

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Modern science faces fundamental problems. Particularly through the concept of standpoint epistemology, it critiques the claim of objectivity by emphasizing that the experiences and perspectives of marginalized groups, such as women, can provide more critical and in-depth insights into scientific realities. Figures like Sandra Harding emphasize that knowledge produced from marginalized positions has the potential to reveal hidden biases within traditional scientific methodologies.¹ Evelyn Fox Keller critiques the masculine dominance in science and suggests that a more inclusive science could transform the way we understand the world. Donna Haraway, with her concept of "situated knowledge," asserts that all knowledge is situated,² and that scientific claims to objectivity must be recognized as emerging from specific social positions, rather than as universal truths free from bias. Thus, it can be understood that nothing is truly objective in science, as scientific knowledge is also shaped by social constructs, particularly in the context of marginalized feminism.

¹ Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–99; S. Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives* (Cornell University Press, 1991), 78.

² Ezgi Pehlivanli, "Masculinity of the Scientific Tradition in the Post-Truth Era: A Comparative Analysis of Sweden and Turkey," *Science, Technology and Society for a Post-Truth Age: Comparative Dialogues on Reflexivity*, 2024, 259.

In standpoint epistemology, Sandra Harding uses the term "God-Trick" to critique claims of objective knowledge that assume knowledge can be obtained from a completely neutral perspective, free from social bias. Sandra Harding employs this term to describe how scientific knowledge often claims to have a view akin to "God's view," as if it can see and understand everything without being influenced by social position or individual experience. Standpoint epistemology challenges this notion by arguing that knowledge is never entirely objective but is always shaped by social perspectives and experiences. By focusing on the experiences of marginalized groups, standpoint epistemology aims to produce more inclusive knowledge that is aware of biases, countering claims of knowledge that ignore the influence of social and cultural contexts.³ This can be seen in the following quote:

First, for standpoint theories, the grounds for knowledge are fully saturated with history and social life rather than abstracted from it. Standpoint knowledge projects do not claim to originate in purportedly universal human problematics; they do not claim to perform the "God-trick." However, the fact that feminist knowledge claims are socially situated does not in practice distinguish them from any other knowledge claims that have ever been made inside or outside

³ Sandra Harding, "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What Is 'Strong Objectivity'?", in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra Harding (New York: Routledge, 1993), 49–82, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198751458.003.0016>.

*the history of Western thought and the disciplines today; all bear the fingerprints of the communities that produce them.*⁴

From the above perspective, when viewed from the standpoint of Muslim scholars, the concept of the "God-Trick" in relation to Sandra Harding's standpoint epistemology can be seen as problematic because it neglects the spiritual and ethical dimensions of knowledge production. In Islamic tradition, knowledge is not only obtained through observation and objective reasoning but also through revelation, ethics, and moral perspectives guided by religious teachings.⁵ The "God-Trick," which asserts that knowledge can be acquired from a neutral and unbiased position, contradicts the Islamic principle that knowledge must align with higher spiritual values and guidance. In this view, considering knowledge as something that can be acquired objectively without accounting for moral and spiritual dimensions is seen as a narrow and incomplete approach, overlooking an important aspect of holistic understanding in Islamic tradition.

Although standpoint epistemology makes a significant contribution to uncovering biases and injustices in scientific structures, it also faces sharp criticism regarding the potential epistemological relativism it may lead to.⁶ Richard Rorty, for instance, criticizes standpoint epistemology for weakening universal truth

⁴ Harding.

⁵ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam an Exposition of The Fundamental Elements of The Worlview of Islam*, edisi ke-1 (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995), 96.

⁶ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1991), 112.

claims by placing all knowledge within a particular social context, which could lead to relativism.⁷ Susan Haack,⁸ in her critique of radical feminism in science, emphasizes the importance of maintaining principles of objectivity to uphold scientific integrity, although she acknowledges the need to consider diverse perspectives. On the other hand, Helen Longino, while supporting standpoint epistemology, recognizes this challenge and proposes that objectivity can be achieved through critical interaction among diverse social perspectives, thereby avoiding relativism while still valuing the experiences of marginalized groups.⁹ Therefore, although standpoint epistemology provides valuable insights into biases in science, it is crucial to balance these perspectives with scientific principles of objectivity to prevent relativism from obscuring the truth.

From the Islamic context, scientific knowledge is considered a path to understanding the signs of God's greatness and revealing true reality.¹⁰ Muslim scholars such as Al-Farabi emphasize that reason and revelation must work together in the pursuit of truth, and scientific knowledge should be grounded in objectivity and justice.¹¹ Al-Ghazali, although critical of pure rationalism, also stresses the importance of scientific methods based on evidence and strong

⁷ Richard Rorty, "13 Is Truth a Goal of Inquiry? Donald Davidson versus Crispin Wright," n.d.

⁸ Susan Haack, *Manifesto of a Passionate Moderate: Unfashionable Essays* (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 68.

⁹ Teemu Lari, "What Counts as Relevant Criticism? Longino's Critical Contextual Empiricism and the Feminist Criticism of Mainstream Economics," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 104 (2024): 88–97.

¹⁰ Ziauddin Sardar, *Explorations in Islamic Science* (Mansell Publishing, 1989).

¹¹ Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, *Madinah Al-Fadhilah* (Mesir: Maktabah al-Nafidhah, n.d.).

argumentation, avoiding relativistic claims that could obscure the truth.¹² Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in his critique of modern epistemology,¹³ emphasizes that knowledge in Islam possesses a spiritual dimension that demands integrity and objectivity, making epistemological relativism, as proposed by standpoint epistemology, incompatible with Islamic epistemological principles that prioritize absolute truth derived from God. From the Islamic context, scientific knowledge is seen as a means of uncovering absolute truth from God, with an emphasis on integrating reason and revelation in the process of its pursuit.

Furthermore, Al-Ghazali's conception of knowledge (al-'ilm) relates to a state of knowing that leads to a conviction in the heart, leaving no room for doubt.¹⁴ He states, "Certainty is an absolute condition for the soul to be considered as 'knowing.'" However, knowledge is not identical to science; science is not merely about knowing but must also be verified through research. Therefore, knowledge is an understanding accepted within the soul without doubt.¹⁵ As Al-Ghazali writes in *Risalah al-Laduniyyah*:

¹² Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Maqasid Al-Falasifah*, I (Dasmaskus: Matba' al-Dhibah, n.d.), 234.

¹³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Science and Civilization in Islam* (ABC International Group, 2001), 69.

¹⁴ Imām Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Munqiz Minad-Dalāl* (Beirut: Maktabah Saqafiyyah, tt., n.d.); Mundiri, *Logika* (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 1966); Mohammed Salah Bouchtalla, "On the Relationship Between the Sufi and the Philosopher: Ibn Arabi Mourning Ibn Rushd," *Tabayyun* 45 (n.d.): 45–62; Moh Hafid, "Islamisasi Ilmu Pengetahuan," *HAKAM: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam Dan Hukum Ekonomi Islam* 5, no. 2 (2022): 81–90, <https://doi.org/10.33650/jhi.v5i2.3501>.

¹⁵ Mundiri, *Logika*, 67.

*Knowledge (al-'ilm) is the manifestation, by the rational and tranquil soul (al-nafs al-natiqah al-mutma'innah), of the true meaning of things—their outward forms, when stripped of matter in themselves—their modes, quantities, substance, and essence, if they are simple. Thus, the knower (al-'alim) is the one who comprehends, perceives, and understands, and that which is known (al-ma'lum) is the essence of the thing, with the knowledge of it being inscribed upon the soul.*¹⁶

From this quote, it can be understood that knowledge is not limited to science but includes the recognition of God or *ma'rifatullah*. Al-Attas further elaborates on this by describing knowledge as the awareness of *al-Haqq*, emphasizing that knowledge in Islam manner of acknowledgment and recognition of God. Human beings are, by their very nature, obliged to know God through true knowledge.¹⁷ Therefore, knowledge is not confined to empirical matters alone.

In discussing the ontology of truth, Syed Naquib Al-Attas emphasizes that every civilization, or "ism" has its own unique ontological concept, shaped by its perspective on reality and the sources through which truth is attained.¹⁸ Al-Ghazali, for example,

¹⁶ "Al-Ghazali, Ar-Risālah Al-Lā-duniyyah fī Majmū' Ar-Rasā'il" "English Translation by Margareth Smith," *The Journal of The Royal Asiatic Society, Part II Vol. III* (1938), 243.

¹⁷ Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam an Exposition of The Fundamental Elements of The Worlview of Islam*, 91.

¹⁸ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam Dan Filsafat Sains*, ed. (terjemahan: Saiful Muzani), Edisi ke-1 (Bandung: MIZAN, 1995); Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993); Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslim*, Edisi ke-1 (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 2001); Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam an Exposition of The Fundamental Elements of The Worlview of Islam*.

believed that true knowledge does not solely arise from reason or the senses but also from divine revelation, which shapes his understanding of reality and truth. Ibn Sina, on the other hand, developed an ontological view rooted in reason and Aristotelian philosophy, arguing that truth can be achieved through rationality and metaphysical exploration.¹⁹ Meanwhile, Al-Farabi synthesized elements of Greek philosophy with Islamic thought, emphasizing that truth is the result of a synthesis between scientific knowledge and wisdom, reflecting the integration of various ontological perspectives in Islamic civilization.²⁰ Thus, differences in the ways and sources of knowledge lead to various ontological concepts that influence how truth is understood across traditions and civilizations.

In the context of standpoint epistemology, three contemporary Muslim scholars—Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Muhammad Iqbal, and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi—offer ontological views related to knowledge derived from spiritual experience and Islamic tradition.²¹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr stresses the importance of human nature and metaphysical reality as the foundation of ontology,²² where knowledge cannot be separated

¹⁹ Ibnu Sina, *Al-Syifa' al-Tabi'iyyah* (Kairo: Haiah Misriyyah al-'Ammah li al-Kitabah, 1975).

²⁰ Ida Ilmiah Mursidin, "Philosophical Thought of Al-Kindi and Al-Farabi," *Jurnal Al-Dustur: Journal of Politic and Islamic Law* 3, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.30863/jad.v3i1.718>.

²¹ Isma'il Rāgī A. Al-Fārūqī, "The Self in Mu'tazilah Thought," in *East-West Studies on the Problem of the Self: Papers Presented at the Conference on Comparative Philosophy and Culture Held at the College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio, April 22–24, 1965* (Springer, 1968), 87–107.

²² Harold Pashler et al., "Concepts and Evidence," *Psychological Science* 9, no. 3 (2009): 105–19.

from the spiritual and transcendent dimensions of the Divine, making standpoint epistemology rooted in the relationship between humans and God.²³ Muhammad Iqbal, who emphasizes dynamism and creativity in the pursuit of truth, suggests that Islamic ontology must combine physical and spiritual realities, meaning that an individual's perspective of knowledge is closely tied to their existential consciousness and experience.²⁴ Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, in contrast, focuses on the concept of tawhid as the foundation of ontology, asserting that all perspectives on knowledge stem from the oneness of God; thus, standpoint epistemology in Islam must integrate a holistic view that unites all human experiences under the principle of tawhid. These scholars expand the ontology in Islam to affirm that knowledge is not merely empirical experience but involves a comprehensive spiritual dimension.

Standpoint epistemology is often criticized for containing logical fallacies such as ad hominem, genetic fallacy, and false dichotomy, which can undermine the validity of its arguments.^{25,26} Karl Popper, a philosopher of science, emphasizes the importance of falsifiability and open debate in science, criticizing standpoint epistemology for leading

²³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (New York dan London: KPI, 1987).

²⁴ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction Religious Thought In Islam* (California: Stanford University Press, 2012).

²⁵ Elizabeth Anderson, "Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defense," *Hypatia* 10, no. 3 (1995): 50–84.

²⁶ Helen E. Longino, *Science as Social Knowledge: Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

to confirmation bias by prioritizing certain perspectives.²⁷ Ayn Rand also critiques standpoint epistemology as an example of the genetic fallacy, where the validity of an argument is judged based on its social origins rather than its factual merit.²⁸ Meanwhile, David Stove argues that standpoint epistemology promotes a false dichotomy by framing knowledge as a struggle between dominant and marginalized perspectives, overlooking the possibility of a more coherent and objective integration of these perspectives.²⁹ Therefore, while standpoint epistemology contributes to the understanding of social bias in science, it is important to avoid logical fallacies.

Additionally, standpoint epistemology has been criticized by figures such as Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Michel Foucault.³⁰ Kant emphasized the importance of universal rationality in building knowledge, and he might view standpoint epistemology as overly subjective and tied to individual experience, which could undermine the principles of universality in knowledge.³¹ Nietzsche, with his critique of morality and absolute truth, might argue that standpoint epistemology remains dependent on the illusion of

²⁷ Maydi Aula Riski, "Teori Falsifikasi Karl Raimund Popper: Urgensi Pemikirannya Dalam Dunia Akademik," *Jurnal Filsafat Indonesia* 4, no. 3 (2021): 261–72.

²⁸ Marie Kolkenbrock, "Superstitions of Composure: The Ayn Rand Cult and the Pop-Psychology of Self-Esteem," *BJPsych Bulletin*, 2024, 1–5.

²⁹ Kendra N Williams et al., "Beyond Cost: Exploring Fuel Choices and the Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Liquefied Petroleum Gas Stove Adoption in Peru," *Energy Research & Social Science* 66 (2020).

³⁰ Jingyi Wu, "Epistemic Advantage on the Margin: A Network Standpoint Epistemology," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 106, no. 3 (2023): 755–77.

³¹ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge University Press, 1997); Liam Kofi Bright, "Duboisian Leadership through Standpoint Epistemology," *The Monist* 107, no. 1 (2024): 82–97.

morality and social hierarchy and that truth should be understood as more flexible and dependent on the will to power.³² Foucault, although acknowledging the role of power in the formation of knowledge, might criticize standpoint epistemology for focusing on individual or group perspectives, while he was more interested in how broader discourses and power structures shape entire systems of knowledge.³³ Thus, while offering insights into social biases, standpoint epistemology is criticized for neglecting the universality and complexity of power structures in the production of knowledge.

In this context, it is important to conduct a critical analysis of standpoint epistemology in feminist philosophy of science using an Islamic context and the philosophy of science approach. This analysis will help identify the weaknesses in feminist approaches and offer an alternative view that is more balanced and objective.³⁴ Therefore, this study aims to critique Sandra Harding's standpoint epistemology using Al-Attas' perspective in the philosophy of science, under the title, "*A Critical Analysis Of Sandra Harding's Standpoint Epistemology.*"

³² Michael Lewin, "Nietzsche Was No Perspectivist," *Philosophies* 9, no. 1 (2024): 9; Titus Stahl, "Social Structure and Epistemic Privilege: Reconstructing Lukács's Standpoint Theory," *Análisis. Revista de Investigación Filosófica* 10, no. 2 (2023): 319–49.

³³ Fateme Saki and Aliasghar Mosleh, "Heidegger and Foucault: Technology and Disciplinary Technology," *Occidental Studies* 14, no. 1 (2023): 85–118; Williams et al., "Beyond Cost: Exploring Fuel Choices and the Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Liquefied Petroleum Gas Stove Adoption in Peru.", 44.

³⁴ Miriam Solomon, *Social Empiricism* (USA: MIT Press, n.d.).

B. Formulation of The Problem

Based on the description that has been presented in the background of the problem above, the issue can be examined with the following formulation:

1. What are the foundational concepts of Sandra Harding's standpoint epistemology in understanding contemporary knowledge?
2. What critiques can be raised against Harding's standpoint epistemology concerning objectivity, universality, and relativism?
3. How does the Islamic epistemological engage with these issues raised by standpoint epistemology?

C. Objectives of Study

Based on the formulation of the problem that has been made in this study, the objectives of this study can be made as follows:

1. This research aims to explore the foundational concepts of Sandra Harding's standpoint epistemology and her critique of contemporary knowledge.
2. This research aims to analyze the limitations and controversies surrounding Harding's epistemology, particularly in relation to objectivity, universality, and relativism.
3. This research aims to examine the engagement with issues raised by standpoint epistemology.

D. Benefits of Study

This study aims to present significant theoretical and practical benefits for both the author and the reader.

1. Theoretical Contributions

The theoretical uses in question are related to the development of epistemological discourse from both Western and Islamic context: (a) This study is expected to contribute to the development of Islamic epistemology by engaging critically with Sandra Harding's standpoint epistemology, thereby enriching the discourse on Islamic Philosophy of Science in the contemporary context; (b) It is also intended to provide a conceptual foundation for Muslim scholars and intellectuals to reflect upon and prearticulate the relevance of Islamic epistemological principles in response to modern challenges in knowledge production; (c) Furthermore, this study may serve as a reference for developing alternative frameworks of knowledge that are inclusive, decolonize, and grounded in the intellectual heritage of Islam.

2. Practical Contributions

The purpose of practical purpose is related to implementing the transformation of the Islamic worldview in Islamic Universities practically. Among them: (a) Broadening the author's horizons on the concept of Islamic Epistemology more broadly and deeply; (b) This thesis is expected to present proper values for society, especially for those who want to explore more broadly about Islamic Epistemology.

E. Literature Review

To find out the novelty of this research, the author conducted a search related to A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SANDRA HARDING'S STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY. There are several studies from journals, theses, dissertations, and scientific books that discuss the concept of the concept.

In this literature review, there are two main areas of focus. First, there are four studies that specifically discuss the figure of Sandra Harding, a thinker known for her contribution to the development of standpoint epistemology. These studies examine her ideas from various perspectives, including critiques of scientific objectivity and feminist analysis of knowledge structures. Second, there are six other studies that focus on standpoint epistemology as the main subject of inquiry. These studies explore the concept of standpoint as an epistemological approach that considers certain social experiences in the formation of knowledge, both in the context of feminism and other frameworks such as sociology and the philosophy of science. Thus, this literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of both Sandra Harding as a figure and the development of the concept of standpoint epistemology itself. It will explain bellow.

First, the book written by Emily Tilton and Briana Toole, with the title, "*Standpoint Epistemology and the Epistemology of Deference*."³⁵ In this article, explained that Epistemological standpoints, which emphasize

³⁵ Emily Tilton and Briana Toole, "Standpoint Epistemology and the Epistemology of Deference," *Blackwell Companion to Epistemology, Third Edition*, 2022, 1–17.

the epistemic privilege of marginalized groups, are increasingly associated with calls to give respect to these groups in discussions about knowledge and truth. Respect, in this context, means acknowledging that marginalized individuals are better positioned to answer certain questions due to their unique perspectives and accepting their judgments as superior. However, this approach has been criticized for reinforcing divisions between social groups and potentially inhibiting the ability of dominant groups to develop important cognitive skills such as empathy and critical inquiry. Therefore, the authors argue that standpoint epistemology should promote inclusion rather than deference, by encouraging all groups to engage in shared understanding and knowledge production collaboratively.

Milda Longgeita Pinem explained in his writing entitled *"Gagasan Sandra Harding Tentang Strong Objectivity Dan Kontribusinya Bagi Metodologi Feminis Di Indonesia"*³⁶ Standpoint epistemology, which highlights the epistemic advantages of marginalized groups due to their unique social positions, has increasingly been associated with calls for deference in knowledge discussions. Deference, in this context, involves recognizing marginalized individuals as better suited to address certain questions and accepting their judgments as superior because of their distinct perspectives. However, this practice has been critiqued for potentially deepening social divides and

³⁶ Milda Longgeita Pinem, "Gagasan Sandra Harding Tentang Strong Objectivity Dan Kontribusinya Bagi Metodologi Feminis," *Kafa'ah: Journal of Gender Studies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 3–9, <https://doi.org/10.15548/jk.v11i2.365>.

limiting the dominant group's ability to develop critical skills such as empathy and critical thinking. The argument is made that instead of promoting deference, standpoint epistemology should advocate for inclusion, encouraging all groups to engage in mutual understanding and collaborative knowledge creation.

George Adekunle, in her paper *Feminist Standpoint Theory and Positionality of Experience in the African Novel*,³⁷ This paper explores Feminist Standpoint Theory and the significance of positionality in the experiences depicted in novels by selected male and female African writers. It argues that, although citizens of a society or community may share common experiences that create a sense of collective identity, internal factors such as class, ethnicity, religion, and gender further divide individuals into distinct sub-groups. These divisions underscore the importance of considering diverse perspectives and experiences when analyzing literary works, as they reveal the complex social dynamics that shape individual and collective identities within African societies.

Sandra Harding, *Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What Is 'Strong Objectivity'?*³⁸ Sandra Harding's concept of "strong objectivity" rethinks traditional standpoint epistemology by challenging the notion that scientific knowledge is neutral and free from bias. In her work, she argues that all knowledge is socially situated, and that

³⁷ George Adekunle Ojo et al., "Feminist Standpoint Theory and Positionality of Experience in the African Feminist Standpoint Theory and Positionality of Experience in the African Novel Olumide Ogunrotimi (PhD)," no. May (2024).

³⁸ Harding, "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What Is 'Strong Objectivity'?"

dominant perspectives often reflect the interests and biases of more powerful groups. "Strong objectivity" calls for a more rigorous approach to objectivity, one that incorporates the perspectives of marginalized or less powerful groups to uncover hidden assumptions and power dynamics. By doing so, Harding suggests that a more complete and accurate understanding of knowledge can be achieved.

Iswanti, *"Konsep 'Objektivitas Tinggi' Sandra Harding Sebagai Kritik Feminisme Terhadap Paham Objektivisme"*³⁹ Sandra Harding's concept of "Strong Objectivity" serves as a feminist critique of traditional objectivism, which claims that knowledge can be completely neutral and free from bias. Harding argues that conventional objectivism overlooks the influence of social and power dynamics on knowledge production. "Strong Objectivity" suggests that true objectivity can only be achieved by critically examining and including the perspectives of marginalized groups, as these perspectives reveal the biases and assumptions inherent in dominant viewpoints. This approach seeks to create a more inclusive and accurate understanding of knowledge, challenging the idea that objectivity can be detached from social context.

Kinanthi Fatwasuci, *"Fenomena Keberadaan Kaum Marginal dalam Masyarakat: Sebuah Kajian Literatur Standpoint Theory"*⁴⁰ The

³⁹ Iswanti, *"Konsep 'Objektivitas Tinggi' Sandra Harding Sebagai Kritik Feminisme Terhadap Paham Objektivisme"* (Jakarta: Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Driyarkara, 2004).

⁴⁰ Kinanthi Fatwasuci and Irwansyah Irwansyah, "Fenomena Keberadaan Kaum Marginal Dalam Masyarakat: Sebuah Kajian Literatur Standpoint Theory," *Jurnal Lensa Mutiara Komunikasi* 6, no. 1 (2022): 40–49, <https://doi.org/10.51544/jlmk.v6i1.1669>.

phenomenon of marginalized groups in society is examined through the lens of Standpoint Theory in this literature review. Standpoint Theory posits that marginalized individuals have unique perspectives shaped by their social positions, which provide valuable insights into the structures of power and inequality. The literature suggests that these perspectives are often overlooked or undervalued by dominant groups, yet they offer a critical understanding of social dynamics and injustices. By focusing on the lived experiences of marginalized communities, the study highlights the importance of incorporating these voices to challenge and enrich the mainstream narratives within society.

Kristina Rolin, *"The Bias Paradox in Feminist Standpoint Epistemology"*⁴¹ The Bias Paradox in Feminist Standpoint Epistemology refers to the tension between the claim that all knowledge is socially situated and shaped by biases, and the assertion that marginalized groups have epistemic privilege due to their unique social positions. On one hand, if all perspectives are influenced by biases, then no standpoint, including those of marginalized groups, can be fully objective or neutral. On the other hand, feminist standpoint epistemology argues that the experiences of marginalized groups offer critical insights that can reveal and challenge dominant biases. The paradox lies in reconciling the idea that while all knowledge is biased, some perspectives, particularly those from marginalized standpoints, are more capable of exposing and correcting for these biases.

⁴¹ Kristina Rolin, "The Bias Paradox in Feminist Standpoint Epistemology," *Episteme* 3, no. 1–2 (2006): 125–36, <https://doi.org/10.3366/epi.2006.3.1-2.125>.

Jannie Mulwa, *“Contextual Limitations in Sandra Harding’s Epistemological Framework and How They Can be Overcome”*⁴² Sandra Harding's epistemological framework, particularly her concept of "strong objectivity," emphasizes the importance of incorporating marginalized perspectives to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of knowledge. However, a key limitation of this framework is its reliance on the assumption that marginalized groups inherently possess clearer insights into social injustices. This assumption can overlook the complexities and diversity within marginalized communities, potentially leading to oversimplifications or essentialist views. To overcome these contextual limitations, it is crucial to adopt a more nuanced approach that recognizes the variability within marginalized groups, encourages intersectional analysis, and promotes continuous reflexivity. This allows for a more dynamic and inclusive application of Harding's ideas, ensuring that diverse voices are genuinely integrated into the epistemological process.

Paul Gowder, *Standpoint Epistemology, the First Amendment, and University Affirmative Action*⁴³ Standpoint epistemology, which highlights the importance of marginalized perspectives in shaping knowledge, intersects with debates about the First Amendment and university affirmative action policies. This epistemological framework

⁴² Jannie Mulwa, Jacob Magero, and Josephat Oyigo, “Contextual Limitations in Sandra Harding’s Epistemological Framework and How They Can Be Overcome” 4, no. 2 (2024): 46–52.

⁴³ Paul Gowder, “Standpoint Epistemology, the First Amendment, and University Affirmative Action” 32, no. 4 (2024).

supports affirmative action by advocating for diverse perspectives in academic settings, arguing that including underrepresented voices enhances the breadth and depth of knowledge. However, the First Amendment's protection of free speech complicates these discussions, as it guarantees individuals' rights to express their views, even if those views oppose affirmative action policies. Balancing the principles of standpoint epistemology, which seeks to address historical inequities and broaden perspectives, with First Amendment rights involves navigating complex issues of free expression, inclusivity, and institutional policy.

Dahlia Guzman, *"The Strategic Naturalism of Sandra Harding's Feminist Standpoint Epistemology : A Path Toward Epistemic Progress."*⁴⁴ Sandra Harding's feminist standpoint epistemology, through its strategic naturalism, proposes a path toward epistemic progress by integrating insights from marginalized perspectives while maintaining a commitment to empirical rigor. Strategic naturalism asserts that while all knowledge is socially situated, it can still be grounded in empirical research and scientific methods. Harding's approach suggests that incorporating diverse standpoints into the knowledge production process not only enriches understanding but also helps identify and address biases inherent in traditional research frameworks. By advocating for this inclusive and empirically grounded method, strategic naturalism aims to advance epistemic

⁴⁴ Dahlia Guzman, "The Strategic Naturalism of Sandra Harding ' s Feminist Standpoint Epistemology : A Path Toward Epistemic Progress," *Graduate Theses and Dissertations, University of South Florida Scholar Commons*, no. March (2018).

progress by ensuring that knowledge is both socially aware and scientifically robust.

From the review of previous research, it appears that none closely align with the upcoming study, "*Standpoint Epistemology In Feminist Philosophy Of Science: An Analysis Of Sandra Harding's Thought*", making this research novel. While existing studies have explored various aspects of feminist standpoint epistemology and Sandra Harding's contributions, none have conducted a comprehensive critical analysis specifically focusing on Harding's epistemological perspectives in the way this study intends.

F. Theoretical Framework

Before moving on to a statement regarding the theoretical framework of this thesis, it is necessary to define the general understanding of the theoretical framework. The foundation or research theoretical framework is the basis for establishing a scientific research process. This becomes the basis for strategies and guidelines for researchers in analyzing research problems.⁴⁵ Instead, we will focus on the theoretical framework in this chapter, matching points of definition, namely conceptual systems and methodological determinants. In completing this Thesis, "*A Critical Analysis of Sandra Harding's Standpoint Epistemology*", researchers used a theoretical framework built by al-Attas. Because he has many similarities to the

⁴⁵ Kaelan M.S., "Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Bidang Filsafat" (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Paradigma, 2005).

theories discussed by the authors, it is hoped that it will be easier for researchers to complete this thesis.

The focus of Islamic Epistemology, as articulated by Syed Naquib al-Attas, revolves around the integration of Islamic principles with the pursuit of scientific knowledge. Al-Attas emphasizes that the philosophy of science within the Islamic framework should not merely adopt Western scientific methods but should also consider the ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological dimensions rooted in Islamic teachings. This approach seeks to harmonize scientific inquiry with spiritual and moral values, ensuring that scientific practices align with the broader goals of Islamic wisdom and knowledge.⁴⁶

According to al-Attas, knowledge is defined as "*the arrival of meaning to the soul and the arrival of the soul to meaning.*" This definition emphasizes that knowledge is not merely information or data but a deep and essential understanding of reality. Knowledge involves recognizing the true meaning of things that touch both the intellectual and spiritual aspects of human beings. For al-Attas, true knowledge must lead individuals to truth, justice, and an awareness of their position in relation to God, the natural world, and others. Knowledge, in his view, is not just about mastering empirical facts but about a profound and contextual understanding that brings peace and order to the soul and improves the structure of human life.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Al-Attas, *Islam Dan Filsafat Sains*; Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam an Exposition of The Fundamental Elements of The Worlview of Islam*; Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*.

⁴⁷ Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*.

Moreover, the primary sources of knowledge are revelation and reason, with revelation being the highest and most authoritative source, while reason serves as a complementary instrument for human understanding. Revelation, as the word of God, provides humanity with knowledge of absolute truth and realities that cannot be achieved through reason or sensory experience alone. While reason is important, it must be subordinate to revelation to avoid deviation in the pursuit of truth. Additionally, Al-Attas acknowledges sensory experience and intuition as sources of knowledge, but both must be guided by revelation and sound reason. Thus, according to al-Attas, the sources of knowledge represent a harmonious combination of divine dimensions (revelation) and human rational capacity (reason), which together lead to true and holistic knowledge.⁴⁸

According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the scientific method encompasses an integration of rational, empirical, and intuitive-spiritual approaches. The rational and empirical approaches involve using logic and observation to gather and analyze data. However, these must be complemented by intuitive insight and spiritual guidance from revelation to ensure that the knowledge acquired is not only scientifically accurate but also aligns with metaphysical truth.⁴⁹

The classification of knowledge according to Al-Attas is divided into two main categories: *fardhu 'ain* knowledge, which is the type of

⁴⁸ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality* (Kuala Lumpur, 1976).

⁴⁹ Al-Attas, *Islam Dan Filsafat Sains*.

knowledge that every individual is required to learn, such as religious and ethical sciences aimed at guiding moral and spiritual development; and *fardhu kifayah* knowledge, which refers to knowledge that needs to be acquired by certain individuals to meet societal needs, such as science and technology. This classification ensures that knowledge serves not only intellectual and practical advancement but also contributes to the spiritual and moral well-being of humanity.⁵⁰

The ontological understanding of truth in Islam differentiates it from other philosophical traditions. In Islamic epistemology, truth is not solely a matter of empirical verification but is also deeply connected to divine revelation and metaphysical realities. Unlike secular or purely rationalist perspectives, which often treat truth as an objective or relative construct, Islamic ontology posits that ultimate truth is grounded in the knowledge of God, making it both transcendent and immanent. This view influences how Islamic philosophy of science approaches the nature of reality, knowledge, and the relationship between the two.⁵¹

Al-Attas' position in the philosophy of science addresses issues raised by standpoint epistemology by emphasizing a holistic and integrative approach to knowledge. Standpoint epistemology often highlights the importance of marginalized perspectives in understanding truth and knowledge. Al-Attas counters this by

⁵⁰ Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*.

⁵¹ Al-Attas, *Islam Dan Filsafat Sains*; Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam an Exposition of The Fundamental Elements of The Worlview of Islam*.

proposing that a balanced perspective that incorporates both empirical and metaphysical insights, grounded in Islamic thought, can offer a more comprehensive and unified understanding of reality. This approach aims to bridge the gap between different epistemological standpoints while maintaining a commitment to the Islamic conception of truth.⁵²

In addressing the problems of standpoint epistemology, Al-Attas argues for an epistemological framework that harmonizes the pursuit of scientific knowledge with spiritual and ethical considerations. By incorporating Islamic principles into the philosophy of science, Al-Attas seeks to provide a framework that respects diverse viewpoints while upholding a coherent and integrated understanding of truth. This perspective not only contributes to resolving epistemological conflicts but also reinforces the role of religious and metaphysical dimensions in the scientific discourse, promoting a more inclusive and principled approach to knowledge.⁵³

Based on the above explanation, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's concept of knowledge in the philosophy of science, which relates to ontology and epistemology, will be used as the framework in this research to analyze the position of standpoint epistemology. Standpoint epistemology emphasizes that knowledge is not objective and neutral but is influenced by social positions and individual

⁵² Al-Attas, *Islam Dan Filsafat Sains*; Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam an Exposition of The Fundamental Elements of The Worlview of Islam*.

⁵³ Al-Attas, *Islam Dan Filsafat Sains*; Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam an Exposition of The Fundamental Elements of The Worlview of Islam*.

perspectives, often reflecting biases and structural injustices. In this context, al-Attas's theory, which integrates revelation and reason as sources of knowledge and highlights the importance of deep and holistic understanding, will be used to evaluate and critique the standpoint epistemology approach. By referencing al-Attas's theory, this research aims to identify and address aspects of standpoint epistemology that may not align with the scientific and spiritual principles upheld by al-Attas. This includes assessing how standpoint epistemology deviates from higher principles of truth and how it can be corrected or developed to achieve a more comprehensive and fair understanding.

G. Research Methodology

In this research, to achieve the expected goals, appropriate methods and approaches are needed. Therefore, in this study several methods and approaches will be used, adapted to the type and/or research model.

1. Type of Research

This type of research the researcher uses is qualitative research. In accordance with the object of this thesis study, this type of research is included in the category of library research. First, by recording all the findings regarding A Critical Analysis of Sandra Harding's Standpoint Epistemology any research discussion found in the literature and sources, or the latest findings regarding similar thoughts that can influence the results of this discussion. Second, after taking notes, then integrating all

findings, both theories or new findings into the discussion. Third, analyze all the findings from various readings, relating to the weaknesses of each source, the strengths, or the relationship of each of the discourses discussed in it. The last is to criticize and provide critical ideas in the results of research on previous discourses by presenting new findings in collaborating different thoughts, especially in this paper, *A Critical Analysis Of Sandra Harding's Standpoints Epistemology*.⁵⁴

According to Kaelan, sometimes literature research has descriptive and historical characteristics. It is said to be historical because many studies of this kind have historical dimensions, including religious research. This literature research can include criticism of thought, research on the history of religion, and it can also be research on certain works or certain texts. Therefore, library research will face data sources in the form of books, which are very large, so it requires an adequate method. For this reason, in library research, collecting books must be done in stages, because it would be difficult if not.⁵⁵

To get all the needs mentioned above, it can be generated through libraries, bookstores, *maktabah syamilah*, research centers and internet networks by accessing writings and information about the Purification of Natural Science. By using data from various references, both primary and secondary. The data is

⁵⁴ Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2004).

⁵⁵ M.S., "Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Bidang Filsafat."

collected using documentation techniques by reading or text reading, reviewing, studying, and recording literature related to the issues discussed in this paper.⁵⁶

2. The Technique of Data Collection

Data collection techniques: in this case the researcher will identify discourse from books, papers or articles, magazines, journals, websites (internet), or other information related to the title of the writing to look for things or variables in the form of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, and so on related to A Critical Analysis of Sandra Harding's Epistemological Standpoints. So, to make it easier for researchers to share data sources in collecting data. There are two categories of data used during the study; they are classified into primary data and secondary data.

a. The Primary Data

Primary data that researcher used, such as: *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*;⁵⁷ *The Science Question in Feminism*;⁵⁸ *Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What Is 'Strong Objectivity'?*;⁵⁹ *Feminist*

⁵⁶ Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan*.

⁵⁷ Sandra Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives* (USA: Cornell University Press, 1991).

⁵⁸ Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

⁵⁹ Harding, "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What Is 'Strong Objectivity'?"

Standpoint Epistemology," *The Gender and Science Reader*;⁶⁰ and so on.

Hence, *Islam and Secularism*⁶¹, *The Concept of Education In Islam*,⁶² *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education*,⁶³ *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul*,⁶⁴ *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of The Fundamental Elements of The Worldview of Islam*,⁶⁵ *Islam: the Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*,⁶⁶ *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam*,⁶⁷ and so on.

b. The Secondary Data

Meanwhile, secondary data sources were data whose material is indirect related to the formulated problem, this data material is a support and a complement to primary data and were obtained from discussions on Sandra Harding to help researcher to understand the main problem. The

⁶⁰ Sandra Harding, "Feminist Standpoint Epistemology," *The Gender and Science Reader*, 2001, 145–68.

⁶¹ Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*.

⁶² Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education In Islam*, Edisi ke-2 (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC (International Institute of Islam Thought and Civilization), 1980).

⁶³ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education*, 1st ed. (Jeddah, 1979).

⁶⁴ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Nature of Man and the Pscychology of the Human Soul* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1990).

⁶⁵ Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam an Exposition of The Fundamental Elements of The Worlview of Islam*.

⁶⁶ Al-Attas, *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*.

⁶⁷ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam* (Kuala Lumpu: ISTAC, 1993).

secondary data used in this study, such as: Standpoint Epistemology and the Epistemology of Deference,⁶⁸ Feminist Standpoint Theory and Positionality of Experience in the African Feminist Standpoint Theory and Positionality of Experience in the African Novel Olumide Ogunrotimi (PhD),⁶⁹ Fenomena Keberadaan Kaum Marginal dalam Masyarakat: Sebuah Kajian Literatur Standpoint Theory,⁷⁰ The Bias Paradox in Feminist Standpoint Epistemology,⁷¹ and so on.

3. The Technique of Discussion Approach

Because this research examines the thoughts of philosophers who usually read problems in philosophy, the approach in this research uses a philosophical approach. According to Muhammad Adib,⁷² the philosophy of science is an attempt to seek clarity regarding the basics of concepts, prejudices, and postulates of science and consists of several diverse studies that are shown to establish clear boundaries regarding certain knowledge. So, the philosophical approach referred to here is a set of instruments used to analyze, compare, and critically examine concepts in philosophy with the aim of finding the main problem. The

⁶⁸ Tilton and Toole, "Standpoint Epistemology and the Epistemology of Deference."

⁶⁹ Ojo et al., "Feminist Standpoint Theory and Positionality of Experience in the African Feminist Standpoint Theory and Positionality of Experience in the African Novel Olumide Ogunrotimi (PhD)."

⁷⁰ Fatwasuci and Irwansyah, "Fenomena Keberadaan Kaum Marginal Dalam Masyarakat: Sebuah Kajian Literatur Standpoint Theory."

⁷¹ Rolin, "The Bias Paradox in Feminist Standpoint Epistemology."

⁷² Mohammad Adib, *Filsafat Ilmu; Ontologi, Epistemologi, Aksiologi, Dan Logika Ilmu Pengetahuan*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015.

instruments used in this philosophical approach are metaphysics to read paradigms and metaphysical beliefs in epistemology; epistemology to read theories and methodologies in the natural sciences; axiology and ethics to read the relationship between basic assumptions in the natural sciences and the resulting environmental and social problems; and logic to read the flow of argumentation and establish conclusions on the premises used. Therefore, the researcher used a philosophy of science approach in this study.

4. The Technique of Discussion Method

The method used by the writer in searching the data that will be used to arrive at the purpose of the discussion, to facilitate the author in writing, and to explore the discussion, also to fulfill the understanding A Critical Analysis Of Sandra Harding's Epistemological Standpoints, with the following methods below.

a. Descriptive Method. The data analysis technique in descriptive research focuses on organizing and presenting data to allow for systematic description without modifying or interpreting it beyond the data itself.⁷³ Key technical elements:

1) Categorization: data are grouped based on observable patterns or themes (key concepts in Harding's

⁷³ Rosemarie Rizzo Parse, *Qualitative Inquiry: The Path of Sciencing* (Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2001).

epistemology: standpoint theory, strong objectivity, etc.).

- 2) Tabulation or Coding: Textual data (writings by Harding) may be coded to identify recurring terms, concepts, or definitions.
- 3) Synthesis of Descriptive Findings: After categorizing the data, the researcher summarizes the characteristics of the phenomena—such as the structural elements of Harding's epistemological thought.
- 4) Non-interpretative: No evaluation or critique is applied; the goal is factual representation of ideas.

With the goal is to describe Sandra Harding's epistemological standpoints in a structured, accurate, and unbiased manner.

- b. Analytical Method. In the analytical method, the focus shifts from description to breaking down the data into its components and then reassembling them to understand internal structures or relationships.⁷⁴

Key Technical Elements:

- 1) Decomposition: Concepts from Harding's thought are broken down into constituent ideas (what constitutes "strong objectivity").
- 2) Comparative Analysis: Components are compared within the framework or across related theories

⁷⁴ Kenneth M Sayre, "Plato's Analytic Method," 1969.

(comparing “standpoint epistemology” with other feminist or mainstream epistemologies).

- 3) Thematic Coding and Conceptual Mapping: Themes are identified and visually or structurally mapped to see interrelations.
- 4) Reconstruction: Data is reassembled in a new form to highlight how the components function together (how different parts of Harding’s theory support each other).

And the goal is to analyze the internal logic, structure, and coherence of Harding’s epistemological framework.

c. Critical Method. The critical method employs a more reflective, evaluative, and often philosophical form of analysis. The data are scrutinized, questioned, and evaluated, especially in relation to dominant paradigms (like natural sciences).⁷⁵ How it works:

- 1) Critically evaluate both Harding’s assumptions and the dominant scientific paradigms she critiques, using Islamic metaphysical and epistemological criteria.
- 2) Apply *taḥqīq* (verification) or Islamic rational-critical tools (e.g., *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, *naqd*, *ijtihād*) to assess the validity or limits of Harding’s framework.

⁷⁵ D John et al., “Lyn Pykett, Reading Fin de Siecle Fictions Steven Connor, Charles Dickens,” n.d.

- 3) Reflect on how Islamic epistemology may challenge, enrich, or offer alternatives to both Harding and the positivist science she critiques.

And the goal is to produce an Islamically-informed critique that engages both with Western feminist theory and the paradigms it critiques.

H. System of Study

To make easier the discussion of problems in this thesis, the researcher divides this thesis into several chapters, and each chapter has sub-chapters, which are as follows:

Chapter One : Introduction. This chapter discusses background of study, problem formulation, purpose of study, importance of study, literature review, theoretical framework, research method, and system of study.

Chapter Two: Intellectual background of Sandra Harding. This chapter presents a comprehensive overview of Sandra Harding's intellectual background, including her early life and education, the development of her patterns of thought, as well as her major works and contributions in the field of feminist epistemology.

Chapter Three: Sandra Harding's Standpoint Theory. This chapter elaborates the theoretical core of Sandra Harding's standpoint epistemology. It is divided into three parts: (1) The roots of feminist standpoint theory, (2) The formulation of Harding's standpoint epistemology, and (3) A critical analysis of her theory, which includes

three major critiques: the bias paradox, relativism epistemic, and false universalism.

Chapter Four: Standpoint Epistemology In Islamic Context. This chapter provides a critical analysis of Sandra Harding's standpoint theory from the perspective of Islamic epistemology, particularly through the thoughts of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. It discusses key concepts such as the definition of knowledge, the process of knowing, the role of intuition, and the metaphysical foundation of Islamic knowledge.

Chapter Five: Closing. Closing that contains a conclusion which is an answer for problem formulation that has been delivered, as the result of this research. So continued by the closing from the researcher.