irony. In the opening sentences of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman she states "that either nature has made a great difference between man and man, or that the civilization which has hitherto taken place in the world has been very partial." (71) Here, irony is implicated in the attempt to balance the opposite claims of ‘nature’ and those of society: both hold truths, but the tension itself is produced and reproduced by society and only there it can be remedied. Elsewhere she tries the formulation: "Nature having made men unequal, .. the end of government ought to be, to destroy this inequality by protecting the weak." (1794, 289) While she accepts the existence of a basic inequality of physical strength between the sexes, she tries to annul its significance in various ways: by disputing Rousseau’s view of the state of nature, by dismissing nostalgia as an unphilosophical attitude, and, most crucially, by adopting a teleological instead of naturalist theory of gender. Insisting on arguing, not from nature, but from the telos of human life, she has in fact left natural rights thought behind and become a genuine civic humanist. Femininity as well as masculinity are postures one is educated in, and which should be envisioned and remade according to social ideals.

Her play with philosophical possibilities shows serendipity with respect to the problematic of

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68 I have lend the term from Riley 1988, who speaks of the 'massifications' of 'men' and 'women'.

gender difference and equality. Where her contemporaries Rousseau and De Sade were optimistic about nature, simply postulating the natural equality of the sexes, Wollstonecraft is in a better position to work with and confront the ironical condition of femininity. The Marquis de Sade (1740-1814) employs a 'colloquial irony' in his critique of the French republicans ("Yet another effort, Frenchmen, if you would become republicans", as he titles his political pamphlet in *Philosophy in the Bedroom*), and with this stylistic means straightforwardly declares gender equality, in order to propose to (re)install it, by every available means (whether incestuous 'brotherhood', brothels for women's satisfaction, or legalizing rape which anyway hardly differs from marital practice) in society. Wollstonecraft's 'philosophical irony', on the contrary, introduces much complexity. She is a stranger to the idea that one could simply introduce some original order or blueprint of the future which neglects reality, in other words, declare gender equality in a social order based on such an ironical condition of gender. This is precisely her problem with the libertines who abandon women to the established double moral standard, only increasing their objectification, instead of ameliorating their subject-status. Libertines have simply denied the reality of minds, virtues, and bodies having been given sexes. She is extremely ambivalent about the engineering possibilities society possesses. Gender is historically and socially produced, but neither to be engineered nor annulled at will. The romantic idea of society as a work of art, the aesthetic conception of society, is absent in her thought - an aversion she again shares with Burke. Her work does testify of a critical utopian energy in divining a future sexually democratic republic. But more than utopia, we find a feminist social critique that wants to stay attuned to women's social realities; and more important than her ironical style of writing is the philosophical irony in her work which handles the indeterminacy of gender between nature and society, as well as its linguistic vicissitudes. Her feminism displays no jubilant ideology of progress, but rather a sceptical reflection on the obstinacy of gender in an era which should not too recklessly pronounce itself enlightened or modern.

4.5 *Democracy in the bedroom, or: The personal is political.*

To Palm-Aelders, the vital categories for a feminist approach to republicanism are not those of the private and the public sphere, but those of responsibility and corruption. In both her and Wollstonecraft's reception of it, the general republican preoccupation with acting has been translated into an ethics, one which connects the human commitment to acting with a human responsibility and accountability in either social, political, or personal respect, and across gender. Like Wollstonecraft, she places the eighteenth century theme of female unfitness for republican values within a conventionalist approach of virtue, stressing that fitness for public endeavours is something to be achieved and educated in. While Wollstonecraft wishes women to "become more like moral agents" (1792, 265), Palm-Aelders wavers between declaring women
already the best equipped as educators, and demanding to accord them a much-needed moral and national education. In addressing women’s role as educators, Palm-Aelders interestingly stresses that, although women will also have to educate children and husbands, they will have to educate mainly themselves and other women in the true republican values. Similarly Wollstonecraft states “I do not wish them to have power over men; but over themselves” (1792, 133) ‘The sex’ will not so much have a moral obligation with respect to society (a well-known theme from nineteenth century feminism), but rather the - that is, Enlightenment’s - obligation to master themselves, whether individually or collectively. Moreover, neither the lack of virtue, nor the role of moral educator is reserved for women, as we saw in § 4.3.

This need for an ethics of political and social life is accompanied by the need for an ethics for intimate life. Both Palm-Aelders and Wollstonecraft attempt to address the necessity of an ethics of love as an ingredient of republicanism. In a personal letter to a male friend Palm-Aelders reproaches men for being corrupt in their private utterings of feelings and love. She indicts the defective behaviour of men, who, as men, do not live up to the republican requirement to foster steady and substantive sentiments.

Many a person desires the liberation of the slaves in America and upholds the despotism of the husband. (...) You want us to penetrate the deepest of your heart. Oh! How much you thereby in general lose! How often do you not display feelings you do not possess, while more stringent etiquette obliges us to hide the ones that consume us. Well? What do your homages mean to us, when they are only the fruits of a heated imagination? You court us? Yes, but for your own sake; where is the man who knows to love tenderly when he does not hope to submit to his will the object of his desire? Ah, sir, there are only few people, who know love.  

Palm-Aelders envisions a ‘domestic ideal’ in which the sober republican concept of social bonding is applied to the male-female relationship as one of friendship, equality, mutual responsibility, and of aversion to cruelty and corruption. Where she speaks of the private relations between men and women, she values elements of republicanism for their possible worth in private contexts: ideals of loyalty and comradeship. These ‘domestic virtues’ are treated as feminine nor natural, but as worthy of a republican outlook on the world. Thus, instead of promoting domestic or ‘feminine’ virtues as being of use in the public realm, she proceeds the other way around and promotes the republican political ideals of non-corruptness, trustworthiness, and friendship. In a crucial inversion of the Aristotelian approach, she does not understand corruption as the threat posed to politics by a private sphere: the private sphere is not the source of corruption, corruption is the source of the problems in the private sphere. Corruption arises where one fails to obey the republican values of non-violent, respectful human community whereever it arises.

69 Cited in Hardenberg 1962, 70, probably 1791.
The concept of corruption can denote the violation and abuse of relationships of trust. Violence and injustice done to women are thus brought under the category of political violence. They fall short of the republican ideals: the indictment of arbitrary violence and inegalitarian human association. Palm-Aelders has the unswerving conviction that the intimate sphere is obviously not to be excepted from the applicability of political ideals, whether jurisprudential or republican. To republican feminism, public ideals will guide private practice.

Wollstonecraft is much more ambivalent on love, and a major characteristic of her feminist critique is to develop a critique of love-as-ideology, rather than an ethics of love. "To speak disrespectfully of love is, I know, high treason against sentiment and fine-feelings; but I wish .. rather to address the head than the heart." (1792, 93) Love seems to defy dignification on rationalist republican terms, as it is "in a great degree an arbitrary passion" (1792, 194), where "chance and sensation take place of choice and reason" (1792, 96). We almost hear Karl Marx criticizing alienation, when she analyzes the nature of love:

And love? .. To see a mortal adorn an object with imaginary charms, and then fall down and worship the idol which he had himself set up - how ridiculous! (1792, 186)

She discusses the problems of love as if they were similes of those of the republic: both imply the struggle for a secular existence, as neither heaven nor eternity apply; therefore both love and the republic have to confront problems of temporality as well as durability. The matter of time, presenting the problem of instability, whether in the form of unsteady politics or sentiments, occupies a central place in her reflections. Her works abound with condemnations of temporal pleasures. The contemporary culture of pleasure, in which one lives "for temporary gratifications", "the triumph of an hour" (1792, 107), is one of her central worries; it contradicts reason and the republican ethics of human accountability. He who "lives only for the passing day" "cannot be an accountable creature" (1792, 102)

Supposing, for a moment, .. that man was only created for the present scene, - I think we should have reason to complain that love, infantine fondness, ever grew insipid and palled upon the sense. Let us eat, drink, and love for tomorrow we die, would be, in fact the language of reason, the morality of life. (1792, 97)

Making love into an arbitrary, unsteady sensation which dodges accountability, the libertine's regime of pleasure obstructs freedom and turns women, who have anyway not attained equal degrees of freedom compared to men, into mere objects of sense: "Women .. are degraded by the same propensity to enjoy the present moment." (1792, 121)

Someone who lives for the moment, can be neither citizen nor lover. Love poses problems analogous to those of realizing a polity in the civic humanist tradition. The republic has to deal with the secular and therefore time-bound nature of political society, and in the face of this to strive to maintain itself. Likewise, love needs to be withdrawn from on the one hand the celebration of temporality,
especially in the pursuit of pleasure, and on the other the promise of timelessness of romantics. And again like politics, love should neither be grounded in inherited tradition (whether the ancient or the aristocratic one), nor rely on temporary allure, but commit itself to reflection and future continuity. Of the present marital state Wollstonecraft is extremely sceptical; legally it has been made "an absurd unit of a man and his wife" (1792, 226), and generally, marriages are unhappy alliances which confront women with irresolvable choices between being a happy wife or a good mother. But the alternative to tradition is equally deceitful. Romantic representations of love depict it "with celestial charms" and suggest the possibility of perfect eternal union where "the world is to be shut out, and every thought and wish, that do not nurture pure affection and permanent virtue." (1792, 146) This kind of happiness, however, is too little material, too little substantial, as to represent a republican passion. "(I)!t is not against strong, persevering passions; but romantic wavering feelings that I wish to guard the female heart." (1792, 146) If women are to become, and be respected as, subjects in their own right, love will have to respect the distance, the irreducible remoteness, between living individuals.

If pleasure, tradition, and romantics are love's adversaries, what could love then be about? "Happiness is reflected" (1790, 33), Wollstonecraft insists, and reflection is "shut out by pleasure" (1792, 80). All three mentioned opponents have, in fact, this precise feature in common: they shut out reflection. Unreflected pleasure, which gives sedulous care to outward appearances, should give way to minds "sufficiently opened to take pleasure in reflection." (1792, 275) We may, then, deduce from her work an ethics of love. The key-words appear to be, first, reflection, and second, distance. Reflection as well as distance are, according to her, what current practices of love lack. And to her, both are indispensable, vital ingredients of love. Too often, love implies direct, unreflected and therefore arbitrary sentiment, and fails to recognize the earthly, independent existence of the partners involved. Clearly, she has difficulty in distinguishing it from friendship. This may be estimated as either a failure to appreciate love's tumultuous indigence as a probably inevitable part of the constitution of subjectivity, or a genuine belief that a novel organisation of human association will resolve political as well as psychical neuroses and needs. She is, in fact, confronted with the aporia of love (by her exclusively understood as heterosexual): it deludes all her ideals of social reform in insisting on the existence of sexual difference.

A wild wish has just flown from my heart to my head .. I do earnestly wish to see the distinction of sex confounded in society, unless where love animates the behaviour. (1792, 126)

Simultaneously, she wants to insist on women's humane, instead of sexual persona in love.

A man, or a woman, of any feeling, must always wish to convince a beloved object that it is

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70 A choice from her statements on the subject: "The tenderest mothers are often the most unhappy wives" (53); "(T)he neglected wife is, in general, the best mother" (97); "The mother will be lost in the coquette" (117); "Meek wives are, in general, foolish mothers" (233).
the caresses of the individual, not the sex, that are received and returned with pleasure (1792, 174)

Wollstonecraft is, again, properly confused about the problems social difference poses to a political practice like love. Yet, the above-mentioned estimations miss the quintessence of what she advocates for an enlightened approach of love: a recognition of first, the ideological dimensions of love, and second, of women's subjectivity in love. Wollstonecraft's ethics of love is a genuine republican one, cast within a similar conceptual framework as its political philosophy, and consistent with republicanism's requirements of a politically experienced life, in whatever 'domain' society has tried to fence off from politics.

It would be a denial of feminism's proper intellectual history to dismiss *mulier clausa*, in her feminist guise of citizen-lover, as somehow a female imitation of masculinity, perhaps inspired even by homophobia - if we remember Wollstonecraft's discomfort with women's culture of mental and bodily intimacy. It should, on the contrary, be appreciated as a position within feminism: one that abhors how "(s)ensibility is the *manie* of the day" (1790, 6), all would-be authenticty, especially when presented as expression of a definite gender identity; and which distrusts a familiarity, or empathy, that knows no reservations with respect to otherness. Where Wollstonecraft complains that the female world displays less friendship than the male (1792, 275, 277), that is, has less experience with its requisites of balancing distance and equality, she also again alerts her readers to the problem of 'massification' which affects the female sex more than the male.

Both Palm-Aelders' and Wollstonecraft's politics of love are motivated and nourished by their love for politics. Their work offers an important feminist intuition of political representation. They think that the proper direction of a feminist politics of representation is not representing personal or private values in politics, but *vice versa*. It should not carry the personal to the political, as sentimentalist discourse does, but carry politics to private experience. This furthermore constitutes a clear break from the tenacious view on the direction of modern political representation, in which this is assumed to proceed by representing private interest in the political domain.

With respect to feminist theory, their position can be contrasted with present-day feminist ethics of mothering. Palm-Aelders nor Wollstonecraft want mothers-in-politics; they want citizens in the realm of care. Wollstonecraft literally exclaims: "make women rational creatures and free citizens, and they will quickly become good wives and mothers." (1792, 264) They do not want to represent the private sphere in politics, but think that in personal life public virtue should be represented. Politics have to be brought to the private sphere and to personal matters. The personal is to be lived along political and cultural values.

While adversaries in cultural politics, in a philosophical sense feminist republicanism allies again with - at least Sadean - libertarianism. In their political perception of subjectivity, which results from a process of public performativity, they do not clash with libertarians, but with romantics.
Feminist republicans are strangers to the idea of individual authenticity. The democracy in the bedroom of Palm-Aelders and Wollstonecraft can be seen as part of the same program as the philosophy in the bedroom of De Sade. Both approaches hold that the personal should be investigated, not as the expression of extra-cultural or pre-cultural resources, but as representing public culture. Both, therefore, celebrate reflectivity. Moreover, both dismiss the idea that the bedroom could somehow be a sanctuary from which activities designated as 'public' - like either philosophy or democracy - should, or could for that matter, be dispelled.

The tradition of civic humanism has produced theoretical insights of several types. John Rawls (1993), e.g., has characterized the difference between classical republicanism and civic humanism as the difference between presupposing that citizens must possess political virtues in order to take part in public life, and presupposing that participation in public life forms the essence of human existence, the privileged locus of the good life. Feminist republicans may be seen to contribute a further position to their tradition. Their political perception of gender implicates seizing upon the radical, enabling contingency of modern political life, and presupposes, not so much the priority of a political realm (in whatever weak or strong formulation), but a fundamentally political perspective on human bonding across modernity's societal spheres of life. They are perhaps the most genuine Aristotelian philosophers, as they radically grant political theory a master status with respect to the acquirement of knowledge about human life. Moreover, they have grasped that what modern politics characterizes is its representational activity, which has not just democratical meanings, but also epistemological ones. The way they discuss gender and private matters shows an intuition that establishing knowledge about these matters involves a recognition of their representational, instead of natural or factual, status, as their meanings have been arbitrarily founded. "The sexual distinction which men have so warmly insisted upon, is arbitrary," Wollstonecraft firmly states. (1792, 282) That is, it has been produced within the contingencies of history, which resulted in its ambivalent existence in language. As by the same contingent potential typical of modernity the premodern category of chance has been dissolved into human beings' capacity for - voluntary or involuntary - action, these meanings can and will be made into essentially contested ones. And to address this contestability as a problem of the implementation of an egalitarian society presents a type of job, of course, that the agenda of republican politics ought to but welcome.
Chapter V. The Social Representation of Gender. Scottish Commerce.

5.1 Hume, a ladies’ man.

The critique of the male nature of Enlightenment thought in feminist debate has been developed on at least three different fronts: those of the debates on rationalism, ethics and political theory. Rationalist epistemology has been attacked predominantly from the side of French feminist thought and postmodernism. Kantian ethics, resumed in the works of Kohlberg's psychologistic ethics, provoked a debate with the counter-research of Gilligan as the opening bid. Enlightenment politics have been exposed as being determined either by the hypocritical humanist claims of an in fact male liberalism, or by a virulently women-hating, male model of republicanism. Rationalist epistemology has been countered by more literary modes of reading, as logocentrism had to make room for a discursive world. Rationalist individualist ethics have been countered by an ideal of communitarian and emphatic moral behaviour which takes emotions into account instead of passing them by. Alternatives to both liberal and civic humanism were formulated in the research into early-feminist political theories and practices, among which that pre-eminent and much reviled female practice of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the salon.

In the meantime, a somewhat different project has emerged which endeavours to trace the philosophical roots of these feminist interventions in Enlightenment debate itself, thus exposing arbitrary claims to 'dominant' philosophy. Scottish moral philosophy seems to stand out as a source for a non-rationalist epistemology, a non-Kantian ethics, as well as, consequently, for an alternative to the triumph of masculine values in the politics of the modern state. The present-day reception of Scottish philosophy by feminism has hence been, on the whole, rather benevolent. We could even infer that two Enlightenments are emerging from feminist debate, a male and a female one - again a dualist arrangement of thought, one in which Scottish moral philosophy would exemplify the more 'feminine' perspective on knowledge and social imagery.

At the center of this chapter stands David Hume (1711-1776), whom we can safely regard as the founding father of the Scottish philosophy of Enlightenment. What is more, Hume's philosophical ideas have been perceived as exemplifying modern feminist themes. On the whole, the several lines of modern feminist criticism all seem, in retrospect, to converge in the philosophy of Hume: its epistemological, political and ethical criticism, as well as its overall critique of persistent philosophical sexism.

For one thing, having the reputation of being a well-mannered and gentle man, he seems to have been liked by women all through the ages. The Dutch author Isabelle de Charrière (1740-1805) (born as Belle van Zuylen) was positively enchanted after she had met Hume. She calls him a charming, unaffected, nice man. (Although she also admits not to have spoken with him much, except about roastbeef and plum pudding, and at the occasion was eating more than speaking with him.) Hume is, furthermore, known to have conducted a rather extensive exchange of ideas with many of
the ladies of Edinburgh. Annette Baier (1979) thinks that Hume was "remarkably free of discriminatory sexism" (10). Is Hume's occasional sexism to be judged as a mere description of social habits, or as something to be attributed to a prostration before contemporary attitudes and thus as easily dismissed, as Baier wants us to believe? There are very different evaluations of Hume's views on women to take into account. Both Christine Battersby (1981) and Steven MacLeod Burns (1979) emphasize Hume's sexist attitudes beneath, or because of, the 'gallantry' he professes to practice with respect to women. I propose to further explore the textual strategies with respect to gender of this professed 'ladies' man'. In the case of this Scottish philosophy, where present-day feminism for once has assumed affinity with Enlightenment themes, I will reach rather sceptical conclusions. I will first give a brief inventory of Scottish' philosophy's position in regard to its contemporary opponents.

We can distinguish two clusters of reasons for which David Hume could qualify as the 'women's philosopher' of the Enlightenment. First, his ideas usually are contrasted with those of Kant, who has been awarded the dubious honour of representing male philosophy par excellence and, for that matter, of the male bias of Enlightenment thought in general. A superficial comparison of Hume's and Kant's remarks about women certainly suggests a more hesitant, and apparently more playful, approach of the differences between the sexes and the status of women in the writings of Hume. Also on a more systematic philosophical level, Scottish moral philosophy may be opposed to that of Kant. The Humean theory of passions and sentiments is nowadays seen to contrast in a positive, sympathetic way with Kantian universalist rationalism. Baier has attempted to relate this contrast to present-day feminist critique of dominant ethics. Given women's ethical convictions as described by Carol Gilligan, Baier (1987) wants to establish whether Hume's moral theory "squares or does not square with women's moral wisdom." (38) She judges his moral theory to be in principle "wise and profound". (39) Joan Tronto (1987a) has pointed out the same opposition between Kant and Hume and has attempted to identify the philosophical heritages of the positions in the debate on an 'ethic of care', known as the 'Kohlberg-Gilligan debate'.

Like Carol Gilligan's ethic of care, Scottish Enlightenment moral theory concentrated more on the morally concrete than the morally abstract, more on relationships than on rules, more on actions than on judgements. (89) Tronto concludes, rather contrary to Baier, with some warnings against the drawbacks of Scottish moral philosophy. Her proposal to look at present-day feminist debates on ethics as a rerun of the controversy between Hume and Kant in the history of ethics intends to open up a political and historical critique of feminist ethic-of-care thinking.

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71 See e.g. the Introduction to New Letters, (eds. R. Klibansky and E.C. Mossner), and Christensen 1987, esp. chapter 4.
72 I have discussed the presence of both philosophical perspectives in novels by Isabelle de Charrière. See Vega 1990b.
The second cluster of reasons for qualifying Humean thought as a 'women's philosophy' can be traced in the polemical context in which Scottish philosophy functioned and developed. The Scottish moral philosophy of polite culture, of which Hume is a founding father, sharply contrasts with classical republicanism. Insofar as republicanism could be characterized as a male ideology, opposing simultaneously the new vocabulary of sociability and the female practice of salon-life in a directly anti-feminist hypostatization, Hume could appear to join a less misogynist direction of thought in the eighteenth century.

J.G.A. Pocock, chronicler of the tradition of civic humanism up to the eighteenth century, has made precisely this assumption. He suggests that the idiom of sociability may have allowed for more female participation.

(For nearly the first time what were supposed to be feminine values were recognized as having universal merit by male theorists. It was claimed for the new world commerce that it softened, refined, and polished the manners and led to a more general intercourse among nations. Hume - who must have been reading the Symposium - was moved to declare that modern conversation was superior to ancient because women were admitted to it. (1985, 572)

While apparent oppositions exist between Scottish thought and eighteenth-century classical republicanism, it has also been argued that Scottish thought can be judged as an idiomatic offshoot of the civic humanist tradition. Unlike jurisprudential political theory, in this tradition the main issue is not so much the ideal construction of government, but rather the quality of citizenship. For the Scots, this issue translates not in a concentration on public virtues, but rather on the powers and logic of social sentiments. Instead of 'citizenship', the central problem here is 'social intercourse'; instead of 'politics', the pivotal realm here is 'the social' as the domain conceived of as pertaining to modern commercial society. Scottish Enlightenment could hence maybe qualify as a less 'obsessive' version of conceptualizing intersubjectivity in a public realm.

Both counterpoints to Humean thought - Kantianism and civic humanism - invite a critical feminist probing into Humean thought. Hume undoubtedly opposed the classical republican style. Important themes of his work, like his emphasis on the positive social values of commerce and luxury, his preference for the polite virtues above the ancient martial virtues, his plea for a mixed government, as well as his interest in literary style and 'polite writing', were in explicit opposition to contemporary classical-republican values. The question, however, is whether Hume therefore joins sides with a 'feminine' political and epistemological praxis. The question could, for a start, be approached as one about actual affiliations. Does the philosopher who exclaimed: "What better school for manners than

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73 See for discussion e.g. Pocock 1981, 1983; Robertson 1983.
the company of virtuous women?" (Essays 134), in fact choose the loathed side of women, and for example prefer the contemporary alternative of the salon-praxis, the enemy par excellence of the admirers of the classical values? While Londa Schiebinger (1989) thinks that Hume considered women of the salons "allies against the impotent philosophy of the scholastics" (152) and favourably thought of women's literary capacities, I will argue that in exploring the ways he socially embedded epistemology, and which center on the proper relation between literature and science as concurring modes of representing and knowing the world, his attitude towards salon life and women's writing turns out to be profoundly ambivalent. An ambivalence which moreover is theoretically anchored, as, while they are often lumped together, in the end a vast gap turns out to exist between Humean sociability and salon epistemic and political practice.

A second way of framing the question is to relate his moral theory to his broader concerns about the gendered social. In Hume's philosophy gender certainly is not an excluded or underplayed category of thought; gendered existence is on the contrary conceived of as the heartbeat of modern society. Social relations somehow collocate with those of gender. Hume's focus on a theory of social intercourse hinges on the importance of gender and the interplay interestingly combines with his critique of rationalism. But is it an obvious conclusion that, when Reason is dethroned and emotive action takes its place, a new style of emancipation, a more caring philosophy, and feminist motives appear in sight? How exactly does Hume's emotive turn change the subject? What sentiment about - and in - (gendered) modernity is conveyed in his texts?

5.2 Sentiment, commodity, hierarchy.

As has often been pointed out, Hume refutes the 'selfish system' in ethics in favour of recognizing an uncorrupted 'disinterested benevolence' and 'generosity' as the guiding principle of moral behaviour. Hume distances himself from those philosophers "who fancied that all our concern for the public might be resolved into a concern for our own happiness and preservation". He 'excuses' them by granting that self-love "is a principle in human nature of such extensive energy, and the interest of each individual is, in general, so closely connected with that of the community." (Enq 218) But by the same token one could say that, when "all is self-love", the same could be true for feelings of benevolence. Experience teaches us that it is not always possible to discern what is a general concern for society, and what one more modification of self-love.

We have found instances, in which private interest was separate from public; in which it was even contrary: And yet we observed the moral sentiment to continue, notwithstanding this disjunction of interests. (...) Compelled by these instances, we must renounce the theory, which accounts for every moral sentiment by the principle of self-love. We must adopt a more public affection, and allow, that the interests of society are not, even on their own
Baier has concluded from this very granting of philosophical priority to social virtues Hume's affinity with feminist concerns. Benevolence and social orientation rather than self-love and self-centredness will steer his social order. If we, however, probe a bit further into Hume's theory of sentiments it becomes increasingly difficult to infer the intended affinity.

Hume is unambiguous about the true incentive behind his apparent optimism with respect to social life. If he thinks that a certain natural benevolence will outwit motives of interest, this conviction is motivated for a large part by problems internal to the process of building consistent systematical philosophy. He, first, does not think it a sufficient system of philosophy to "reduce all the various emotions of the human mind to a perfect simplicity" (Enq 299), that is to say, to put all different appearances under the heading of an all-explaining principle such as self-interest. And secondly, he thinks that benevolence, "however faint", is the only possible denominator in a theory of moral sentiment, simply because the vices are too diverse to provide for a common ground of behaviour.

The other passions produce in every breast, many strong sentiments of desire and aversion, affection and hatred; but these neither are felt so much in common, nor are so comprehensive, as to be the foundation of any general system. (Enq 272)

The life of the vices simply is so lively that it ends up being hopeless from the point of view of theory-building. Hume has, moreover, rather Machiavellian reasons for stressing human virtue rather than vice. Virtuous sentiments themselves are not even that worthy of applause in regard to social intercourse, as a delicate sense of morals, especially when attended with a splenetic temper, is apt to give a man a disgust of the world, and to make him consider the common course of human affairs with too much indignation. (Essays 81)

It is, however, at all times better to let a man live with "a high notion of his rank and character in the creation" for he then will act up to it. This rather petty moral state of affairs in men in general is illustrated by refering to the specifically problematic nature of female decency. In some text editions he demonstrates his point by clarifying the salutary impact of the flattering of young women. Because "their chief point of honour is considered as much more difficult than ours", it "requires to be supported by all that decent pride which can be instilled into them". (Essays 81, c, 619) Hume is a moral pragmatist: man, weak as he is, had better be flattered than criticized if you wish to keep society in smooth water. (And women in particular have a propensity to degenerate when they are not talked into virtue and decency.)

The 'selfish system' has thus gotten unsatisfactory marks in philosophy as well as moral pragmatics. Hume continues with expounding the principle of utility as a source of moral sentiment:

If usefulness, therefore, be a source of moral sentiment, .. it follows, that everything, which contributes to the happiness of society, recommends itself directly to our approbation and good-will. (Enq 219)
He is astonishingly evasive on actual ethical problems of contrariety between public and private interest, between the happiness of society and of individuals. Exactly on this point the logic or consistency of his argument is shaky. Any hint of a calculating inclination could - logically as well as practically - easily clash with the principle of natural benevolence, and especially so in cases where 'fellow-feeling' is called for. For situations of care, the theory seems flawed. In a note on the nature of fellow-feeling he merely informs us that it is a self-evident matter that the sentiment of fellow-feeling exists. Fellow-feeling is naturalized, and here Hume appears to urge us to neglect hierarchies in our sentiments about ourselves, others, and the public world. In Appendix 2 of the Enquiries he re-examines the question. Interestingly, he now mentions the "love between the sexes" as the obvious instance of the natural existence of mere benevolence and goodwill between human beings - only to illustrate this with the example of motherly love. We will not discover more adequate examples of such natural heterosexual love, of a harmony of gender, in his work, as in Hume's work in general the relationship between the sexes often serves to illustrate the cultural relativity, variety, and complexity of social institutions. This only adds to the confusion, as this reveals that in Hume's philosophy the relationship between the sexes is hardly fit to form a model of naturally benevolent companionship - natural benevolence paradoxically is clearly in need of social engendering. And how is this social engendering of benevolence pictured? Is the hierarchy of sentiments indeed a moot issue? As will be discussed at the end of this section, it, on the contrary, eventually appears sexually engendered. While on the one hand Hume naturalizes fellow-feeling, on the other he naturalizes a hierarchy of sentiments, and has familial relations exemplify the self-regulation of affections. Hume's principle of public affection becomes enmeshed in a naturalized economy of 'descending desires', which is tailored to benefit a commercial, not a caring, society.

When we turn from Appendix 2 to Appendix 4, still another background of benevolence is highlighted that immediately puts the vindication of 'natural' benevolence and unselfishness on a different footing. Here, Hume discusses the character of the virtues, commonly denoted as 'social virtues'. Virtues turn out to be denoted as such purely through convention.

(1)It seems to me, that though it is always allowed, that there are virtues of many different kinds, yet, when a man is called virtuous, or is denominated a man of virtue, we chiefly regard his social qualities, which are, indeed, the most valuable. (Enq 314)

Not ethical reflection, but society plays a decisive role in establishing the meanings of virtue. Trying to establish distinctions such as those between 'voluntary' and 'social' virtues, only results in verbal disputes and "philosophical discourse needs not enter into all these caprices of language". (Enq 314)

He here, first, curiously exorcizes from philosophy concerns about the "caprices of language", that is, about linguistic signification. Second, in rigorously referring the meaning of virtue to its social context, Hume reveals himself to be a relativist pur sang, a position which is further illustrated in A Dialogue.

An annoying example of the way gender relations serve Hume's general philosophical argument throws new light upon his mild and gallant remarks on women. By now we may well judge
precisely these convictions as a prostration for social norms rather than as holding a conviction with regard to the respectful treatment of women.\textsuperscript{74} His descriptions of gender relationships exemplify radically relativist convictions. For, as far as Hume is concerned, anything goes in the field of gender. Any treatment of women, whether considered 'good' or 'bad', may serve the righteous values of a given society, whether ancient or modern. In \textit{A Dialogue}, a text devoted to the discussion of very different moral constellations of societies in a somewhat teasing manner, he illustrates these different moral attitudes primarily through drawing examples from the position women have in these societies and from the way sexual matters are handled. He describes how differences may be extreme, varying from the enslavement to the liberty of women.

The customs of some nations shut up the women from all social commerce: Those of others make them so essential a part of society and conversation, that, except where business is transacted, the male-sex alone are supposed almost wholly incapable of mutual discourse and entertainment. (Enq 338)

It is obvious that in this passage he is implicitly comparing ancient Greece and modern France. Hume uses these comparisons to drive home the point that we cannot lend a universal content to morals. It is the same text in which he writes his famous sentences: "Would you try a Greek or Roman by the common law of England? Hear him defend himself by his own maxims; and then pronounce." (Enq 330) Hiding behind the slightly ironic tone of the \textit{Dialogue}, Hume does not think it necessary to take a stand himself - neither with respect to the countries caricatured, nor with respect to their respective organisations of gender.

Any favourable (feminist) reception of his attempt to ground a system of ethics in something else than the rationalist subject should include an understanding of the meaning of Hume's relativism as part of his attack on Lockean 'ethical rationalism'. Autonomous reason is relieved by convention. If reason is dethroned, it is to let social convention, alias public affection, hold sway over moral behaviour. In Hume's characterization of the social it is neither reason nor care, but mimesis that does the job.

The human mind is of a very imitative nature; nor is it possible for any set of men to converse often together, without acquiring a similitude of manners .. ( Essays 202)

In the words of Duncan Forbes (1975), Hume insists that men need the approval of others. A man's consciousness of his own worth, which Hume calls 'pride' or 'self-value', depends on this. 'Men always consider the sentiments of others in their judgement of themselves'; they seek the good opinion of others, 'in order to fix and confirm their favourable opinion of themselves'. (..) men's ways of thinking and feeling are to

\textsuperscript{74} Of course, according to Hume's own social theory, social norms and individual convictions are not opposed but in fact coincide. He hence hardly needs consider the reproach made here, a reproach at all. Then again, as we shall see later on, Hume does oppose his own convictions - which are indifferent to norms - to the convictions or norms of others. And this again deprives him of an excuse for whatever prostration.
Hume does approach moral dilemmas - women's more feeble position included - as social problems. When there is a difference between virtue and vice that can to some measure be recognized as natural, it is also true that "we are commonly more influenced by comparison than by any fixed unalterable standard in the nature of things". (Essays 81) He for example recognizes how standards of beauty are very different for men and women and very much a matter of comparison, and that there exists a double morality in measuring degrees of beauty in men and women. Men much sooner meet an ideal standard of beauty where women with the same 'degree' of beauty are considered deformed. However, Hume's observation that values are relative and not constructed by fixed standards but through comparison is followed by resignation, not by a social critique; virtue as it is found should be instilled because it is unwise to portray mankind as structurally vicious.

Hume deals with the passions so thoroughly because he distrusts them. He is not simply interested in grounding a new system of ethics in the passions rather than in reason and consequently in social rather than in selfish sentiments. He amply discusses the emotions that he thinks silly, dangerous, too clearly reigned by the imagination, or otherwise 'wrong'. Passions not only have to be channelled but also fixed by society and social convention, because their extreme states threaten the harmonious development of commercial society. The key word for the normative direction Hume wants to give the passions is 'moderation'. This is precisely the ground on which his normative political philosophy, ethics and aesthetics intersect.

From this same motive, friendship - also between the sexes - is preferred above love, and love had better not be too passionate, as it is "in the southern countries". Love should be "properly managed" to become a source of politeness and refinement. (Essays 215) This is not merely an example of fashionable indulging in cross-cultural comparison; it confirms the sceptical insight into the conventionalist, instead of naturalist, status of the personal. In Hume's case, this insight is followed up by a call for a conservative or anti-libertarian politics of the personal. Hume assures us that we do not want passion: we want sentiment, in politics as well as in love. Hobbesian passions, ensuring ontological equality (right through the boundaries of gender), are turned into Humean sentiments, which guarantee the survival of the English gentleman and his modest mistress. In the Humean variety of sentimentalist discourse, social engineering and sexual engineering constitute one and the same project. While one could probably subscribe to both "properly managed" love and society, the problem of course is that this sentimentalist turn benefits conventionalist, not egalitarian sentiments. Hume's sentimental politics of the personal intends to edit away signs of the presence of politics in the personal. Subjectivity is to be thoroughly 'socialized', theoretically as well as practically, but 'politicizations' of whatever kind are to be kept at bay. The anticipated 'management' is a sceptical solution only forestalling problems ensuing from actual collisions between social (sexual) difference and passion; Humean scepticism forfeits the chance of securing a place for a critique of the very
naturalization of sentiments supposed to uphold tranquil society. A social fixed in conventional moderation has neurotically silenced politics.

With respect to gender, Hume is a token optimist, and in fact an anxious sceptic. This scepticism eventually motivates him to advocate a differentiation in epistemic orders for modernity, as will be explored in the following sections.

Humean theory shows that, contrary to widespread conviction, commercial society does not necessarily demand gender equality in order to function. His social philosophy does, meanwhile, depend on specific notions of gender. It is impossible to neglect the predominant status of the relationship between the sexes in his work: it leaps to attention in many crucial cases where Hume needs some illustration, clarification or reference to common sense. Even more significantly, it is often introduced as an analogy for political and moral relations.

Hume occasionally introduces the family as the model of social relations. This does not happen to be an affectionate analogy.

Man, born in a family, is compelled to maintain society, from necessity, from natural inclination, and from habit. The same creature, in his further progress, is engaged to establish political society, in order to administer justice; without which there can be no peace among them, nor safety, nor mutual intercourse. (Essays 37)

The family is the origin of society, and society should be careful, he appears to be saying, not to pay too hard for this fact. Hume almost casually weaves the family into his observation that society carries faction in its bosom. The jurisprudential component of Humean thought, more specifically the notion of the necessity of some sort of political institution in the restricted sense of a solid apparatus of legal regulations, subtly turns out to be dependent on the notion of men's familial origins.

There is a further sense in which the family is woven into the preferable regulation of polite society. The patriarchal family is the model for illustrating the self-regulation of the passions. In the Treatise, Hume discusses the workings of sentiment in commercial society. The sentiments should know some kind of self-regulation. They cannot be directed at all available objects at the same time, they will choose some and renounce others. The model of this is provided by an account of the hierarchical proceedings of the emotions in the context of the family. Already in an early phase, the child knows how to recognize the father as the superior object of love in comparison with the mother. The imagination becomes confused when it is presented with too many secondary loyalties. It will

See also Okin 1989 who shows how Hume's description of the family as an example of situations of "enlarged affections" in which justice is either useless or inappropriate, has formed a source for present-day theorists of justice who likewise argue that justice is an irrelevant virtue with respect to family life. (26-30) One could add that in view of the analogies between social and sexual relationships in Hume's perspective on the social, it works the other way around as well. Hume's notion of a social order steered by affections which moreover is modelled on naturalized - and naturally hierarchical - familial relationships is to render redundant or marginal in his moral philosophy the very need of accounting for social justice.
naturally return to the object of greater worth, the one that will not easily be submerged into surrounding relationships. (Tr 404-6) The 'seventh experiment', one of Hume's exercises in moral casuistry, is another example of the selective character of the mind's proceedings. The human soul may elsewhere be likened to a republic by Hume (see § 5.3), here it turns out not to be a democracy in any radical sense.

'Tis evident, that tho' all passions pass easily from one object to another related to it, yet this transition is made with greater facility, where the more considerable object is first presented, and the lesser follows it, than when this order is revers'd, and the lesser takes the precedence. Thus 'tis more natural for us to love the son upon account of the father, than the father upon account of the son; the servant for the master, than the master for the servant; the subject for the prince, than the prince for the subject. .. In short, our passions, like other objects, descend with greater facility than they ascend. (Tr 391)

Further examples show the naturalness of the inferiority of the wife compared with the husband, and of the woman as daughter compared with the woman as mother. The association of ideas is subject to a cultural force of gravity, presented as a natural one.

The patriarchal family serves as the model for the self-regulation of the emotions. Keeping in mind Hume's social preferences, he here gives an interesting account of desire as suiting modern commerce. Market society needs choice directed to specific goods. It has to be able to approach the customer as if he or she will automatically recognize how to prefer one commodity among others. The familial economy of desires serves very well an expanding market started up by plush commodities setting off more large-scale consumer behaviour. Mass consumption, in imitating aristocratic or upper-class prodigality, is led by an already engendered desire trained in ordering its objects hierarchically. In the new regime of commerce, the baby is no longer his majesty: s/he is a purposive consumer - whose desires will be satisfied by a functional stand-in for the ultimate model. Hume's patriarchal economy of passion will beget miniature consumers and thus serve economic progress.

To be sure, a rival image exists in modern commercial imagination of these conscious, purposeful buyers. They could be confronted with the very different ideal of consuming subjects who buy at random, who are unable to keep their endless desire for satisfaction under some regime of control - their desires not derived but unfocused ones. Next to the assured, profitable effects this character would have for the market, it also implies an unrestrained, unruly behaviour that would hardly contribute to social equilibrium. It would probably not be Hume's favourite modern subject. Does this rival image nevertheless play a role in Humean thought? Does he somehow identify in modern culture a regime of desire he positively fears as being incompatible with the concerted rules of sociability and commerce? If this rival image of a mind untrained in patriarchal hierarchy is indeed to be recognized in the catalogue of Humean anxieties, what consequences are to be inferred for his philosophy of gender? I will explore the subject - indirectly, like Hume himself - by discussing his epistemological ambivalences.
5.3 A sceptic's anxieties: theatrical subjects.

Ever since Kant told us that sceptics, "like nomadic tribes, who hate a permanent habitation and settled mode of living", attack those who have organized themselves into civil communities, scepticism seems to be the honorary title for all those who in no civil society can feel at home, for all who oppose conventional modern bourgeois culture. Not so for Hume. His scepticism explicitly supports convention and the said culture. He is nowhere near resembling Deleuze's sceptic nomad. His sceptic doubt has to be related to his concern for and discomfort with the unpredictable and disturbing aspects of close relationships, of which the relationship with one's own image is one example, and the sexual relationship another. The general philosophical theme of anxiety which informs scepticism, and the theme of anxiety for women's supposed responsibility for eruptive passions and social instability are, in Hume's mind, connected.

It is most instructive to look at Hume's discussion of 'personal identity'. Here sceptical anxiety appears to reach a crucial level of existentialist despair. The human subject is a fragmented, interdependent and insecure creature. This especially hits hard with regard to those objects, human or material, that are most close to him. Our impressions of objects are necessarily temporary and/or deceived, being merely associations of ideas.

In the section 'Of personal identity' in A Treatise of Human Nature, he comments on the fragility or even non-existence of any uncomplicated consciousness of self.

(S)etting aside some metaphysians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. .. The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no simplicity in it at one time, nor identity in different. (Tr 300-01)

The whole of this doctrine leads us to a conclusion, which is of great importance in the present affair, viz. that all the nice and subtle questions concerning personal identity can never possibly be decided, and are to be regarded rather as grammatical than as philosophical difficulties. Identity depends on the relations of ideas; and these relations produce identity. (Tr 310)

This nominalist assertion of reality does not express appreciation of the dramaturgical complexity which characterizes subjectivity: the theatrical metaphor here rather threatens security and peaceful existence. The mind is a faculty not to be trusted; the autobiographical image we live with one way or another as well as our perceptions of others are fictions that produce, and never just find, our world.
The memory not only discovers the identity, but also contributes to its production, by producing the relation of resemblance among the perceptions. The case is the same whether we consider ourselves or others. (Tr 308)

The mind is ruled by a mimetic procedure.

Hume's conception of the self mirrors his conception of polite society. The self is a republic in constant danger of decay, but an invisible hand, which directs the exchange of sentiments along mechanisms of resemblance, steers this political, potentially subversive self towards a socially defined self, safe from upheaval. This is the mimetic model of society:

I cannot compare the soul more properly to any thing than to a republic or commonwealth, in which the several members are united by the reciprocal ties of government and subordination, and give rise to other persons, who propagate the same republic. (Tr 309)

To ward off the danger of the personal becoming political, Hume persuades us that the self will become social, will be mimetically produced, so as to "propagate the same republic". The laws of identity, paralleling the laws of the social, will guarantee a set identity - of the individual as well as of the community.

Hume's theatre of subjectivity is peculiar: it appears to be deficient in some respect or another. When Hume sees actors, they are embodied: acting is, in utilitarian fashion, a function of the expected balance of pleasure and pain. Acting boils down to a reflex of harmonizing one's own and others' inclinations and drives. In this sense, benevolent action is profoundly embodied action - an embodied acting that is simultaneously prevented from becoming political action. These acting bodies may not have lost their mind completely, but still this acting on sentiments hardly lends itself to criticism. At the most, one can judge whether an action has been effective, but one cannot be expected to exert a reflective judgement on the act itself. In Humean sentimentalism, sentiment is not a state of mind: sentiment has moved resolutely into the body. While Reason has been deprived of a transcendental, totalizing power, the mind works only mimetically, and the body has taken over as the unifying entity and site of judgement.

Hume confirms our line of thought where, in the context of his discussion of the status of judgement from a sceptical perspective, he announces that art should better avoid being too clever.

A tragic poet, that would represent his heroes as very ingenious and witty in their misfortunes, would never touch the passions. As the emotions of the soul prevent any

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76 See e.g.: "The hypothesis which we embrace is plain. It maintains that morality is determined by sentiment. It defines virtue to be whatever mental action or quality gives to a spectator the pleasing sentiment of approbation; and vice the contrary." (Enq 289)

77 "(R)eason alone can never produce any action .. We speak not strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat of passion and of reason. Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them," (Tr 462) Hume's view of the impotency of reason with respect to action will further be discussed in § 5.6.
subtle reasoning and reflection, so these latter actions of the mind are equally prejudicial to
the former. (Tr 236)

Mind and body exist at each other’s expense.

It is a certain rule, that wit and passion are entirely incompatible. When the affections are
moved, there is no place for the imagination. The mind of man being naturally limited, it is
impossible that all its faculties can operate at once .. (Essays 195)

The deficiency can now be pin-pointed: Hume’s theatre lacks judges. The spectators in his theatre
bear no resemblance to a category like 'the representatives of modern public opinion'. The spectators
weep, tremble, resent, rejoice, and are inflamed with all the variety of passions, which
actuate the several personages of the drama. (Enq 222)

They indulge in the suffering or joy occurring on stage: there is no sensation of distance, no
consciousness of the fictive character of the spectacle, of the proces of representation. The
spectators identify effortlessly with the actors and can only perceive them as natural persons. Acting
is always by nature being present; it is not nature that is staged. Hume’s spectators are not critics or
judges, but consumers of culture who never question their subjectivity that in that very spectatorial act
is produced.

This is of course what happens from the perspective of the actors and spectators
themselves. Hume’s theory of identity as a continual staging of presumed natural identity reveals that
‘in fact’ a very different process is occurring ‘behind the backs’ of these victims of an unsceptical
slumber. The spectator yields unawares to the play of successive meanings, confounding identity and
diversity; the philosopher’s task is to grasp the patterns organizing the association of ideas and to
identify the mistakes of common experience. The philosopher is the only ‘reflective spectator’ in
Hume’s worldview.

We should expand here a little on the theory of actors and spectators developed by Adam Smith
(1723-1790). Scottish philosophy does offer very different views on the mechanisms of modern
society. Smith develops a theory of subjectivity in which mimetic identification is always mediated by
some mental representation of the social setting in which identification and judgement occur. Smith
thus introduces a third term in the mimetic process of subjectivity: the figure of ‘the man within the
breast’. Ideally, this ‘man within’ represents an ‘impartial spectator’: an imaginary or fictional outsider
whose point of view will correct direct, partial impressions and judgements, and who acts as a judge
of conduct. As a general principle, we might say that the internalized spectator signifies a merging of

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78 My arguments here and in § 5.6 and 5.7 invert the argument in Baier 1993 that Hume could
qualify as ‘the reflective women’s epistemologist’.

79 Mullan makes the similar observation that in Hume’s work “alongside the persona of philosopher
as conversationalist is that of philosopher as solitary sceptic, excluded .. from the normally
unconsidered commerce of society, the ‘common life’ to which the text is compelled to refer”. (1988, 9)
actor and spectator. A merging that in Smith's case, in contrast to Hume's, means that any immediate or 'natural' experience of self and others is constantly interrupted by this fictional presence. The social is on principle represented as part of our self-representation; the third term - whether it directs towards the ideal or towards an imperfect outcome - prevents a durable fantasy of autonomy as well as any clear rupture between sociability and reflective awareness, between social men and philosophers.

Hume himself has no such view of what happens in the breast of a man, or at least of what happens in that of an intellectual like himself. At the occasion of the appearance of Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759) he writes his pupil a rather nasty letter. Commenting on the favourable reception of Smith's book he states:

A wise man's kingdom is his own breast; or, if he ever looks farther, it will only be to the judgement of a select few, who are free from prejudices, and capable of examining his work. Nothing, indeed, can be a stronger presumption of falsehood than the approbation of the multitude. (Letters I, 1759, 304)

And nothing, indeed, can be a greater distancing of Smith's newly delivered theory of the always-mediated character of opinion and identity through an internalized spectator, inhabiting that autonomous breast Hume - one of the select few - desperately tries to hold on to. Hume here betrays the model he stubbornly identifies with, his ideal of the 'real man' as distinguished sharply from the average man.

We detect a trace of the double standard Hume wants to bequeath to modern culture. What is more, Hume seems to search for a device that allows him to escape from a commitment to the mediocre practices of the social. He reluctantly lives in his own representation of the social.

5.4 A sceptic's anxieties: language, intercourse, style.

"Grammar is politics by other means."

Questions of identity, Hume has stated, pose grammatical rather than philosophical difficulties. We

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80 See also Forbes 1975, who concludes that Hume appeals "to two incompatible types of experience: an 'individualistic', uniformitarian psychology on the one hand, and his view of human nature as socially conditioned and plastic on the other." (118) And Brunius 1952: "Hume's attitude was twofold. On one hand he had confidence in the constancy and uniformity of human nature, that is, its tendency to establish patterns of evaluation which are similarly formed. On the other hand, to this uniformity he gave a motivation of psychological associationism which in turn inspired a relativism. His connection with the fixed neoclassical frame of taste is found in his belief in the uniformity of esthetic standards. But when he gave the motivation of the psychology of association to this fixed system of esthetic standards, he became a pioneer in the development of psychological relativism." (118)
live by fancy, not by understanding. (Tr 315) While identity obeys linguistic laws, this does not imply that the rules of language bring easy recourse. Most of the time, actually, language offers not a solution but a problem. It is not so much grammar as semantics - the problem of the "caprices of language" - that dominate most of his inspections of language.

If Hume was a philosopher who was "committed to the resources of a language of feeling for the purpose of representing necessary social bonds" (Mullan 1988, 2), the 'language' as well as the 'feeling' should not be understood as natural resources but as disorderly reservoirs of meaning in need of 'proper management'. Hume proposes a specific politics of representation, meant to ensure a mimetic social existence for ordinary men. His elaborate comparisons of cultures serve to convince his readers of the necessity and legitimacy of this 'compulsory politeness'. If the world is a stage where several plays may be performed, politeness is the happy ending to which all should aspire, lest the sceptic loses his nerve.

The arbitrariness of meanings produced by verbal disputes, as he himself taught us, rules the social value-system, just as our daily experience of our selves is necessarily subjected to the theatrical procedures of conscience. This arbitrariness has to be accepted for the sake of keeping a non-rational humanity going.

With respect to the issue of language, we find Hume at the side of Rousseau, who was politically on a very different side. Rousseau suspected that it may be language itself that is responsible for the corruption of civil society. Hume appears inspired by a comparable mood in his rather persistent research into what we may call the limits of language and the dividing line between mere "verbal disputes" and "real meanings". In Hume's approach of language, we encounter once again his obsession with the necessary conformism to social convention. In the light of Humean scepticism, language and love fairly amount to the same thing: they are unruly practices. Like the passions, language has to be channeled and fixed.

The more we converse with mankind, and the greater social intercourse we maintain, the more shall we be familiarized to these general preferences and distinctions, without which our conversation and discourse could scarcely be rendered intelligible to each other. .. General language, therefore, .. must be moulded on some more general views, and must affix the epithets of praise and blame, in conformity to sentiments, which arise from the general interest of the community. .. The intercourse of sentiments, therefore, in society and conversation, makes us form some general unalterable standard .. (Enq 228-29)

Hume's nominalist theory of language converts into an ethical imperative of communal meaning. A polymorphic field of meanings is funneled towards a general, unalterable standard through the socio-linguistic procedures of resemblance. Theoretical nominalism ends utilitarian in community standards of meaning.

In Hume's theory of communicative action the motor of communication is not reason, but
sentiment. The te/os of language does not consist in generating 'understanding' but in bringing about a chain of 'resemblances': language is to stabilize personal identity in the process of communicating inclinations and sentiments. But whereas social life generates all kinds of semantic perplexities, to be solved through the convergent tendency of communication, other domains are subjected to the solutions offered by the rule of grammar. Below I will further discuss these domains - art and science.

Hume's nominalist view of language is, moreover, supplemented by one in which language ideally does describe reality; one in which the grammatical solutions he once recommended over and above philosophical ones, do not get lost in fiction or style. Grammar returns with a vengeance; the whole business of semantics is easily forgotten the moment Hume devotes his attention to art and science. In most respects, art and science are no opposites to Hume: they are the domains of the labour of geniuses, domains under the sway of regimes of representation very different from those of the social. The mimetic production of a floating identity, which does not correspond to a natural origin of that identity, or which simply mimes its social Others, here changes into the mimetic representation of a natural reality.

Art as well as language are dangerous things when they do not obey realism, or proper aesthetic standards. Beauty is destroyed when there is no natural reference - or should we say: when there is no correct, Humean reference. Too much appeal to the imagination is not to be encouraged. Hume thinks that in the field of aesthetics a correspondence theory of truth should apply.

(P)rroductions, which are merely surprising, without being natural, can never give any lasting entertainment to the mind. To draw chimeras is not, properly speaking, to copy or imitate. The justness of the representation is lost, and the mind is displeased to find a picture, which bears no resemblance to any original. (Essays 192)

Teddy Brunius (1952) discusses Hume as a representative of the neo-classical ideal in eighteenth-century aesthetics. Hume values French classicism highly and abhors the 'gothic' and 'barbaric' in art, following the negative appreciation of these conceptions in the writings of e.g. Addison and Fontenelle.

Hume acknowledges that both simplicity and refinement know their extremes - they are the extremes of masculinity and femininity. On the first kind of extreme, he has a dim rather than stern view:

If his language be not elegant, his observations uncommon, his sense strong and masculine, he will in vain boast his nature and simplicity. He may be correct; but he never will be agreeable. (Essays 192)

As to the second kind of extreme, Hume adopts the contemporary habit of equating 'too much' refinement with effeminacy. In Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences, while preferring English mixed government above the monarchy (as in France) and the republic (as in Holland), he confesses jealousy of the French cultivation of politeness. On the other hand, notwithstanding his
admiration of French culture, he points to the favourable effects of commercial intercourse between nations, illustrating this with the example of France.

The FRENCH are convinced, that their theatre has become somewhat effeminate, by too much love and gallantry; and begin to approve of the more masculine taste of some neighbouring nations. (Essays 122)

When he has to choose between the excesses of refinement and those of simplicity, he has made up his mind: "Too much ornament is a fault in every kind of production." (Essays 192) Put even more strongly: "refinement, as it is the less beautiful, so is it the more dangerous extreme." (Essays 196)

How can aesthetic abundance be dangerous? It leads to affectation and conceit in writing, and as such testifies to the existence of vicious sentiments: sentiments trying not to mime, that is, trying to disobey the social imperative of mimetic behaviour. Hume makes an even more general observation: aesthetic abundance degenerates civilisation as such. His discussion of taste is given an immediate social transposition. He intimates that countries can degenerate because of such inferior taste. In the words of Brunius: "According to Hume, artificiality in taste is closely allied to moral corruption." (106)

In the end, the effeminate extreme is neither correct, nor agreeable.

Hume, not surprisingly since we know him a little better, advocates the middle road. This road definitely has a gender. He likes his own style of writing because to him it exemplifies such a middle road, and rather painstakingly defends it against improper interpretations:

I am surpriz'd you shou'd find Fault with my Letter. For my Part I esteem it the best I ever wrote. There is neither Barbarism, Solecism, Aequivoque, Redundancy, nor Transgression of one single Rule of Grammar or Rhetoric thro the Whole. The Words are chosen with an exact Propriety to the Sense, & the Sense was full of masculine Strength & Energy. .. Exact Propriety of Words & Thought. (Letters I, 43. 1742)

In the vocabulary of sociability, neither luxury nor commerce stand for threatening effeminacy, but excess still does. The elegant style of politeness is identified as masculine.

Representation on the level of the social may be destined to follow the tracks of a fickle, whimsical female model immersed in meaning; in the representation of nature (including, as we saw, the natural desire of the consumer), a solid, trustworthy, and selective male model should be imitated.

5.5 Cognitive dualism (en)gendered: polite order and excess.

The association by virtue of resemblance of gender relations and social relations gives rise to several analogies. A very ambivalent analogy occurs where Hume conducts a polemic with his contemporaries who adhere too enthusiastically to the example of classical republicanism and its martial virtues and style requisites. He celebrates civilization because it has led to a refinement of manners. Polite culture is no doubt superior to other modes of social intercourse.
(I)t rather improves our sensibility for all the tender and agreeable passions; at the same time that it renders the mind incapable of the rougher and more boisterous emotions. (Essays 6)

In the course of the argument, and not surprisingly, when we consider the centrality of the question of gender in civic humanist debate, he often refers to the position and treatment of women among "the ancients". Hume’s discussion of polite culture gives evidence of a profound ambivalence with regard to the nature of the offspring of the relationship between the sexes. His ambivalence springs from his eagerness to identify the position of polite culture in relation to the struggle of classical republicanism with the opponent it had chosen for itself: the salonnière. Is it possible to see in Hume's approach of the social an alliance between the cultural positions of politeness and of the salon? To eighteenth-century republicans both stand for despicable effeminate culture, but from the point of view of our defender of politeness things are not that conveniently arranged.

On the one hand, the relation of women to polite culture is described in extremely sympathetic terms. Women "are much better Judges of all polite Writing than Men of the same Degree of Understanding." (Essays 536) He enthusiastically approves of having women educated and is indignant about the contemporary habit of heaping ridicule upon learned women.

Let the Dread of that Ridicule have no other Effect, than to make them conceal their knowledge before Fools, who are not worthy of it, nor of them. Such will still presume upon the vain Title of the Male Sex to affect a Superiority above them: But my fair Readers may be assur’d, that all Men of Sense, who know the World, have a great Deference for their Judgement of such Books as ly within the Compass of their Knowledge .. (Essays 536)

He continues by explicitly confronting the influence of the salons in France.

In a neighbouring Nation, equally famous for good Taste, and for Gallantry, the Ladies are, in a Manner, the Sovereigns of the learned World, as well as of the conversable; and no polite Writer pretends to venture upon the Public, without the Approbation of some celebrated Judges of that Sex. (Essays 536)

That "(t)heir verdict is, indeed, sometimes complain’d of" has no sufficient ground for him. However, ambivalence arises here. He does claim to know better than the ladies. He distrusts their judgment concerning books of gallantry and devotion:

(M)ost of them seem more delighted with the Warmth, than with the justness of the Passion. (Essays 537)

Now, as scepticism has taught us and a feminist critical theory itself may adopt as dogma, there is surely ground for distrusting the 'warmth' of passions. If, however, failing to do so constitutes an epistemological vice Hume is eager to make it into a female vice. He suggests the existence of a typical female habit to swoon, where distanced judgement is called for. Women's judgement may righteously contribute to a pleasant social warmth but is being removed from the realm of incisive knowledge.
The essay Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences contains Hume's most important statements on the value and superiority of polite culture. At the same time, it is an essay on the relationship between the sexes. He weighs polite culture and "ancient simplicity" against each other. Both have their drawbacks.

(M)odern politeness, which is naturally so ornamental, runs often into affectation and foppery, disguise and insincerity; so the ancient simplicity, which is naturally so amiable and affecting, often degenerates into rusticity and abuse, scurrility and obscenity. (Essays 130-1)

It is nevertheless clear that his preference lies with polite culture, as being uniquely able to promote commercial society and to facilitate commerce between the nations. The essay Of Commerce leaves no doubt in defending refinement in the arts and the conveniences of life as being advantageous to the public and making men more sociable. Furthermore, it benefits public as well as private life, unlike the ancient virtues that are directed solely to public life. Hume traces the source of politeness to court life.

Among the ancients, the character of the fair-sex was considered as altogether domestic; nor were they regarded as part of the polite world or of good company. This, perhaps, is the true reason why the ancients have not left us one piece of pleasantry that is excellent. This, therefore, is one considerable improvement, which the polite arts have received from gallantry, and from courts, where it first arose. (Essays 134)

He defends gallantry against accusations by "the more zealous partizans of the ancients", who claim that it would be "foppish and ridiculous, and a reproach, rather than a credit, to the present age." (131) The way his argument proceeds turns the classic-republican equation of politeness and femininity against itself. Polite culture, according to Hume, cannot be a corruption, as it springs from the relation between the sexes itself. It forms its natural product, since it is the intercourse between the sexes which begets the polite passion of gallantry. Hume legitimates the superiority of polite culture by presenting it as being an originally thoroughly gendered culture.

Nature has implanted in all living creatures an affectation between the sexes, which .. is not merely confined to the satisfaction of the bodily appetite, but begets a friendship and mutual sympathy, which runs through the whole tenor of their lives. .. Nothing, therefore, can proceed less from affectation than the passion of gallantry. It is natural in the highest degree. Art and education, in the most elegant courts, make no more alteration on it, than all the other laudible passions. (Essays 131)

Then again, for this very inescapable dependency on the intercourse between the sexes, polite society is a risk society. Even the clear advantages polite culture offers society are not at all unambiguous. After all, the Dialogue informs us that thanks to the very "reserved manners" of the Greek vis-à-vis women

there scarcely is an instance of any event in the Greek history, which proceeded from the
intrigues of women. On the other hand, in modern times, particularly in a neighbouring nation, the females enter into all transactions and all management of church and state: And no man can expect success, who takes not care to obtain their good graces. .. It is needless to dissemble: The consequence of a very free commerce between the sexes, and of their living much together, will often terminate in intrigues and gallantry. We must sacrifice somewhat of the *useful*, if we be very anxious to obtain all the *agreeable* qualities; and cannot pretend to reach alike every kind of advantage. (Enq 339)

Here a Rousseauan anguish shows, about male dependency on women where women "enter all transactions and all management". The promotion of the status of women in polite culture brings along the risk of intrigue; once again the risk of faction is associated with gender relations. Humean thought vacillates between two representations of the nature of gender: one in which the vicissitudes of gender resemble those of social life, another in which they resemble political life. Women can, and even should, be present in the public sphere as long as they bring - and represent - pleasantry. But the picture becomes sordid as soon as their presence translates into taking egalitarian pathes, equally entering into "all transactions and all management" as "the consequence of a very free commerce between the sexes". Polite culture, far from constituting a 'woman-friendly' context for freely developing female subjectivity, turns out to warrant a discipline of women.

Hume's ambivalence with regard to the profitable effects of having women around is by now obvious. The presence of women benefits polite culture because women have the potential for turning men into more humble creatures. But in which capacity? Do women stand for the Good and should they therefore be imitated? This explanation finds support in his exclamation:

> I must think, that mixt companies, without the fair-sex, are the most insipid entertainment in the world, and destitute of gaiety and politeness, as much as of sense and reason. Nothing can keep them from excessive dulness but hard drinking. (Essays 134, n, 626)

Or do they provoke the Good in men because of their weaknesses - even because of their being Other in general? Is it not simply the case that male fear of women's potentially eruptive powers puts men on their guard and makes their behaviour calculated and studied? This second explanation finds at least equal support:

> A man is lord in his own family, and his guests are, in a manner, subject to his authority: Hence, he is always the lowest person in the company; attentive to the wants of every one; and giving himself all the trouble, in order to please .. As nature has given man the superiority above woman, by endowing him with greater strength both of mind and body; it is his part to alleviate that superiority, as much as possible, by the generosity of his behaviour, and by a studied deference and complaisance for all her inclinations and opinions. Barbarous nations display this superiority, by reducing their females to the most abject slavery; by confining them, by beating them, by selling them, by killing them. But the male sex, among a polite people, discover their authority in a more generous, though not a
less evident manner; by civility, by respect, by complaisance, and, in a word, by gallantry. (Essays 132-33)

Some remarks in his autobiographical essay *The Life of the Author* may throw light on his personal handling of the subject - the same remarks, by the way, which established his reputation as a non-sexist philosopher.

.. as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men anywise eminent, have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched, or even attacked by her baleful tooth. (Essays xl-xl)

This is in no way a statement that reveals a respectful egalitarianism. It reveals someone who is proud of his accomplishment to have beaten a constant danger, who cunningly mastered it or cleverly outwitted it.

Hume the philosopher may be in doubt; Hume the man projects onto gender the meanings he associates with politics. Echoing his approach of personal identity in general, a constant fear emerges from the texts that gender will escape the Humean social and will become political.

Although Hume in his discussion of *Love and Marriage* exclaims that he would wish "there were no pretensions to authority on either side; but that every thing was carried on with perfect equality" (Essays 560), he fails to live up to the professed ideal. All his essays bearing on the subject abound with advice to women about what to do, how to judge, what to read, how to improve their chances of admission to the learned world - of which he considers himself an Ambassador. In a generous gesture he offers women the position of "sovereign" of the "Empire of Conversation", and regrets not to be able to offer them the same position in the "Republic of Letters", because its stubborn, learned male inhabitants are "unaccustomed to Subjection". (Essays 535) Will the ladies understand this small difficulty? Though presented as a 'reverent gesture', Hume's phrases sound rather like a polite explanation by a dominant to a subordinate nation of their mutual relationship.

Hume's formulations point to a new division within the 'conversable world' between those capable of proper judgement, and those in a lower echelon: those who operate within the discourse of "a continued Series of gossipping Stories and idle Remarks". (Essays 534) Of course, the standard of judgement for those who are appointed to rule the 'conversable world' is still set in the 'learned world'. This division provides Hume with a solution to a pressing dilemma: he does not want to be part of commercial intercourse, but he still does want intercourse with women. The two-dimensional world of conversation designed by himself allows him to keep his anxiety about his double identity as a man and a philosopher at bay.

Hume's social theory and epistemic backing of polite culture turns out to part company in crucial respects with the ones that can be distilled from salon culture - viz. the assured anti-rationalist sentimentalism of his social theory and the way his polite culture warrants a discipline of women.
5.6 Cognitive dualism (en)gendered: reason, judgement, verbal disputes.

In many places we find Hume on his personal quest for the Holy Grail, that is, his continual quest to find "what is real, and what is only verbal" in controversies. He, the philosopher, wants to work his way out of the arbitrariness of verbal disputes which dominate the social. If the philosopher Hume may now and then pose as a woman, in order to bequeath to social theory - and social life - a model, in the end he remains loyal to the natural person he simply knows is behind the mask. Hume attempts to rescue science by prescribing positivism as the only solution out of arbitrariness. Polite society is a theatrical republic. The aesthetic and scientific domains look a lot like classical republics.

Hume's double epistemological standard has drawn the attention of other commentators as well. P.F. Strawson (1985), for example, has pointed out the "double role" Hume plays in this respect: arch-sceptic and arch-naturalist. But I would propose not to see this as a matter of some personal philosophical indecisiveness on the part of Hume. The two 'roles' can be connected to different practices, since he reserves the merely 'verbal disputes' for society and adopts a positivist research into real meanings for scientific purposes. Hume's nominalist description of daily experience and his recommendations for the good life for average men stand in sharp contradiction to his scientific positivism. This position offends the eighteenth century mode of doing research by way of literary and social dispute which is represented by the salon; it conflicts with the nominalist spirit which reigns the salon's normative ideals.

Of course, Hume's scepticism leads him to a critique of speculative rationalist philosophy - "If we reason a priori, anything may appear able to produce anything." (Enq 164) He advocates a science which proceeds from experimental reasoning. This reason handles "the discovery of truth or falshood" (Tr 510), and has hence no connection to morality.

Actions may be laudable or blameable; but they cannot be reasonable .. Moral distinctions, therefore, are not the offspring of reason. Reason is wholly inactive, and can never be the source of so active a principle as conscience, or a sense of morals. (Tr 510)

Because reason has no place in morality, morality is not subject to science. "Reason or science is nothing but the comparing of ideas, and the discovery of their relations" and "morality consists not in any relations, that are the objects of science" nor "in any matter of fact, which can be discover'd by the understanding." (Tr 518, 520)

Twist and turn this matter as much as you will, you can never rest the morality on relation; but must have recourse to the decisions of sentiment. (Enq 288)

Likewise, the content of morality is not subject to a grammatical enquiry, for Hume does not find "that in the English, or any other modern tongue, the boundaries are exactly fixed between virtues and talents, vices and defects." (Enq 313)
Morals and criticism are not so properly objects of the understanding as of taste and sentiment. Beauty, whether moral or natural, is felt, more properly than perceived. (Enq 165)

Hume specifies the heuristics of scientific investigation in opposition to taste: as the faculties of "understanding and sentiment" (Enq 286) are contrary to each other, so are "reason and taste".

Thus the distinct boundaries and offices of reason and of taste are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood: the latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one discovers objects as they really stand in nature, without addition or diminution: the other has a productive faculty .. Reason being cool and disengaged, is no motive to action, .. Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain, and thereby constitutes happiness or misery, becomes a motive to action .. (Enq 294)

Reason discovers the real nature of things and therefore belongs to science; taste perceives "the peculiar nature" of each being bestowed on it by the Supreme Being and belongs to emotive action.

In all the sciences, our mind from the known relations investigates the unknown. But in all decisions of taste .. all the relations are beforehand obvious to the eye. (Enq 291)

Hume has opposed the faculty of judgement, which is based in sentiment and therefore capable of leading to action, to reason. Reason is impotent from the sceptical point of view. In science there is no action. Stated otherwise, in science neither sentiment nor body exist. Science needs understanding - for the investigation of the hitherto unknown; for research into the relations of ideas and matter; and for the knowledge of truth. Judgement is embodied, but the understanding is not.

Reason discovers while taste produces; yet this production is not of a creative kind but rather assembly line production. Judgement belongs to the 'obvious', and has to steer clear of 'imagination', or poetry and (political) rhetorics - which constitute sublime domains of mere unruly excess.

The imagination of man is naturally sublime, delighted with whatever is remote and extraordinary, and running, without control .. in order to avoid the objects, which custom has rendered too familiar to it. A correct Judgement observes a contrary method, and avoiding all distant and high enquiries, confines itself to common life, and to such subjects as fall

\[\text{81} \text{And: "The end of all moral speculations is to teach us our duty; and, by proper representations of the deformity of vice and beauty of virtue, beget correspondent habits .. But is this ever to be expected from inferences and conclusions of the understanding, which of themselves have no hold of the affections nor set in motion the active powers of men? They discover truths: but .. they can have no influence on conduct and behaviour." (Enq 172, acc. in this citation by me)}\]

\[\text{82} \text{A nice piece of sceptical anxiety is delivered in the Treatise: "tis impossible for us so much as to conceive or form an idea of any thing specifically different from ideas and impressions. Let us fix our attention out of ourselves as much as possible: Let us chase our imagination to the heavens, or to the utmost limits of the universe; we never really advance a step beyond ourselves .. This is the universe of the imagination, nor have we any idea but what is there produced." (116) No matter how hard we try, we will never escape ourselves; science may be the only candidate to get us out of this cul-de-sac of imaginary worldly existence.}\]
under daily practice and experience; leaving the more sublime topics to the embellishment
of poets and orators, or to the arts of priests and politicians. (Enq 162)

Now what subjects can judge? While belonging on, and restricted to, the level of common daily life,
Hume’s embodied judgement is not for just any body. As has already been expounded in § 5.3, the
regular spectator is excluded from the competence of judgement. The Humean type of judgement is
restricted to the few who qualify as having the right bodies when it comes to sentimentalist, embodied
judging. In a passage nicely specifying the embodied character of taste, he states:

Thus, though the principles of taste be universal, and nearly, if not entirely the same in all
men; yet few are qualified to give judgement on any work of art, or establish their own
sentiment as the standard of beauty. The organs of internal sensation are seldom so perfect
as to allow the general principles their full play .. (Essays 241)

Having or not having the right body is not a merely contingent matter: some social roles function as
schibboleths making the bodies with unfit internal organs recognizable even from the outside - making
sure who does not qualify. Apart from the common spectator, judgement can neither be exercised by
the unruly subjects of the sublime: orators, politicians, priests, as well as all women who fail to pass
as rulers of the conversable world. 83

Judgement does not demand (experimental) reason because it will obey established rules
of composition, the standard of taste, founded on experience of "what has been universally found to
please in all countries and in all ages". Though "beauty is no quality in things themselves" and "exists
merely in the mind which contemplates them", in the course of civilization "natural meanings" of
beauty have been established. (Essays 231, 230) The rules of good taste are "obvious". "Morals and
criticism" are pronounced to be the objects of "taste and sentiment", but in making judgement into the
slave of sentiment, Hume has in fact managed an oblique approach of either morality as instrument of

83 There are curious juxtapositions of women and priests in Hume's work, serving to make them
alike as non-soldiers, and wanting in courage and martial spirit. "Revenge is a natural passion to
mankind; but seems to reign with the greatest force in priests and women: Because, being deprived of
the immediate exertion of anger, in violence and combat, they are apt to fancy themselves despised
on that account; and their pride supports their vindictive disposition." (Essays 201, note) In a passage
where Hume wants to show that politeness and the development of the refined arts not necessarily
lead to effeminacy, lack of honour and martial spirit, the comparison between priests and women is
repeated: "ROME was governed by priests, and NAPLES by women." (Essays 275) (This being part of
a "satisfactory" explanation for the degeneration of Italy.) Hume's distrust "on only one Subject" of
the "Judgment of Females" (Essays 537) has already been mentioned. But there are several
instances in which supposedly female judgements provide examples of 'false judgements'. In the
Treatise women are sneered at for producing false sentiments of pity issuing not from supposedly
"subtile reflections on the instability of fortune", but from an "infirmity" they share with children. (418)
Another derisory comment is made with respect to the sillyness of women who, according to Hume,
judge all criminals who go to the scaffold as "uncommonly handsome and well-shaped". (436) Again,
in the Essays he states that women, if at all interested in history, prefer "secret history"; that is, the
histories of the intimate lives of historical characters. (564) (Though it would be interesting to pursue
the issue of Hume's theory of history, I cannot expand here on how this notion of 'secret history'
Necessarily results in a defence of a 'proper' history of the public sphere.) In general, we may
conclude that in Hume's thought 'women' often function as stand-ins for average mankind in general.
social critique rather than social norm, or of taste-as-criticism - eighteenth century's significant concoction. These are virtually obliterated as criticism is subjected to the rules of propriety in taste and thus withdrawn from reflective labour beyond rule-following. Judgement is safeguarded from politics, or civil assertiveness.

Reason, in turn, continually risks to overstep the boundaries of a 'moderate scepticism'. Though "excessive scepticism" is irrefutable, the real sceptic has to know "his proper sphere" as in common life "no durable good can ever result from it". (Enq 159) It will threaten social action and communication. Hume reprimands the "excessive" sceptic precisely because this Pyrrhonian cannot expect, that his philosophy will have any constant influence on the mind: or if it had, that its influence would be beneficial to society. .. All discourse, all action would immediately cease .. (Enq 160)

The only kind of scepticism Hume allows is a "mitigated" or "academical" scepticism. (Enq 161) Only a moderate scepticism will benefit the illiterate and make them more modest beings; a 'modesty', that is, with respect to reasoning. There are not just social costs: Hume is also clearly worried that excessive scepticism will reduce scientific life to a rather chilling business. He often mentions the pleasure that intellectual activity can provide, and points to the necessity of allowing 'warmth' into philosophy in order to distinguish it from 'cold speculation'. (Tr 319) Hume compares "the love of truth" which accompanies philosophy to the passion of hunting, although he realizes that "in both cases the end of our action may in itself be despis'd." (Tr 498) (A warmth instead of justness in male passion once again easily deceiving women?) This pleasure surely has to obey Hume's dictum that pleasure is agreeable provided that it is "without effeminacy," (Enq 252); neither should philosophy be guilty of refinement, as this belongs not to reason but to the imagination. (Enq 299) Philosophy offers one more instance of Hume's promotion of a warm, masculine style.

As we already saw, art and science are considered to be subject to the same imperatives of representation and should both copy nature. Still science eventually moulds the rules of art: art, if it wants to excel in its proper rules, should rely on scientific advise. A Treatise ends thus:

The anatomist ought never to emulate the painter; nor in his accurate dissections and portraiture of the smaller parts of the human body, pretend to give his figures any graceful and engaging attitude or expression. .. An anatomist, however, is admirably fitted to give advice to a painter; and 'tis even impracticable to excel in the latter art, without the assistance of the former. (670)

84 MacIntyre (1967) has a similar observation and points to Hume's unhistorical approach of human nature. "Even though a historian, he was an essentially unhistorical thinker. Feelings, sentiments, passions, are unproblematic and uncriticizable." (175) Another, nicely sceptical, remark in the same vein on Hume's account of the obviousness of virtues: "About the virtues apparently we cannot be mistaken. Yet who are we?" (1981, 230)

85 In Hume's translation of an originally French verse the association with effeminacy is made explicit only by Hume himself. The French original has: "j'aime le plaisir, sans molesse".
Science bestows a special distinction; it is the final guardian of all representation. 

Instead of contending that Hume's polite philosophy constitutes a 'women's philosophy', we have arrived at quite different suspicions. His epistemological dualism seems a necessary device because the female position is the measure of polite society, the model to be mimed by all common men. Scepticism with regard to ethical rationalism is alright as it oils the theoretical mechanics of the Humean social world, while in the epistemological realm excessive scepticism is in the proper control of scientific male guardians. Positivist inquiry will offer scientific knowledge and male genius a way out of the mediocrity of everyday insights and mere verbal disputes.

Michael Morrisroe (1974) has noted exactly the latter, in his wording of the end of philosophical enquiry according to Hume:

> The discovery and elimination of 'verbal disputes' becomes an important adjunct of the proper mental attitude. Verbal disputes are not worth the energy spent in their pursuit. They detract from the calm air of deliberate doubt which suits philosophers. ... The discovery and elimination of verbal disputes limits enquiries to the proper subjects. (79)

Morrisroe moreover identifies the role model that informs Hume's scientific 'solution' of verbal disputes. It is hard to imagine that Hume ever meant to allow for female agents in the prerogative domain of real science.

The form of the analysis, like the other forms of Hume's rhetoric, tends to produce a dispassionate frame of mind in the reader. Reflect, for example, on Hume's creation of a

| An exercise in Humean dichotomies (problems of 'excess' are coupled to the categories of the social and located in the column far left; in the middle a 'superior social'):
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detached and clinical narrator for his works. The narrator is apparently removed from the heat of controversy. .. The effect on the audience is intentional. .. The narrator is an anatomist, a clinical observer unaffected by imaginative visions and prejudice. (78)

Hume's proposals for a specific scientific language, discovering nature through the analysis of already established relations, make sure none of the 'verbal disputes' of ordinary communicative language will enter this domain. The troubled attempt to eliminate social noises while dreading the ensuing loss of 'warmth', constitutes the bottom line of the conservative sceptic's despair. Hume's realist, mature knowledge, represented as beyond polite order, is the last resort for an unambiguous representation of masculinity. Scientific knowledge is to disconnect its pursuers from the association of silly language - 'mere words' - and femininity. Hume obviates its potential 'cold' by concocting a moderate, masculine warmth - which is instrumental simultaneously to the distinction between the social and scientific domains, and to surviving the pursuit of knowledge away from women.

5.7 The gendered social: conversation beyond doubt.

Hume's social discourse allows very limited space for a self-assertion of female voices in an explicit plural. Humean sociability springs from a social untouched by either politics or knowledge. His polite social eventually offers three options for gendered life: pleasant women, warm masculine style, scientific men. Hume's theory of communicative action may be suitable for (some kinds of) commercial intercourse oriented towards market demands, but hardly for satisfying sexually democratic negotiations.

We shall only observe .. that, though an appeal to general opinion may justly, in the speculative sciences of metaphysics, natural philosophy, or astronomy, be deemed unfair and inconclusive, yet in all questions with regard to morals, as well as criticism, there is really no other standard, by which any controversy can ever be decided. (Essays 486)

Compared with political tenets like the original contract, consent to rule, or civil elections, a conversation taking its cues from general opinion easily forms a superior device with regard to the guarantee of social bonding.

Michael Walzer (1990) approves of Hume's efforts to devise a conversational model: according to him, Hume's version does not fall into the familiar habit of designing a model for "good talk" that inevitably will fix the endings in advance.

There are not many examples of inconclusive endings [to dialogues written by philosophers, jv] but David Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion demonstrate the possibility. Hume's skepticism seems to create a kind of 'negative capability' - a readiness to resist philosophical triumph and forgo choral affirmation. .. His readers resemble men and women in an actual conversation who disagree the next day about who said what, and with what
Walzer's enthusiasm does need some qualification. Conversation, as part of the culture of politeness and as an important faculty of the good life of the citizen, is indeed imperative to Hume. Its characteristics are dictated by his general conviction that harsh, fanatical political critique should be avoided, for the benefit of a stable society. But this conversation, steering communication towards resemblance, also is in no way opening up practices of ongoing critical speech. It belongs to gallantry, a social virtue cut out for recognizing hierarchies of virtue established conventionally. There is a caveat contained in Hume's dislike for politics. He equates it with war, bloodshed, barbarism and factional struggle. (As we saw, these are not necessarily male activities.) Politics has to be shied away from, or better even, replaced with the life of the social, the market, the fine arts, politeness. Citizens occupied with elegant style and the fine arts will not have a disposition for extreme political commitments. There is good reason to assemble, notwithstanding their profound differences, republicanism and Scottish thought under the rubric of a shared idiom, as Pocock has suggested: the idiom of virtue and vice. The positive liberty of the citizens is translated by Hume, not into a political fiction of a general will producing universal consensus, but into a social fiction of communication that is perhaps sloppy in the way of truth-production but much likelier to produce a harmless verbal practice of reaching general standards. This implies that Hume can see politics only as a threat, never as a corrective (or only in a very limited, legislative sense), to the social. His sentimental social appears immune to any consciousness of epistemic irony. His aversion to politics eventually boils down to abandoning the subjects in his gendered social precisely to "choral affirmations". Hume's polite culture depends upon subject positions that will turn away from any dialogue in which one would risk self (instead of strategically being talked into virtue through flattering).

With Hume, communication produces subjects, not the reverse. Ideally, these subjects do not experience a tension between a personal and a social sphere of values. The power of the social is anonymous though authoritative and its subject has no reason to address it. Humean modern subjects are neither authors of their own lives, nor very observant readers.

Hume conceptualizes a differentiation of modern society into political and social spheres - a differentiation which underlies sentimental identity. Meanwhile the modern subject does not experience itself as an effect of this Humean divide between the social and the political domain. The centrifugal tendencies of subjectivity - one of which is motivated by gender - that he (rightly) perceives as fated to become subject to 'political' struggle (that is, escape the social), are to be counteracted in social procedures commanding identity. The emancipation of sentiment, accompanied by a certain linguistic or communicative turn in social theory, simply results in one more - and suspiciously patriarchal - logic of identity.

One more lead has been suggested for seeing Hume's communicative ideal of polite conversation as allowing conversation to strike a critical note. Christine Battersby (1979) has argued that to Hume...
"conversation is a distancing device". In her view, Hume distinguishes the conversational world from the learned world, and attempts to mediate between the two realms. In his philosophy he often chooses the form of dialogue to this end, because "the dialogue form is closely connected with an empiricist concern to subject even the most abstract reasoning to the test of experience, to submit it to the test of "common Life and Conversation"." (246) The rather dismal mood towards the end of the first book of the Treatise indeed testifies to a readiness to drop the whole presumptuous business of philosophy and science, as a too zealous sceptic may be tempted "to forbear all examination and enquiry". (321) Hume recommends less rigour and a "more truly sceptical" disposition. One should not refuse oneself "any innocent satisfaction" within grasp on account of either philosophical doubt or conviction. The true sceptic will, instead of rejecting philosophy altogether, study "philosophy in this careless manner". (320) And in the essay Of Essaywriting he does commend the mutual benefit of increased contacts between the two worlds.

We nevertheless may wonder whether this "distancing device" only functions vis-à-vis philosophy, in order to bring philosophy closer to everyday conversation, or whether, on the contrary, it is to be a distancing move vis-à-vis trivial, conversational life. We already saw how Hume sexes the two worlds, measuring their accessibility, and providing them with irreconcilable epistemological assignments. Far from providing it with emancipating or critical potential, Hume gives conversation a respectable turn, that is, belies the frustrating powers of 'conversations' with respect to the affirmation of received social identities. The judgement occuring in 'conversation' does only exist by virtue of rule-following. The faculty of judgement is carefully removed, not merely from abstract reason, but from critical reason as well, that is, from more substantial political action; it has been embedded in social conformism and communally enforced rules, and subsequently relegated to painstakingly circumscribed domains of art and morality.

In a mental association on Hume's part, social intercourse resembles sexual intercourse: he perceives both as chaotic activities, difficult to combine safely with independency. Both are therefore to be submitted to the sentimentalist procedures of knowledge. (No scepticism please, where we are most Hum(e)an.) Doubt in itself, it should be noticed, is not perceived by Hume to be an ethical good, although he reserves a place for it in his ethics of science. Hume's 'philosophy of the personal' turns into a pedagogical program of moralistic discipline. His scepticism stops short where we might expect room for a critique of morals - that is, for a reasoned judgement - in the heart of conversation. It is equally inconceivable to Hume that doubt could belong to aesthetics or taste, or that the intellectual pleasures of scepticism might be introduced into the very practices of common life. 87

The dialogue form may be effective in subjecting abstract reason to the test of experience; it need however not forbear from hierarchy between the participants in conversation. Both the last section of book I of the Treatise and Of Essay-writing may be felt to serve rather the demarcation of

87 "As 'tis the nature of doubt to cause a variation in the thought, and transport us suddenly from one idea to another, it must of consequence be the occasion of pain." (Tr 500)
philosophical and 'socialized' thinking than the mediation of philosophy and common life. In these texts, Hume is constructing and naming the two worlds and is administering passports for the inhabitants of the world of conversation to visit the other.

Hume, like other Enlightenment philosophers, certainly offers a vision of women's social performance. But his critique, whether ethical, aesthetical, or epistemological, is a far cry from any critical or normative philosophy demanded by present-day feminist critics. It may, on the contrary, instruct us in a rather Machiavellistic way about the workings of sociability, and for that matter of commercial society in general. In this sense, he provides us with an interesting alternative view of received ideas on motives for market behaviour. Commercial society thrives, not on rationally steered individuals, but on idioms of sentiment in which thinking and acting are entrenched.

A feminist reception, then, is presented with two ways of reading Hume's philosophy: first, as giving an analysis of sentiment as the product of social mimesis, which annihilates its celebration as representing some expressionist Good defying dominant modern discourse - on a descriptive level, Hume's philosophy does contribute to feminist insights into an ironic modernity; and second, as projecting a fear of 'effeminized' sentiment onto the faculty of judgement (women's 'silly' judgement moreover being its exemplary case), which he subsequently assigns to warm masculine rule and has him promulgate the laws of social passions - and in this respect his philosophy reveals that polite culture cannot exist but at the expense of a feminist political passion. Eventually, Hume's warm masculine style does not so much signify the end of politics, as a specific political styling of the social. This may be contrasted with a 'cold', that is, critical styling which safeguards reflection on commercial communities' sentimental self-images.

Contrary to widespread feminist belief, modernity's philosophies have not omitted serious reflection on emotion. Next to modern discourses on rationality, we find modern discourses on emotion and sentiment - which are equally problematic for feminist assessments of modernity. While modern society is generally seen as being programmed by an abstract rationalist political and moral philosophy, Scottish philosophy is pre-eminently bound up with and committed to the role of passion in commercial society. Contrary to a benevolent feminist reception of the latter, I would argue that at least its Humean version does not square with feminist concerns about knowledge, ethics and sexual politics. The very notion of grounding social life in and legitimating it by the workings of spontaneous affectionate relationships is in principle misbegotten from the point of view of these concerns and belies feminism's proper notion of either love or care as instances of labour or politics next to affectionate expression.

Annette Baier (1991) has chosen Hume's exclamation that the true sceptic is not the one who rejects philosophy and science, but the one who is content with small satisfactions and "studies philosophy in this careless manner", as the title for one of her chapters. I have argued that his variety of scepticism should rather be approached with caution. In Hume's 'careless philosophy', a careless
rationality constitutes as much a problem as a careless ethics. His analysis teaches us that in evoking the vocabularies of either sentiment or reason, we enter into the problematics either of social mimesis or of the copying of nature. It is not the philosophical priority given to either reason or sentiment which should occupy feminists, but the contiguous problematics of the representation of gender which either perspective calls into existence. Sentiment, with Hume, uniquely serves communicative harmony - if sentiment has instrumental or strategic dimensions, we will search in vain for a conceptual place to articulate a critique of these. Precisely because sentiment underlies the social, it is beyond sceptical, reasoned judgement: no insight into its politics is developed. Sentimental existence, on Hume's scheme of things, renders invisible its own naturalizing representational practice. Such an unreasoned sentiment will constitute considerable problems for a feminist ethics; much more so than a category - unknown to Hume - like an active reason, which might very well approach the world carefully.
Chapter VI. Aligning political and aesthetical representation. Gender and Knowledge with Kant.

Kant (Critique of Pure Reason):
"De nobis ipsis silemus"

Against Kant:
"Of ourselves we do speak"

Paradigm I. Kant establishes a foundationalist modern philosophy of rational, objective, universalist knowledge. His work represents par excellence the heroic obsessions of modern philosophy, indeed, the pathology of modernity.

6.1 The women of Kant.

6.1.1 Explicit sexism.

Explicit statements by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) with regard to the relation between the sexes appear to be textbook cases of women-excluding and women-disciplining thought. Sources of such explicit sexism are the pre-critical work Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen (1764); the essays that Kant wrote between 1784 and 1795: Wass ist Aufklärung? (1784), Mutmaszlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte (1786), Über den Gemeinspruch: das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis (1793); as well as Metaphysik der Sitten (1797) and Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (1798). Women, or issues of gender relations, are absent from the three Critiques. It is perhaps because of his observation that women are "in general acute in observing the smallest want of attention and regard for them" that he did not want to indulge them by spending too much space in his writings on an explicit discussion of the atypical status of women in knowing. For on the matter whether such contrariety was the case, he was certain it was. At the age of forty, Kant wrote his early essay 'Observation on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime', in which he included a rather elaborate section (19 pages) on the relationship between the sexes, titled 'Of the distinction between the sublime and the beautiful in the counterrelation of both sexes'. The essay has bequeathed to us the notorious sentence: "A woman who has a head full of Greek, .. might as well even have a beard."
Thirty four years later, he repeats this gesture of paying attention to 'them' in the 'Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view', which includes a section 'On the character of the sexes'. One more notorious sentence is found in this essay:

As for the scholarly women, they need their *books* in much the same way as they need their *watch*, namely to carry it in order to let people notice they have one, whether or not it is running or has been set by the sun.\(^1\)

In *Theory and Practice* (and again in *Metaphysics*) he allows for the inequality of women, who, despite their equality as subjects of the state, have to obey men. Furthermore, when defining citizenship, he explicitly excludes women from the ensuing right to vote:

The only qualification required by a citizen (except the natural one that there is not a child or a woman involved) is that he must be his own *master (sui iuris)*, that he therefore owns some *property*, supporting him in his livelihood.\(^2\)

Similarly in *Anthropology*:

A *woman*, regardless of her age, is under civil tutelage .. the right of the weaker enters into this, and man's very nature calls on him to respect and defend it.\(^3\)

Furthermore, Kant sees women as incapable of following rules and duties:

I hardly believe that the fair sex are capable of principles.\(^4\)

That women should not aspire to intellectual life, that they are not capable of following the highest ethical principles, and that they should be excluded from active citizenship, together form the kind of sexist ascriptions that has earned Kant a reputation of thorough contemptuousness with regard to women - an attitude, moreover, even more erratic as it appears so hard to reconcile with his overall 'enlightened' philosophy.

At first sight - that is to say, in the eyes of most commentators - Kant is a follower of Rousseau in his opinions on women: compare their notions of a male maturity and a female immaturity where moral attitude is concerned; of the gendered nature of the beautiful and noble virtues; of the corruptness of women vis-à-vis civic life. There have been several 'solutions' to deal with these perceived aberrations within Kantianism.

\(^1\) *Anthropologie*, 654: "Was die gelehrten Frauen betrifft: so brauchen sie ihre *Bücher* etwa so wie ihre *Uhr*, nämlich sie zu tragen, damit gesehen werde, dass sie eine haben; ob sie zwar gemeiniglich still steht oder nicht nach der Sonne gestellt ist." (Transl. by JV)

\(^2\) *Über den Gemeinspruch*, 151: "Derjenige nun, welcher das Stimmrecht in dieser Gesetzgebung hat, heisst ein *Bürger* .. Die dazu erforderliche Qualität ist, ausser der *natürlicher* (dass es ein Kind, kein Weib sei), die einzige: dass er sein eigener Herr (sui iuris) sei, mithin irgend ein *Eigentum* habe .. welches ihn ernährt." (Transl. by Reiss adapted by JV).

\(^3\) *Anthropologie*, 522: "Das *Weib* in jedem Alter wird für bürgerlich-unmündig erklärt .. weil hier das *Recht des Schwächeren* eintritt, welches zu achten und zu verteidigen sich das männliche Geschlecht durch seine Natur schon berufen fühlt". (Transl. by Gregor, 79)

\(^4\) *Beobachtungen*, 854/55: "Ich glaube schwerlich, dass das schöne Geschlecht der Grundsätze fähig sei." (Transl. by Osborne)
A widespread strategy - common until recently and still to be found in the work of traditional, in general male commentators on Kant, but also found by way of a feminist criticism - has been to isolate these fragments from the rest of the work. They are then judged as to be excused by the historical context and as contingent to the rest of Kantian philosophy, or else, in the case of a feminist critique, as mere illustrations of a pervasive sexism in the history of philosophy and indeed contingent to the substantive bodies of thought in philosophy. The argument here runs that Kant in this respect has to be considered a child of his time.

This, now, is a recurring argument which deserves some reflection. First of all, there is an incongruity to the excuse, as Kant himself called for reflection on one's own time, and claimed that we should be able to think for ourselves. An enlightened being should exercise such reflection and discard the tutelage of conventional opinion. Secondly, if Kant is offensive, but his time is getting the blame, then we should inquire further into the real time involved. There is something weird about thus blaming time: time gets engendered as begetter of meaning - an a priori category gone (re)productive of its own accord. It is again Kant himself who teaches that time merely enables our specific intuitions of reality, enables historical representations: it does not by itself signify. Which time, or whose time, is staged in this apology? If we consider the employed metaphor of time as a parent, we discover the track of one specific parental role doing the job here. Behind the notion of a sexist time gone by hides a historical-sociological notion of patriarchy - patriarchy conceived of as a societal phase - an empirical delimitation subsequently depleting the process of signification, of establishing textual meaning. The occurrence of sexism in Kant's work is due to a-modern phenomena. He simply transmits objective features of his societal and intellectual epoch.

What happens here is that history is assumed as present, instead of represented; hermeneutical considerations are foreclosed through claiming a (one particular) 'factuality' of history.

The question, of course, is whether this interpretation of Kant finds, or instead produces, an ancestry thus deluded on the subject of gender. Stated differently, in what measure is it inventing this ancestry? One thing we can remark is that these interpreters assume a progressive history of emancipation, thereby neglecting the possibility of an ironic history of gender relations. (That is, they see themselves as above such foolishness, and not as authors apt to commit the same transgressions albeit probably in new ways.) Secondly, we can object that they entirely neglect the abundant textual context of Enlightenment debates on meanings of gender and the relation between the sexes.

Feminist adversaries of such triumphant Whig-historiography can follow several strategies. First, they can point out the contemporary context of debates in which Kant's texts are enmeshed: debates on gender, including (proto- and semi-)feminist positions, have indeed proved to be of all

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95 We find still another kind of approving approach of Kant in traditional studies of Kant's attitude to women. Jauch (1988) points to a body of texts in which Kant is praised for his courteous and galant, supposedly very eighteenth-century, approach of women. This is - hardly surprising as it supposes women's gratitude for being paid attention to at all - not an approach met with in the feminist literature on Kant. I will not deal with it further. My own text, of course, has no intention to be an apologetic for Kant.
times, and the Enlightenment especially cannot be accused of silence in this respect. Secondly, they may argue the existence, not of a progressive, but of an ironic history of gender: the timeless recurrence of the topic of gender in philosophical reflection which has no clear-cut political signification (whether 'feminist', 'non-feminist', 'anti-feminist', or quite different political positions dependent on time and context). This means insisting on a responsive attitude to textual politics in this respect. Both options are being explored in my study.

In the next section, I will first discuss a third approach to Kant's sexism: the feminist research into 'implicit sexism'. This kind of interpretation assumes, so to say, that if a patriarchal era - a time of fathers - is postulated, it may be countered with women's time - the mothers' and daughters' perspectives on it. Is not a gender-specific and objectionable reality being erected and lived behind the veil of easily dismissed injunctions and jocular remarks?

6.1.2 Implicit sexism.

The view that Kant's stance towards women is an illustration of incorrigible philosophical sexism, but inconsequential to Kantianism as such, has been countered by a more far-reaching feminist hermeneutics. Feminist commentators developed an alternative strategy in which the overtly sexist fragments are judged not as contingencies, but on the contrary as part and parcel of the Kantian body of thought. This leads to quite different conclusions: apparently Kant's views on rationality, ethics, aesthetics, and citizenship are structurally informed by a male standard, and hence Kantianism should, from a feminist point of view, be rejected integrally. We are dealing not just with explicit sexism but with an implicit exclusion of women through the upholding of male standards with regard to cognition, morality, and aesthetic sensibility.

An important exposition of the feminist critique of Kant's 'critical rationality' to which the philosophical exclusion of women is held to be consequential, has been delivered by Robin May Schott (1988). She examines Kant's notion of sensibility in his theory of knowledge and elsewhere, basing her argument mainly on Anthropology, Critique of Pure Reason and Critique of Judgement. She finds that he identifies sensibility with 'intuition' (Anschauung), a concept that in turn serves a 'purified' conception of sensibility, which he endeavours to isolate from "the immediate apprehension of the object" that should not be a component of knowledge. (103) Direct, bodily awareness should not be a factor in cognition. "In his view, touch only contributes to knowledge of the formal properties of an object." (104) Kant has structured intuition by a theory of perception. She concludes that in Kant's prescriptions for epistemology an exclusion of feeling, or emotion, takes place, in prioritizing the sense of sight above the other senses. Thus observation becomes the primary mode of knowledge, and the spectator becomes the genuine knower.

96 For the difference between critiques of implicit and explicit sexism in philosophical thinking, see e.g. Grimshaw 1986, chapter 2, 'The 'maleness' of philosophy'.

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In his view, feeling "contains only the relation of a representation to the subject". In other words, affective responses, though stimulated by sensation, are not determined by the character of the perceived object. (106)

Furthermore, his definition of emotion omits sensuality and sensual pleasure. Citing from *Anthropology*, she states that Kant denounces feelings of joy as "life-threatening". The text "reflects the turning away from pleasure and love that has characterized the ascetic tradition." (109)

She sees Kant as a model illustration for the Marxist critique of alienation and fetishist consciousness of the object.

He cannot conceive of any other activity than that of reflection. (123)

The subject, therefore, is deprived of any immediate experience of himself. Instead of experiencing himself as the creator of the objective world, the subject finds his own empirical character to be shaped by the object. (126)

Feminist philosophy can lay bare the ideological character of the fetishism of this and other theories of objectivity. Examples are to be found in feminist alternatives to established theories of science.

For the moment, I will limit my comment on Schott's line of thought to the observation that her criticism of Kant appears to boil down to a disagreement with his conception of representation as determining knowledge, holding that we never have a direct knowledge of the object, only representations of it in the mind. She judges this to be an "alienating feature" of the Kantian procedure of knowledge. Her criticism turns out to depend on an epistemological position of feminist empiricism. I will return to Schott's approach in § 6.3.2.

A second much contested topic is Kantian ethics. Several feminist interpreters (among them Schott) have pointed out that Kant, who in the *Observations* sees women as incapable of following the ground rules of ethics is, accordingly, developing a masculine perspective on ethics in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785) where he coins his idea of the highest maxim of ethical actions, that is, that they should be performed out of duty. *Genevieve Lloyd* (1984), e.g., concludes that "by his own logic, the immaturity of women must be connected with their systematic exclusion both from the private use of Reason in the duties of civil functionaries, and from the public use of Reason, in which those roles are set aside." (Lloyd, 67) She concludes by seeing Kant, not so much as the author of the very idea, but rather as the author of an ensuing paradigm about a not fully developed female morality: "Space was created within our intellectual tradition for the idea of the moral immaturity of female consciousness by the conception of Reason as developing from lesser forms of consciousness." (70) The man of reason here coincides with the man of ethics.

Kantian aesthetics is seen as providing a third example of gendered norms hierarchically conceived of. *Christine Battersby* (1989) dismisses Kant's theory of the sublime as an equivalent of his theory of knowledge centered on the subject. His aesthetics is exemplary for eighteenth century

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97 Compare Harding 1986, who distinguishes three feminist epistemologies: standpoint theory, empiricism and postmodernism. Schott argues from a certain variant of empiricism: one that relies on the unmediated experiences of women to counteract patriarchal thinking.
conceptions of artistic creativity in which beauty, which appeals primarily to the senses, is contrasted with the sublime, which issues from reason and imagination. This sublime is a male preserve, not of some ontological, but of a social and aesthetical nature, which Kant (who is not as explicit on the subject of the gender connotations with these aesthetic categories as some of his contemporaries were) made clear in Observations and Anthropology. "For Kant a woman genius is not impossible; but for a woman to aim at the sublime makes her merely ridiculous .. and, even worse, ekelhaft (loathsome)." (77)

Finally, Susan Mendus (1987) discusses the relationship between the Kantian requisites for citizenship and his views on gender. She points to the passages where Kant is not simply implying but is actively constructing a passive citizenship for women. He excludes them from active citizenship, not just because they might lack certain requisites for being owners of property, but explicitly as women. In the end, Mendus strikes still another note, and traces Kant's opinions on women to a more general presupposition in his philosophy, in this case his individualism that, according to her, implicitly precludes feminist outcomes.

In the meantime, however, Mendus has alerted her readers to several weird incoherences in Kant's work: a defense of the freedom of women that nevertheless fails to qualify them as equal citizens; a critical though at the same time conservative attitude to sexuality; a dialectic of domination in which women's role seems to alternate between being subject and being object. Mendus insists that Kant solves these problems by referring to the different nature of women. But this conclusion begs too many questions. It cannot silence the inquisitive urges she stirs up in her readers to probe further into this weird absenting and presenting of women.

Important though these critiques of sexism are in making us sensitive to the problem of gender in Kantian thought, there are several loose ends in the approaches discussed. It might be remarked that what seems to be at stake in the criticisms of implicit sexism is, first of all, the object of the critique of sexism. Clearly, feminists themselves have no final criterion to arbitrate on whether it is more sexist to neglect including women under the generic term 'human being', or to neglect a positive assessment of the differential status of women with regard to a generic 'man'. Patriarchalism has in modernity met humanism, and their joint venture henceforward gnaws at any foundational definition of sexism: sexism cannot simply be defined as either excluding or including women under the rubric of 'men', it may arise whether gender is thought relevant, or irrelevant. There is a second loose end - with equally ironical consequences - as the criticisms mentioned point to a subtextual sexism - a 'sexism without women' - by which its philosophical and cultural scope is broadened practically infinitely. The analyses of 'implicit sexism' have caught philosophy in the act of metonymically discussing women: she appears in the traces of other problematics. If sexism is not just found in what is explicitly stated 'about women', but also in what does not directly names them, then how do we know about and denominate this 'something else'? Feminist philosophy becomes implicated in its very critique of philosophical sexism: several epistemological disagreements are bound to arise among feminists on
how to characterize a feminist knowledge and under which conditions it may arise.

The seemingly rather straightforward critique of sexism, then, subsequently opens up a debate on how precisely feminist critique does relate to Kantian concepts. Eventually it necessitates an exposition of the feminist presuppositions involved in the respective readings of Kant. The various criticisms of implicit sexism, meant to expose the far-reaching implications of a culturally ingrained patriarchy, overstep the terms of ideology criticism (the critique of patriarchy) where they embark on the project of constituting normative feminist knowledge in the face of it. They find themselves participating in a dispute, not so much between Kant and feminism, but among feminist commentators. The dispute concerns the ways in which the prescriptions for cognition (empiricism?, rationalism?, perspectivism?, embodied thinking?) and subjectivity (individualist?, communitarian?, situated?, identified?, processual?) that modern thought has bequeathed us, should be judged from a feminist perspective.

For the record, such feminist differences of insight can no longer be explained as being cast in terms of the naturalist paradox: the regime of difference or equality. The 'loose ends' identified only alert us to ways in which the critique of sexism has to deal with, not with a naturalist, but with an 'ironic' condition of modern knowledge. This critique keeps stumbling upon the lack of a singular vantage point - which is precisely its modern predicament. 'Feminist' as well as 'sexist' knowledge are produced within a modern humanism not typified by a philosophy of origins, but by a proliferation of philosophical perspectives and scientized regimes of knowledge. Knowledge claims about gender equality and difference have long since left the claims of naturalism and have entered those of the professionalized knowledge of culture - put in shorthand: they left nature and entered culture.

As far as feminist claims are concerned, these will now be felt to originate in different academic approaches, such as anglo-american analytical philosophy versus anglo-american psychology and sociology, or french historiography versus french écriture féminine, and so on. But if modernity sentences the critique of sexism to ironic accounts, then how could contours of a feminist critique of philosophy be deciphered?

6.2 Displacing the 'women of Kant'.

Judgement on Kant's texts is bound up neither with naturalist nor with academic identity politics. The positions mentioned on Kant's sexual politics might well decry too quickly the sexist identity of Kant's texts, not just by underrating the problematic of ideology criticism, or by failing to recognize their own particular epistemological tastes, but also by neglecting several methodological difficulties that accompany the act of reading. The interpretation of texts does not only pose questions on the levels of ideology or epistemological preference: there are also several semantic or syntactic riddles to be
solved. Readings of Kant that are sensitive to the range of hermeneutical pitfalls that threaten any reader of any text, appear capable of reaching rather ‘unorthodox’ positions on how to understand Kant’s discussions of gender. Taking into account the crucial impact of reading perspectives on the substantial messages ‘discovered’ in the text, they could conclude in seeing Kant as a critic of Rousseau, rather than as his associate as the former feminist criticisms have it. The reading of Kant by Ursula Pia Jauch (1989) illustrates such an interpretation.\textsuperscript{98}

I will single out two difficulties in interpretation that are pre-eminently relevant to feminist readings of Kant’s work - difficulties, by the way, which do not only apply to feminist problematics but more generally to the understanding of texts from the history of ideas.

6.2.1 Prescription and description.

The first hermeneutic complication occurs when the following question is brought to attention: how will we distinguish between descriptive and prescriptive moments of the text? This is the classical first complication in the recognition of sexism. The above mentioned critiques of sexism take it for granted that Kant is naturalizing sex-difference, and take the texts to be prescriptive in its utterings on gender. But one and the same sentence can offend when read in a prescriptive sense, and elicit consent when read in a descriptive sense, simply describing and not endorsing societal or cultural matters.

Driving home a related point, Jean Grimshaw (1986) has remarked that it is not always clear in the Observations to what extent Kant is saying that “women are unable to reason in ways that men can, and to what extent he is saying that they should not”. (43) This Kantian ambiguity calls for unraveling the descriptive and prescriptive moments his texts hold. We will see how this offers an alternative handle on the subjects singled out in the critique of explicit as well as implicit sexism. Can’t women do it, or shouldn’t they do it? Is Kant describing or prescribing such inability of women, or in the second case, what kind of reasons back up his normative conclusion? A lot of sub-questions immediately announce themselves. When he postulates that women are unable to reason in the same way as men, is he deducing from natural causes, or describing social ones? Is a female natural disposition implied here, or on the contrary an awareness of their social and economic dependence on men that provokes them into a pragmatic, ‘pleasing’, coquetish behaviour vis-à-vis men? And when they can, but should not reason as men do, what is it Kant is aiming at? Is it because they then aspire to the sublime domain of men and destroy their true predestined femininity? Or is it because this will destroy a female realm of knowledge, letting something disappear from the world that Kant eagerly wants to preserve?

Grimshaw concludes that Kant does not think women to be in general inferior to men, but instead defends complementary virtues. This answer, however, is not cut to the size of our

\textsuperscript{98} In several (not all) respects, the reflections in section 6.2.1. resemble her approach, although the book by Jauch is much more extensive on the subject of Kant’s thoughts on women than this chapter can be.
hermeneutical investigation. It also begs a lot of our sub-questions, and is later on contradicted by her own argument that a hierarchical order among these virtues is implied by Kant's further philosophical elaborations of knowledge and ethics. The insight into the ambiguity of the texts needs to be pushed further. The notion that Kant holds a well-known and rather worn, Rousseauean view of the complementarity of male and female capacities does not exhaust, and does no justice to, his treatment of the subject of gender.

Kant warns, as early as the Observations, that in the discussion of the relationship of the sexes to the beautiful and the sublime it will not do to imagine that one is presented with human beings; one should at the same time not let it pass unnoticed that these human beings are not all of the same kind.\textsuperscript{99}

Talking simply about 'human beings' might obscure or neglect important aspects of the matter to be discussed. It may be felt hard to decide whether we are dealing here with a specimen of philosophical sexism or of philosophical anti-humanism. I prefer, and will expound this view further below, to discern a sensitivity to the complications gender poses to humanism. Kant is convinced of the pertinence of gender as a category in researching aspects of society and of knowledge. Hence, contrary to the conclusion of Lloyd that "Kant does not explore the possibility of a sexual differentiation in the process of enlightenment" (67), I want to defend the position that this is exactly what is being explored in much of Kant's texts.

Well according with the survey motive I here ascribe to Kant, is his consistent employment of the Future Imperfect throughout the texts in which he discusses the respective properties of the sexes, in particular the properties labeled by his various commentators as 'higher' on a Kantian scale or as 'male' on a feminist scale. Yet this very use of the tenses urges us to re-verify the pair of scales. The text allows for a reading in which these 'male' propensities are not understood as substantial attributes of maleness but are, on the contrary, characterized by Kant as ascriptions, as presumed or appropriated propensities of masculinity.

The fair sex have understanding as well as the male sex, yet it is a beautiful understanding, ours should be a deep understanding, which is an expression that means the same as the sublime.

The virtue of the woman is a beautiful virtue. That of the male sex should be a noble virtue.\textsuperscript{100}

Masculinity in these texts turns out to be a thoroughly manipulated category of thought. Kant's

\textsuperscript{99} Beobachtungen, 851: "Denn es ist hier nicht genug, sich vorzustellen, dass man Menschen vor sich habe, man muss zugleich nicht aus der Acht lassen, dass diese Menschen nicht von einerlei Art sein." (Transl. by JV)

\textsuperscript{100} Beobachtungen, 851: "Das schöne Geschlecht hat ebenso wohl Verstand als das männliche, nur ist es ein schöner Verstand, der unsrige soll ein tiefer Verstand sein, welches ein Ausdruck ist, der einerlei mit dem Erhabenen bedeutet."; 854: Die Tugend des Frauentzimmers ist eine schöne Tugend. Die des männlichen Geschlechts soll eine edele Tugend sein. (Transl. by JV; accentuations in bold print by JV)
formulations in German ("soll sein") leave open two possible translations in English: "is supposed to be" or "should be". This mode of German conjugation can signify either that masculinity consists of self-appointed superiority, or that it should aspire to the indicated properties.

Kant never doubts that women are artificially kept from acquiring knowledge and are held unfree by force. His stern verdict on general human backwardness in What is Enlightenment?, where he postulates the responsibility of truly enlightened people to rescue themselves from their "self-incurred condition of tutelage" and sneers that this process of enlightenment is hindered not by any natural circumstance but by the laziness, cowardness, and indolence of people, in a following sentence suddenly changes into a quite different tone of voice. In this sentence he discerns a second possible cause for an unenlightened condition: the majority of people, all women included, does not think the step to maturity merely troublesome, but also dangerous. This is accomplished by their self-appointed tutors, who first took care to keep their 'cattle' backward and prevented them from walking outside the walking-frames in which the tutors themselves had secluded them, and subsequently instilled fear in them for the dangers that threatened if they tried to walk by themselves. (Enlightenment, Reiss 54)

Fear, in this case explicitly conceptualized by Kant as a part of social power relations and as produced by often imaginary threats, is an issue very different from laziness. Where he explicitly talks about the tutelage of women, Kant castigates the male tutors much more severely than their victims, although even in their condition as victims he holds them - being human beings - responsible for their choices. Thus, the implementation of enlightened rationality and autonomy appears to be most of all a problem of the condition of masculinity. Two roles are mentioned in the story in which men may appear: as beasts of convenience where they themselves are concerned, or as little bullies where others - 'all women included' - are concerned.

In History he again expresses clear awareness of the patriarchal social conditions that underlie women's condition:

The man foresaw the staggering load of his labour. The woman foresaw the burdens to which nature had subjected her sex, and above these the burdens which the more powerful man would inflict upon her.\[101\]

Kant in general shows a keen insight into women's experience of their so-called freedom in present society. He states explicitly that the supposed features of femininity are products of social coercion and convention and imply an unfreedom not consented to in liberty.

When refined luxury has reached a high level, a woman shows herself virtuous only under constraint and makes no secret of her wish that she were a man, so that she could give her

\[101\] Mutmasslicher Anfang, 90: "Der Mann .. sah die immer wachsende Mühseligkeit seiner Arbeit; das Weib sah die Beschwerlichkeiten, denen die Natur ihr Geschlecht unterworfen hatte, und noch obenein diejenigen, welche der mächtigere Mann ihr auferlegen würde, voraus." (Transl. by JV; accentuation in bold print by JV)
inclinations wider scope and freer play. But no man would want to be a woman.\textsuperscript{102}

In the same breath that he is sneering towards scholarly women, Kant recognizes equality of reason in principle. Subsequently, as we have seen, he formulates in the \textit{Observations} the contours of what should be a 'feminine' rationality. He acknowledges a female practice of rationality and its substantial contribution to society.

The beautiful understanding chooses for its objects all that is closely related to the delicate feeling, and leaves abstract speculations or knowledges, which are useful but dry, to the diligent, thorough and deep understanding.\textsuperscript{103}

The content of woman's great science is rather humankind, and among humankind man. .. One would try to broaden her total moral feeling and not her memory, and this not through general rules, but through some judgement on the behaviour they see around them. The examples taken from from other times, to understand the influence the fair sex have had in the business of the world, the various relationships in which they in other times or in foreign countries stood towards the male sex, the character of both so far as it is hereby clarified, and the changing taste in pleasures, make up their whole history and geography. .. Never cold and speculative instruction, always sensations. that is, those that remain as close as possible to their relationships of the sexes.\textsuperscript{104}

Kant is not naturalizing gender here. Rather, he is embarking on a sex-gender debate, not unlike that within feminist theory at least up to the eighties of the present century.\textsuperscript{105} Though it is unlikely that Kant would reserve room at the academy for this branch of "science", these passages could be read as following the general lines of thought of research programs that choose gender as their object of research and that nowadays are called 'women's studies' or 'gender studies'. He even points to a

\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Anthropologie}, 654: "Wenn der verfeinerte Luxus hoch gestiegen ist, so zeigt sich die Frau nur aus Zwang sittsam und hat kein Hehl zu wünschen, dass sie lieber Mann sein möchte, wo sie ihren Neigungen einen grössern und freieren Spielraum geben könnte; kein Mann aber wird ein Weib sein wollen." (Transl. by Gregor, 170: I changed her translation of 'Frau' with 'wife' into 'woman'. 'Weib' can be translated both as 'wife' and 'woman'.)

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Beobachtungen}, 852: "Der schöne Verstand wählt zu seinen Gegenstanden alles, was mit dem feineren Gefühl nahe verwandt ist, und überlässt abstrakte Spekulationen oder Kenntnisse, die nützlich aber trocken sind, dem emsigen, gründlichen und tiefen Verstande." (Transl. by JV)

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Beobachtungen}, 853/4: "Der Inhalt der grossen Wissenschaft des Frauenzimmers ist vielmehr der Mensch und unter den Menschen der Mann. .. Man wird ihr gesamtes moralisches Gefühl und nicht ihr Gedächtnis zu erweitern suchen, und zwar nicht durch allgemeine Regeln, sondern durch einiges Urteil über das Betragen, welches sie um sich sehen. Die Beispiele, die man aus andern Zeiten entlehnet, um den Einfluss einzusehen, den das schöne Geschlecht in die Weltgeschäfte gehabt hat, die mancherlei Verhältnisse, darin es in andern Zeitaltern oder in fremden Landen gegen das männliche gestanden, der Charakter beider, so ferne er sich hiedurch erleütern lässt, und der veränderliche Geschmack der Vergnügungen machen ihre ganze Geschichte und Geographie aus. .. Niemals ein kalter und spekulativer Unterricht, jederzeit Empfindungen und zwar die so nahe wie möglich bei ihrem Geschlechtverhältnisse bleiben." (Transl. by JV)

\textsuperscript{105} See e.g. Haraway 1987.
specific feminine approach to research in general - nowadays a quite respectable position within feminist philosophy of science.¹⁰⁶

What is more, women seem best equipped to conduct the research described by Kant as 'anthropology from a pragmatic point of view'. This, as distinguished from an 'anthropology from a physiological point of view' that studies Nature and what it makes out of men, studies the world and gives knowledge of what 'freely acting men', as cosmopolitans, are capable of doing. For example, studying the human races as if they belong to 'the play of nature' will not yet be a broader and scientific, 'pragmatic' knowledge of the world.¹⁰⁷ Developing this knowledge presupposes an 'insight into human character' reached by already having observed closely one's surrounding society. This 'general knowledge' of humankind should precede any 'local knowledge' which is acquired by studying the wide world 'outside', that is to say, other cultures. If we want to learn about the scope of the freedom of a human being as a world citizen, about how men will bring into practice being both free and social, we have to have become 'anthropologists' already at home.

*General knowledge* here always preceeds *local knowledge*, if it is to be ordered and led by philosophy: without which all acquired knowledge can give rise to nothing but fragmentary probing and not to science.¹⁰⁸

The section on 'The character of gender' in *Anthropology* appropriately concludes, not by prescribing a fixed relationship of the sexes, but by stating the 'open end' of history and the provisional character of the findings of research in this respect. (See also sections 6.2.2, 6.3.3, and 6.4.4)

A particularly interesting occasion to consider the descriptive and prescriptive levels of his work, is offered by Kant's discussion of marriage and sexuality in the *Rechtslehre*, part of the *Metaphysics of Morals*. He defines sexuality as follows:

> Sexual intercourse (commercium sexuale) is the mutual use one human being makes of another's genital organs and sexual capacity (usus membrorum et facultatem sexualium

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¹⁰⁶ See e.g. Keller 1985.

¹⁰⁷ The historizing approach of race he thus favours in the *Anthropology* he already recommends in the early essay *Von den verschiedenen Rassen der Menschen*, 1775 ('On the various races of humankind'). Here he seems to have in mind a similar type of - rather relativist - research into gender and race. It should be remarked that this is a great improvement on the insulting remarks on in particular the "black race" in the *Observations* of 1764 which disagree painfully with the 'scientific' attitude he himself would like to see developed. "Die Schwarzen sind sehr eitel, aber auf Negerart, und so plauderhaft, dass sie mit Prügeln müssen auseinander gejagt werden." In this essay a judgement on the 'favourable' attitude to women in northern, western society is developed by way of contrasting it with the 'barbaric' treatment of women by other 'backward' races. A like rhetorical move, serving most of all a self-congratulatory or self-glorifying pose, is to be found in several contemporary histories of civilization, next to 'romanticizing' approaches of other cultures.

¹⁰⁸ *Anthropologie*, 400: "Die Generalkenntnis geht hierin immer vor der Lokalkenntnis voraus; wenn jene durch Philosophie geordnet und geleitet werden soll: ohne welche alles erworbene Erkennnis nichts als fragmentarisches Herumtappen und keine Wissenschaft abgeben kann." (Transl. by JV)
Starting from this description, Kant embarks upon a discussion of marital law. The section treating this subject has the curious title *Von dem auf dingliche Art persönlichen Recht*. He defines this right as follows:

This right is that of the possession of an external object *as a thing* and of the use of this object *as a person*. - The mine and thine according to this right are the *domestic* and the relationship in this condition is the one of the community of free beings, who through mutual influence (of the person of the one on the other) following the principle of external freedom (*causality*) constitute a society of members of a whole (persons who form a *community*), which is called the *household*. The sort of acquisition of this condition and in this condition happens neither by a high-handed act (facto) nor by a mere contract (pacto), but through the law (lege), which, because it is not the right *to an object, nor just a right* against a person, but also a possession of both at the same time, a right which exceeds all issues of ownership and of personal nature, because it must be the right of humanity in our own person, from which follows a natural law of granting that by its favour allows us an acquisition of this kind.

Kant is trying, in this section, to deal with the problem of how we are capable of representing ourselves - to ourselves as well as to others - as human subjects in an intimate relationship, in which we consent freely to being placed in a subjective and objective condition at the same time. He does not want, as the natural rights theorists did, to pose the marital relation in terms of an original position that can be contracted away or taken by force. Human nature is not present here, it only comes into being by way of a representation of our thing-like status *as if* owned by our subjectivity - a representation made possible by a fiction: the law, the third term by which our human status is authorized.

The difference between natural persons and artificial persons is canceled here: we act

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109 *Metaphysik der Sitten, Rechtslehre*, 389: "Geschlechtsgemeinschaft (commercium sexuale) ist der wechselseitige Gebrauch, den ein Mensch von eines anderen Geschlechtsorganen und Vermögen macht (usus membrorum et facultatem sexualium alterius)” (Transl. by JV)

110 *Metaphysik der Sitten, Rechtslehre*, 388/389: "Dieses Recht ist das des Besitzes eines äusseren Gegenstandes als einer Sache und des Gebrauchs desselben als einer Person. - Das Mein und Dein nach diesem Recht ist das häusliche und das Verhältnis in diesem Zustande ist das der Gemeinschaft freier Wesen, die durch den wechselseitigen Einfluss (der Person des einen auf das andere) nach dem Prinzip der äusseren Freiheit (Kausalität) eine Gesellschaft von Gliedern eines Ganzen (in Gemeinschaft stehender Personen) ausmachen, welches das Hauswesen heisst. - Die Erwerbungsart dieses Zustandes und in demselben geschieht weder durch eigenmächtige Tat (facto), noch durch blossen Vertrag (pacto), sondern durchs Gesetz (lege), welches, weil es kein Recht in einer Sache, auch nicht ein blosses Recht gegen eine Person, sondern auch ein Besitz derselben zugleich ist, ein über alles sachen- und persönliche hinausliegendes Recht, nämlich das Recht der Menschheit in unserer eigenen Person sein muss, welches ein natürliches Erlaubnisgesetz zur Folge hat, durch dessen Gunst uns eine solche Erwerbung möglich ist” (Transl. by JV; all accentuations are by Kant.)
We become human beings in the sense of the law only by a fictitious process of continual self-representation, by recognizing ourselves as things represented as such by our own persons. Kant treats this as a condition that - to use Hegelian language - implies a master-slave dialectic on the inter-personal and on the intra-personal level simultaneously. The subject is carrying on an internal dialogue that has an intersubjective onset. It is important to notice that Kant is not just entangled in a sex-gender debate, as was concluded above, but that he here ventures even beyond the terms of the debate on cultural representations of a natural difference, discussing the gendered practices of marriage and sexuality as the results of an undetermined process of representation. The sexual relation should not realize sexual difference, but should on the contrary serve the realization of people's humanity. We could say that he here manages to erect a picture of a truly sexual-democratic humanism, if it weren't the case that he explicitly rules out homosexual relationships from his exposition - these belong to nature as they cannot conceivably be subjected to law. The difference to be handled in intimate relations is not that between human beings in general, but the specific difference between two sexes.

After this introduction on domestic relationships and sexual acts as problems of representation, he continues by expounding how this intricate condition, that in its very essence seems to defy ethical norms, can nevertheless be made subject to an ethical judgement. Since it is only the law that - in this respect - can guarantee our human status, it is the law that, through marriage, sanctifies sexual practice.

By this action a human being makes itself into a thing, .. This is possible only under the singular condition that the person who is acquired by another like a thing acquires again this other person in return, for in this way she again regains herself and restores her personality. .. Therefore the gift and acceptance of a sex for the enjoyment of the other is not only permissible under the condition of marriage, but also only possible under this condition. He furthermore discerns two consequences of this position: first, extra-marital sex, the concubinage, cannot qualify as a legal contract because it adds up to being a Kontrakt der Verdingung, a 'contract of objectification'; second, a contract of marriage that admits a refusal of sexuality is only a 'simulated contract' and cannot constitute marriage. Contract and sexuality, law and desire, are inextricably bound up with each other. Having sex or desire legitimate marriage is a unique approach, as

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111 Compare Hobbes' formulations in Leviathan, ch. 16: "So that a Person, is the same that an Actor is, both on the Stage and in common Conversation; and to Personate, is to Act, or Represent himselfe, or an other". See also Pitkin 1967, 24: "Hobbes is suggesting that every act is an act of representation - if not of someone else, then of oneself."

112 Metaphysik der Sitten, Rechtslehre, 390/91: "In diesem Akt macht sich ein Mensch selbst zur Sache, .. Nur unter der einzigen Bedingung ist dieses möglich, dass, indem die eine Person von der anderen, gleich als Sache, erworben wird, diese gegenseitig wiederum jene erwerbe; denn so gewinnt sie wiederum sich selbst und stellt ihre Persönlichkeit wieder her. .. (F)olglicht ist die Hingebung und Annehmung eines Geschlechts zum Genuss des andern nicht allein unter der Bedingung der Ehe zulässig, sondern auch allein unter derselben möglich." (Transl. by JV)
marriage usually was ascribed either religious or reproductive aims and legitimated likewise. With Kant, marital law exists for the exact purpose of mediating desire and the ethical requirement to strive towards mutual recognition of a modern subjectivity. It is coy to pretend otherwise and not to acknowledge this precise and weighty gist of the institution of marriage (simulation), as it is unacceptable to practice desire in separation from law or ethics (objectification). We should look beyond the precise - historical contingent - application to marital law, to see the value of his argument. Law here serves to make desire subject to ethical judgement. Kant insists that some ethical guarantee should apply in objectifying practices in which we simultaneously try to (and should) represent ourselves as equal persons - that is, as modern human beings. Kant appears to be arrested by the singular substance of sexual practices that calls for such a guarantee. How should we grasp what he is struggling with? It is not a mere moralistic call for regulated sex, for objectification and simulation are constituting the problematic issues. This is not about moralism, but about how to safeguard subjects against an unethical condition modernity should shudder at. Sex appears to cover the problems of subjectivity under modernity. Sexuality, as a case where autonomous human beings voluntarily objectify themselves, serves as an exemplary situation of crucial problems of modern life. First, human beings are confronted with the duty to remain human in a world in which they participate as objects, at least as much as subjects, and secondly, especially those who are most likely to be objectified, have to be guaranteed a restoration of their subjectivity.

But also sexuality as such constitutes an issue here. And something gets out of hand, where Kant sees himself forced to put sex, God forbid, not into practice, but, equally risky as he will learn the hard way, into language. Language and sex, let alone if they occur in unison, tend to push their authors out of control. And so Kant stumbles into the trap he laid himself when he designed a distinction between separate as well as gendered styles of knowledge. (Kant has his head stuffed with Latin as soon as he talks of sexual practices.) Probably, by employing Latin idiom throughout the section on sexuality and marriage, he expects to discuss issues of immorality in an amoral language on sex, and figures a scientific turn as an alternative to sentimentalist as well as sceptical discourses on sexuality. Science may relieve sexuality from the intellectual indolence of either emotional or libertarian meddlers. (He certainly has not reckoned with the comical effects this strategy produces. But this unintended effect can again be seen as adequate to his purpose: translated onto the level of narrative analysis it results in comedy - a plot structure working towards reconciliation, here in the conflict between the alternatives of either romanticizing, or exorcizing, or liberating sexuality in the libertine's style. Kant provides for a deus ex machina in the form of science.) Apart from vanity, the use of ‘scientific’ terms in his discussion of sexuality might well betray discomfort with the subject at issue. But while Kant's discomfort has often been seen as prudery, or as an explicitly repressive attitude towards sex, it is as plausible to see it issuing from a concern with the immoral doings and dealings sexual practices often imply, and from an attempt to deal with oppression and powerlessness in such practices.

The text does not testify to a propensity to repress or deny desire, as Schott - who reads
Kant persistently as if offering a normative perspective - is having it. He describes patriarchy, and insists on not separating desire from law, that is, ethics. What is more, this description of 'outlawed' sexuality as an unethical use of persons as objects leads him to reflect on the difficulty of arriving at an unimpaired human self-understanding where gender becomes unavoidably pertinent to self-knowledge and knowledge of intersubjective relations (as in sexuality). The core question puzzling him is: what does it mean, and what is needed, to be simultaneously a modern human, and male or female being?

So much for the 'recognition' of the explicit sexism in Kant's texts. What about the critique of the implicit sexism in Kantianism, that tries, so to speak, to trace the disastrous dissemination, the fall-out of the supposed Kantian underrating of women throughout the rest of his work? Are the Critiques and the greater part of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, far from being gender-neutral texts, working with substantive assumptions on what constitutes maleness and femaleness? Is the sign of silence so easily to be interpreted as either compulsion, neglect, or exclusion? We might wonder whether the modest scale of his discussion of gender could be seen, not as a sign of a contemptuous underrating of women in the domains of knowledge, nor as simply another theory of complementary virtues, but as a sign of his hesitation to discuss in substantive terms a subject that society seems stubbornly to approach predominantly in *a priori* terms.

In *Observations* he states that he intends to discuss male and female properties, not in their similarities but as poles apart; that is, he confesses to hypostatizing for the sake of the argument. He announces, as it were, his genders to be hyperboles. I will not stretch the point too far by suggesting that the *Observations* is a conscious exercise in kitsch, because it is not. The argument takes another direction. After one more statement that

By this is not to be understood that women want noble properties, or that the male sex must totally dispense with the beauties; it is rather expected that each sex shall unite both, he does not hesitate to add that both sexes should aim at perfecting 'their' respective aesthetical

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113 Several other citations may underpin this assessment of Kant's treatment of sexuality. In the 'Theory of Virtue', the second part of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, he again takes up the issues of sex, love and morality. He does not, in the ascetic fashion, eliminate sexuality from love, but provides a conditional connection between the two. Animal desires that bring the danger of forsaking the laws of reason, can be allowed a latitude: lust can ally closely with ethical love if practical reason sets its limiting conditions. *"Von wo an kann man die Einschränkung einer weiten Verbindlichkeit zum Purism (einer Pedanterie in Ansehung der Pflichtbeobachtung, was die Weite derselben betrifft) zählen, und den tierischen Neigungen, mit Gefahr der Verlassung des Vernunftgesetzes, einen Spielraum verstatten? Die Geschlechtsneigung wird auch Liebe (in der engsten Bedeutung des Worts) genannt und ist in der Tat die grösste Sinnenlust, die an einem Gegenstande möglich ist; .. sondern ist eine Lust von besonderen Art (sui generis) und das Brünstigsein hat mit der moralischen Liebe eigentlich nichts gemein, wiewohl sie mit der letzteren, wenn die praktische Vernunft mit ihren einschränkenden Bedingungen hinzukommt, in enge Verbindung treten kann." (Werke IV, 559)

114 *Beobachtungen*, 850: "Hiedurch wird nun nicht verstanden: dass das Frauenzimmer edeler Eigenschaften erlangelte, oder das männliche Geschlecht der Schönheiten gänzlich entbehren müsste, vielmehr erwartet man, dass ein jedes Geschlecht beide vereinbare." (Transl. by Osborne)
expressions. There are of course traces here of the naturalist paradox. But the ambivalence here regarding the equality or difference of the sexes is not simply the familiar confusion of philosophers with regard to measuring gender on an equality-difference scale.

Kant here discerns two ways of aesthetical expression, not necessarily linked in a full-blown way to definite genders even if we tend to represent them as thus linked, and tries to preserve both ways of knowing and judging by appointing sexed guardians for them. His aesthetical politics - the elements of which will be discussed in more detail below - is knit together with a sexual politics. Kant is experimenting with sexing aesthetical knowledge, which eventually converts, not into a gendering of reason, but into a gendering of the practice of another type of knowledge: judgement. But we are running ahead of things. There is still another hermeneutical pitfall to be discussed.

We have been led to some unlikely questions as: How conclusive is it that head and tail of the oeuvre of our labeled ‘philosopher of universalism’ - the early Observations and the late Anthropology - both explicitly deal with gendered structured processes of knowledge and judgement? Do the Critiques, which do not deal with gender while the ‘surrounding’ texts do, nevertheless bear on themes cherished in feminist thinking? Is the Anthropology, in many ways so similar to the 34 years earlier Observations, a text in which he allows himself to take up once more the issues of social difference he dealt with before the Critiques, winding up thoughts he elaborated in the meantime? These questions suggest that it is worth a try to find a way of (re)presenting his remarks on women as part and parcel of Kantian thought without smoothing out the intricacy of Kantian sexual philosophy, nor the hermeneutical perplexities of our own levels of interpretation.

We can brace ourselves for this undertaking by asking one more unlikely, and rather unruly, question. How funny, or how serious, a text is the Observations?

6.2.2 Seriousness and irony.

As soon as it is admitted that the hermeneutical relationship cannot simply be seen as one between an ideology-conscious reader and a thinly disguised text, an even stronger version of the opaqueness of the text arises. These semiotically inspired hermeneutics claim not to be able to develop a critique of an ideology of sexism without reflecting on their own position as accessory interpreter of the representative text. The more Kant's philosophical text is seen as a text that deals with the fictitious representation of gender, that is to say, as resembling a literary proposal of looking at the world, our position as a reader becomes as important as his position as an author.

With the question on the funny sides of the Observations, I was not referring to the circumstance that a sexist text may strike a feminist reader as hilarious, but, and rather on the contrary, to the nagging question of how to 'recognize' the plotstructure of a story, to borrow the terms of Hayden White's proposal for approaching historiography. What do we do when we make a text familiar to us, grasp the message that it holds by understanding the type of story it tells? What is the
subjective contribution of the reader in emplotting the data? In this section then, a second hermeneutical complication will be addressed which issues from the question: how will we know whether to read texts as ironic or serious messages?

In some of the above cited passages, we could already detect a certain wild, coquettish trait in Kantian thinking; a naughtiness not so much directed at women, but rather at men. There are many more examples to give of this unexpected, even nomadic play with identities. The example from the Observations of a sentence that made Kant notorious for his sexism reads in full:

Women who have their heads stuffed with Greek, .. might as well have a beard; for this would perhaps express more remarkably the air of penetration, to which they aspire.  

What meanings is this sentence conveying? Is there proof here of a contemptuous attitude towards learned women, or should we instead notice scorn towards the superficial pretentiousness ('air of profundity', Miene des Tiefsinns) of scholarly man? Should women stay 'women', or better: aspire to become 'women', lest they become as pompous as men? Kant offers another ambiguous remark in the Observations:

We, on the other hand, lay claim to the denomination of the noble sex, were it not required of a noble disposition of mind, to decline names of honour and rather to bestow than to receive them.

Is this remark evidence of a pompous trait in his own reasoning, or is it rather an - ironic - attempt to put men in their place? And can we really resist, when we read the passage from Anthropology: 'The woman becomes free by marriage; the man thereby loses his freedom' to add, with support of Kant's preceding remarks: indeed, he will lose his freedom to fall back into his animal urges as was his condition before marriage? And in the previous section I already remarked on the employment of the ambiguous German 'sollen'.

As we already observed, Enlightenment seems to be seen by Kant mainly as a recipe for a sickness of which men carry the worst symptoms. Could we infer that Enlightenment à la Kant is a trick masculinity plays on itself, recognizing its own desperate need to drag itself by a modern, autonomous deed from the morasses of its self-induced pre-modern immaturity? Is immaturity not a problem of femininity at all, keeping in mind his permissive attitude regarding the female sex:

This [cold and speculative, jv] instruction is so rare, because it requires talents, experience and a feeling heart, and women may do without every other, as even without these they

115 Beobachtungen. 852: "Ein Frauenzimmer, das den Kopf voll Griechisch hat, .. mag nur immerhin noch einen Bart dazu haben; denn dieser würde vielleicht die Miene des Tiefsinns noch kenntlicher ausdrücken, um welchen sie sich bewerben." (Transl. by Osborne slightly adapted)

116 Beobachtungen. 850: "Anderer Seits könnten wir auf die Benennung des edlen Geschlechts Anspruch machen, wenn es nicht auch von einer edlen Gemütsart erfordert würde, Ehrennamen abzulehnen und sie lieber zu erteilen als zu empfangen." (Transl. by Osborne)

117 Anthropologie. 656: "Das Weib wird durch die Ehe frei; der Mann verliert dadurch seine Freiheit."
commonly cultivate or improve themselves very well. The female sex has in practice to educate and discipline herself; the male one does not have the knack of this, but on the contrary the present condition of masculinity, of mankind? Is it men, rather than women, who should fear an unfavourable verdict from the Tribune of Reason?  

The Observations is a troubling text as soon as these problems are reflected on. It is really an intriguing case of floating signifiers. The text has much in common with the classical rabbit-duck graphic. It turns out to be not so much a case of understanding the right way in which to read it: the text simply lends itself to be read in two ways; by blinkering your eyes you suddenly have put a totally different text in front of you. There probably is no definite answer to the question whether the Observations is an ironic text or not; we do not have a way to decide whether it is or is not. Perhaps even Kant himself would not have been able to decide this: his subject might well have escaped his own control. (Let's face it: according to all his biographers he was rather tense about the subject of women. Is it not plausible that this tension should recur on the level of the text, that he, in Wittgenstein's formula, has been 'bewitched by his own language'? The distinctions between the intended and unintended meanings guiding the argument in historical texts (variously assessed as e.g. conscious versus unconscious, or directly expressed meanings versus meanings uncovered only later on as being implicated), here have become inconsequential. The emphasis shifts from the author to the text the reader is presented with and endeavours to decode. The possibility of reading the text ironically exists, and irrespective of the question whether or not the author intended the text this way. Rather than of explicit or even implicit opinions to be discovered, we might speak of 'rumours' that resound through the text; indexes, so to speak, pointing to an ironic narration of a metaphysics of gender. Irony, saying one thing only to highlight its opposite, is probably an extraordinary kind of trope, one whose presence cannot be established definitely through analysis, but can be traced only through a judgement of taste. Once more we have arrived in the - very Kantian - domain of judgement, that is, the aesthetical domain.

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118 Reabachtungen, 854: "Diese [kalter und spekulativer] Unterweisung ist darum so selten, weil sie Talente, Erfahrenheit und ein Herz voll Gefühl erfordert, und jeder andere kann das Frauenzimmer sehr wohl entbehren, wie es denn auch ohne diese sich von selbst gemeiniglich sehr wohl ausbildet". (Transl. by Osborne) The other example is from Anthropologie, 655: "Das weibliche Geschlecht muss sich im Praktischen selbst ausbilden und disziplinieren; das männliche versteht sich darauf nicht." (Transl. by JV)

119 In On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy (1796) Kant, almost in passing, comments on an analogy between reason and masculinity used by Neo-Platonist philosopher Schlosser, a position which states "the danger of emasculating a faculty of reason that has become so high-strung by metaphysical sublimation that it can hardly maintain itself in the struggle with vice". Kant rebuts that "it is in precisely these a priori principles that practical reason rightly feels its otherwise never intimated strength" and that it is, on the contrary, "in falsely attributed empirical properties .. that reason is emasculated and crippled". (Transl. by Ferves, 64-66) Do we find here a sexist identification of reason, or does this tussle about masculinity rather illustrate an ironical perception of gender, a mischievous reflection on the contemporary metaphorical philosophical politics of gender? See for a discussion of this essay also Koffman 1982, and § 6.4.1.
In *Anthropology*, Kant again discusses the weak bases of men's morality - more often than not a derivative of circumstance, not of autonomous insight. As women demand to be treated softly and courteously, men attain only to a sort of morality - they do not achieve a genuine ethics, as they arrive there through an act of magnanimity. Is, then, the categorical imperative always to act from duty instead of inclination implying the superiority of masculine behaviour, or has it on the contrary been designed because men do not spontaneously act morally, or else, to combat the male inclination to immature or counterfeit actions in the field of morality? Is he here describing the stuff masculinity is made of, or is the text implying its absence, the strained, fruitless efforts to realize itself as an ethical self?

Likewise, Kant's discussion in *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785) of moral actions performed from duty compared to those performed from inclination, which is commonly interpreted by feminists as characterizing genuine moral worth as a masculine attribute, relegating 'mere' compassionate or sympathetic actions to inferior, unprincipled female goodness, may be read quite differently. In his insistence on grounding ethical behaviour in duty, Kant throughout addresses the problem how men who 'are not stirred by the need of others', who do not 'find an inner pleasure in spreading happiness around them', who suffer from a 'deadly insensibility', who are 'cold in temperament and indifferent to the sufferings of others', how such a man would not still be able to 'find in himself a source from which he may draw a worth far higher than any that a good natured temperament can have'.\(^{120}\) This hardly reads as a vindication of male superiority - rather as a desperate attempt to rescue those in urgent need of moral assistance through offering them the categorical imperative.

In *Anthropology* this ambivalence with regard to male ethical agency is backed up by a reflection on women's contribution to publicity and the eventual good for society and morality which issues therefrom. Here unfolds an ironic reconciliation of women's particularist public performance with the universalist aims of modern ethics and politics. Despite the apparent sexism of the formulations in this text they lend themselves to a surprisingly effervescent analytics of the characteristic features of modern women's atypical public actions. Kant mentions Pope's characterization of women (the cultivated ones, that is) as having a propensity to rule ("herrschen"), and a propensity to amusement ("Vergnügen"), that is, amusement in public. The first propensity, Kant comments, can hardly characterize one class of human beings, as the inclination to profit as well as the will to power is common to all people. But he does allow for a strange feature to the female will to power, which is directed not to the other sex, but to its own. The inclination to public amusement is not an aim in itself, but serves this female inclination to rule - over itself. On the one hand, Kant attributes this to a 'natural' competition between women over men, which does have a rational ground as in the 'stage of

\(^{120}\) Quoted in Grimshaw 1986, 44.
gallantry' women are entitled to the freedom of sexual choice (Kant uses the strikingly Sadean formulation of their entitlement to 'the conquest of the whole male sex', *Eroberung dieses ganzen Geschlechts*), or at least guarantee themselves social safety through their relationships with men. On the other hand, Kant goes on to establish the superior purpose of nature - more interesting or to the point than human purposes - in this characteristic of the female sex: the female will to public amusement serves the culture of sociability and politeness itself. The specific female will to power, then, has universal import, and it even furthers morality.

These femininities are called weaknesses. People make fun of them; .. Rational people, however, understand very well that these form precisely the levers with which to steer masculinity.

Women reign over men through their mastery of culture, diversion, and decency. In Kant's discussion of women's existence in the public sphere we recognize more of the Scots than of Rousseau. The *Anthropology*, far from denying women public roles, attributes to women a citizenship in their own right, a citizenship as the affirmation of their social identity as women. But there is more at stake than the defense of specific social interests. While in *Enlightenment* the public use of reason characterizes enlightened citizenship, Kant here touches upon another road into enlightened publicity. Women here are not docile, silent, or otherwise unenlightened: if anything, they are too subversive, in employing unusual means of language, laughter, and lamentation to establish control. They inject an additional faculty of communication into the public sphere. The question then is, how does the public use of reason relate to the public use of pleasure?

If the female sex wants to rule itself rather than the other sex, this is indeed an enlightened, and even specifically Kantian, act of autonomy: the will to power is self-directed, not directed towards dominion over foreign others. By mentioning this specific female contribution to publicity and eventually politeness, Kant addresses women's strange, but surely enlightened, citizenship. It is a citizenship of those who are free, but not equal, who join modernity neither as *bourgeois* nor as *citoyen* but rather as *persona*, who introduce a political aesthetics to contribute to the implementation of morality. Women's representational practices in public constitute a typical female form of publicity. This is not exactly a counter-publicity, but it does exhibite characteristics which are not easily assimilated into Kant's general picture of public rational activity. The text addresses both an issue of style and an issue of identity. Next to stipulating a typical female style of publicity, Kant here formulates women's public existence as constituted by what I have called in chapter I 'social passions': the discovery of identity as the basis for authoritative public performances: women operate from a particularist perspective - their interests and identity as a sex. If the public use of reason should

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121 Kant uses the German words "Kultur der Gesellschaft", "Verfeinerung", "Geselligkeit", "Sittsamkeit", "Wohlanständigkeit", "Beredtheit in Sprache und Mienen".

122 *Anthropologie*, 649: "Diese Weiblichkeiten heissen Schwächen. Man spasst darüber; .. Vernünftige aber sehen sehr gut, dass sie gerade die Hebezeuge sind, die Männlichkeit zu lenken." (Transl. by JV)
ascertain a critical assessment of unwarranted political authority, and articulate the critical role of the
community of civil society vis-à-vis the state, the public use of pleasure is able to express the
problematic self-articulation of this community, and allows for the diverse and historical, instead of
universal, grounds of communicative ability.

To say that Kant here discovers the social passions as voicing social difference, also
implies that in this intuition of a 'female' public sphere, there is not yet an intuition of a feminist political
passion, of the ironical foundation in knowledge of gendered existence, to be discovered here: for
Kantian openings in this respect we will have to await the discussion in § 6.4.

Interlude.

6.3 The Kant of women.

I have discussed several feminist perspectives on the ways Kant deals with women. There is another,
quite different feminist approach to Kant, which reverses, so to speak, the direction of the interpretive
task. I want to take a look at the ways feminists can use Kantian thought as such, in other words:
at the ways to make sense of the categorical imperatives, epistemological undertakings, and political-
theoretical approaches in the light of feminist concerns.

6.3.1 Ethics and love

Is Kant silent on love? Is there an inability to love in this philosopher 'who cannot conceive of any
other activity than that of reflection' that testifies of something defective in his character, as a
contemporary woman pronounced according to a citation by Schott? Apart from sounding
suspiciously like notorious sexist estimations of intellectual women, this conclusion cannot be
grounded in a supposed neglect of the subject of love with Kant. In particular in the Metaphysics of
Morals (both the 'Theory of Law' and the 'Theory of Virtues') and in his works on the philosophy of
history love gets ample attention.

Perhaps the most important clue to his treatment of love lies in Kant's description of
(hetero)sexual attraction as an artefact, as a product of the imagination, rather than of nature. Drives
incline towards a direct acting on sensuous impulse, towards withdrawing from the possibility of
choice and reflection. But sexual desires come to be ruled by reason, which adds imagination to
them, through the development of love and respect.

Refusal was the art to rise from mere sensed to ideal allure, from mere animal desire slowly
to love, and with this from a feeling for the merely agreeable to the appreciation of
Love opens the way to beauty; aesthetical consciousness has truly embodied dimensions.

The existing comments on the categorical imperatives should be estimated in the light of the various passages clarifying Kant's approach of the entanglement of ethics and gender. Morality, an inclination to inspire respect for us in others through good behaviour (dissembling all that might invite disdain), .. gave moreover the first impulse to the formation of human beings as moral beings. Generating respect (however ironically characterized) is the precondition for any further moral human relationships. It should above all precede any further relationship of appropriation of persons. Talking about human beings' 'discovery' of their own capacity to appropriate nature, he stipulates that this at the same time gives rise to the consciousness that this mastering cannot apply to other human beings.

.. that he could not address other human beings this way, but should regard them as equal participants in the gifts of nature. This prepares for the restrictions which reason eventually should impose on will with regard to fellow human beings and which are far more necessary than affection and love for the establishment of society. He continues with bringing to mind the categorical imperative that all human beings may equally claim the right to be treated as ends, to be recognized by all as such, and to be treated by nobody as just a means to other purposes.

As Kant in the following pages of the essay describes the ascent of patriarchal culture (see § 6.2.1), again the insight into the combined themes of appropriation and love springs to the fore. Kant shows a down-to-earth insight in contemporary sexual politics in his attempt to empty out 'love' of any form of manipulative, exploitative, or tyrannical claims to power, overruling these corruptions of love with the unimpaired right to respect as a human being. He continues the eighteenth century debate on love discussed in chapters III and IV.

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123 *Mutmasslicher Anfang*, 89: "*Weigerung war das Kunststück, um von bloss empfundenen zu idealischen Reizen, von der bloss tierischen Begierde allmählich zur Liebe, und mit dieser vom Gefühl des bloss Angenehmen zum Geschmack für Schönheit .. überzuführen.*" (Transl. by JV; accentuation in bold print by JV).

124 *Mutmasslicher Anfang*, 89/90: "*Die Sittsamkeit, eine Neigung, durch guten Anstand (Verhehlung dessen, was Geringschätzung erregen könnte) andern Achtung gegen uns einzufüßen, .. gab überdem den ersten Wink zur Ausbildung des Menschen, als eines sittlichen Geschöpf.*" (Transl. by JV)

125 *Mutmasslicher Anfang*, 91: "dass er so etwas zu keinem Menschen sagen dürfe, sondern diesen als gleichen Teilnehmer an den Geschenken der Natur anzusehen habe: eine Vorbereitung von weitern zu den Einschränkungen, die die Vernunft künftig dem Willen in Ansehung seines Mitmenschen auferlegen sollte, und welche, weit mehr als Zuneigung und Liebe, zu Errichtung der Gesellschaft notwendig ist." (Transl. by JV)
One example of a discussion by women who have tried to deal with Kant on ethics and love is worth bringing to attention. They hold very different views of what Kantian ethics is about and of its applicability in love. Their papers try to deal with the question whether in Theodor Fontane's novel *Effi Briest* the character of the husband, Instetten, is a Kantian one or not. Instetten finds out about the adulterous affair his wife Effi had six years ago. He feels compelled to act from an exceptionless principle of duty, and rather from this Prussian conviction than from envy, jealousy or other passions about the event of six years before, kills the former lover and divorces his wife. The tragedy ends in the suicide of Effi. *Julia Annas* (1984) accentuates how Kantian ethics is an ethics based on the strict performance of duty. She observes that Instetten is not really acting in a Kantian way, as he, by his destructive behaviour, obviously violates several other maxims of morality Kant designed. For example, Instetten confuses temporary social morality with Kant's sublime moral law, and he cannot reasonably feel that his action should become a universal law of moral action. He simply is insufficiently critical of contemporary Bismarckian conventions. And his treatment of his wife certainly does not answer the Kantian maxim always to treat a human being as an end in itself, and not as a means to other ends. But Annas does see it as a crucial problem of Kantian morality that it makes a sharp distinction between motives from duty, and motives from inclination. Instetten is incapable to discriminate between trivial feelings of self-love and self-interest which should be discarded in moral action, and profound feelings of love and commitment which to him all boil down to the same level of inclinations that he feels compelled to deny. She concludes that "to live successfully by the Kantian ethic is to risk destroying one's sources of love and concern for others, and that this not only hurts the others but leaves one's own life bare and meaningless too." (29)

*Marcia Baron* (1988) takes a quite different view of how to evaluate Instetten's behaviour in the light of Kantian ethics. According to her, he simply is not Kantian enough, or even not at all. Instetten's rigid, unreflective adherence to rules and his judgmental behaviour can in no way issue from the Kantian notion of duty. Kant's concern is with inward principles, with character; his ethic demands a high level of self-evaluation - a duty towards oneself, not a destructive criticism of others or a denial of their separate, individual dignity. She concludes that Fontane's novel does not portray the dangers of Kantian ethics, but of anxious concern for reputation and social position and rigid adherence to society's rules.126

While Annas works from a, we may say, 'dominant' feminist perspective, and draws the conclusion of a 'Prussian' Kant, with Baron a much more 'humane' Kant emerges. This 'other' Kant can be, and has been, used by feminists from the eighteenth century onwards to insist on an ethics of love, in which mutual responsibility, recognition of human dignity, aversion of cruelty and hightonhandedness, and the possibility to refuse socially prescribed duties for women (like being solely occupied with love) are cornerstones.

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126 See also Vega 1990b, where I discuss the presence of similar Kantian themes that Annas and Baron address in Fontane's *Effi Briest* in the novels *Three Women* and *Mrs Henley* by the eighteenth-century Dutch author Isabelle de Charrière.
6.3.2 Aesthetics and knowledge.

Schott reproaches Kant for isolating intuition (Anschauung) as pure or ‘genuine’ sensibility and opposing this intuition as a category of knowledge to ‘feeling’ as the ‘immediate apprehension of an object’. This way Kant prioritizes among the senses the sense of looking or observation, and among the knowers the spectator, thus excluding feeling and the other senses like smell and taste from the relevant categories of knowledge. She cites Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, where he defines feeling as follows: ‘feeling is not a faculty whereby we represent things, but lies outside our whole faculty of knowledge’. Her disapproval seems to be directed to the second part of the sentence.

Let us first dwell on her notion of feeling as a category of ‘direct, immediate knowledge’ of the world, and as such well suited for feminist purposes. The criticism of the subject-object dichotomy in scientific and philosophical tradition that makes the object into a passive element instead of an active participant in the construction of knowledge, here becomes a rather naive celebration of the possibility of unmediated, somehow pre-social, knowledge.

Kant's idealist approach of representation can certainly be shown to be defective in the light of more recent developments in philosophy, those within feminist philosophy included. It can and has been for example criticized exactly for its idealist position, that is, for not being a linguistic theory of representation. Attention to the relationship between subject and object has been largely replaced by attention to the relationship between language and the world. When it is not the mind producing representations, but instead language that organizes the representations of the world, the theory of knowledge has once more been greatly complicated. Nevertheless, Kant's insight into knowledge as built up in representational procedures offers clues for modern theories of language.

Schott seems to ignore this linguistic turn by insisting on the soundness of a direct, unmediated knowledge of the world that will overcome estrangement. Apparently, she disagrees with the circumstance that, in the words of Joan Landes (1988), "we may criticize representations, but we can never escape the web of representations". (10) We might add that to seek an immediate access to the real world by neutralizing the effects of language, to idealize immediate and instantaneous forms of communication between subject and world, has been precisely the project of the modern bourgeois public sphere. Its implications from a feminist point of view have been treated in earlier chapters.

Feminists who are enamored of feeling as a promising route to non-corrupt knowledge and transparency seem, furthermore, to have deprived themselves of means to criticize specific feelings if necessary. Kant himself intimates that acting on immediate, unreflected feeling is a major cause of immature, capricious, and arbitrary male behaviour. Kant's warning that feeling in its immediacy only reaches surfaces, is, indeed, well taken. But we might judge Kant's opinion that 'feeling is not a faculty whereby we represent things but lies outside our whole faculty of knowledge' as as much misguided as Schott's wish to make it a faculty of knowledge because it suggests direct knowledge of the object.
Kant's aversion of or even hostility to feeling as a basis for knowledge seems to rise from the suspicion that feeling is suggesting direct knowledge of the object, which has to be a false pretension. Accordingly, he defines it as beyond the field of knowledge. Of course, we might defend that the category of feeling does belong to the procedures of representation and for that very reason does constitute knowledge. Paradoxically, Schott wants to politicize a philosophically undervalued category of feeling through an epistemological move which entails a depoliticizing effect. Her intervention boils down to withdrawing feeling from the project of critical philosophy, while it should, on the contrary, be made one of its concerns. If we leave idealism behind and move on to linguistic, semiotic theories of representation, we equip ourselves with means to consider feeling from a critical-philosophical perspective and to criticize the many 'corrupt' aspects of emotions, such as projections, connotations from the imaginary, phantasms.

Two more problematic aspects of this line of defense of feeling should be mentioned. Schott judges the priority of the sense of seeing in Kant's work as leading to "a fetishism of objectivity". This view is unhappily oblivious of the possibility of a feminist appropriation of the spectatorial position. Especially in the field of feminist film theory, the ‘female gaze' and the feminine spectator are respectable categories in the analyses. Finally, her view needs to be juxtaposed to an appreciation of the Critique of Judgement, where the sense of taste - precisely one of the 'undervalued' categories of sensory knowledge Schott spotted in Kantianism - becomes the category par excellence of knowledge and representation and allies itself with the spectatorial position. In § 6.4 I will proceed with this subject and discuss Hannah Arendt's reception of the Kantian theory of taste.

6.3.3 Politics and representation

Any machine that is supposed to accomplish just as much as another machine, but with less force, implies art.\(^{127}\)

Who, then, should have supreme command in the household? .. I would say, in the language of gallantry (but not without truth): the woman should reign and the man govern; for inclination reigns and understanding governs.\(^{128}\)

It is not difficult to see the heritage here. Kant, continuing in the line of thought of natural rights theory which bequeathed us the analogy of politics and the personal, first of all works with the analogy between state and marital or domestic realm in discussing the relation between man and woman. In the first quotation (first line of Anthropology's section on the sexes) he furthermore, in a directly

\(^{127}\) Anthropologie, 648: "In alle Maschinen, durch die mit kleiner Kraft eben so viel ausgerichtet werden soll, als durch andere mit grosser, muss Kunst gelegt sein." (Transl. by Gregor, 166)

\(^{128}\) Anthropologie, 657: "Wer soll dann den oberen Befehl im Hause haben? .. - Ich würde in der Sprache der Galanterie (doch nicht ohne Wahrheit) sagen: die Frau soll herrschen und der Mann regieren; denn die Neigung herrscht und der Verstand regiert." (Transl. by Gregor, 172)
Hobbesian approach of human beings, withdraws the sexes from nature's realm and pictures them as artefacts - and woman more so than man. Through the use of the Imperfect Future the second quote oscillates between moral warrant and wishful thinking. In the latter mode it indicates that Kant (who clearly will not decide on the 'supreme command') urges man to govern and use his reason, and also incites the woman to rule, implying that the present state of affairs is quite different. Kant is clearly conceptually confused as well as unclear on his speech intentions: compare passages like: 'Woman wants to dominate, man to be dominated (especially before marriage)'; 'The woman should reign and the man govern'; 'If a union is to be harmonious and indissoluble, it is not enough for two people to associate as they please; one party must be subordinate to the other and mutually one superior to the other in some respect, in order to be able to dominate or rule him'. On whose side power lies and should lie between the marriage partners, and what concept of power applies (domination, rule, or government), changes from one formulation to another: men may figure as masochists or managers; women want to or should reign; domination or government may apply to the politics of either sex.

Elsewhere he takes refuge with an analogy from monarchical power. The passage from *Anthropology* reads:

But since the man must know best how his affairs stand and how far he can go, he will be like a minister to his monarch who thinks only of amusement; .. so that the monarch can do all that he wills, although under the circumstance that his minister suggests him this will. Kant here allots the man the role of wise minister who canalizes the capricious demands of his queen. In this particular passage on women as monarchs, a fear resounds of women's atypical public activity, which concentrates on the delights that public performance may bring - on their rule by entertainment instead of economic expediency. All remarks lumped together, it is clear that Kant is at a loss to find an analogy for sexual politics in existing political idiom. Let us then review the possible meanings of the analogies between rule, monarchy, and sex. In order to grasp some of the possibilities, it is necessary to consider how these analogies function within the eighteenth century debate on competing conceptions of political representation.

Which debates on politics form the background of Kant's remarks about the relation

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129 *Anthropologie*, 652: "Die Frau will herrschen, der Mann beherrscht sein (vornehmlich vor der Ehe)."; 657: "Die Frau soll herrschen, und der Mann regieren" (Transl. by Gregor, 169; 172); 648: "Zur Einheit und Unaufloslichkeit einer Verbindung ist das beliebige Zusammentreten zweier Personen nicht hinreichend; ein Teil musste dem andern unterworfen und wechselseitig einer dem andern irgendworin überlegen sein, um ihn beherrschen oder regieren zu können." (Transl. by Gregor, 167 adapted)

130 *Anthropologie*, 657: "Weil aber der Mann am besten wissen muss, wie er stehe und wie weit er gehen könne: so wird er, wie ein Minister seinem blos auf Vergnügen bedachten Monarchen, ..auf dieses seinen Befehl zuerst seine schuldige Willfähigkeit dazu erklären; .. so dass der höchstgebietende Herr alles tun kann was er will, doch mit den Umstande, dass diesen Willen ihm sein Minister an die Hand gibt." (Transl. by Gregor, 173 adapted)

131 Wollstonecraft differently phrases the ethical outlook of the same analogy demonstrative of women's powerlessness: ".. women have been duped by their lovers as princes by their ministers, whilst dreaming that they reigned over them". *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Todd, 90)
between minister and king? How was monarchical rule conceived of in this age of the French Revolution? Thomas Hobbes, founder of the modern conception of political representation, had argued in *Leviathan* that “it is the unity of the representor, not the unity of the represented, that maketh the person one,” thereby legitimizing absolute rule, not as a divine right, but as a form of representation of the multitude of the people. This form of symbolic (instead of descriptive) representation in single rule was countered by subsequent parliamentary proposals for representative assemblies capable of reflecting (some kind of) social diversity. (Kant himself thought the rule of monarchs legitimate provided that they govern in a republican manner.) In the idiom of the eighteenth-century revolutionaries trying to overthrow the *ancien régime* monarchs were but symbols for mankind’s state of slavery: kings could have no relationship whatsoever to representation of the people. Thus, various logics of representation circulated.

What, then, does this mean for an analogy between sexual and monarchical politics? When Kant is casting the woman as ‘king’ in the marital power relation, what conception of kings resonates through Kant’s jest (if it is jest) on the wisest way to conduct marriage? Let us survey some possibilities. The citation seems closest to meaning that she stands for the childish, powerless king who figured as the object of hatred in republican discourse. We are then witnessing a lapse in Kantian thought that suddenly favours the virulent women-hatred accompanying Roussaeuan republican politics. But our prior discussions of Kant’s thought on women plead against the republican option which simply ostracizes women’s public performances. What is more, men and women in Kant’s text appear to take turns at being the most arbitrary, capricious of the two. If we relate his statements on marriage and monarchy to Kant’s other reflections on gender - e.g. his repeated admission that women act and should act (in their own as well as societal interests) as protectors of the institution of marriage, and his dwelling on a male propensity to libertine excess if not curtailed by marriage - we get a quite different vantage point for picturing a female monarchical rule. The woman then illustrates the Hobbesian solution to a pressing need (equally recognized by Kant) to reign over a potentially warring multitude. She thus represents the multiple positions and interests the married couple somehow has to unite; a gendered plural made one through the stable unity and identity of marriage - a multitude embodied in her person.¹³²

We can safely state that Kant alternates between the images of a woman’s rule which unites and one which subverts. He cannot decide whether a ‘queen’ brings about unity, or squanders communal interest. As for woman as public persona, women’s pleasure-ruled publicity is nowhere associated with absolute rule, nor in a Rousseauist manner with, in a potentially germane formulation Kant himself once used, a deceitful, “mendacious form of publicity”: it does constitute - or at least

¹³² It is a pity that the text’s timing is wrong to have Kant seeing woman in the role of the enlightened exemplary king of the state preferred by Kant. In his essay *Enlightenment* ‘his’ king Frederic the Great is still the much admired example, being an ‘enlightened monarch’ - in Kant’s estimation. By the time Kant wrote *Anthropology*, however, the political situation in Prussia had changed with the death of ‘his’ king, and Frederick William II gave Kant no reason to applaud monarchs. Hence no convincing case for Kantian women as enlightened monarchs exists.
operates within - constitutional rule. The general impression we are left with is that Kant's confused analogies between sexual and state politics testify to a developing ironic condition of a modern sexual politics - reigned over by various and often contradictory political idioms.

Through all polysemy, one crucial philosophical peculiarity does surface. Kant demonstrates having departed from natural rights thought in not aiming at a conceptualization in terms of a founding marital contract: his attempt to grasp the sexual politics of marriage occurs on the field of the problematic of political representation, its symbolics, metaphorics, ideologies. For one thing, he thus manages to avoid the cul-de-sac of the endless debates on consent applied to the marital relationship, where a once-and-for-all consent to state of affairs fixes conflict and silences voices that contracted themselves away from deliberation. Instead, we are presented with problems of multiplicity and unity, of state and publicity, of a gendered humanism. The analogies used by Kant are adequate in showing the problematic of the male-female relationship as joining the general problem of modern rule. He eventually treats it as subject to the problems of representation as envisioned by Hobbes.

One more - and related - peculiarity presents itself since the opening sentence of Anthropology’s section on the sexes (see first quotation): aesthetics is presented as a crucial determinant of a modern sexual politics in which force can no longer be decisive. Where "less force" has to accomplish "just as much" as stronger forces, aesthetic production takes over from the machineries of power politics. A modern political philosophy appears to demand that the mere presence of women in sexual-political relationships introduces art in them. This makes marriage a matter of determining, not the right to govern, but rather the right style to order interaction and mutual power. However far Kant may be from Romantic aesthetical politics in the state, these features of his discussion of sexual politics unambiguously introduce an aesthetical vantage point - and have it definitely depart from a foundationalist one.

Paradigm II. Kant establishes the necessity of grounding rational knowledge in sense-experience, and, vice versa, of filtering experience through the concepts of rationality. He is the philosopher par excellence of a sensory-based, experiential rationality, indeed, of embodied thinking and judging.

6.4 Gender and knowledge in Kant.

From the various feminist interpretations of Kant, two main strings of thought present themselves in which conceptualizations of gender are being activated in Kantianism. In Kant's work, as we have

133 Compare Kant's discussion of Great Britain in The Contest of the Faculties, 1798. (Transl. by Reiss, 186/187)
already begun to unravel, women and men manifest themselves as such in an **ethical** perspective and in an **aesthetical** one. We can keep this intuition, shared by about all Kant's feminist commentators, and try to work out how it might combine with our divination that Kant is somehow gendering the very possibility of modern knowledge and judgement.

In these perspectives, as we have observed, Kantian subjects seldom are the abstract or arrogant human beings of Enlightenment humanism who in current representations of the Enlightenment have been under attack so heavily. When we keep in mind his remarks on the importance of gender in the research of knowledge, suddenly there are hardly any universal persons left. On the most elaborate subjects of Kantianism as expounded in the three Critiques, there is an accompanying narration in which the relevant human subjects are staged as predominantly gendered subjects. We may surmise that easing these destabilized subjects into the texts in which the respective 'critical' perspectives are elaborated will result in new and surprising stories about what constitutes the modernist discourse on gender and knowledge of which Kantian thought is exemplary.

6.4.1 (En)gendering ethics.

Justice and ethics are closely intertwined themes of Kant's 'practical philosophy' and both generally taken as signposts for a rather sterile (masculine) Kantian discourse on moral autonomy, solitary self-governance and abstract rights. In the preceding chapter we have already met with a quite different approach by Kant of the subjects of rights and ethics. I want to add some more remarks on this issue which will lead us still farther away from the cliché of sterile and static moral procedure in Kant's thought and into the dynamics of the ethical learning process as conceived by Kant.

Kant understands well that rights, in any case those 'personal rights that have objectifying quality', are not abstract goods because they are embedded in contexts of power relations. In the case of sexual claims of one person on another, justice cannot be entrusted simply to morally autonomous persons as they do not 'own' themselves nor the other person. Justice is, in the words of Hanna Pitkin, although she fails to attribute the insight to Kant himself, "concerned not merely with metaphorical legislation enacted by the individual", but amounts to an "actual experience of making, applying, and changing the norms" by which partners involved in sexual encounters live, through "deliberation, debate and action". (1981, 345)

This pride of the woman to ward off, through the respect she inspires, the man's importunities, and to demand the right to respect, also apart from merit, is enforced by her merely by belonging to her sex. - The woman refuses, the man courts; her submission is a favour.  

134 Anthropologie, 652: "Diesen Stolz des Weibes, durch den Respekt, den es einflösst, alle Zudringlichkeit des Mannes abzuhalten, und das Recht, Achtung vor sich, auch ohne Verdienste, zu fordern, behauptet sie schon aus dem Titel ihres Geschlechts. - Das Weib ist weigernd, der Mann bewerbend; ihre Unterwerfung ist Gunst." (Transl. by JV, accentuations in bold print by JV)
In thus discussing respect, Kant hardly avoids the complication gender poses to essential issues of morality, or, in differentwordings, the problem of whether and how a humanist ethics could be universalized in the face of a gendered empirical world. If he can be seen to equivocate on the question of equal or special rights to a basic feature of human dignity like the right to respect, this is hardly to be judged as a denial of a real world of difference. For one thing, the mere content of the quotation already could elicit a generous feminist understanding. Kant here formulates a right to respect, independent of individual merit, that - single reservation - will be effectuated only by proud women. There is no such thing as a male right to women's favours: when women give, men will have to appreciate this as a gift and not as somehow fitting their property rights. But a more fundamental, procedural aspect of his ethics deserves attention: if we focus on the encounters of morality and sexuality in Kant's work, we catch sight of the heteronomous, instead of autonomous, character that ethical learning processes in Kant's accounts possess.

This engendering of respect is the major theme in Sarah Koffman's (1982) rendering of Kantian ethics. Kant discerns two kinds of respect: respect as a comparative sentiment, which is a respect for hierarchical values, and respect as a moral sentiment, which comes about when we restrict our esteem for ourselves by taking into consideration the human dignity of another person and is, in other words, a respect for human equality. Koffman stipulates that this moral sentiment implies not so much absence of distance as incommensurable distance. Kant does not elaborate on comparative respect as this cannot count as a pure principle of the doctrine of virtue: differences between human beings like age, sex, birth, strength, even social status, are in the end arbitrary distinctions. Koffman, however, observes that Kant drops the distinction in the rest of the work, and relegates the different forms of respect to mere particular cases of experience. She asks whether, in the case of the respect of men for women, we find either just the question of respect 'between human beings' or "an example among others", or that we have here "a model, a very prefiguration of moral respect".

(If the question were, in the name of respect, that of holding women in respect - at a certain respectful distance - would morality not serve as a cover for an operation of a completely different order, an operation of mastery? (1982b, 385)

She speaks of an 'economy of respect' with Kant, for he sees respect between the sexes, not as issuing from a 'moral sentiment', but from a will to power, a struggle for domination. In this economy the woman refuses, the man demands, the woman must appear cold (modest), in order to gain respect: this way women may 'educate' men in being respectful. Koffman sees as the quintessential problem in Kant's treatment of marriage and sexuality that in his notion of woman educating man in preventing him from "giving himself up to sensuality" or "animal inclination", from "becoming an object of disgust to himself", there is not just the problem of man feeling thus defiled, no longer a moral human being; there is one where man not only fears moral disgust or defilement, but disgust for the sex of women. This 'denial of femininity' is in this account occurring in both men and women. Nature itself demands this sexual economy of respect to steer men towards morality. Koffman concludes that
(m)en's education towards reason and morality leads therefore to an emancipation with respect to mother nature, to women, and to feelings. The order of nature prefigures in this way the moral order, respect for women announces and prepares for respect for man. (1982b, 391-2)

In this economy the real issue, sexuality, has to remain veiled. Koffman links this theme to the aesthetic perspective in which Kant places the moral law. The moral law, to Kant, is severe, holy, and majestic, it inspires in its subjects fear, fascination, and a notion that one is unworthy, humbled, and fragile. As its sublimity lends it its power, empirical representations of this law should be resisted as substitutes, and the idea of the moral law should be placed before any attempt to substitute easy to recognize, sensible forms or personifications for it. Assuming definite, fixed understanding - assuming mastery - is denying its sublime function of appealing to the imagination. He chooses its personification in the all-presuming goddess Isis to discuss what aestheticization should and should not be about: recognition of its veiled, impenetrable character, but not a beautified, sensible form which empties out its indefinite seductive powers. He warns against empirical and pathological contaminations of the pure idea of law as these, according to him, boil down to the paralysis and emasculation of reason.

Koffman remarks that a contamination is present in this very idea of Kant, as in the real processes of education to morality and respect, 'personification' does come "before the knowledge of a priori moral principles, and thus indeed risks the contamination of all subsequent 'representation' of the moral law." (1982b, 402) Koffman detects an empirical referent in this 'aestheticization' of the moral law: the phallic, castrating motherfigure / woman inspiring fright, fascination and horror, which again illustrates how the respect for women prefigures moral respect in general. Moral respect betrays the first relation to authority or power the child had: the relation to the mother. That is, in the practice of male morality or respect for women, analogy takes over from reality.

It is first of all remarkable that Koffman manages to ironize traditional psychoanalytical accounts of the moral law: the law here does not represent (fear of) the father but the mother. But secondly, in highlighting the aesthetical perspective in which Kant discusses the moral law, she gains a more fundamental, and probably more important, insight. Koffman concludes that the authority of the law "does not emanate purely and simply from its a priori character, that the a priori is always already contaminated by the a posteriori, the masculine by the feminine". (1982b, 403) In grasping that the myths of morality are given us in the practice of living, in gendered practices of learning moral points of view, it becomes possible to apply Kant's discussions of good and bad forms of aestheticization, of the myths of personification which are operative in morality, and of the ways our notions of what is a priori right and wrong are contaminated by such myths, to feminist analyses of moral practices in real life situations of incommensurable distance between equal human beings.

6.4.2 (En)gendering judgement.
Hannah Arendt's evaluation of Kant's philosophy counteracts the one of Schott. As if she was in direct discussion with this feminist author, she draws an explicit comparison between Kant's approach and a Platonic despising of the body and its pleasures, in which the body functions as a burden if one is after truth, and declares:

This, of course, cannot be Kant's position, for his theoretical philosophy holds that all cognition depends on the interplay and cooperation of sensibility and intellect, and his Critique of Pure Reason has rightly been called a justification, if not a glorification, of human sensibility. (1982, 27)

She eases this sensible body, or embodied intellect, into a Kantian theory of publicity. In the twelve lectures Arendt devoted to Kant's aesthetical theory, the Critique of Judgement assumes the role of the treatise on political philosophy he never explicitly wrote. Observing that the three central topics of Kantian philosophy are not directed to man as a _zoon politikon_ and do not know a faculty for action, she nevertheless sees several starting-points for a Kantian political theory. In the first place, the third Critique does not deal with 'truth' but with understanding; in the second place it takes up the question of the sociability of man, not merely in the sense of an interdependence in respects of needs and cares, but "in their highest faculty, the human mind, which will not function outside human society". Citing Kant, she adds: "Company is indispensible for the thinker." (1982, 10) Critical thinking for Kant is inextricably bound up with communicability. Philosophical truth, unlike scientific truth, is, first, dependent on its being made public to have critical meaning at all. Second, it does not imply 'general validity' but implies accountability, demanding not 'to prove' utterings but to 'give an account'. In these features critical thinking shows its political affiliation.

Arendt sees a continuity between the concerns in Kant's precritical work, among which the Observations, and this Critique.

In other words, the topics of the Critique of Judgement - the particular, whether a fact of nature or an event in history; the faculty of judgement as the faculty of man's mind to deal with it; sociability of men as the condition of the functioning of this faculty .. - these topics, all of them of eminent political significance - that is, important for the political - were concerns of Kant long before he finally .. turned to them when he was old. (1982, 14)

Her reading of Kant echoes the one by Marcia Baron. Arendt notices that his question 'What ought I to do?’, taken from his moral philosophy, is one that concerns the conduct of the self in its independence of others:

it is precisely by applying critical standards to one's own thought that one learns the art of critical thought. (1982, 42)

At the same time, however, this solitary business requires imagination:

critical thinking .. does not cut itself off from 'all others'. To be sure, it still goes on in isolation, but by the force of imagination it makes others present and thus moves in a space that is potentially public, open to all sides; in other words, it adopts the position of Kant's
Arendt seizes upon this Kantian notion of 'enlarged mentality' to clarify his Enlightenment maxim 'to think for yourself' as well as his directives for reaching 'impartiality'. Impartiality results not from some higher standpoint but is obtained by taking the viewpoints of others into account. This is not meant to be some kind of "enormously enlarged empathy", claiming to be able to know what goes on in the mind of others.

"Enlarged thought" is the result of first "abstracting from the limitations which contingently attach to our own judgement", of disregarding its "subjective private conditions .., by which so many are limited," that is, disregarding what we usually call self-interest, which, according to Kant, is not enlightened or capable of enlightenment but is in fact limiting. The greater the reach - the larger the realm in which the enlightened individual is able to move from standpoint to standpoint - the more 'general' will be his thinking. (1982, 43)

It is the spectator who judges, as opposed to the actor who engages and acts. Their respective positions illustrate, according to Arendt, the Kantian "conflict of politics and morality". The uninvolved spectator is capable of reflecting, understanding, and judging accordingly. However, this judgement is not to be a maxim for acting. By acting upon the perception of sublime aspects, the aesthetic judgement of the spectator would result in criminal acting, the acting of fools. On the other hand, Kant's spectator also leaves behind the traditional philosophical notion according to which contemplation only concerns the soul and should stand outside the playing fields of action. Kant's spectator represents, because of her capability to reach impartial and general judgements, the Judge. The actor is dependent on this judgement for having a measure for his action.

Meanwhile, contrary to the partial and uncritical judgement of citizens led by their self-interests, this judgement will have to be a public affair. The public domain is the terrain of criticism and development of judgement, and the spectator is its inhabitant. The spectatorial moral judgement by definition has to be already-public, for "private maxims must be subjected to an examination by which I find out whether I can declare them publicly". (49) The judgement procedure by which morality has to be reached, implies that in morality the private and the public coalesce. In the retreat from public life thus lies immorality. Judgement chooses the care for the world over and above the care for the self. So far Arendt's reading of Kant.

We can add further reflections in the same vein. Kant's distrust of human action leads him to place the realm of the judgement of taste and its "never-passive reason" (CJ I, 152) over and above the realm of acting and the sublime. Taste here wins out over genius, and the beautiful wins out over the sublime:

Taste, like judgement in general, is the discipline (or corrective) of genius. It severely clips its wings, and makes it orderly or polished; but at the same time it gives it guidance, directing and controlling its flight, so that it may preserve its character of finality. It introduces a clearness and order into the plenitude of thought, and in so doing gives stability to the ideas and qualifies them at once for permanent and universal approval, for being followed
by others, and for a continually progressive culture. And so, where the interests of both these qualities clash in a product, and there has to be a sacrifice of something, than it should rather be on the side of genius. (CJ I, 183)

Kant expounds that it is the Subject, not the Object, of judgement who determines the judgement of taste. This leaves unimpeded that judgement is by nature universally communicable, and also that taste should have an original faculty and not ensue from imitation of models. (CJ I, 75) When Kant is saying that an aesthetic idea is an intuition and therefore cannot become cognition, he merely tells us that it does not accord with objective principles. Judgement differs from moral feeling in not operating by following laws. Judgement is not constrained by rules: it operates in the realm of freedom.

The pleasure in the beautiful is, on the other hand, neither a pleasure of enjoyment nor of an activity according to law, nor yet one of a rationalizing contemplation according to ideas, but rather of mere reflection. Without any guiding-line of end or principle this pleasure attends the ordinary apprehension of an object by means of the imagination, as the faculty of intuition, but with a reference to the understanding as faculty of concepts, and through the operation of a process of judgement which has also to be invoked in order to obtain the commonest experience. (CJ I, 149-150)

The judgement of taste contemplates the object "irrespective of its use or of any end". (CJ I, 87) Put differently, it should try to disregard any commodification of the objects under judgement - Kant apparently perceives a market process already showing a propensity to occupy the realm of knowing.

Judgements of taste are by definition 'other-directed' and not law-abiding. They do not only replace 'monological thinking' for the 'dialogical' thinking of ethic self-evaluation, they assume a true practice of polylogue. Furthermore, in judging, we understand that we are not simply the natural owners or autonomous 'authors' of our statements; in judging we are true representatives of others, and as such artificial or fictional subjects ourselves. This representative, instead of authorizing, quality of judgement demonstrates that judgement is simultaneously a personal as well as a political activity.135 From these perspectives, the Critique of Judgement testifies to a contextualist and polylogical theory of judgement. The specificity of the procedure which leads to reaching judgements of taste forces private sense-experience into the intersubjective realm. The capacity for judgement is the result of making private sensations public. It supposes reflection on the representations in the imagination of the sensations of the senses. Although Kant restricts it to taste, its potential scope seems to be all sense-dependent knowledge. The imagination and reflection necessary in the judgement of taste enable us to free ourselves from our solitary and private determinations.

Whereas those hovering in the sublime may see themselves as the Chosen, this nobility turns out to be a serious handicap in the realm of reason; what can a noble man know, after all? The foregoing discussions suggest a new dichotomy of gender, surprisingly different from familiar

135 Kant, in thus approaching the concept of the person, is again indebted to Hobbes' discussion of 'persona' and his notion of the representative character of all actions. Compare Pitkin 1967, chapter 1.
It is interesting and perhaps astounding to see Arendt deriving 'political theory' from a (an aesthetical) theory of judgement. Arendt, who has always emphasized that action is to be seen as the quintessential feature of free human life, does not suddenly underrate action or politics. She rather emphasizes its communicative dimension, the way it is always bound up with or embedded in communicative, that is, linguistic performances. In Kant's theory of judgement she finds a theoretical underpinning for this critical guidance action depends on for moral criteria on its own behalf. Conversely, judging is always bound to be a public performance. Her notion of judgement supports her own approach of political action in counteracting notions of action which either presuppose its ensuing from a united community, or from solipsistic, heroic motives - in both cases the acting of fools. Politics, to Arendt, "rests on the fact of the plurality of human beings." (1950, 9: Politik beruht auf der Tatsache der Pluralität der Menschen.) In the words of Canovan (1983), she thought "that the whole notion of getting individuals to act as one was a dangerous illusion. What she herself stressed was the inescapable plurality of men, not just in the early stages of discussion, but in action." (110) The plurality accompanying the formation of judgement, then, is to guarantee action a genuine political significance.

Kant's theory of judgement does not mention gender, nor can we use it to understand the substantial influence gender identity can exert on processes of judgement - e.g. with respect to the representation of private sensations in public life, or the very capacity for practicing 'enlarged thought'. In § 6.2.1, however, we observed how Kant discerns two ways of aesthetical expression, which do not have full-blown links to definite genders but which tend to be represented as thus linked. He tries to preserve both ways of knowing and judging by appointing sexed guardians for them, women standing for the expression of beauty and men for the expression of nobility or the sublime. Aesthetical politics, then, is a sexual politics in real life practices. This sexing of aesthetical knowledge reveals a gendered practice of judgement - we cannot but infer that women are to be the guardians of a genuine politics, that is, one resting on the plurality of humanity.

The polylogical, law-aversive, and representative features of Kant's theory of judgement

dichotomies in this field, and all the same very Kantian:

| spectators | actors |
| judges     | genius |
| women      | men    |
| seeing the whole | seeing a part |
| accountable | criminal |
| reflective | fools |
| onlookers  | participators |
| public     | private |
| beautiful  | sublime |
| disinterested | self-interest |
| plurality  | mass |
| impartiality | partiality |
| maturity   | immaturity |
could support heteronomous ethical learning processes and the demystification of 'unemancipated' personifications of moral law these ought to include, as well as a feminist approach of politics, formulated as I did in the Introduction as the awareness of the necessity to act and decide in the face of undecidability, while safeguarding reflection on the representational character of others' and its own assertions, as well as its proper social authority to form and pass judgements.

6.4.3 Conclusions.

Have we in this chapter encircled Kant effectively? Has it been shown that, being positions we can inhabit on the circle, none of the positions can claim a privileged short cut to the kernel of Kant's thought with respect to gender, and that we, sentenced to a place on the circle, can aspire to but never can reach the kernel definitely? I would like to think so. Nevertheless, I will attempt to impose some new order.

First, Enlightenment according to Kant has little patience with fixing dualisms, certainly not the ones that imply women's inferiority or exclusion. The contrary has appeared to be the case. The analyses of 'implicit sexism' have eventually alerted us to the problematic determination of sexist meaning as well as feminist knowledge. I have fused this approach with attentiveness to semiotics, in order to render visible the Kantian awareness of gender dynamics in various processes of knowledge. Kant is in fact keenly aware of the disturbing complication the category of gender forms for modern consciousness and cognition. His philosophy tries to design procedures of knowledge that prevent the modern subject from becoming either metaphysians prone to dogmatism, or sceptics who will be unable to live in any community whatsoever, and therefore can still serve, through its attempts to merge rationalism and empiricism, a feminist project of critical knowledge. This merger did more than add up or reconcile both epistemologies: it was to destabilize fundamental approaches to knowledge.

The mediation of empiricism and rationalism was not the only significant historical achievement of Kant's philosophy. Both rationalism and empiricism proceeded from a shared presupposition, namely that things, as they are, can in principle be conceived of as accessible to our cognition (whether sensory or rational cognition). In this respect both philosophical standpoints were uncritical, that is, dogmatical. (Baumgartner 1988, 19, transl. by JV)

Kant denied both epistemologies their reliance on the eventual transparency of what occurs, of the things to be understood. He denied the human capacity for cognition its claims to final knowledge. The epistemological significance of this endeavour is supported by his ethical, and by the same token democratic, appeal to subjective accountability in the realm of knowledge - the admonition to take responsibility for one's own rationality. It has been remarked that one should distinguish between Kant's humanism and his critical rationality, the latter providing modern reflection with its
characteristical philosophical ethos of permanent critique of one's time. (Foucault 1984) While both Kantian humanism and rationality have been dismissed in feminist receptions as mutually reinforcing devices for the exclusion of women, an opposite feminist motive has surfaced to reassess the utility of this very dichotomy. I have argued that in several ways Kantian humanism does take on the problems a gendered empirical world poses to human dignity and capacity for cognition. Furthermore, it could well be a self-defeating feminist criticism to deny how both the ambivalent-humanist and the critical-epistemological principles of Kantianism still form - and should form - part and parcel of feminist endeavours to assert and authorize its proper critique of modern knowledges. While it is sound feminist politics and ethics to be disgusted by neglect or denial of feelings, this repulsion is to be supported by, instead of contrasted with, an epistemology which defends, with Kant, the position that raw experience and sensation do not constitute knowledge.

Second, I have juxtaposed the notion of heteronomous as well as demystifying ethical learning processes and the contextualist and polylogical procedures of judgement. These constitute different narratives about morality and cognition than the ones criticized by feminists arguing from paradigm I. I have argued that Kantian morality and judgement have both been imbedded in gender-sensitive contexts that cannot but produce dynamic processes of knowing - simultaneously self-directed and intersubjectively directed, self-critical and accountable to others. If we insert Kant's thought on gender into his critical philosophy, Kantian morals and judgement both turn out to presuppose all the way that the subject of knowledge will not follow fixed rules of conduct, and will discount its subjectivity, its proper representations of embodied existence included, in developing knowledge.

Third, our reading of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgement, drawing on Arendt's reading of the third Critique, coupled to his discussion of a female publicity, appears to deliver the philosophical foundation of the practice of the salon as the modern, political public sphere par excellence. Have we not thus defeated Habermas with Kant himself?

Meanwhile, one severe objection to Kant's line of thought is still standing: he does not avoid employing substantial conceptions of masculinity and femininity throughout his work. While Kant does courageously avoid naturalizing gender, there is a self-defeating feature to the Kantian 'solution' of the complication that gender poses with regard to human learning processes. There turns out to be one sure end to reflection. As women appear to have been granted the dubious honour of starting the motor of the dynamics discussed, we cannot be sure that Kant would ever have arrived at making the relationship between the sexes as such an issue for public or intersubjective deliberation and change. The driving force of the process is woman, that is, it has been relegated to a fixed position in the distribution of roles. Is there a profound fear resounding in Kant that the whole process of communication would break down if 'women' renounce the business of perfecting 'their' indispensable expertise in ethical and aesthetical knowledge? Would there be any guide left at all for men through the minefields of knowledge? Or will critical philosophy, after all, be sentenced to rely on mere legal
rules and 'objective' categories for arriving at some form of decency?

Thus our final doubt regards the question: could another kind of intersubjectivity, one that is less gender-bound, generate as well the sensitivities required for a Kantian attitude towards ethics and judgement? Kant does give us hints which show a way out of this perplexity and provide for an open ending to the future of gender.

6.4.4 Against closure: some open endings.

The section on gender in *Anthropology* concludes:

Also in this respect nature has put into her economy so rich a treasure of arrangements for its end, which is nothing less than the preservation of our species, that, in case of further investigations, for a long time there will be enough material to provide these with problems

Kant here states the open end to our reflections on nature and its development, for it knows such profuse possibilities to arrange relationships between the sexes. In his *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* (1784) he again turns to the problem of knowing nature and the way it unfolds as human history. He acknowledges that "it would seem that only a novel could result" from the "philosophical attempt to work out a universal history of the world in accordance with a plan of nature aimed at a perfect civil union of mankind." (51-52, Reiss) Kant obviously wavers. He wants to safeguard a belief in humanity's progress while understanding that this is not to be founded in any epistemologically secure theory of history. He grants that, in the last instance, we probably have to admit that the 'telos of nature' develops as a narrative does. We can know the 'plan of nature', that is, human nature, only in fictitional terms, as the 'author' of this nature will always be one of its very subjects - a human subject. This author is nothing more, or less, than a reader of the story unfolding before her.

*Hayden White* (1973) commented on the ambivalence of late-eighteenth-century historians who aspired to analyse the social process in view of certain social goals and provide a legitimate account of specific representations of historical data. "The result of this conflict between the means of historical representation and the end to which it was meant to contribute was to drive history into a position that was overtly and militantly Ironic." (48) He argues that what nineteenth century historical thinkers "objected to most in Enlightenment historiography was its essential irony" (47); they rebelled against the late-eighteenth-century "fictionalization" of history. (49)

Kant regarded all .. modes of conceiving the historical process as equally "fabulous" or equally "fictive". They represented to him evidence of the mind's capacity to impose different

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kinds of formal coherence on the historical process, different possibilities of its emplotment, the products of different aesthetic apprehensions of the historical field. But Kant stressed the moral implications of these aesthetic choices, the effects that the decision to emplot or conceive the historical process in a specific way might have on the way one lived history, the implications they would have for the way one conceived one's present and projected a future for oneself and other men. (56-57)

For the purpose of writing histories of gender, ones which could make a difference to our future, we assume one or other arrangement of the data and texts existing out there. Even if in everyday life we do not arrive at perceiving anything else than a disordered world and are not able to detect the final mechanism, we still need the idea of the narrative device to guide us in continuing to describe at least some of the broad outlines that organize our experiences.

Adopting the same, optimistic Kantian mood, let us - paraphrasing Theodor Adorno (1966) - conclude that, while never obsolete in the first place, feminist philosophy did 'miss the moment to realize itself' - but there will be feminist philosophies, and feminist histories, instead.
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SAMENVATTING

VERHALEN OVER SEKSE IN DE VERLICHTING. De representatie van moderniteit ter diskussie.

Het begrip 'Verlichting' wordt in de diskussie tussen modernen en postmodernen in het algemeen als synoniem voor 'moderniteit' gebruikt. 'Modern' kan onderwijl van alles betekenen: diverse teksten en interpretaties daarvan dienen zich aan als mogelijke bron, en diverse inhoudelijke omschrijvingen zingen rond. Moderniteit wordt niet gevonden, maar uitgevonden, telkens weer. Dit boek wil vooral onderzoeken hoe 'moderniteit' zich verhoudt tot 'vrouwen'. In het geval van een 'moderne vrouw' zijn bronnen en betekenissen nog veel ongrijpbaarder. De representatie van vrouwen wordt in de moderniteit toenemend een symbolische of tropische (beeldsprakige), en daarnaast zijn opmerkingen over sekse i.h.a., in moderne filosofische teksten verspreid over allerlei soorten diskussies. Er is dan ook niet zozeer sprake van een 'identiteitspolitiek' in die teksten maar van een debat over sekse in verband met - blijkbaar - aangrenzende thema's als sociabiliteit, sentiment, rationaliteit, burgerlijke maatschappij, etc.. De moderne vrouw is, met andere woorden, onderwerp van metonymische diskussie.

Dit boek is een onderzoek naar de filosofische genealogie van de 'moderne vrouw'. Wat onderzocht wordt is de gelijktijdige representatie van moderniteit en sekse in zowel hedendaagse als Verlichtingsteksten, een representatie die politieke, sociale en esthetische dimensies heeft. De sleutelconcepten in het onderzoek zijn daarmee moderniteit, sekse, en representatie.

De diskussie over de emancipatoire waarde van Verlichtingsdenken in het feminisme lijkt op de algemeen-filosofische diskussie daarover: moeten we voor of tegen de Verlichting zijn? Of de oordelen nu positief of negatief uitvallen, ze hebben gemeen dat ze de betekenis van 'de' Verlichting veronderstellen. In het voetspoor van Kant wil deze studie de vraag 'Wat is Verlichting?' op de agenda houden. Dit is de vraag die postmodernen zelf nu net niet stellen, in weerwil van hun eigen nadruk op de discursieve processen van representatie van de geschiedenis. De bekende postmoderne optie is het 'grote verhaal' als tegenstander te kiezen, maar dit wordt daardoor tegelijkertijd in het leven geroepen - tevens onthult deze strategie het eigen heroïsche zelfbeeld. Er is een andere optie: het geconstrueerde grote verhaal te vervangen door 'kleine verhalen', oftewel interpretaties en varianten van verhalen, die de titel van Verlichting kregen. Een postmodernistisch 'tegen-discours' ontwikkelen wordt ingewikkelder wanneer de representatie van de Verlichting zelf onderwerp van debat blijft. Een opnieuw vooropstellen van beschrijvingen kan de neiging tot 'grand theory' tegengas bieden. Wat in de postmoderne kritiek van 'de Verlichting' onvoldoende verdiente werd zijn kwesties die verschillende hermeneutische filosofen en geschiedfilosofen hebben aangekaart: de perspectiviteit van waarheid en het probleem van onbeslisbaarheid van betekenis. De kritiek lijkt in weerwil van haar eigen opvattingen met betrekking tot processen van betekenisgeving de Verlichting te 'vinden' in plaats van 'uit te vinden'.
In feministische theorievorming komen vormen van 'grand theory' vooral tot uitdrukking in de veronderstelling van een rigide dualistisch modern denken dat de bron zou vormen van uitsluiting en discipline van vrouwen. Maar dit beeld volgt niet noodzakelijk uit de teksten van de vroege moderniteit: het is veel grilliger. De 'onrust' rond 'sekse' in die teksten kan eerder gerelateerd worden aan een specifiek moderne problematiek van contingentie dan aan een zgn. 'foundationalist' filosofie. Verschillende filosofen hebben er op gewezen dat dichotomieën als natuur-cultuur of natuur-sociale in de moderne tijd juist aan betekenis verliezen. Natuur, of lot, worden niet zozeer ontkend of onderdrukt, maar lossen op in de steeds grotere voorrang die menselijk, dus sociaal en politiek, handelen krijgt in de verklaring van problemen. In het verlengde van die observaties ligt mijn these dat in de moderne filosofie vrouwen niet zozeer met natuur maar eerder met cultuur worden geassocieerd, en de betekenis van dit artefact 'vrouw' dan ook niet eenduidig gefundeerd maar integendeel principieel omstreden zaak geworden is. Ook een dichotomie als rede-emotie is onbruikbaar om seksisme in het moderne denken aan te hangen. Rationalistisch feminisme heeft als probleem dat ten eerste claims op rationaliteit zeer divers van aard zijn, ten tweede vaak verhuld hebben hoe ze dominante sekse posities bevestigen en dus verweven zijn met een specifieke wil tot macht. De toevlucht nemen tot 'emotie' is al even problematisch ten eerste vanwege de geïmpliceerde tegenstelling tot een kritisch-analytische positie en ten tweede omdat het zelf centraal heeft gestaan in dominante moderne discoursen (bijv. van de Schotse Verlichting) en dus geen zins een 'anti-moderne' kritische categorie vertegenwoordigt. Een conceptueel realisme dreigt waarin emotie als historisch ongedifferentieerd 'eeuwig idee' 'herontdekt' moet.

In plaats van op dualismen of dialectieken wil deze studie de aandacht vestigen op de moderne politiek van metonymie ten aanzien van sekse - die zowel een feministische als anti-feministische signatuur kan hebben. De betekenis van begrippen als natuur, fortuna, rede, en emotie, en die van sekse zijn contigu. De bestaande hoeveelheid betekenissen maakt politieke toëigening van één specifieke associatie een verloren zaak.

Een feministische hermeneutiek werkt binnen de spanningsverhouding tussen het kritische motief van de moed te weten (Kant) en de disciplinerende werking van de wil tot weten (Foucault). Als we 'postmodern auteur' willen zijn moeten we blijven beseffen zowel lezer als auteur van de geschiedenis te zijn. In plaats van de juiste interpretatie vast te stellen moet dan het probleem van mogelijkheid van overeenstemmend over de beschrijving zelf zoveel mogelijk expliciet het kernprobleem zijn. De door mij voorgestelde 'descriptieve wending' heeft tot doel een dergelijke habitus te bevorderen, en daarmee een alternatief te vormen voor de notie dat dualisme het moderne denken regeert. Ze beoogt ten eerste zo min mogelijk coherentie aanspraken in het vaststellen van 'de structuur' van modern seksisme te belonen waar deze alternatieve lezingen wegredigeren, ten tweede niet een moderne 'uitsluiting' van vrouwen centraal te stellen in feministisch onderzoek maar hun 'insluiting', dat is, de metonymische diskussies over sekse, en ten derde seksisme niet in 'de teksten zelf' te lokaliseren maar te conceptualiseren als moment in de
representatie van die teksten.

Twee verdere conceptuele alternatieven dienen zich aan: de notie dat ironie in plaats van dualisme moderne discoursen kenmerkt, en de notie dat contingentie in plaats van 'foundationalism' de karakteristieke epistemologische achtergrond vormt van moderne benaderingen van sekse. De kwestie van onbeslisbaarheid van betekenis kan verbonden worden met noties van het ambivalente en ironische karakter van moderne linguistische praktijken. Ironie wordt vaak opgevoerd als politiek-kritische positie tegenover een dominant modern discours, maar kan beter begrepen worden juist als eigenschap van moderne kennis regimes: ironie hoort niet thuis bij een anti-moderne ethiek maar in een analytica van moderniteit. Het begrip verwijst naar de omvangrijkheid en complexiteit van de moderne kennis productie ten aanzien van 'sekses', de tegenstrijdige of incompatibele typen en inhouden van die kennis. Ook het begrip contingentie staat in deze studie naar Verlichting en sekse niet zozeer centraal vanwege inhoudelijke associaties tussen particulariteit, accidentaliteit, lot, of wanorde, en vrouwelijkheid, maar om de epistemologische status die contingentie heeft in de moderne zelfopvatting. Contingentie vormt in feite de noemer van het project van moderniteit: op welke wijzen kan menselijk handelen de wereld wel en niet maken? Moderniteit vereist de notie van contingentie in plaats van deterministicatie: het is de conceptuele voorwaarde voor een begrip van vrij menselijk handelen. In een andere betekenis staat contingentie juist voor de grenzen aan de maakbaarheid van de wereld door mensen, voor de notie dat totale controle een illusie is. Moderne betekenisgeving aan sekse komt tot stand in die contingente wereld, wat resulteert in een agonistisch kennisveld. Kort toegelicht: wat betreft kennis over sekse komen de wil tot weten en de wil niet te weten te staan tegenover de moed te weten.

Zoals gezegd is naast moderniteit en sekse, representatie een sleutelbegrip in deze studie. Moderniteit wordt door postmoderne kritici vaak aangeduid als het 'paradigma van representatie', waarbij representatie staat voor de claim realistische weergaven van objectieve feiten te geven. Feministische kritieken van de representatie van vrouwen hanteren veelal eenzelfde definitie van het begrip representatie. In navolging van Hanna Pitkin onderscheid ik representatie als *Darstellung*, wat bovenstaande definitie min of meer dekt, van representatie als *Vertretung*. Met dit laatste begrip wordt representatie begrepen in termen van een handelingstheorie en komen kwesties als het proces van representatie en woordvoerderschap naar voren. De paradox die inherent is aan het begrip re-presenteren blijft hier consequent in stand: het op een of andere manier aanwezig maken van iets dat niettemin niet letterlijk of feitelijk aanwezig is. Het begrip leent zich daarmee bij uitstek voor een studie van de representatie van vrouwen en is conceptuele hulp bij de feministische kritieken op essentialisme en identiteitspolitic.

Het laatste thema in het eerste hoofdstuk is de relevantie van de categorie van 'het sociale' voor feministische begripsvorming van moderniteit. In de betreffende paragraaf wordt de afhankelijkheid van feministische theorievorming van dit 'sociale' in kaart gebracht en getracht tegenover deze 'sociale afhankelijkheid' een conceptie van feministische politiek te munten.
die beantwoordt aan de ironische en contingente condities van het moderne geseksueerde bestaan.

Het klassieke liberalisme van het zeventiende-eeuwse denken over de natuurstaat en natuurrecht wordt algemeen gezien als exemplarische bron van het westere 'foundationalist' universalisme in de filosofie en van een verwetenschappelijke politiek. In hoofdstuk II geef ik een alternatieve lezing. We vinden hier de eerste aanwijzingen dat sekse van een verondersteld natuurlijke categorie verandert in een artefact van het moderne politieke leven. De ontwikkeling van de theorieën van Thomas Hobbes en John Locke impliceerden de ontwikkeling van moderne theorieën over politieke representatie. Waar de burgerlijke maatschappij begrepen gaat worden als menselijk artefact geschapen door individuen waarvan de gelijkheid gepostuleerd is, worden ook de subjecten die die maatschappij bevolken begrepen als artefacten. Voor Hobbes is het de 'theatrale' component van politieke representatie die ons moet redden van het spookbeeld van de moderne contingentie. Natuurrecht theorieën worden geïnformeerd door een 'naturalistische paradox': vrouwen en mannen zijn zowel gelijk als anders. Ik zal concluderen dat deze - typisch moderne - paradox dit type theorie ertoe leidt impliciet of expliciet het contingente en artificiële karakter van noties van sekse te conceptualiseren.

In hoofdstuk III wordt gereconstrueerd hoe in de achttiende eeuw juist de theatrale of esthetische componenten van representatie als de tegenhanger begrepen gaan worden van politieke, burgerlijke representatie. Hier wordt zowel aangesloten bij Jürgen Habermas' theorie van de ontwikkeling van moderne openbaarheid, als principiële kritiek geleverd op het model dat hij hanteert. Vrouwengeschiedenis die consequent vanuit een politiek of publiek perspectief gedacht wordt, heeft behalve de metaforen van 

markt en forum, ook die van het theater nodig. Deze metafoor kan de aandacht vestigen op wat we de 'semiotiek van modern burgerschap' kunnen noemen. Jean-Jacques Rousseau zag al dat behalve recht en deugd, stijl een belangrijke categorie is in de conceptualisering van burgerschap. Diverse auteurs hebben een oorspronkelijke oppositie gezien tussen politiek en esthetiek in de moderne politieke theorie en praktijk. In dit hoofdstuk worden beide domeinen echter begrepen als praktijken van representatie. Er bestaat een geschiedenis van verschillende stijlen van representatie die verweven is met een politieke geschiedenis van sekse. De politieke praktijk van de salon en de culturele van de rococo worden in samenhang besproken. Ze vormen een uit feministisch oogpunt 'exemplarische situatie' van een systematisch-filosofisch model voor moderne politieke representatie. Deze 'esthetische moderniteit' wordt gezien als verwant aan 'postmoderne' alternatieven voor 'identiteitspolitiek', maar is dus een politieke praktijk van representatie in het hart van het moderne denken.

Hoofdstuk IV is gewijd aan het achttiende-eeuwse republikanisme. De dominante feministische receptie heeft het republikeinse idioom gehekeld als een bij uitstek masculien politiek idioom dat ondermeer private en lichamelijke ervaringen politiek irrelevant verklaart. Ditzelfde idioom heeft echter feministische vertalingen gekregen, die de strenge demarcatie van publiek en privé juist op de agenda zetten. Het belangrijkste aanknopingspunt bij het republikeinse perspectief op politiek

In hoofdstuk V staat David Hume centraal, een van de belangrijkste critici van het filosofisch rationalisme. Terwijl een welwillende feministische receptie van Hume's sceptische filosofie te constateren is, met name in verband met een feministische zorg-ethiek, is het zeer de vraag wat deze theorie van emotief sociaal handelen feministische theorie te bieden heeft. Volgens Hume is, en moet, het sociale bestaan zoveel mogelijk gevrijwaard van politiek en rede. Ik zal concluderen dat zijn sociale theorie eerder een descriptieve waarde heeft dan een normatieve voor een feministische analytica van moderniteit.

Hoofdstuk VI besluit met een overzicht van feministische Kant-recepties. Immanuel Kant is de gedoodverfde filosoof van de moderniteit, en van een 'mannelijke' moderniteit in het bijzonder. Veel feministische evaluaties van de inhoud en betekenis van zijn werk volgen de algemeen-filosofische consensus hierover. Maar soms verschijnt een andere Kant. Er blijken inmiddels twee paradigmata's te onderscheiden te zijn waarbinnen feministen Kant kunnen lezen. In het eerste is Kant de ontwerper van een 'foundationalist' moderne filosofie van rationalistische, objectieve, universele kennis. Hij representeert dan de heroïsche obsessies van de moderne filosofie, de gewraakte pathologieën van de moderniteit. In het tweede paradigma toont Kant de noodzaak aan rationele kennis in zintuiglijke ervaring te funderen, en omgekeerd, ervaringskennis te filteren door de concepten van de rationaliteit. Hij is dan de filosoof bij uitstek van een zintuiglijk gebaseerde, empiristische rationaliteit, dat is, van een belichaamd denken en oordelen. Ik zal de verschillende feministische kritieken confronteren met Hannah Arendt's lezing van Kants Derde Kritiek (van het oordeelsvermogen) als potentiële politieke theorie. Ik zal concluderen dat aandacht geven aan een zeker bewustzijn van sekse in zijn denken ons ontwankelijk maakt voor de sociale, ethische en esthetische dynamieken die hij conceptualiseert. Een feministische lezing van Kant wordt daarmee mogelijk die de reguliere associaties van zijn denken met gefixeerde dualismen en hogere en lagere vormen van ethiek, esthetiek en burgerschap verlaat, en zich richt op zijn poging esthetische en politieke procedures van representatie te verzoenen.
1. That feminism is not a 'grand narrative' feeding on a circumscribed canon of 'founding texts' but rather an ensemble of creative hermeneutic interventions in established bodies of theory, is once again affirmed by showing how its intellectual history feeds on diverse critical and democratic philosophies of modernity. (This thesis)

2. Enlightenment has been erroneously presented as the ultimate discourse of an assured, decisive humanism. Newly relating its narratives of ambivalence, its themes of contingency, irony, and critique, safeguards feminism from being drawn into the novel grand and heroic narrative of postmodernity. (This thesis)

3. Securing a space for voicing women's experiences of dominance in the face of popular as well as state discourses on either accomplished emancipation or 'how far we have already come' in emancipation, is tied up with the elaboration of the notion of an 'ironic history of gender' as opposed to a 'whig history' of 'women's liberation'. (This thesis, esp. chapter I)

4. Real love is a nominalist issue. (This thesis, ch. III)

5. Whether or not insisting on politics' distinctions is a masculinist vice neglectful of many vital features of human life, depends on the type of 'politics' in question. A performative approach to politics, for instance, can show obsession with politics to be a feminist virtue instead of a macho vice. (This thesis, chapter IV)

6. A basically uncritical social theory like that of David Hume, who next to declaring reason to be the slave of passion also made judgement into the slave of sentiment, is not to be taken up as an epistemic framework for a feminist theory of care. (This thesis, chapter V)

7. One of the important tasks of political theory today is to counteract the wave of social and private discourses that (again) 'psychologize' individual problems as opposed to 'politicizing' them. Another pivotal task lies in articulating the discursive immersion as distinguished from the expressive status of political statements, in order to disprove the declared obvious legitimacy of populist utterings.

8. In the recent debates on 'Dutch identity', there has been insufficient attention to the
possibilities of coining an 'inverted nationalism' by accentuating the historically 'invented' as opposed to 'founded' status of this identity, and by articulating this Dutch identity in terms of the 'other' it projects through the logic of its self-image.

9. The term 'feminist philosophy' has, compared with the term 'women's studies in philosophy', the virtue of more astutely articulating a contested relationship between politics and philosophy, while the latter term first, suggests a narrow critical endeavour 'about' and 'by' women, and second, draws this endeavour into a justificatory technical language of existing academical disciplines (which, though, in turn may have its proper strategic advantages).

10. If feminist philosophy (or women's studies in philosophy) is taught by persons not - by regular academic criteria - demonstrably qualified in it, a paradoxical and perverse shifting of weights has come about in the above mentioned contested relationship between politics and philosophy. That is, it has become 'merely politics' as opposed to systematic intellectual reflection, in other words, it has been stopped short in the aspiration to employ the maxims of professional academic labour and is ranged under issues of public debate and academic sexual politics.

11. In the revived quests of the past decades for 'Jewish identity', this has increasingly become a privatized and newly religiously defined category, instead of being expressed in the public, secular, and intellectual forms available in prewar history.

12. In the light of Arendt's distinction between 'work' and 'labour' - meant to contrast 'the making of the world' with 'drudging in order to survive' - the expression 'working at your relationship' should in lots of cases be replaced by 'labouring on your relationship'.

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