we call a subsistence perspective.... This was already clear to Mahatma Gandhi 60 years ago, who, when asked by a British journalist whether he would like India to have the same standard of living as Britain, replied: "To have its standard of living a tiny country like Britain had to exploit half the globe. How many globes will India need to exploit to have the same standard of living?"[27] From an ecological and feminist perspective, moreover, even if there were more globes to be exploited, it is not even desirable that this development paradigm and standard of living was generalized, because it has failed to fulfill its promises of happiness, freedom, dignity and peace, even for those who have profited from it.

NOTES

1. Mies, Maria, et al, *Women: The Last Colony,* Zed Books, London, 1988; Mies, M. (1991) *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labor,* Zed Books, London, 1991.

2. Kurz, R. *Der Kollaps der Modernisierung, vom Zusammenbruch des Kasernensozialismus zur Krise der Weltökonomie.* Eichborn Verlag, Frankfurt, 1991.

3. Mies, et al, *Women.*

...

5. Kurz, R. *Der Kollaps der Modernisierung,* p. 101.

6. Ibid., p. 102.

...

8. Dar es Salaam Declaration: Alternative Development Strategies for Africa. Institute for African Alternatives (IFAA), London, 1989.

9. Ibid.

10. Dankelman, I. and J. Davidson, *Women and Environment in the Third World. Alliance for the Future.* Earthscan Publications, London, 1988. Women's Feature Service (ed.) *The Power to Change: Women in the Third World Redefine their Environment.* Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1992; Zed Books, London, 1993.

11. Joshi, Gopal (1988) Alltag im Himalya, in: Tüting, Ludmilla (ed.), *Menschen, Bäume, Erosionen, Kahlschlag im Himalya; Wege aus der Zerstörung.* Der Grune Zweig, Lohrbach, pp. 38–41.

...

21. Gothe, Lothar and Meggie Lucke, *Land in Sight,* Cologne, 1990.

...

23. Bookchin, Murray, *Toward an Ecological Society.* Black Rose Books, Montreal, Buffalo, 1986. Mies, 1991, op. cit. Ackelsberg, Martha and Irene Diamond, "Is Ecofeminism a New Phase of Anarchism?" Paper presented at Eighth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Douglass College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 8–10 June, 1990.

24. Ackelsberg and Diamond, op. cit.

25. Diamond, Irene and Gloria Feman-Orenstein, *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism,* Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1990.

...

27. Quoted by Kamla Bhasin, op. cit., p. 11.

SANDRA HARDING

Borderlands Epistemologies

TWO PROBLEMATIC EPISTEMOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

The new kinds of science and technology studies that emerged after World War II were created out of the systematic gaps in modern science's self-understanding.[1] ... Of course no humans are ever able to understand fully "what we are doing," since we lack the historical long view, the

awareness of larger economic, political, and social patterns, and an understanding of the causes of our collective fears, interests, preferences, and desires that subsequent histories, sociologies, political economies, and psychologies reveal.

... [I]n the early 1960s historian Thomas Kuhn had called for more of the kind of social history of modern science that could "display the historical integrity of ... science in its own time." These histories were to explain scientific and technological change in ways that the prevailing intellectual histories could not.... Of course these social histories would not turn out to be merely an additive project that left untouched conventional understandings of how the sciences have worked, for Kuhn's account revealed a different pattern to the growth of knowledge than the intellectual histories had detected....

The older, "internalist" histories and philosophies of science that many of us learned were not just accidentally silent about such matters. Rather, they had denied the relevance and legitimacy of such accounts to understanding how science "really works." Such social accounts might explain how societies provided many of the resources scientific research requires, how they sometimes influenced the selection of which scientific projects were to be pursued, and how they applied the information science produced. And they could explain how politics sometimes managed to lead science down wrong paths, as with Lysenkoism and Nazi so-called science. But they could not explain science's successes, the internalist histories and epistemologies claimed, since these were the product not of such social factors, but of nature's order and the powerful features of scientific inquiry that lay entirely *inside* scientific processes. A distinctive scientific method of research, high standards of objectivity and of what can count as good reasoning, a critical attitude toward traditional belief, the distinctive metaphysics of nature that distinguished primary and secondary qualities, the use of mathematics to express nature's order, the particular way modern scientific communities have been organized—these and other features *internal* to science were especially suited to discovering nature's order.... The post–World War II science and technology studies pointed out, however, that this internalist dogma, as some referred to it, left mysterious the answers to kinds of historical questions that are considered necessary to understand each and every other product of human activity.[3]

The internalist epistemology obscured why modern science emerged when and where it did, how it changed over time, and how its culture and practices coevolved with those of other social institutions, such as the economy and state. Of course it was this epistemology of modern science—its method, standards of objectivity and rationality, the necessity of such features for social progress—that had long been used to justify the unique authority of the modern West in global political relations. Consequently, the discovery of these systematic and suspicious gaps were one source of rising global skepticism about the desirability and legitimacy of the authority of the West more generally. Widespread recognition of such failures has produced what is referred to as the epistemological crisis of the modern West.

...

Two strategies for resolving the "crisis" that have been favored in post-Kuhnian science studies appear problematic from the perspective of postcolonial and feminist science and technology studies.[4] One project has been to try to patch up this conventional epistemology by responding to some criticisms of it and dismissing others without abandoning its fundamental internalist principle.... These revisionists think that the prevailing epistemology of modern science should be retained in a modified form....

Another project, characteristic of many northern sociologists and ethnographers of sciences, is to agree with much more of the criticism of internalist epistemology—indeed, these theorists have themselves produced a great deal of it. But they presume that the only reasonable solution is to abandon epistemological projects completely and forswear the arrogance of presuming the political and intellectual appropriateness of the "policing of thought" that they think this requires.[5] They conceptualize all epistemological projects as necessarily internalist.[6] The only alternatives to such epistemologies are to be descriptive histories, sociologies, and

ethnographies of science that disavow the normative stance taken by epistemologies. They try to substitute "sciences" of natural sciences, namely social sciences and more accurate historical accounts of natural sciences, for epistemologies of science....

While revised internalist epistemologies or the "abandonment" of epistemology have sometimes been the favored strategies in postcolonial and feminist science studies, a third approach has clearly emerged in both, which makes use of the resources of "borderlands" locations and states of mind. This is the approach of standpoint epistemologies....

WHAT IS A STANDPOINT? CULTURAL AND POLITICAL EPISTEMOLOGICAL RESOURCES

... The concept of a standpoint arose from women's political struggles to see their concerns represented in public policy and in the natural and social science disciplines that have shaped such policy. These epistemologies propose that there are important resources for the production of knowledge to be found in starting off research projects from issues arising in women's lives rather than only from the dominant androcentric conceptual frameworks of the disciplines and the larger social order. Two kinds of "difference" provide independent arguments for abandoning the internalist epistemology of the modern West. One appeals to *politically* assigned locations in social hierarchies, such as those created by class, racism, imperialism, or sexism. The other appeals to *culturally* created locations, such as Chinese versus Puerto Rican, or Confucian versus Catholic. Though analytically distinguishable, in daily life the pervasiveness of political relations within and between cultures insures that different cultural resources almost never have equal political status.[9]

Intellectual and Social Histories of Standpoint Epistemologies

The intellectual history of feminist standpoint theory conventionally is traced to Hegel's reflections on what can be known about the master/slave relationship from the standpoint of the slave's life in contrast to the far more distorted understanding of it available from the perspective of the master's life. From the perspective of the master's activities, everything the slave does appears to be the consequence either of the master's will or of the slave's lazy and brutish nature. The slave does not appear fully human. However, from the standpoint of the slave's activities, one can see her smiling at the master when she in fact wishes to kill, playing lazy as the only form of resistance she can get away with, and scheming with the slave community to escape. The slave can be seen as fully human. Marx, Engels, and Lukacs subsequently developed this insight into the "standpoint of the proletariat," from which were produced theories of how class society operates.[10] In the 1970s, several feminist thinkers independently began reflecting on how the Marxian analysis could be transformed to explain how structural and symbolic gender relations had consequences for the production of knowledge....

A *social* history of standpoint theory would focus on the kinds of criticisms of prevailing institutions, their cultures, and practices that appear when formerly silenced peoples begin to gain public voice. On the one hand, these voices argue for applying the existing methods, rules, and procedures more fairly in order to eliminate what they think of as the biases in the prevailing views. However, they also frequently argue that the existing conceptual frameworks, methods, rules, and procedures for inquiry are themselves constituted only from the perspective of ruling-group interests. The standpoint of some particular marginalized group can point the way to less partial and distorted conceptual frameworks, methods, rules, and procedures of inquiry. What the standpoint of any particular group consists in must be determined by empirical observation and theoretical reflection. A standpoint is an objective position in social relations as articulated through one or another theory or discourse....

The Conceptual Practices of Power[14]

Standpoint theory is not much concerned with the biases of individuals or of subgroups within the dominant culture (one laboratory or research group versus another), which are the conventional focus of internalist epistemological thinking. Rather, its concern is with the assumptions generated by "ways of life" and apparent in discursive frameworks, conceptual schemes, and epistemes, within which entire dominant groups tend to think about nature and social relations, and to use such frameworks to structure social relations for the rest of us, too.... A standpoint is not the same as a viewpoint or perspective, for it requires both science and political struggle, as Nancy Hartsock puts the point, to see beneath the surfaces of social life to the "realities" that structure it.[15]

We can pick out several major themes in standpoint approaches. First, the starting point of standpoint theory, and its claim that is most often misread, is that in societies stratified by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, or some other such politics shaping the very structure and meanings of social relations, the *activities* or lives ("labor" in the Marxian account) of those at the top both organize and set limits on what persons who perform such activities can understand about themselves and the world around them.... In contrast, the activities of those who are exploited by such social hierarchies can provide starting points for thought—for everyone's research and scholarship—from which otherwise obscured relations that people have with each other and with the natural world can become visible.

... [D]ifferent cultures are led to ask different questions about nature and social relations because of their distinctive locations in the natural world (in deserts, on waterways, in the Arctic, or on the equator), their distinctive cultural interests even in "the same" environment, their culturally local discursive legacies (the metaphors, models, narratives, and the like through which they have defined themselves as a culture and come to see the world around them), and their distinctive ways of organizing the work of producing knowledge. Chinese and Puerto Rican patterns of knowledge and ignorance will differ because of such cultural differences. However, power differences within or between cultures will also create different opportunities for systematic knowledge and systematic ignorance. The experience and lives of marginalized peoples, as they understand them, provide distinctive *problems to be explained* or research agendas that are not visible or not compelling to the dominant groups. Marginalized experiences and lives have been devalued or ignored as a source of important questions about nature and social relations, especially objectivity-maximizing ones.... It is valuable new questions that thinking from the perspective of such lives can generate.

However, the answers to such questions are never completely to be found in those experiences or lives. For the answers, one must examine critically the dominant conceptual frameworks that reflect disproportionately the interests of dominant groups. It is dominant groups who, in making what appear to them to be perfectly reasonable policies, shape marginal lives in ways not always visible within those lives. For example, women, too, have tended to see their household labor as not really work.... Thus, standpoint theories argue that it is certainly the case that each group's social situation enables and sets limits on what it can know. However, the critically unexamined dominant ones tend to be more limiting than others in this respect. What makes these social locations more limiting is their inability to generate—indeed, their interests in avoiding, devaluing, silencing—the most critical questions about the dominant conceptual frameworks. Marginalized groups have interests in asking such questions, and dominant groups have interests in not hearing them.

Of course this does not mean that all women will be able to ask the most critical questions of androcentric frameworks.... Nor does it mean that no men can ever ask them; there are plenty of examples of men doing so in the history of feminist political activism, research, and scholarship.... Standpoint theory is only pointing to how people tend to perceive their own best interests in predictable ways, though they can always find reason to pursue other interests that make exceptions to such predictions.

... Women's lives (our many different lives and different experiences) can provide the starting point for asking new, critical questions about not only those lives, but also about men's lives and the social institutions designed primarily by men to serve "humanity." Most importantly, [Dorothy] Smith argues, a sociology that is to be *for* women, rather than for the dominant social institutions and their beneficiaries must ask new questions about the causal relations between women's lives, on the one hand, and men's lives and public institutions, on the other hand.

For example, [Smith] points out that if we start thinking from women's lives, we (anyone) can see that women are assigned the work that men do not want to do for themselves, especially the care of everyone's bodies—the bodies of men, of babies and children, of old people, of the sick, and of their own bodies. And they are assigned responsibility for the local places where those bodies exist as they clean and maintain their own and others' houses and workplaces.... And men in marginalized groups often perform certain kinds of such work in restaurants, hospitals, and janitorial jobs. This kind of work, she shows, frees men in the ruling groups to immerse themselves in the world of abstract concepts. The more successful women are at this concrete work, the more invisible it becomes to men as distinctively social labor. Caring for bodies and for the places in which bodies exist disappears into nature....

She points out that if we start from women's lives, we can generate questions about why primarily women are assigned such activities and what the consequences are for the economy, the state, the family, the educational system, and other social institutions of assigning body and emotional work to one group and head work to another.[18] Such questions lead to less partial and distorted understandings of women's worlds, men's worlds, and the causal relations between them than do questions originating only in that part of human activity that men in the dominant groups reserve for themselves—the abstract mental work of management and administration.[19]

Similar accounts of the tendency of the eurocentric, colonial, or imperial mentality to conceptualize "natives" as part of nature, of their labor as not really social labor, not really part of human history, their land as empty or wasteland, are common.[20] ...

Thus, standpoint epistemology sets the relationship between knowledge and politics at the center of its account in the sense that it tries to explain the effects that different kinds of political arrangements have on the production of knowledge. Of course, the older empiricist theories of knowledge were also concerned with the effects politics have on the production of knowledge, but prefeminist empiricism conceptualizes politics as entirely a threat to the purity of scientific knowledge.[21] Empiricism tries to purify science of all such bad politics by adherence to what it takes to be rigorous methods for the testing of hypotheses.... Thought that begins from the lives of the marginalized has no chance to get its critical questions voiced or heard within such an empiricist conception of the way to produce knowledge, nor can the positive value of such "political" questions be detected within empiricist frameworks....

Thus, the standpoint claims that all knowledge attempts are socially situated, and that some of these objective social locations are better than others as starting points for knowledge projects, challenge some of the most fundamental assumptions of the scientific worldview and the western thought that take science as their model of how to produce knowledge. It sets out guidelines for a "logic of discovery" intended to maximize the objectivity of the results of research, and thereby to produce knowledge that can be for marginalized people and for those who would know what they can know....

How Can the Lives of the "Weak" Provide Resources for the Growth of Knowledge in the Natural Sciences?

Most conventional histories, sociologies, and philosophies of science assumed that science's social relations are constituted fundamentally by public, official, visible, and dramatic role players and situations—scientists and their critics who were recognized as such in their own

day, for example.... Of course, it is those who are public, official, visible, and dramatic role players ... who would make such limited and distorting assumptions about the constitution of a culture such as scientific culture.... So it was by starting off analyses from the unofficial, supportive, less dramatic, private, and invisible spheres of social life "outside science," ones that support and sustain public, official, visible, and dramatic *scientific* role players and organizations, that it has been possible to produce more accurate and comprehensive accounts of the historical integrity of sciences with their cultures. Feminist and postcolonial critiques of the conceptual frameworks of each discipline contributing to the social studies of science—history, economics, political philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology—draw our attention to unacknowledged aspects of the culture and practices of both modern sciences and the scientific and technological traditions of other cultures....

One can learn much by starting off thought from the lives of those who perform the daily routines necessary for everyone's bodily and social survival. Insofar as different groups are assigned different daily activities, they will tend to know different things about natural and social worlds.

Another way this "power of the weak" has been discussed is in terms of the advantages of the stranger or outsider. The stranger brings to research just the combination of nearness and remoteness, concern and indifference, that are central to maximizing objectivity.[24] Women, racial/ethnic minorities, the victims of imperialism and colonialism, and the poor are in some respects functionally "strangers" to the dominant cultures and practices that structure their lives—including such scientific and technological cultures and practices. Their needs and desires are not the ones that have found expression in the design and functioning of the dominant institutions.... And yet these groups are not completely outside the dominant institutions—they are no longer off in Africa or barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen. They are instead on the margins, the periphery; they are "outsiders within" or on the "borderlands," in two influential standpoint phrases.[25]

... Anyone who starts out thinking about science funding, or environmental destruction, or medical research from the perspective of the lives of those who bear a disproportionate share of the costs of these activities can learn to "follow the interests" of the latter to arrive at less partial and distorted accounts of science and technology institutions and practices.

...

The older Marxian accounts argued that certain social formations only became easily visible at certain historical moments.... Feminist theorists have described the emergence into visibility only after World War II of what has been called the "gender system"—a system that is not entirely an effect of biology, of class relations, or of some other social arrangements.[26] Of course class and gender relations are far older than the 1840s and 1950s, respectively; but their relative independence from other social formations only becomes visible at these points.... Thus, epistemic advantage with respect to any particular social formation of sciences and technologies can wax and wane at different historical moments. The ability to identify and think from those sites—to identify the contradictions within the dominant ways of organizing social life—is to enhance one's chances for more accurate and comprehensive accounts of nature and social relations.

Finally, a whole range of interpretive strategies in literary, cultural, and historical studies draws our attention to alternative readings not only of conventional texts—of spoken or written words—but also of cultural formations.... Starting from marginalized lives makes it easier to see the discursive formations that construct and continuously relegitimate dominant conceptual frameworks in the sciences and the larger societies that evolve together.

WHAT STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGIES ARE NOT

For those who still hold that maximizing objectivity requires maximizing neutrality ... standpoint epistemologies will appear relativist. From such a perspective they appear as a kind of special pleading or unreasonably claimed privileged positionality. On such a reading, empiricism is

politics-free, and standpoint theory is asserting epistemological/scientific privilege for one group at the expense of the equally valuable and/or equally distorted perceptions of other groups. All groups are "biased," they are willing to admit, so standpoint approaches are simply claiming privilege for one kind of such bias....

This interpretation of difference as mere diversity is a serious misunderstanding of social relations, as well as of political standpoint claims about the effects of power on knowledge claims. It reduces power relations to mere cultural differences. Standpoint theory leads us to turn such a way of posing the issue into a topic for historical analysis: "what forms of social relations make this conceptual framework—the view from nowhere versus special pleading—so useful, and for what purposes?" Let us look at some of these common misunderstandings of standpoint theory.

Not Only about Marginal Lives

First, standpoint theory is not only about how to get a more accurate understanding of marginal lives.... Instead, research is to *start off* from such locations in order to explain the relationship between those lives and the rest of social relations, including human interactions with nature.... The point is to produce systematic causal accounts of how the natural and social orders are organized such that the everyday lives of women and men, Europeans and those they encounter, end up in the forms that they do.

"Grounded," but Unconventionally So

The phrases "peasant experiences" and "women's experiences" can be read in an empiricist way such that these experiences are assumed to be constituted prior to the social. Major strains of standpoint theory challenge this kind of reading.[29] For a researcher to start from marginalized lives is not necessarily to take one's research problems in the terms in which marginalized people perceive or articulate their problems—and this is as true for researchers who come from these groups as it is for those who do not. The dominant discourses, their institutions, practices, favored conceptual frameworks, and languages, restrict what everyone is permitted to see and shape everyone's consciousness. Fortunately, they are not perfect at these projects, for subjugated discourses always also exist; power always also produces in its subjects visions, dreams, plans for its end. Women, like men, have had to learn to think of their domestic work not just as a "labor of love," but as a contribution to the local and national economy. Many citizens of so-called developing countries have had to reassess just who is benefitting from the "progress" that the transfer to their cultures of modern sciences and technologies is supposed to be bringing.... It is obvious that "peasant experience" or "women's experience" does not automatically generate counterhegemonic analyses, since the former often exists but only occasionally does the latter emerge. Standpoint theorists are not making the absurd claim that the new postcolonial and feminist analyses simply flow naturally from these groups' experiences.

Postcolonial and feminist analyses are not culturally neutral elaborations of people's social experiences, or what members of marginalized groups say about their lives; they are theoretical reflections on them. Marginalized experiences, and what marginalized peoples say, are crucial guides to the new questions that can be asked about nature, sciences, and social relations. Such questions arise out of the gap between marginalized interests and consciousness, on the one hand, and the way the dominant conceptual schemes organize social relations, including those of scientific and technological change. Moreover, the answers to such research questions cannot be found simply by examining more carefully marginalized lives, since marginalized interests and experiences are shaped by national and international policies and practices that are formulated and enacted far away from marginalized people's daily lives.... Standpoint theory is not calling for phenomenologies or merely rational interpretations of marginalized worlds. Nor is it arguing that only members of marginalized groups can generate knowledge that is useful to

such groups—that is *for* them. Standpoint epistemology is not an "identity politics" project for knowledge production—unless "identity" is taken as one's commitment to who one wants to be rather than only to where one has come from.

Men, too, can learn to start their thought from women's lives, and northern peoples from southern lives, as many have done. Misunderstandings come about because objectivism insists that the only alternative to its "view from nowhere" is special interest biases and ethnoknowledges that can be understood only within a relativist epistemology....

Much of the debate over just what "grounds" standpoint accounts is a consequence of the different ways feminist (and postcolonial) analyses have theorized what was problematic about internalist epistemologies. Where the internalist epistemologies insisted on the scientific priority, the greater objectivity, of outsiders' descriptions over "the natives," the new social movements have insisted that such descriptions greatly lacked objectivity, and that marginalized groups should get to express their concerns in their own terms. Their "experiences" were at least as good as the experiences of their "masters" in providing objective descriptions and explanations of the social relations between them. There was no innocent, disembodied view from nowhere possible with respect to gender, class, or race relations in which everyone was implicated, whether or not they chose to recognize such loss of innocence. The site from which more objective analyses were to emerge was not individuals' consciousness, but collective histories. One's position in such histories was crucial.... The suggestion here is that it is more important to understand how the pattern of these claims was created by what they were opposed to and how they were devalued in the mainstream epistemologies than to try to settle on one or another as the really only defensible one.

No Essential Marginalized Lives

Next, standpoint theory is not arguing that there is some kind of essential, universally adequate model of the marginalized life from which research should start off.... "Racially marginalized," "poor," and "women" are not homogenous categories; they include groups whose activities are differently shaped by their class, race, gender, ethnicity, historical period, and cultural milieu. Any presumption of uniform experiences and activities would distort the accounts that ensued. Though the conventional way of thinking about power relations tends to enshrine an oppositional, two-party relationship between a homogenized "us" and a homogenized "them," power functions in far more complex ways.

Consciousness Not Determined by Social Location

According to standpoint theorists, we each have a specific location, albeit often a complex one, in such a social matrix; but that location does not determine one's consciousness. The availability of competing discourses enables some men, for example, to think and act in feminist ways. Yet they still obviously remain men, who are thereby in determinate relations to women and men in every class and race. They can work to eliminate male supremacy, but no matter what they do, they will still be treated with the privilege (or suspicion!) accorded to men by students, sales people, coworkers, family members, and others.... The point of standpoint theory is to help move people toward liberatory standpoints, whether one is in a marginalized or dominant social location. It is an achievement, not a "natural property," of women to develop a feminist standpoint, or a standpoint of women, no less than it is for a man to do so.

An Epistemology, a Philosophy of Science, a Sociology of Knowledge, and a Method for Doing Research

Several disciplines have competed to disown (and in one case not only to claim, but to monopolize) standpoint theory....

Reflection on such rejections of standpoint theory can be illuminating, for they reveal how severely this theory diverges from the standard disciplinary models that conceptualize representations of knowledge seeking. It is more useful, I suggest, to see it as all of these projects: a philosophy of knowledge, a philosophy of science, a sociology of knowledge, a moral/political advocacy of the expansion of democratic rights to participate in making the social decisions that will affect one's life, and a proposed research method for the natural and social sciences. Each such project must always make assumptions about the others.... Our beliefs face the tribunal of experience as a network, and none are immune from possible revision when a misfit between belief and observation arises, as philosopher W. V. O. Quine put the point. Postcolonial, feminist, and post-Kuhnian social studies of science and technology have been raising challenges to conventional conceptual frameworks that have led to reexamination of empiricist assumptions about the organization of scientific communities, ideals of the knower, the known, and how knowledge should be produced, rational reconstructions of the growth of scientific knowledge, and scientific method in the sense of "how to do good research." Standpoint theory's claims have effects on and must draw resources from all of these fields.

Not Damagingly Relativist

... In everyday talk, "standpoint" is used interchangeably with "view," "perspective," and other such locational terms that are relativist not only in that they are socially located, but also in that all have equal authority; none is inherently more advantaged or privileged than any other. However, in the originating analyses on which standpoint theorists reflected, starting off thought from the master's life was not just as good as starting off from the slave's life to understand the master/slave relationship. Nor was the view from bourgeois lives supposed to be just as good as the view from workers' lives to explain how capitalist economic relations worked. In these cases, the exploited social position offered the possibility of a critical perspective on the dominant institutional and conceptual systems. Thanks to African American history and labor history we have come to understand systems of slavery and of class societies in ways that were not visible from the lives of those benefiting from such systems.

Claims can be sociologically or historically "relativist" in the sense of locating a distinctive pattern of thought in its historical and social context: different cultures (classes, genders, historical epochs) tend to favor different patterns of thought. But that still leaves us with the possibility of adopting a position of cognitive or epistemological relativism, or not; it does not force us to a relativist position.... [Standpoint epistemology] argues that such different local knowledge systems each have their own distinctive resources for and limitations on understanding ourselves and the natural and social worlds around us. The practical challenge raised by post–World War II science and technology studies is to understand which are the resources and which the limitations for any given knowledge system, and which systems are best for which knowledge production projects.

CONCLUSION

... Standpoint approaches can show us how to detect values and interests that constitute scientific projects, ones that do not vary between legitimated observers, and the difference between those values and interests that enlarge and those that limit our descriptions, explanations, and understandings of nature and social relations. Standpoint approaches provide a map, a method, for maximizing a "strong objectivity" in the natural and social sciences. They provide more objective ways of explaining the limitations of standard accounts of nature and social relations, and the surprising strengths of the post-Kuhnian, postcolonial, and feminist studies of science and technology that have emerged since World War II.

However, they may not always be the best way to articulate why a particular knowledge seeking strategy is preferable.... My point here is that the preference for one epistemology over another can reasonably be as strategic as the preference for one scientific theory over another: it provides the kind of map we need to get us where we want to go. Of course we then must justify why it is *there* that we want to go. Borderlands have emerged as expanding and crowded territories of contemporary social life. Standpoint epistemologies articulate how important forms of knowledge can be produced from such "territories." ...

NOTES

1. Langdon Winner made this point in his "The Gloves Come Off: Shattered Alliances in Science and Technology Studies," *Social Text* 46–47 (1996), 81–92.

...

3. See, for example, W. V. O. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," in his *From a Logical Point of View* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953). See chapter 15 of Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivism Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) for a good overview of the historical changes and intellectual ferment of the post–World War II period that produced and surrounded the emerging "epistemological crisis of the modern West," including major streams of the science and technology studies examined here. Richard Bernstein's *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983) and Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979) were two immensely influential books by philosophers that diagnosed how "the crisis" was emerging across broad swaths of European and North American natural and social sciences and their philosophies.

4. As noted in earlier chapters, these three streams of science and technology studies are by no means entirely separate; they have interacted and their arguments often coincide. Some writers and writings, such as the latest stages of the gender and sustainable development debates and Donna Haraway's work, for example, clearly have been shaped by all three tendencies. Nevertheless, most of the post–World War II science and technology writings have not drawn on this full range of analyses; they are still constrained by pre-Kuhnian, Eurocentric, and/or androcentric understandings of modern science.

5. The idea is Michel Foucault's. See, for example, his *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977,* trans. Cohn Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (New York: Random House, 1980).

6. As I have argued in a somewhat different context, in this respect they are as conservative as the internalists, who agree that there is no reasonable epistemological alternative to their own program. See my chapter 7, "Feminist Epistemology after the Enlightenment," in *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

...

9. The resources of such culturally specific standpoints were explored especially in chapter 4. Early feminist standpoint theories were explicitly concerned with the effects on knowledge of the politics of men's and women's culturally distinctive activities. How have the systematic patterns of knowledge and ignorance in the modern West reflected the exclusion of women from the conceptualization of sociological or philosophical problems, for example, and the relative absence of men from the childcare, household labor, and emotional labor which had been assigned primarily to women? See, e.g., Nancy Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," in *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science,* ed. Sandra Harding and Merrill Hintikka (Dordrecht: Reidel/Kluwer, 1983); Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), chapter 11; Hilary Rose, "Hand, Brain, and Heart: A Feminist Epistemology for the Natural Sciences," *Signs* 9:1 (1983); Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Sociology for Women* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987); and *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990). Smith's essays collected in these volumes had been appearing since the mid-1970s. See also my discussions of standpoint theories in *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), and in *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?*

10. Of course, there were many problems with the way the proletarian standpoint was conceptualized. After Lukacs's work on it, feminist theorists were the next to try to use the resource of a specifically Marxian understanding of the relationship between "doing" and knowing to develop an epistemology. Of course Foucault had meanwhile been exploring power/knowledge relations in ways that lead readers to the disavowal of any epistemological projects at all. See his *Power/Knowledge.* Fredric Jameson has argued that the feminist standpoint theorists are the only contemporary thinkers currently working explicitly with the Marxian epistemological legacy. See George Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1971); Jameson, "History and Class Consciousness as an 'Unfinished Project,'" *Rethinking Marxism* 1 (1988): 49–72; F. Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific," in *The Marx and Engels Reader,* ed. R. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1972).

...

14. The heading is borrowed from Smith's book, *Conceptual Practices.*

15. Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint."

...

18. Of course body work and emotional work also require head work—contrary to the long history of sexist, racist, and class biased views. See, e.g., Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking* (Boston: Beacon, 1989). And the kind of head work required in administrative and managerial work—what Smith means by "ruling"—also involves distinctive body and emotional work, though it is not acknowledged as such. Think of how much of early childhood education of middle-class children is really about internalizing a certain kind of (gender specific) regulation of bodies and emotions.

19. See the very similar accounts, independently produced, in Hartsock's "Feminist Standpoint" and Rose's "Hand, Brain, and Heart." Feminist standpoint theory was an idea whose time had arrived in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

20. See, for example, Amin, *Eurocentrism;* J. M. Blaut, *The Colonizers' Model of the World* (New York: Guilford Press, 1993); and Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development* (London: Zed, 1989).

21. I specify "prefeminist empiricism" here since some of the feminist philosophical empiricists, such as Helen Longino, who have always understood the importance of progressive politics for "eliminating bias" from purportedly value-free claims, have recently begun to permit somewhat more expanded contributions for such politics, while nevertheless drawing a firm line between their projects and the standpoint centering of relations between politics and knowledge that directs us all to "start off thought from marginal lives" in order to gain more accurate and comprehensive accounts. See her *Science as Social Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

...

24. Patricia Hill Collins has discussed this in *Black Feminist Thought.*

25. "Outsider within" is Patricia Hill Collins's phrase; see her *Black Feminist Thought.* As indicated above, *Borderlands* is Gloria Anzaldúa's term.

26. See my "Why Has the Sex/Gender System Emerged into Visibility Only Now?" in *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science,* ed. Sandra Harding and Merrill Hintikka (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1983).

...

29. Feminist standpoint ambiguities and ambivalences about the role to be assigned to women's experiences have been the topic of innumerable discussions. See, for example, Rosemary Hennessy, *Feminist Materialism and the Politics of Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 1993); and many discussions in sociology journals of Smith's work in particular. However, one strain throughout standpoint theory's history within feminism, more strongly emphasized in some writings than in others, has been that women's experiences are themselves generated from within discourses—prevailing, or subjugated, or newly constructed through feminisms. Neither women's experiences nor their subjectivities are constituted prior to "the social." Accessible discussions of this topic more generally can be found in Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1987).

...