

Excerpts from award winning feminist scholar [Donna Haraway's work A Cyborg Manifesto \[chapter 4 specifically\]](#).

From what I can tell, this entire book is about the fact that central tenets of feminist ideology are in direct contradiction to observations made in fields like sociobiology and evolutionary psychology. This work is an attempt to lay out a strategy to rescue the ideology and allow them to proceed without altering it. The strategy she follows here is the same that [Jordan Peterson lays out plainly in this video between 2:48-4:10](#)

*Is there a specifically feminist theory of knowledge growing today which is analogous in its implications to theories which are the heritage of Greek science and of the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century? Would a feminist epistemology informing scientific inquiry be a family member to existing theories of representation and philosophical realism? Or should feminists adopt a radical form of epistemology that denies the possibility of access to a real world and an objective standpoint?*

**Should we come up with a "feminist science" to address the contradiction between feminist ideology and the biological sciences? Or should we undermine the authority of science by asserting that it is not possible to make any claims about reality? [the post-modern approach]**

*Feminists taking responsibility for modern origin stories - that is, for biology - may try to get the story right, to **clean up shoddy science about evolution and brains and hormones**, to show how biology really comes out right with no conflict between reason and authority. Or feminists may more boldly announce a completely new birth. In both cases, feminists are contesting for a voice. And so rhetorical strategies, the contest to set the terms of speech, are at the centre of feminist struggles in natural science.*

**Feminists must focus on setting the terms of legitimate speech and scientific inquiry.**

*What are the degrees of freedom for feminist reshaping of the production of science? Again, let us approach our question by exploring rhetorical strategies presented in the texts at hand. Susan Leigh Star makes the pervasive theme explicit in *Genes and Gender*: power to determine the language of discourse is the power to make flesh, to somatize our oppression. We have no language at present that does not reflect a Cartesian nature/nurture dichotomy for discussing sex differences. **It is difficult to resist the urge to ask, 'But what, underneath it all, really are the differences between men and women. What we must begin to give voice to as scientists and feminists is that there is no such thing, or place, as underneath it all.** Literally, empirically, physiologically, anatomically, neurologically ... the only accurate locus for research about us who speak*

*to each other is the changing, moving, complex web of our interactions in light of the language, power structures, natural environments (internal and external), and beliefs that weave it in time.*

**Feminists must dogmatically assert that there are no differences between men and women.**

*But the critique of **bad science** that glides into a radical doctrine that **all scientific statements are historical fictions made facts through the exercise of power** produces trouble when feminists want to talk about producing feminist science which is more true, not just better at predicting and controlling the body of the world.*

...

*The process of exposing bad science, showing the fictive character of all science, and then proposing the real facts results in repeated unexamined contradictions in the feminist essays in both books. These contradictions are important.*

**Here she runs straight into the problem with post-modernism: if their claim is that no assertions about the nature of reality can be made, they cannot simultaneously assert that their own version of reality is correct.**

*Nancy Hartsock and Sandra Harding try to overcome this dilemma by arguing in slightly different ways that, because of our historical position, women can have a theory of objectivity, of the radical material-social production of knowledge, and of the possible end of dominating by naming. We have nothing to hide, so the self will not play its usual tricks and recede while substituting a fetish. Subject and object can cohabit without the master-slave domination. **Harding and Hartsock work from the Marxist premise that those suffering oppression have no interest in appearances passing for reality and so can really show how things work.** Life and human sciences have merely been obscured by the position of the knowers on top. I find this approach promising.*

**Oh perfect Marxism to the rescue. Science was created by men in order to facilitate oppressing women so we can't trust any of its claims about reality. WE CAN TRUST WHAT FEMINISTS SAY though because, as part of the oppressed class, they would never manipulate facts to suit a narrative.**

**AND FINALLY - JUST TO HAMMER THE POINT HOME:**

*Scientific debate about monkeys, apes, and human beings, that is, about primates, is a **social process of producing stories**, important stories that constitute public meanings. **Science is our myth.***

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*Feminism is, in part, a project for the reconstruction of public life and public meanings; feminism is therefore a search for new stories, and so for a language which names a new vision of possibilities and limits. That is, feminism, like science, is a myth, a contest for public knowledge.*

## ONE MORE BONUS

*In 'Have only men evolved', Hubbard begins with a thorough critique of theories of representation and ideologies of objectivity in science in general. For humans, language plays a major role in generating reality ... However, all acts of naming happen against a backdrop of what is socially accepted as real. The question is who has social sanction to define the larger reality into which one's everyday experiences must fit in order that one be reckoned sane and responsible ... At present science is the most respectable legitimator of new realities. {Hubbard el 01., '979, pp. 8--9}12*

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*Next Hubbard provides a nuanced reading of male-'engendered' origin stories of human evolution. But then, in the midst of discussing the difficulty of reconstructing the past, she puts in a little sentence that categorically asserts a fact: 'Since the time when we and the apes diverged some fifteen million years ago, the main features of human evolution that one can read from the palaeontological finds are the upright stance, reduction in the size of the teeth, and increase in brain size' (p. 29) Maybe, but what are the rules of interpretation that make this story unequivocally readable, and how do they differ from the rules for reading social and behavioural evolution? The main difference seems to be that there is now a non-gender-linked agreement about upright stance, so the reading is uncontested. But does the end of controversy mean that a story has achieved the status of fact, has escaped social determination, and has become objective? So suggests an innocent declarative sentence in the midst of scathing deconstruction.*