

**THE CREATION OF DOROTHY SMITH'S STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY:  
A feminist appropriation of male theorists.**

**A MASTER'S THESIS**

**BY**

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty  
of Graduate Studies in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Arts

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY  
THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO  
SPRING, 1995**

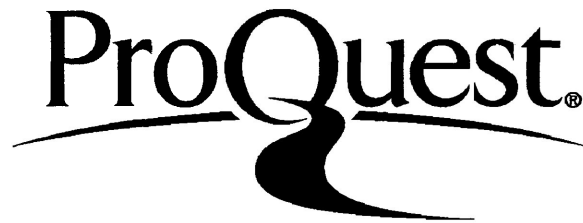
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ISBN 0-612-09240-2

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Creation of Dorothy Smith's Standpoint Epistemology:  
A feminist appropriation of male theorists

by

Deirdre Mary Smyth

One of Dorothy Smith's most important contributions to feminist theory was the development of her concept called 'the standpoint of women' (Smith, 1979). This thesis traces the evolution of this concept in her work from her earliest intellectual beginnings to the present. It restricts the examination of Smith's writing to her work on ideology and the sociology of knowledge, giving attention to the male theorists that she has appropriated in her early writings and the emergence of a more autonomous framework in her recent publications. The thesis is constructed from a sociology of knowledge perspective, thus Smith's writings are contextualized in the socio-historical events that have shaped them, occurrences such as the Free Speech Movement and the Montreal Massacre.

Data for the thesis includes Smith's original writing, secondary sources on her work and original interviews which I conducted with Smith about the intellectual development of her writing. In addition, the extent of Smith's influence in Canadian sociology has been explored through: 1) A survey of several prominent Canadian feminist sociologists and the editors of a few feminist journals; and 2) A search of the Social Sciences Citation Index to discover where, how often and in what ways she has been cited.

Chapter One introduces the predominant themes of the thesis. One of these themes is a method which begins inquiry from the personal, and another is the

examination of epistemological autonomy in Smith's writing. Chapters 2 deals with the quantification of Smith's influence in sociology, through a the survey of feminist theorists and a citation analysis. Chapter 3 documents her intellectual beginnings at the London School of Economics and at the University of California at Berkeley. Marxist feminism and the domestic labour debate in feminist theory are the topic of Chapter 4. Chapter 5 traces the origin of the 'standpoint of women' and includes recent criticism. The Montreal Massacre and the possibility of an epistemological break in Smith's work are the subjects of Chapter 6. The thesis ends with an interpretation of how the male writers that Smith has chosen to appropriate have affected her work.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, thanks are extended to my thesis advisor, Pam Wakewich, who initially introduced me to the work of Dorothy Smith. Then, I express my gratitude to the members of my thesis committee, who read innumerable drafts of this thesis: firstly, to Jim Stafford for his unfailing emotional support, and for introducing me to Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own. Final thanks go to Chris Southcott, for his knowledge of postmodern theory, and his stories of poverty in Paris.

My appreciation is offered to President R. Rosehart, Dr. J. Gellert, Dean of Arts, and Rick Cox, Vice-President of Finance at L.U.S.U. for making it possible to conduct research for this project at the Robarts Library in Toronto. I owe a huge debt to Dr. Connie H. Nelson, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, for an Emergency Bursary which allowed me to finish my thesis.

I would also like to acknowledge my teachers, the department secretaries, Karen and Eleanor; Diane Maltby, the Women's Studies secretary, for assistance in the survey of feminist theorists and my fellow graduate students for their smiles, words of encouragement and their sympathetic ears. This has, indeed, been a labour of love, for my discipline and for all the people involved.

Finally, I submit my warmest thanks and appreciation to Dorothy E. Smith, whose interest and assistance in this undertaking made it one that went far beyond my original expectations.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Dorothy Smith's most important contribution to the development of feminist theory in the discipline of sociology was the construction of her concept called 'the standpoint of women' (Smith, 1979). As the title of this thesis suggests, my primary objective is to trace the creation of this concept from Smith's earliest intellectual beginnings to the present. One of the most striking and paradoxical characteristics of 'the standpoint of women' is the fact that Smith has predominantly made use of the work of male philosophers and male sociologists to construct a theory which is to be used for the examination of, or inquiry into, the lives of women. To me, this was a fascinating discovery which warranted further study. I wanted to understand more about the intellectual motivations which prompted Dorothy Smith to make the kind of choices that she did.

Having determined the topic for inquiry I now had several decisions to make about the structure of the thesis. What were going to be its main themes? What kind of a methodology should I use? One of the predominant motifs in this thesis is connected to Smith's choice of male theorists to assist her in the construction of her theory. This is the theme of autonomy in the intellectual realm, or a term that I have borrowed from Lorraine Code called epistemological autonomy (Code, 1991, 110). What kind of effect would Smith's choice of male theorists have on her autonomy as a writer? How would it affect a theory that was designed specifically for women?

The methodology that I chose for this thesis reflects what I call a "feminist consciousness", a term extrapolated from the writing of Stanley and Wise (Stanley,

1990). I begin the thesis with my personal experience with men, which forms the emotional and motivational infrastructure for a larger intellectual project. This thesis is written from a sociology of knowledge perspective, thus Smith's writings are contextualized in the socio-historical events that have shaped them. The thesis also includes a brief and simply constructed quantitative element which attests to the extent of Smith's influence inside and outside of the discipline of sociology. The quantitative analysis is in the form of an evaluation of all of Smith's recorded citations in the Social Sciences Citation Index as well as a survey of feminist theorists.

Meeting and interviewing Dorothy Smith ranks as one of the most enlightening experiences of my life. I regard it as an occasion of consequence, a sort of 'rite of passage' in the process of becoming completely absorbed into the discipline of sociology. As a result of this experience, I began to think that it might actually be possible for me to become a 'real' sociologist. The two interviews that I was able to conduct with her were something that I had never anticipated. How many graduate students are fortunate enough to meet and converse with the person whose work they are studying?

I found her very easy to speak with, an open honest person who was quite as willing to entrust me with her innermost thoughts as I was to share my own experiences with her. In the short space of time that we spent together, I felt as if I had made a friend. I found her personality to be fascinating. She has a wonderful sense of humour and laughs effortlessly. We talked about other things besides sociology, for example, her love of literature - especially the writing of Virginia Woolf and the poetry of Adrienne Rich. We talked about our families and our experiences as single parents. She was always

anxious, though, to return to serious talk about sociology.

A description of her office at OISE further illustrates her character. Her office is chaotic. To me, the offices of my teachers are enchanting places where I can find out a lot about them by just observing the surroundings. I like to read the titles of their books when they are talking on the phone. Dorothy Smith's office is the most disorderly academic study I have ever seen. I interpret this as the sign of an extremely active scholar. Piles of books, papers and family photos fill the room. I had to gingerly move some things to make room for my coffee on a corner of her desk. There is a particularly hilarious memento on the wall left by an irreverent friend. It is a very formal looking photograph of what appears to be a Board of Directors, mostly male. Colourful bulletin board pins are stuck through everyone of their heads. The Jessie Bernard Award for Lifetime Achievement received by Smith from the American Sociological Association, 1993, sits delicately askew on a pile of books. It was a very comfortable place to be and she is a very comfortable person.

This is a thesis based on a concept of feminism. My idea of feminism is very simple: it is a personal commitment to support the abilities and the potential of women, intellectual and otherwise, in any way that my experience and talents will allow. It is therefore inspired, and to a large extent made possible by the Women's Movement in all of its facets, historical and political. This was a movement that I was denied full access to, and involvement in, despite an overwhelming desire to be a part of it, chiefly because I allowed myself to be subordinated to a man, who at the time of my marriage to him, behaved in a physically abusive and controlling manner. It is a thesis in which the main

ingredient is a "feminist consciousness". The concept of feminism has had a strengthening effect on me since my return to university three years ago. 'Feminist' is a category that I embraced rather easily in the course of my studies in sociology, and is a word with which I am very comfortable.

A small passage from Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own (1945), her well known feminist essay on the position of women at Cambridge University, describes in a circumspect way my feelings and experiences of womanhood, which prompted me to begin to think of myself as a feminist. The following lines struck me as poignant, so much so that as a woman, and as a graduate student, I felt a strong connection to them:

Instinct rather than reason came to my help; he was a Beadle; I was a woman. This was the turf; there was the path. Only the fellows and scholars are allowed there; the gravel is the place for me (Woolf, 1945, 8).

It was the particular phrase, "the gravel is the place for me", that leapt from the page, confirming my own feelings. I experienced an empathy with her role in this episode, because most of my background consisted of encounters with men where I was forced onto the "gravel".

I became interested in the work of Dorothy Smith when I wrote a review of her book The Conceptual Practices of Power (1990a), and first came into contact with her reasons for beginning sociological inquiry with 'the standpoint of women'. This idea, according to Smith, can form the basis for a theory, an epistemology or a methodology of women's experiences of social life. It is a claim in feminist standpoint theory that all women are to varying degrees subordinate to a male universe, and have experienced exclusion and a silencing of their expression because of it. By way of an antithesis to

male hegemony in the intellectual domain, 'standpoint epistemology', (Harding, 1986, 136), offers a way to begin analysis so that women's experiences will be accounted for and included. Feminist epistemology has as its starting point the notion that subordinate members of a society have access to a more complete knowledge of their social reality, specifically because of their subordinate place in it (Nielsen, 1990, 10). Therefore the lived experience of subordinate and marginal groups provides a salient approach to a fuller understanding of the social realm.

The influence of this epistemology on me was immediate and heartfelt. I can describe it as being given a strong verification of my lived experience as a woman, which I had taken for granted, and regarded as relatively unimportant. In other words, I discovered my experience had value in a society of women. Another point of identification with Dorothy Smith came from her background as a single parent of two boys. This was my own circumstance (although I have two daughters), for a period of fifteen years.

A portion of the grounding for this thesis is my belief that the presence of women's healthy autonomy from men, both in everyday life and in the theoretical spheres, is crucial to their scholarly development. Virginia Woolf states that for a woman to be able to write (fiction), she "must have money and a room of her own..." (Woolf, 1945, 5). Autonomy's opposite, or the subordination of women, is a term that I use to describe an unequal relationship between the world of women and the world of men, involving a set of practices that has contributed to women's underdevelopment in intellectual and economic domains.

My concern with autonomy is also based on my life experiences with men, relations that on more occasions than I can count, threatened my existence. As an eight year old child, I was sexually assaulted at knifepoint by a group of boys in my neighbourhood. The experience of being a victim at such a young age, without the benefit of any therapeutic intervention, eventually led me to become involved in a violent marriage, where I experienced the role of the 'battered wife'. When I attempted to deal with these atrocities through counselling with a male member of the Anglican clergy, I endured a further sexual abuse from him. These are the most vicious examples. There are many more. In order to destroy the cyclical nature of these violent experiences I had to assert my autonomy from men in a radical way. My autonomy as a woman, then, has been quite literally a matter of life and death. It has been an essential ingredient for my academic development.

About ten years ago I took my children to Toronto specifically to see a Sadler's Wells production of Swan Lake at the O'Keefe Centre. The effect of this performance has been a lasting one, and in particular, one scene is lodged in my memory. At one point the white swan, Odette, is presented fluttering desperately on the other side of a stained glass window. She is powerless as the black swan, the wicked Odile, who is disguised as Odette, tricks Prince Sigfried into declaring his undying love for her. This meant that Odette, the victim of an evil enchantment, had to remain a swan by day and a human by night for the rest of eternity. It is a heartbreaking moment in the ballet, where in the allegorical sense, any hope of achieving fulfilment of her desire is irretrievably lost. This is where these unspeakable experiences with men have placed me: on the other side

of a stained glass window, on the "gravel", or, as Dorothy Smith would put it "outside the frame" (Sherman, 1979, 146). They have contributed to my underdevelopment. Although I used to aspire to an academic career in my early twenties, it has not been possible to pursue it until now. Consequently my independence from men is something to which I attach great importance. It is a condition that has afforded me a great deal of contentment, and has given me the freedom to pursue my own interests. As Smith and other feminist writers have pointed out, traditional categories for analysis are not usually taken from direct experience, yet these categories from my background, 'sexual assault', 'battered wife', and 'sexual abuse by clergy' have all been topics for recent feminist inquiry. They are the emotional motivation behind this scholarly endeavour.

The work of the healing process from these events, particularly the difficult task of forgiving these men is turning into a life-long interest. My hope is that an examination of Dorothy Smith's engagement with male theorists in the documentation of the evolution of her standpoint epistemology will assist me in the working out of any residual rage that these experiences have engendered. For several years now, I have ceased to be a victim of male misogyny. The cycle of violence in my life has been effectively smashed. Now I look to the example of Professor Smith to lead me in the direction of a healthy way of relating to men in my everyday/everynight and intellectual worlds. She has, as she words it, "not hesitated to learn from men" (Smith, 1987, 9). In this way my objectives for this thesis are both intellectual and personal.



## COMMENTARY ON 'THE STANDPOINT OF WOMEN'

'The standpoint of women' is, according to Smith, a way of initiating sociological inquiry so that women's experiences will be accounted for and included. The textual origin of this concept comes from the philosophy of Hegel, specifically The Phenomenology of Mind, first published in 1807. Hegel was thirty-seven years of age at the time of its publication, and the work was considered "the first fruit of Hegel's maturity" (Baillie, 1961, 11). The translation I examined was one by J.B. Baillie, revised most recently in 1949. The portion appropriated by Dorothy Smith for the feminist standpoint is a parable that Hegel created concerning the relationship between a master and his servant. The terminology differs among the various authors for this relation: Baillie used the terms "Master" and "Bondsman", Sandra Harding's explanation used the words "master" and "slave" (Harding, 1986), and Dorothy Smith refers to the relationship as "master" and "servant" (Sherman, 1979).

The 'standpoint of women' first appeared in Dorothy Smith's work in 1979, in a collection of essays entitled: The Prism of Sex: Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge. Smith links Hegel's parable to Marx to begin with, by making a comparison of the position of the ruling class vis-à-vis the working class to the relationship of the master and the servant:

The standpoint of labour provides, therefore, a basis for knowledge corresponding to the position of the servant in Hegel's exemplary tale (Smith, 1979, 165).

She extends this affiliation to the standpoint of women in the social division of labour. Women do the practical work that enables the existence of "an abstracted conceptual mode of ruling" (1979, 165). Women are thus the subordinate or slave/servant part of

this liaison.

Sandra Harding initially refers to the origins of the 'standpoint of women' in The Science Question in Feminism (1986). She locates it with Hegel and the further interpretations of the master and slave affiliation by Marx, Engels and Lukacs (Harding, 1986, 26). Furthermore, it is in Harding's work that Smith is defined as a 'standpoint feminist', a category that has generated a growing body of criticism from postmodern/poststructuralist feminists (Hennessey, 1993; Clough, 1993).

It is my intention to trace the evolution of this conceptualization through the development of Dorothy Smith's work - from her intellectual beginnings at the London School of Economics to the present. I will argue that it has always been present in her thought, and was a "feminist consciousness" that was not yet visible. Dorothy Smith's mother was a Suffragette, as was her grandmother. She grew up in a feminist household, which eventually could not be denied expression, despite the confines of the patriarchal discipline of sociology, and the kind of sociological training to which she was exposed. Therefore this thesis will examine the differing forms that this standpoint has taken throughout her academic career with attention to the role that male theorists have played in its development. I intend to argue that her engagement with male writing has declined in her recent writing largely as a result of a more intense commitment to other feminist writings.

## EPISTEMOLOGICAL AUTONOMY

I have already established my feeling of the importance of autonomy, both in everyday life and in the theoretical realm. I would like to come to terms with it, and establish an ideal for myself in this area, precisely to help me to ascertain the boundaries of my own intellectual independence. This is one of my primary objectives for this thesis. Even in very early feminist writing, autonomy from men is advanced as a highly valued state of being. "Independence I have long considered as the grand blessing of life, the basis of every virtue..." writes Mary Wollstonecraft in A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1988, 3). Virginia Woolf insisted that the basis for a woman's ability to write at all depended on autonomy from men and financial independence (Woolf, 1945, 6). Jessie Bernard, in Academic Women (1964), pointed out that academic women are less likely to be married than academic men. Bernard gives three reasons why this was the case:

...a monastic tradition in the academic world, a vocation for celibacy among some academic women, and the shortage of suitable men in the world at large (Bernard, 1964, 206).

Clearly, independence from men, either financial, emotional or intellectual is a condition which women are encouraged to aspire to by the feminist community. Even when a woman is married, or otherwise involved in a relationship, independence within that relationship is equated with strength of character and is put forth as desirable. Should this kind of consciousness be encouraged at the level of abstraction, in the realm of ideas, and in the formulation of feminist theory? Is it appropriate for feminist writers to engage with men even at an intellectual level, who recommend at the same time

independence in the life-world of ordinary women, to assist them, perhaps, with the tenacity to free themselves from the oppression of abuse? And if this is appropriate, what form should this theoretical relationship take, so as not to negatively affect a feminist writer's epistemological autonomy?

Once again I will turn to Virginia Woolf as a source for what I wish to express about autonomy in writing. The choice is appropriate because Woolf's writing was such a strong influence on Dorothy Smith. This time the quotation is from The Waves (1931), considered by some to be Woolf's greatest literary achievement. Her comment can be applied to writing in general:

A good phrase, however, seems to me to have an independent existence. Yet I think it is likely that the best are made in solitude. They require some final refrigeration that I cannot give them, dabbling always in warm soluble words (Woolf, 1931, 58).

Woolf was a staunch advocate of autonomy. Notice her remarks on reading in an essay called "How should one read a book?" (1932), published in a collection of papers called Great Essays (1954):

The only advice, indeed, that one person can give another about reading is to take no advice, to follow your own instincts, to use your own reason, to come to your own conclusions. If this agreed between us, then I feel at liberty to put forward a few ideas and suggestions because you will not allow them to fetter that independence which is the most important quality that a reader can possess (Peterson, 1954, 373).

These two references from Woolf are sound advice on the two most important aspects of the production of knowledge: reading and writing. They can be applied to the creation of a sociology of knowledge, even to the creation of an epistemology. The

question that has gnawed at me since I began to write this thesis is: What would be the guidelines for an appropriate epistemological autonomy? An immaculate autonomy in the intellectual realm is unlikely, impossible, perhaps even dangerous. Yet it could be argued that those who have produced distinction in writing are those who were able to maintain a certain autonomy of thought. This is a complex issue especially when it is applied to feminist epistemology. Under what conditions is it appropriate for a feminist writer to avail herself/himself of the thought of a male writer to draft a system of principles (a theory) for women?

One illustration of a woman who has taken an intense interest in the appropriation of 'male' theory is Toril Moi. The 'object' of her attentiveness is the French theorist, Pierre Bourdieu. In a recent article called "Appropriating Bourdieu: Feminist theory and Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture" (1991), she begins by giving an explanation as to why Bourdieu's theory is "promising terrain for feminists" (Moi, 1991, 1018). She regards his main selling point as his "microtheory of social power" (Moi, 1991, 1019). This theory allows the analysis of "hegemonic ideology" at even a very specific mundane level, for example, the teacher's remarks on student's papers, or the instructions at the beginning of an examination. She brings out the fact that Bourdieu has not, until now, dealt with the topic of women, but in 1990, his journal called Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales published two special issues dealing with "sexual difference" (Moi, 1991, 1030). He has begun to publicly demonstrate an empathy with women and the feminist cause, even the difficulties involved in women's autonomy:

Bourdieu, on the other hand, certainly does not underestimate the difficulties of breaking loose from patriarchal shackles. It

follows from his theory that the effects of symbolic violence do not necessarily disappear when social conditions change. Here Simone de Beauvoir's own life furnishes an excellent illustration of this point. Earning her own living, living a life independent of social conventions and believing in her own freedom, Beauvoir nevertheless displays the most painful conflicts and contradictions when it comes to asserting emotional autonomy or intellectual independence from Sartre (Moi, 1991, 1032).

Moi bases her argument on the appropriateness and congeniality of Bourdieu's theory of culture to feminist theory.

Niza Yanay, in an attempt to deal with the issue of women's autonomy, wrote "The Phenomenology of Independence in Academic Women" (1990). She states that "women do not regard self-reliance and separateness as the bedrock of independence" (Yanay, 1990, 255). She grounds her study in unstructured interviews with academic women from various disciplines who are trying to think of autonomy in a new way. She advances the notion of autonomy within a philosophy of co-operation, and acknowledges the need for human relationships. For these women, the ability and the freedom "to express feelings and thoughts in an authentic way" was a way to define autonomy (Yanay, 1990, 256).

Lorraine Code, a feminist philosopher, has dealt with the intricate question of epistemological autonomy in a book called: What can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge (1991). Code argues that the concept of autonomy in feminist writing has become hegemonic; in fact she sees it as taking on the proportions of "autonomy-obsession that serves no one well" (Code, 1991, 74). According to Code, autonomy must not become defined as a "complete repudiation of interdependence" (Code, 1991, 74). While she has grappled with the notion of "appropriate autonomy",

she fails to explain this concept adequately:

Typically and stereotypically, women of the affluent classes are trained from childhood to be more trusting than men. Hence they tend to place their trust in people who present themselves as authorities, whereas men might, autonomously, resist. That such trustingness is a primary source of women's vulnerability counts as a cogent reason why an appropriate autonomy has to persist as a feminist goal, its tendencies to excess notwithstanding. Too much trust in experts - too little trust in themselves and their collective strength - renders women acquiescent and passive (Code, 1991, 219).

The phenomenon that this passage is attempting to describe is not restricted to the "affluent classes", and can be experienced by many women regardless of class. Code is trying to explain the knowledge claims of women and how they can attain epistemic authority. Women often assert that they know something, but it is refuted by experts, and when this occurs, women lose confidence in their ability to actually know something as accurate (Code, 1991, 218). Dorothy Smith has written about this phenomenon as well in Women Look at Psychiatry (1975c). She asserts in this book that women were more likely to trust a male psychiatrist than a female one, and are more likely than men to seek the services of a psychiatrist (Smith, 1975c, 21). I have two objectives for an explanation of epistemological autonomy for this thesis. 1) The first is to examine how Dorothy Smith has worked out this issue in the course of her writing. 2) The second is to come to my own conclusions with respect to appropriate autonomy in epistemology and knowledge production. Both these objectives will be elaborated upon in Chapter Seven, the conclusion, after Smith's work has been thoroughly examined.

## SITUATING THE PERSONAL IN FEMINIST METHODOLOGY

Here I will present an explanation of the methodology that has been employed for the data gathering process for this thesis, as well as the intellectual sources for its execution. This thesis is a sociology of knowledge of the feminist standpoint epistemology as it evolves in Dorothy Smith's work. It is comprised of a review of her writing on the sociology of knowledge and ideology - a career perspective of the most prominent feminist sociologist of our time. It will focus on several themes - the enduring influence of Marx in her writing, her professional development with attention to changes in her characterization of the position of women in our society, her unique position vis-a-vis other influential feminist authors and the critical response to her work that has emerged in the last decade.

I begin my analysis with a feminist technique that particularly fascinates me, that is, from the standpoint of my own experience (Maynard, 1990, 275). It comes from a radical perspective. What I mean by radical is simply its conventional dictionary meaning, in the sense of root or origin. My reasons for the choice of this method are as follows:

- 1) Although Dorothy Smith writes a great deal in the subjective mode, for example, in her recent essay, "A Berkeley Education" (Meadow-Orlans, 1994), I feel that in some respects she has maintained a barrier until recently to the emotional reasons that motivate her as a feminist author. She has taken an important first step in this direction in "A Berkeley Education".
- 2) It is my hope that knowledge of the motivating force behind this thesis will have an effect of clarification as well as concatenation. Revealing



my own experience will aid in the understanding of the thesis and connect me to a society of women, and possibly men, who have experienced similar things.

My life experiences with men have been especially gruesome, violent and traumatic. Having disclosed the nature of this experience, I would like to position myself within the many choices and styles of methodology that feminist writers have developed. Together with this, it becomes problematic in this thesis to adequately and logically connect this life experience of mine to a sociology of knowledge of male influence in Dorothy Smith's work. This disclosure, then, must provide a genesis for further exploration of an intellectual nature. Elspeth Probyn describes it this way:

Simply put, they [feminism and cultural studies] allow me to conceive of thinking the social through myself. As such they give me the theoretical tools with which to think through the pleasures and pains of my being in the social. However, the self cannot stop there. To appropriate a phrase of Barthes and turn it to my own concerns, the self 'is experienced only in an activity of production...it cannot stop...its constitutive movement is that of cutting across' (Probyn, 1993, 3).

To the extent that there can be said to be an idiosyncratic feminist methodology, feminist sociologists have struggled hard to achieve a passionate, politically-involved discipline (Maynard, 1990, 275). Arguing for a distinctive feminist methodology would mean treading "in the murky waters of essentialism" (Stanley, 1990, 14). Feminists have often validated the subjective and rejected the traditional sociological objective/subjective division (Stanley, 1990, 38). The feminist concern for subjectivity is a form of rebellion against traditional sociological methods; it comes from an awareness that women have always been objectified, particularly in the research process. Graham, for instance, has suggested the "story telling approach", a discourse that allows women to give accounts

of their own lives, "in their own terms and in their own chronology" (quoted in Maynard, 1990, 275). In a corresponding fashion, Smith writes that "the only way of knowing a socially constructed world is to know it from within" (Smith, 1990a, 22).

Stanley and Wise have argued that a feminist consciousness must be present in a constructive way during the research process. They have located five settings where feminist epistemological principles should be discernible in the research practice, as well as the textual analysis: 1) In the researcher-researched relationship; 2) in emotion as a research experience; 3) in the intellectual biography of researchers; 4) in how to manage the differing 'realities' and understandings of researchers and researched; and thus 5) in the complex question of power in research and writing (Stanley and Wise, 1990, 23). Similarly Sandra Harding states that established social science research has begun from the experience of men, but in feminist research "women should be expected to reveal...what women's experiences are" (Harding, 1986, 7). It is these female experiences that should provide the categories for feminist research.

The production of feminist knowledge is often grounded in women's experiences of inequality and oppression; therefore Harding suggests that this kind of research should not only point the way to achieving social justice, but should "study up" rather than "studying down" (1986, 7). She believes that the motives for a particular research project should be inseparable from the sources of the research problematic:

...[t]he class, race, culture and gender assumptions, beliefs and behaviours of the researcher her/himself must be placed within the frame of the picture that she/he attempts to paint (1986, 9).

Devoting a large part of her attention to the creation of a methodology for women,

Dorothy Smith has contributed a vital gift to our discipline. The working out of her ideas on methodology began in 1974 in an article called "Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology" where she conceptualized what she called "women's place". She pointed out that graduate students who are in training to be sociologists were encouraged "to discard our experienced world as a reliable source of information..." (Smith, 1974b, 8). Here, she introduced the idea of the female social scientist as having a "bifurcated consciousness". On a daily basis she must pass from a world of concrete practical activity in the household into the conceptual mode of the working social scientist. The process of negotiating this crossing-over is an alienating one, meaning that within the discipline of sociology, a woman cannot "fully participate in the declarations and formulations of its mode of consciousness" (1974b, 10). She recommends an alternative sociology whose methods undo the discipline's separation from lived experience. This article also contains the early development of standpoint epistemology, where 'the standpoint of women' is articulated as 'women's place' or 'women's perspective'.

Probyn has made an important contribution to the issue of analyzing experience in her book, Sexing the Self: Gendered Positions in Cultural Studies (1993). It is a study of the self and accounts which begin from direct experience including her own work on anorexia and the death of her mother (1993, 3). As Probyn sees it:

This care of the self is of necessity more than a personal endeavour; it must be constructed somewhere between myself and hers; it must be able to reach beyond 'me', beyond who or what 'I' am (Probyn, 1993, 4).

In this way Probyn provides some assistance in declaring my intentions and my motives for including my direct experience with men. This thesis will move beyond this

experience, to the lifeworld of Dorothy Smith.

## **FEMINIST METHODOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE**

Another methodological dilemma is by what means one would go about 'doing' a sociology of knowledge. It would be appropriate to begin by introducing the patriarchal origins of the subfield in sociology known as the sociology of knowledge. The developers of this branch of sociology were Karl Mannheim and Max Scheler, two German thinkers who wrote in the 1920s. Mannheim's Ideology and Utopia (1965) is a classical work on the subject written in the philosophical vein. He divides the sociology of knowledge into two parts: 1) the social determination of knowledge; and 2) its epistemological consequences. A sociology of knowledge according to Mannheim is necessarily perspectival and uncritical and is concerned with "different currents of thought and historical-social groups" (Mannheim, 1965, 266). He defines it like this:

The sociology of knowledge is on the one hand a theory, and on the other hand an historical-sociological method of research (Mannheim, 1965, 266).

Mannheim's work on the sociology of knowledge is androcentric. For example, when dealing with the idea of the hierarchical positioning of groups in a social setting, gender is not included. His specific list of social groups includes the following: "...generations, status groups, sects, occupational groups, schools..." (Mannheim, 1965, 276). Further, his illustrations are gender-blind, as the following passage illustrates:

It can be shown in the case of Marxism that an observer whose view is bound up with a given social position will by

himself never succeed in singling out the more general and theoretical aspects which are implicit in the concrete observations he makes (Mannheim, 1965, 277).

Mannheim's tone is highly condescending, and reminiscent of his elitist notion of a free-floating intelligentsia, one which is not too firmly connected to the social order. His writing on the sociology of knowledge advances the positivist standpoint of disinterestedness, a position that is thoroughly at variance with feminist methodology.

Dorothy Smith's The Conceptual Practices of Power (1990a) is a complete transformation of the sociology of knowledge which includes the standpoint of women and is grounded in the daily activities of real people. Here is Smith's comment on Ideology and Utopia:

Thought is held to be a function of the life situation of the thinker. We can in effect forget about the thinker and move directly from the statements to the interests or perspectives identified with that life situation, into which the thinker is collapsed. The presence of the subject is redundant, needed only as a vehicle for the causal nexus. Subjectivity is not a necessary term in that relation (Smith, 1990a, 39).

Smith's 'standpoint of women' enables a production of knowledge and the examination of that production to occur in a way that did not exist in patriarchal sociology. It is a practical way of 'doing' a women's sociology of knowledge. This thesis creates a sociology of knowledge of one individual woman's knowledge production: Dorothy E. Smith. It employs a method based on the standpoint of one woman (myself) as its point of departure, and begins from a "feminist consciousness" (Stanley and Wise, 1990, 23).

## **METHOD**

Now that I have laid the epistemological groundwork for the production of this thesis I will comment on the ontological concerns. The thesis is comprised of a review of Smith's writings on the sociology of knowledge and ideology, with particular attention to 1) the male influence and 2) the intellectual autonomy displayed in her work. It will include the framework of her career as it emerges: her beginnings at the London School of Economics and Berkeley, her engagement with Marxist feminism at the University of Essex and the University of British Columbia, becoming a 'standpoint feminist' at OISE and the extent of her present influence in the discipline of sociology. The thesis deals with the personal, political and intellectual climates of each of these 'slices' of her life.

### **SMITH'S Beruf: ESTABLISHING THE CATEGORIES**

Dorothy Smith's career development is accompanied by several striking changes in geographical location and intellectual climate. These individual changes easily become both chronological and cognitive stages for analysis. Professor Smith was born in 1926 in Great Britain. At the age of 26 she enrolled in the London School of Economics where she graduated with honours in 1955. She immediately emigrated to the United States with her husband, Bill Smith, and received her Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley in 1963. After two years as a research sociologist and lecturer at Berkeley she returned to England where she taught for two years at the University of Essex at Colchester. The ensuing eleven years of Smith's career as a sociologist were spent at

the University of British Columbia, where she became a full professor. Since 1977, she has held a position at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, where she became the Head for Women's Studies in Education in 1992 (Smith, c. v., 1994).

At the London School of Economics she came to love sociology, and in particular, developed an interest in Social Anthropology. At Berkeley she completed a Doctoral Dissertation which was an ethnographic account of the staff relationships in a state mental institution. It is at Berkeley that her feminist consciousness begins to surface. At the University of Essex, she becomes more overtly activist, and initiates alliances with Marxist feminist writers such as Michele Barrett. The University of British Columbia is the stage for a more resolute commitment to Marxist feminism. It is at OISE that Smith's thought comes to maturity, and her place in feminist theory grows to international recognition.

In contemporary sociology, Smith has finally achieved wide acclaim for her contribution to the development of feminist theory. She is beginning to be included in theoretical texts, as well as in texts for introductory courses in sociology. Her thought is considered and cited both in, and outside of the discipline, in such diverse fields as geography, nursing, commerce and philosophy.

Crucial to this thesis is the examination of how standpoint epistemology has impacted upon the discipline of sociology. I follow the evolution of the standpoint of women in her writing, noting the ways in which male theorists, particularly Marx, have been an influence. Of equal importance is her engagement with other feminist authors, their impression upon her, and how they have been represented in her work. I review the

criticism of her publications that has surfaced in the last decade from within and outside of the feminist community, and her responses to it.

I employ two practical methods that elucidate the extent of Smith's influence inside and outside the discipline of sociology. The first one is a search of the Social Sciences Citation Index, which indicates where, how often, and in what ways she has been cited. The second method is a survey of several feminist sociologists in Canada as well as several prominent journals in the discipline.

In the second week of November, 1994, I was able to spend a week in Toronto at the University of Toronto's Robarts Library where I conducted a thorough search of the Social Sciences Citation Index for evidence of reference to Dorothy Smith's work. Chapter Two contains an analysis of these citations.

The model for the survey which I employ is taken from the work of Michèle Lamont of Princeton University. She studied how the work of the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, came to be so widely accepted in both France and the United States (Lamont, 1987, 584). Lamont points to specific marketable qualities in his work and the intellectual climate that enabled his huge success inside and outside the discipline of philosophy. Many of Lamont's ideas on how the career of Jacques Derrida was advanced parallel and can be applied to the career of Dorothy Smith. For example, Lamont sees the establishment of an intellectual trademark as necessary for the legitimation and authorization of a writer's work (1987, 592). In Derrida's writing, the terms "trace, gramme, supplement, hymen, tympan, dissemination", etc. are easily recognizable "non-concepts" (as Derrida calls them) that increase the marketability of his thought in



academia (Lamont, 1987, 592). Relating this to Dorothy Smith, her terms 'bifurcation of consciousness', 'the standpoint of women', and 'relations of ruling' are concepts that are easily distinguishable as her 'intellectual trademark', and, according to Lamont's argument, could become marketable portions of her thought.

For her research on Derrida, Lamont used "the elite identification technique" which was created by Kadushin in 1974:

In the summer of 1980, I asked 10 important French philosophers and five journalists and editors of major intellectual journals to list the ten most important French philosophers (Lamont, 1987, 587).

I used a similar technique to construct my survey. For a copy of the questionnaire, please see Appendix I. The questionnaires were sent to ten prominent feminist sociologists in Canada, from British Columbia to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Questionnaires were also sent to seven well known feminist journals, as well as The Canadian Journal of Sociology. The results and analysis of this survey are dealt with in Chapter Two.

Finally, I have conducted two personal interviews with Professor Smith, one in October, 1994, at Lakehead University, when she came to present a guest lecture, and a second one at OISE in November of 1994, while I was also working at the Robarts Library. For a list of interview questions, please see Appendix II. The interviews were tape recorded, as was her guest lecture at Lakehead University on October 17, 1994.

I also made extensive notes on a class she attended at Lakehead University called Women and Sociological Theory, where she expanded on the origins of her essays in Texts, Facts and Femininity (1990b). Further research material includes both primary and secondary sources of her writing and her curriculum vitae. These materials form the

textual and audio-visual components for the following thesis in feminist sociology.

### **A SYNOPSIS OF THE CHAPTERS**

It is useful to include a brief synopsis of the theme or focus of each chapter as it relates to my beginnings in the personal, to the analysis of Dorothy Smith's intellectual development and to the socio-historical environment connected to the chronology already established for Smith's career. Each chapter contains three important ingredients: the personal, the evolution of the work of Dorothy Smith and the socio-historical events which engage the larger society. Chapter One presents the dominant themes beginning with the emotional motivation for this thesis. These themes are autonomy, the development of Smith's 'standpoint of women', and the influence of male theorists. Chapter One also elaborates my methodology within a broader sociology of knowledge.

Citation analysis and a survey of feminist theorists form the two central analytic frameworks for measuring the extent of Dorothy Smith's influence inside and outside of the discipline of Sociology/Women's Studies. In Chapter Two, the aggregate of the citations I gathered at the Robarts Library in Toronto are presented in tabular form to demonstrate the development of her career. In a similar way, the statistical findings from a survey of feminist theorists are introduced in the form of tables. These tables portray how Smith's contribution to Sociology has been evaluated by her peers. Chapter Three begins the chronological analysis of Smith's career in sociology. Two geographical locations are included here: her beginnings at the London School of Economics and her

student and teaching days at the Berkeley Campus, as are her class and family background. The Free Speech Movement was identified by Smith as an important socio-historical event at Berkeley, and a brief sketch of this incident is included.

The themes of Marxist feminism and the Domestic Labour Debate in feminist theory dominate the content of Chapter Four. It begins with Smith's short sojourn at the University of Essex in England and ends with her eleven year appointment at the University of British Columbia. The issue of student unrest is the predominant socio-historical condition, and I look at some of the events that go on at UBC and at universities in the rest of Canada. The Domestic Labour Debate is part of the sociology of knowledge for this chapter, as it is an important juncture in the history of feminist thought in Canada.

Chapter Five initiates an analysis of Smith's theoretical maturity. After achieving the rank of full professor at the University of British Columbia, she accepts a position at OISE in Toronto, a relatively new institution inaugurated and supported by the Government of Ontario. The 'standpoint of women' and its origins are examined in detail, as well as the men's writings that have contributed to its construction - Hegel, Schutz, Garfinkel and the influence of the dominant paradigm of postmodernism. Dorothy Smith is categorized at this time as a 'standpoint feminist' by one of her colleagues in the feminist community, Sandra Harding, and Smith's work is located alongside the work of several other women, (Flax, Rose Hartsock), with a similar theoretical orientation (Harding, 1986). Smith's feelings around the issue of postmodernism are included. Finally, the criticism of Smith's work which has begun to surface in the last decade is reviewed in this chapter. This criticism emanates from postmodern writers as well as

writers who support other theories.

The focus of Chapter Six is the socio-historical event of the Montreal Massacre which occurred on December 6, 1989 at L'École Polytechnique. I have tried to include as full an account of this episode as possible from the perspective of the feminist community. I hope to demonstrate the serious impact that this incident had on the Women's Movement in Canada, which was in some instances blamed in the press for the murders. I argue that the aftermath of the Montreal Massacre has been part of what Smith calls a 'renaissance for women' (Lecture, Lakehead University, 1994). I focus on an analysis of Smith's essay on the subject of the Montreal Massacre called "Whistling Women: Reflections on Rage and Rationality" (1992a), as an example of what I interpret as a heightened awareness of women's writing immediately following the event. Other illustrations of her writing since the Montreal Massacre will be included.

The final chapter provides both a summary of this thesis and an analysis of the success/failure of my personal and intellectual objectives for this project. My personal objective is that my writing would be a positive means of expression for the internal rage when a woman is victimized either through physical or sexual abuse. I hope that the study of Dorothy Smith's writing assists me in a more tolerant, kinder attitude to men and the 'male province of meaning'. Further, Chapter Seven summarizes chronologically the academic career of Dorothy Smith, clarifying how 'the standpoint of women' evolves over time, as does the way in which Smith appropriates male theorists. I intend to incorporate a few thoughts on how the appropriation of male theorists has impacted Dorothy Smith's epistemological autonomy. Lastly I include my own observations on the issue of

epistemological autonomy and my own account of what an 'appropriate autonomy' might entail.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **"Not Quite a Pop Singer Yet": Quantifying Smith's Influence**

When I was first introduced to Dorothy Smith on the evening of October 17, 1994, I was acutely aware that I was in the presence of authority. Here was a woman that had spent her life studying and writing about sociology, the discipline which I like to think of as the act of divine intervention that kept me from the clutches of skid row, after my children left home to go to university. The feeling of being near this kind of power was at first uncomfortable. Then, as Professor Smith began her speech holding a microphone on the end of a long cord and referred to herself as 'not quite a pop singer yet', in reference to an elaborate introduction, I relaxed, knowing that this woman had the ability to laugh at herself, and therefore was in sound spiritual condition. Although Dorothy Smith is no Elvis Presley, she is certainly well known, for the most part within the discipline of sociology, and this distinction is beginning to reach well beyond the boundaries of her branch of knowledge.

This chapter will be concerned with establishing the breadth and character of the kind of influence Smith has. I will summarize the results of my citation review and a survey of feminist theorists that will help to document the extent of Smith's influence both within and outside of the discipline of sociology. The citation review was initiated in the Reference Department of the University of Toronto's Robart's Library, from November 9 - 16, 1994. Here I copied by hand the 700 citations of Dorothy Smith's work dated from 1965 to April, 1994 in the Social Sciences Citation Index. An analysis of citations is an important way of measuring the strength of scientific papers. Secondly, with the

assistance of the Women's Studies Program at Lakehead University, I circulated a small survey to a number of feminist sociologists in Canada and feminist journals both in Canada and the United States. The survey was based on an "elite identification technique" used by Michele Lamont to study the career of Jacques Derrida (Lamont, 1987, 587). It was sent to a total of ten feminist sociologists and seven journals, one of which was the mainstream Canadian journal, The Canadian Journal of Sociology. The report of the results will be discussed here.

### **CITATION ANALYSIS**

Citation, or the act of referencing an author either in brackets or in footnotes, has emerged in the last twenty-five years as an important way of establishing the influence of scientific journal articles. According to Stephen Strauss, a science columnist for the *Globe and Mail*, most published papers sink into oblivion, dying a 'citationless death' (*Globe and Mail*, May 25, 1991). A survey of 4,500 highly ranked science and social science journals between 1981 and 1985 revealed that 55% of the articles were not cited five years afterwards. Three quarters of the writing in the social sciences is never cited at all (Strauss, *Globe and Mail*, May 25, 1991).

The reasons for citing a particular author, or a certain article are varied. A list of references may be used to determine the validity of an author's argument and to demonstrate the quality of scholarship of the writer (Lavaglia, 1991, 50). The justification for citing colleagues in a field can be banal, or even egotistical, as in the case of self-

citations. Lavaglia describes the scope of these reasons:

These range from honest attempts to give a colleague credit for an idea, to attempts to flatter reviewers, influence editor's choice of reviewers, and inflate the citation counts of friends (Lavaglia, 1991, 49).

Janet Bavelas suggests that academics cite others as a habit from the traumatic days of writing a doctoral dissertation, to demonstrate familiarity with the literature of a certain field (Bavelas, 1978, 160). Thus the breadth of reasons for citation lies between two motivational extremes, from altruistic to self-serving. Nock, however, argues that there is another impetus attached to an academic's choice of citations. He says that it is "more than just a reflex action" and mirrors the influence of the larger society on the creation of knowledge (Nock, 1993, 81). Nock's analysis includes a lot more than just personal motivation. His hypothesis includes an exploration of the impact of the regionalism sociology in Canada, as well as the influence of existing academic networks, and affiliations by theory and subfields (Nock, 1993, 90). Nock argues that citations operate under a 'halo effect', tending to radiate from a single hub, primarily an important or prestigious university (Nock, 1993, 91).

There is a high value placed on citation analysis in science and social science. This can be attributed to the objective nature of this kind of analysis. Bavelas describes it this way:

The single most crucial justification for measuring scholarly impact by citation counts is that it promises an objective alternative to subjective evaluation by consensus (Bavelas, 1978, 159).

Citation indexes are a library reference tool that show the development of an article



in a forward manner, year by year. They are created in a purely methodical manner using clerical procedures and computational data. Cronin states that there is sound evidence that citation counts can be correlated to a number of measures of scholarly performance, which can be either subjective or objective. For example, high citation counts can be correlated to "recognized quality indicators, such as honorific awards, Nobel Laureateships and reputational ability..." (Cronin, 1981, 16).

The methodology section in Chapter One names the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), as the reference book employed to count the citations accumulated by Dorothy Smith during her thirty-six year career in sociology. Smith began publishing as early as 1959, at the University of California at Berkeley. Her first article "Legitimate and illegitimate deviance: The case of the state mental hospital" was published in the Berkeley Journal of Sociology. According to SSCI, it was cited only once in an article by A.K. Daniels in Psychiatry, in 1964.

SSCI has a scope of 4,700 journals, 1,400 of which are fully covered and 3,300 which are selectively covered. It also includes a selected number of monographs and conference proceedings. Fortunately, it accounted for the citations for all of Dorothy Smith's books, which is unusual practice for this index. During the time period of 1966 to April, 1994, Dorothy Smith accumulated a total of 700 citations, including self-citations. Self-citations were few: only 20. This leaves a total citation count of 680 for analysis. As a measure of comparison, Robert Brym, of the University of Toronto had a total of 71 citations in 1993, and Marlene Mackie had 61. Ten citations a year is considered a fairly high profile. The average citation count per year in Canada is anywhere from zero to

fifteen, and over 100 is very high, thought to be at an elite level (Nock, 1993, 94).

In order to give an illustration of how SSCI works, I would like to follow the citation record of one of Smith's early articles, "Frontline organization of the state mental hospital", published in Administrative Science Quarterly in 1965. This article is of interest because it is not a highly visible topic for Smith, psychiatry as opposed to feminist theory or Women's Studies. Yet it has a citation span of 23 years, as it was last cited by S.A. Kirk in Social Sciences Review, 1988.

Table 1. **Number of Citations by Year for "Frontline Organization of the State Mental Hospital".**

<u>1966-70</u>	<u>1971-75</u>	<u>1976-80</u>	<u>1981-85</u>	<u>1986-90</u>	<u>1991-</u>
4	0	4	5	4	0

This article for the most part is cited in journals of social work. This points out another advantage of citation analysis, in that it can be determined where and how often an author is cited outside her particular discipline. This is a concrete way of establishing the breadth of a writer's influence as a whole. The following table indicates a breakdown, by year, of citations in journals within Sociology/Women's Studies and outside of the discipline/s.

Table Two indicates a steady growth in the number of citations from 1966 to April, 1994, the last month available for a citation count. Notice the startling increase in the percentage of articles which cite Smith's work in journals which are outside of the discipline/s of Sociology/Women's Studies, from 11% in 1986-90, to 33% from 1991 onwards. This would certainly document a significant escalation of her influence outside of the discipline/s.

Table 2. Number of Smith's Citations by Year Inside and Outside Sociology/Women's Studies.

	<u>1966-70</u>	<u>1971-75</u>	<u>1976-80</u>	<u>1981-85</u>	<u>1986-90</u>	<u>1991-</u>
S/WS	2	5 (100%)	37 (84%)	93 (87%)	216 (89%)	183 (67%)
Out	5 (71%)	0	7 (16%)	14 (13%)	28 (11%)	90 (33%)
<hr/>						
Total	7	5 (100%)	44(100%)	107(100%)	244(100%)	273(100%)

Not only is Dorothy Smith's work cited a great deal by her peers and others, entire studies have been constructed using her feminist theory and the standpoint of women. Two excellent examples of this are: Roxana Ng's "Fieldwork as Ideological Practice" (1979), and Sylvia Hale's "The Documentary Construction of Female Mismanagement" (1987). It would be useful to review these two articles, as they are further evidence of the kind of influence that Dorothy Smith has had on the feminist community. Both of these papers make use of Smith's conception of the way that ideology works in a negative way to make the actualities of people's lives disappear in a sociological study. Ng's paper looks at the Chinese community in Vancouver, and Sylvia Hale's study includes two different accounts of how five women in the Indian Civil Service organized a development project (Ng, 1979; Hale, 1987).

Roxana Ng, following Smith's example, initiates her argument by using Marx's conception of the way that ideology was created in Germany. Drawing from The German Ideology (1845), Ng also uses Dorothy Smith's article, "The Ideological Practice of Sociology" (1974a), saying that the "work of concealment" of the conditions of people's

lives in sociology is ideological (Ng, 1979, 4). Ng deconstructs the term 'ethnic community' to demonstrate that this kind of sociological construct is based on social relations, and the real activities of actual individuals. Another level of ideological practice exists with the role of the researcher, when he/she attempts to reconstruct "what actually happened". Quite often, the representation of what an ethnic community is like is taken from community workers, or leaders, 'usually men'. Thus the ordinary people and women do not become part of a sociological account (Ng, 1979, 9). Roxana Ng suggests another kind of method that would eliminate this ideological practice. Ng's 'trick' is to confront the ideological nature of the way that the world is already formed. She suggests the creation of interview questions that tease out how their world is socially constructed. This is a more helpful procedure than requesting how the Chinese women define the concept of community or an ethnic group (Ng, 1979, 11).

Sylvia Hale's article also employs Dorothy Smith's "Ideological Practice of Sociology" 1974a. Here it is used to confirm how ideological procedures in the social sciences operate to exclude women's experience (Hale, 1987, 489). Hale creates two accounts of women's management of an Indian development project. One is based on traditional management theory and the second attempts to recreate what actually happened to the women as they performed the duties connected to the project. She begins with a critique of several books on management theory written by women in the 1980s, all of which espouse a negative ideology of women's management ability. They identify what they consider women's weaknesses and suggest a male mentoring model as a solution (Hale, 1987, 594). Hale draws a parallel between these management

theories and theories of Third World poverty, pointing out the similarities. The female authors judged women and blamed them for their poor performance as managers.

Sylvia Hale turns to Dorothy Smith's article called "Using the Oppressor's Language" (quoted in Hale, 1987). In this article, Smith documents that conventional sociology "entails the imposition of an externalized and objectified language" and the language itself becomes more important than the activities of the people involved (Hale, 1987, 496). When the five Indian women were scrutinized using the methods of traditional management theory, their evaluation was one of "personal failure" - lateness, absenteeism, failure to properly discipline employees, etc. When their practices were examined in light of their real activities on the job it was discovered that the women had a high commitment to their job, were ambitious and well-educated, and showed a genuine distress at the failure of the development programs. Further it was found that the women's department in the development service was not given equal importance with those projects that were directed by men. One female Development Officer had to endure constant harassment from her superior, who forced her to comply with office practices that were corrupt. This in turn was affecting her job performance (Hale, 1987, 507). Sylvia Hale models her study on Dorothy Smith's belief that sociology "must be as much divested from ideology as we can get it" (Smith, 1974a), in order to build a more accurate portrait of the kinds of obstacles that the five female Indian Development Officers had to face.

## **SURVEY OF FEMINIST THEORISTS**

The format of this survey, as mentioned in Chapter One, is based on an 'elite identification technique' employed by Michele Lamont in the study of the career of Jacques Derrida (Lamont, 1987, 592). A total of seventeen questionnaires were mailed. The addresses were selected to represent a Canada-wide sampling of prominent women in Canadian Sociology, who would be extremely familiar with the literature on feminist theory. The editors of several well known feminist journals and one mainstream Canadian sociological journal were also targeted. (For a copy of the cover letter, and example of the survey, see Appendix I). By February 1, 1995 ten of the seventeen questionnaires were returned. Two of the ten declined to participate. This left eight of the seventeen available for analysis at the time of writing.

I have arranged the raw data in the following manner: 1) Section A - the writers who were most instrumental in the development of feminist theory; and 2) Section B - the most influential writers in the last five years. Participants were asked to rank their choices from one to five.

Dorothy Smith's name is identified a total of twelve times - seven times in Section A (the development of feminist theory), and five times in Section B (the most influential writer in the last five years). In Section A, Dorothy Smith was ranked first three times, and second, four times. In Section B, she was ranked first three times, second once and fourth once. The next number of times that a writer was identified was three - this held true for Barrie Thorne, Margrit Eichler and Joan Acker.

This clearly indicates that Dorothy Smith is identified as a leader by her peers in

the developing years of feminist theory. Here is a table illustrating the ranking for writers that were identified as instrumental in the development of feminist theory (Section A). The number of times that a writer was identified is indicated first. Unquestionably, by the use of this identification technique, Dorothy Smith emerges as the writer recognized by her contemporaries in the feminist community as the woman who was the most influential in the early development of feminist theory in sociology.

**Table 3. Total Number of Times Identified in Survey of Feminist Theorists, by Writer, Section A (development of feminist theory).**

Dorothy Smith	7(1,2)*	Margaret Benston	1(3)
Barrie Thorne	3(3,4)	Catherine MacKinnon	1(2)
Margrit Eichler	3(3,4,5)	Liz Stanley	1(5)
Joan Acker	3(3,4,5)	Adrienne Rich	1(5)
Nancy Chodorow	2(1,3)	Mary Daly	1(5)
Michele Barrett	2(2,4)	Audre Lorde	1(3)
Ann Oakley	2(1,5)	Christine Delphy	1(4)
Maria Mies	2(1,2)	Pat Armstrong	1(4)
Sheila Rowbotham	1(1)	Mary O'Brien	1(3)
Patricia Hill Collins	1(1)	Nancy Folbre	1(4)
Jessie Bernard	1(2)	Maxine Baca	1(5)
Vandana Shiva	1(4)		

\* **Ranking is bracketed.**

A second table for Section B (most influential writer in the last five years) shows a decrease in the number of times she is identified by the survey participants from seven to five. However, Dorothy Smith still surfaces as the one writer who remains the most influential in the last five years, as she is ranked first three times, surpassing the other writers in this particular ranking. Table Four indicates the number of times identified by writer in Section B:

**Table 4. Total Number of Times Identified in Survey of Feminist Theorists, Section B (most influential writers in the last five years).**

Dorothy Smith	5(1x3,2,4)*	Maxine Baca	1(5)
Patricia Collins	2(1)	L.Gordon/N.Glenn	1(5)
Maria Mies	2(1,2)	Wally Secombe	1(5)
Margrit Eichler	2(2,4)	Bob Connell	1(5)
Sylvia Hale	2(3,4)	Ros Sydie	1(5)
Barrie Thorne	2(3,4)	bell hooks	1(1)
Judith Butler	1(1)	Anna Shola Onloff	1(2)
Nancy Chodorow	1(2)	Lynne Segal	1(2)
Michel Foucault	1(2)	Nancy Fraser	1(4)
Jane Flax	1(3)	Chandra Mohanty	1(2)
Marlene Mackie	1(3)	Pat Armstrong	1(3)
Susan McDaniel	1(4)	Joan Acker	1(3)
Valerie Walkerdine	1(4)	Nancy Folbre	1(3)
Himani Bannerji	1(5)	Liz Stanley	1(5)

**\* Ranking is bracketed.**

This chapter has been concerned with the scientific measurement of her contemporary influence, both within and outside of the discipline/s of Sociology/Women's Studies. By the rather conventional methods of a citation analysis and a survey of Smith's peers in the feminist community, I have been able to exhibit successfully that Dorothy Smith is recognized as a highly influential force within sociology and outside. Through an examination of her citation record, her authority extends to such diverse areas as geography, philosophy, commerce, law, education and nursing. Despite the fact that Dorothy Smith is a Canadian feminist sociologist with such a wide influence, there is a dearth of both biographical and critical attention to her work. I hope to remedy this gap in the literature of the discipline of sociology with the following study of her writing.



## CHAPTER THREE

### "Miss Plaice, define social structure"

This chapter is an introduction to Dorothy Smith's intellectual beginnings as well as to her family and class background. I will submit that the prospect of a 'feminist consciousness' has been present in her mind and thought, however much it lay dormant in the days of her early scholarship. This preamble begins in her teens and with her experience as a social worker, progresses to her return to university at the London School of Economics, and ends at the Berkeley Campus at the University of California. It documents how Smith's interests in Sociology, in women's theory, and in institutional ethnography were formed. It will describe her attitude to autonomy and to patriarchal sociology. Her Doctoral Dissertation is reviewed in light of these themes. This phase of the thesis lays the foundation for both her intellectual awareness and the starting point of her feminist standpoint epistemology.

Dorothy Edith Smith was born in 1926 in Great Britain, the daughter of middle class parents.<sup>1</sup> She has three brothers, one of whom is a published poet. Her father was a businessman, the owner of a medium-sized enterprise, and her mother came from professional people. Her maiden name was Plaice. Both her mother and her grandmother were involved in the Suffragette Movement, and knew the Pankhursts, who they described to her as a dictatorial and controlling family. Her mother and grandmother belonged to the activist or 'direct action' contingent of the Suffragette Movement. Dorothy Smith grew up listening to her mother's accounts of travelling to Knightsbridge with a coal

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<sup>1</sup> The biographical details which follow come from my interview with Dorothy Smith at OISE on November 11, 1994.

hammer in her bag, deliberately smashing windows, and waiting to be arrested. She is very proud of her mother. With this kind of a family background, a lifetime devoted to the analysis and description of the condition of women in our society is the continuation of what already existed as a family tradition (Interview, OISE, 1994).

When she was seventeen, Smith completed what she describes as a 'mickey mouse' diploma in social work and was given a placement in a northern industrial town. She learned about politics from the men in the factories. It was the end of the Second World War, and the beginning of the overturning of the Conservative Government. Dorothy Smith became active in the Labour Party, and worked to get a Labour MP elected. She remembers sitting around a table with the other women addressing envelopes, listening to them talk about the Great Depression, and what they hoped to get if the Labour Party was elected. After the election nothing seemed to change - conditions for people were so terrible that she lost interest in a social work career. She discovered that there was corruption in the Labour Party and became disillusioned with government. By the time she enrolled in the London School of Economics she was not active in politics (Interview, OISE, 1994).

At the age of 26, after working for approximately five years as a secretary, Dorothy Smith returned to university full time at the London School of Economics (LSE). Her objectives were limited; she simply wanted to be able to become a better secretary (Meadow-Orlans, 1994, 50). Two 'older' women were admitted to the program the same year. Her parents assisted her financially and she had some savings (Interview, OISE, 1994).

Smith developed a passion for the discipline of Sociology that was quite unanticipated. There was no course structure at LSE, as is common in North American universities; instead there were lecture series and tutorials (smaller study groups). She was prodded to excellence by a teacher in the first term whose method was atrocious and who attempted to degrade and humiliate his students. On the first day of a class in Social Anthropology (which became her major and her first love) he glared condescendingly at her and said, "Miss Plaice, define social structure" (Interview, Lakehead University, 1994). When she was unable to answer, he moved on to the next student. She and her colleagues developed a 'cultural resistance' to him and became stubbornly determined to win his respect. At one point she memorized an entire Zulu kinship system in the Zulu language and spitefully wrote it out in its entirety on the blackboard, though she was not required to do so. A defiant example of the proverb that 'living well is the best revenge', she graduated with honours from LSE in 1955 (Interview, Lakehead University, 1994).

At LSE she met and married her husband, Bill Smith, who was in England on a GI bill. When they graduated, they moved back to the United States and enrolled in graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley (Meadow-Orlans, 1994, 46). Her Doctoral Dissertation was written in a personal atmosphere that was extremely unhappy and a social environment that was beginning to split at the seams. Her husband was a research sociologist at a state mental institution, so it was convenient for her to conduct her studies there as well. As she was pregnant, they did not want her working on the wards, so she developed her thesis as an ethnographic description of the staff

relationships in the institution. This primarily involved the physicians, or the medical element in the hospital and the attendants, or custodial component. The dissertation, called "Power and the Frontline: Social Controls in a State Mental Hospital", was completed in 1963.

The social atmosphere at the University of California at Berkeley was in a transitional phase - it was the beginning of the end of the McCarthy Era and students were initiating a fight for intellectual freedom in the form of the Free Speech Movement. Smith describes the political activity on the Berkeley Campus during McCarthyism as restricted to the sidewalk on Bancroft Way, where the various political factions set up their booths on the pavement. They were not allowed on the Campus. She stated that when the police washed the students down the stairs with fire hoses in San Francisco, at a protest at the hearings of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (the McCarthy Committee), a similar protest erupted at the Berkeley Campus. In the San Francisco protest, a friend of Dorothy Smith's, Mary McIntosh, broke her arm during the incident and was deported afterwards. Smith was reluctant to get actively involved in protest because of this, and because she had small children. She did take her eldest son David to the Berkeley protest, pulling him along in a little red wagon, a scene which elicited the cat-calling of some passers by (Meadow-Orlans, 1994, 52).

Smith asserted that the Free Speech Movement was an important juncture at Berkeley, because it was actually on the campus. The participants in this movement were politically naive - they were arguing that politics be allowed on campus - they were not Marxists or student radicals, and their only objective was achieving the right to free

speech. Dorothy Smith claims to have received a political education through this experience. She said, "I sat there with my eyes getting larger and larger." She acquired a knowledge of oppression as it was entrenched in the democratic process and in institutions, and discovered that claims to equity and justice in American politics had no foundation in reality (Interview, Lakehead University, 1994).

The Free Speech Movement on the Berkeley Campus at the University of California found its impetus in several changes in the University's administration in the late 1950s. In 1959, President Robert Sproul was replaced by Clark Kerr, whose management style was markedly different (Otten, 1970, 159). President Sproul had taken a 'hard line' with respect to political activity on campus, in fact; during the McCarthy Era he quite often had the FBI "an organization hardly noted for its scholarly competence" investigate incoming speakers to the university (Otten, 1970, 145). Clark Kerr developed a set of policies and regulations known as the Kerr Directives. Under Kerr, regulations surrounding the hiring of university speakers were relaxed considerably, when, in June 1963, the ban on Communist speakers was rescinded (1970, 163). However, these changes were brought about by the threat of a law suit against the university's regents and with no consultation with the student government. The relaxation in the rules with respect to outside speakers meant an increase in the number of political speakers. This was also reflected in a dramatic change in the range of speaker's topics, for instance, an item on the list of speaker's topics and their sponsors in 1955 was "Personality and Dress" sponsored by the Home Economics Club. In 1965, the same list included the "Grape-Pickers Strike" by the American Federation of Teachers (1970, 165).

The Free Speech Movement had a life span of about nine months, from the summer of 1964 to the spring of 1965 (Heirich, 1971, 6). At the time of its existence, Dorothy Smith was no longer a student, but had been given a job as a research sociologist and lecturer on the Berkeley Campus by John Clausen (Meadow-Orlans, 1994, 46). The specific event that triggered the FSM (Free Speech Movement) was the prohibition of student political activity on a 26 foot piece of property at the campus entrance known as the Bancroft-Telegraph Strip. It happened on September 14, 1964, in the form of a directive from the Dean of Students, Katherine A. Towle (Quarter, 1972, 6). Another key incident occurred on October 1, 1964 when a former student, and a leader of the FSM, Jack Weinberg, was arrested and restrained in a police car. The police car was immediately surrounded by about one hundred students who went limp, a civil rights non-violent protest tactic. Student leaders of the FSM, Mario Savio (who coined the phrase 'don't trust anyone over thirty'), and Arthur Goldberg, held the police car hostage for about 32 hours. They stood on top of the car and delivered the FSM's message to about 7,000 supporters (1972, 7). Joan Baez gave political encouragement to the Movement during several of the demonstrations, not only speaking to the students, but lending emotional support through singing versions of "We Shall Overcome", "With God on Our Side" ( an anti-war song), and a Calypso rendition of "The Lord's Prayer" (Heirich, 1971, 252).

Dorothy Smith's personal relationship with her husband mirrored the chaos that was beginning to manifest itself in the social setting at the Berkeley Campus. She struggled constantly and failed to keep up the appearance of a middle class wife and

mother who valued a wifely role and domesticity above her scholarly discipline. When she and her husband wrote their comprehensive exams at graduate school, she was successful and he was not. The experience was thoroughly mortifying for him. When she handed in her thesis, he left her rather abruptly one morning, leaving her alone to care for her sons who were five years and nine months of age (Meadow-Organs, 1994, 49). She describes Bill Smith as having had a volatile, unpredictable personality. Although he was not abusive to her physically, his temper could erupt without warning, and she, and her eldest son David, would be the unfortunate recipients (Interview, Lakehead University, 1994).

This was the personal environment and the socio-historical framework in which Dorothy Smith wrote her Doctoral Dissertation and embarked on her first academic post. The academic climate was equally alienating. At the time, it was customary to produce a dissertation with little or no supervision and there was no such thing as mentoring. In effect, she wrote the dissertation twice. She came to the conclusion that the first draft had tried vainly to deal with two themes; so she spent a year reading organizational theory before rewriting it. Writing the thesis was a lonely, frustrating experience:

I was on my own with my thesis. The nightmare writing in which you know not who you write for, what it is you might be saying, and what would be proper, correct, sociological to say. Round and round. Thesis supervision as it was practiced then left the candidate to herself. If she had anything for her supervisor to read, she brought it to him. I was supervised by Erving Goffman. He was no exception. He told me at the outset that there was nothing new to be written about state mental hospitals, the topic of my research (Meadow-Orlans, 1994, 50).

Considering the fact that this dissertation was created under circumstances that

were less than encouraging, the thesis is well-written and well-organized, and conveys sociology at a very conventional level. The theory section is the most difficult to read, and, surprisingly, alludes to Marx only once, and then very briefly. This perhaps demonstrates the lingering effects of McCarthyism, as well as the conservative sociology that was practised at the time at the University of California. She refers to Marx to give a macrosocial example of the potential for power in organizational structure:

Of course it is the exercise of power which draws attention to its presence. It is a potentiality for certain kinds of effects rather than the effects themselves. For this reason it is important to be able to locate it by structural co-ordinates which are independent of its exercise. It is this which gives Marx's translation of social power into the ownership of the means of production its analytic strength. It provides a single dimension by which all bases of power in a society could (it seemed) be translated either directly or by simple rules of transformation (Smith, 1963,17).

Smith began the research for her dissertation in the fall of 1956, with two other graduate students. Shortly after their appearance at Western State Hospital (a fictitious name) three attendants were fired "for using unnecessary force in handling a patient" (Smith, 1963, 53). There was an atmosphere of "tension, suspicion and excitement" in the hospital at the time of her arrival. The methodology for her project was three-dimensional, employing participant observation, interviews (recorded in shorthand), and documentation. The hospital had a total of 4600 beds, and from 1956 to 1958 took in male patients only. It still maintained the 19th century policy of a cottage system of organization. Smith's account includes an ethnographic description of the hospital's architecture and grounds. Here is an example of some commentary on one of the more unrefined or 'funky' portions of the hospital:



There are some derelict areas. In one of these a patient has set up a small lean-to and an old couch. From here he conducts a small car-washing enterprise. Although it is against the rules for hospital staff to receive personal services of this kind from patients, it is an informal custom that staff members' car-washing business is given to patients. The customary fee is fifty cents (Smith, 1963, 49).

When women were later admitted to the hospital, the wards were separated into male and female units. Her research was conducted in the women's area, which included the following four ward categories: an admission and treatment ward, a continued treatment ward, a geriatrics ward and a chronic disturbed unit (1963, 55). Even at this early stage in her career, Smith displays a 'feminist consciousness', or a sensitivity and an empathy to the condition of the women at the hospital. The physicians and psychiatrists at Western State Hospital (all were male) are presented as marginal to the medical community, not respected by their peers, and their work had a somewhat low status among the health care professions. The work that they were involved in lacked challenge, and, in fact, "procedures in the hospital were simple and required little skill" (1963, 183). Usually the doctors and even the psychiatrists had little or no training with the mentally ill before arriving to work at the hospital. Smith argues that their work with the patients inevitably became monotonous, so in order to diminish the dreariness of their tasks, the physicians would experiment with variations in electro-shock therapy:

Another type of elaboration involved the accentuation of the risk element in electro-shock therapy. One physician specialized in giving shock therapy to geriatric cases. The elaboration in this instance focussed on the training and operation of an alert team of attendants who together with the physician acted to correct the frequent stoppages of breathing and heart action which resulted from the shock. The team-in-action was demonstrated to the writer with considerable pride

by the physician in question. Eight elderly ladies were given shock; two had to be revived with oxygen and injections of coramine. The speed and smoothness of the operation dramatized the risk. For the observer it also dramatized the questionable necessity of taking it (1963, 183).

This example is important for several reasons. For the most part her thesis is uncritical of the hospital setting, and makes use of the traditional elements that make up the backbone of patriarchal sociology, employing the work of such 'fathers' as Durkheim and Talcott Parsons. This is a departure from what is for the most part, a non-judgmental description of the hospital. It also establishes a concern with the plight of the elderly women, and takes a standpoint critical of the actions of the male physician. This instance is one of two places where women are mentioned specifically. The other is a passage from Johnson and Dodds' A Plea for the Silent (1957, quoted in Smith, 1963). It describes the lonely existence of women who are confined to an asylum, how quite often they would "fall in love" (1963, 78) with a male physician - his daily visit providing the only diversion in the long uneventful hours spent with nothing to do.

Several publications came out of this early research on Western State Hospital. The first was published in 1959 in the Berkeley Journal of Sociology called "Legitimate and illegitimate deviance: The case of the state mental hospital." Then in 1965 an important article was accepted in the Administrative Science Quarterly called: "Frontline organization of the state mental hospital." This article had a citation record that spanned the next 22 years, particularly in psychiatric journals. Dorothy Smith's doctoral dissertation testifies to an early interest in themes contained in the writing of her entire career: an understanding of the position of women, an interest in institutions, in

ethnography and in psychiatry.

A recent autobiographical sketch, included in K.P. Meadow-Orlans' Gender and the Academic Experience (1994), gives further evidence of a feminist consciousness that was not named as such in Smith's days at the University of California. Smith read Jessie Bernard's Academic Women (1964), and was strongly impressed by it. The younger female graduate students for whom she was responsible looked to her for assistance and she educated them politically in the realities of the overwhelming dominance of male faculty members by pointing to the lists of them in the university calendar (Meadow-Orlans, 1994, 48). She refers to a Women's Movement that already existed, but was not yet identified and was still 'hidden' (1994, 48). Clearly, the potential for a feminist standpoint epistemology was a distinct reality, even in the early days of her professional career.

The joy of autonomy was something she initially discovered at the London School of Economics, and was something that she valued highly:

As an undergraduate, I'd been an independent and autonomous person. My discovery of the life of the intellect was an extraordinary gift; it delighted me. I felt it was beyond gender. (Peculiar delusion!). The combination of Berkeley and marriage took that delight and autonomy away (Meadow-Orlans, 1994, 46).

Her attitude to the male intellectual universe is more difficult to pinpoint at this period. Certainly she began to read Maurice Merleau-Ponty during this time, and his writing fascinated her. Smith characterizes the experience as creating a huge shift in her consciousness, instilling her with a desire to be able to think like him. She recounts that she would wake first thing in the morning in those days thinking that she had grasped the

gist of his ideas, only to have the difficult concepts slip away (Interview, OISE, 1994). Here is a phrase from Merleau-Ponty's In Praise of Philosophy (1963), demonstrating Smith's attitude toward writing in sociology, that any inquiry must start from 'within' (Smith, 1990a, 22):

Perception grounds everything because it shows us, so to speak, an obsessional relation with being; it is there before us, and yet it touches us from within (Merleau-Ponty, 1963, 16).

Similarly, his essay "The Philosopher and Sociology" (1974), seems to contain the philosophical antecedents of many of the principles of sociological inquiry that Smith has developed. Smith's recurrent theme of a concern with sociology's separation from lived experience is echoed in Merleau-Ponty's statement in this paper:

It is essential never to cut sociological inquiry off from our experience of social subjects (which of course includes not only what we have experienced ourselves but also the behaviour we perceive through the gestures, tales or writings of our fellow men) (Merleau-Ponty in O'Neill, 1974, 98).

What concerned her most during this period was the inauthentic nature of sociology - how distant it was from real life. She made a vow to 'remake' sociology once her doctorate was complete (Interview, OISE, 1994).

To conclude, Dorothy Smith's interest in social and political life was already firmly established by the time she was in her late teens. This was primarily due to the influence of a family history of activism in the Suffragette Movement and the politics that Smith learned from the men in the factories in Northern England when she was employed as a social worker. The lively intellectual atmosphere at the London School of Economics was the catalyst for what became an intense passion for the disciplines of sociology and

social anthropology. Her life-long concern with the standpoint of women, with psychiatry, ethnography and organizations are further solidified at Berkeley during the course of her doctoral research. A terribly unhappy marriage and two years as a lecturer at Berkeley in a department comprised of forty-four men presented a formidable challenge to a woman in the early 1960s who was beginning a career in sociology. Certainly Dorothy Smith was already aware of what she would like to change in the discipline. Merleau-Ponty provided the seed for a method of inquiry that started from "within". Her experience at Berkeley is one that she deems alienating, yet this was productive - it left her with an unbridled ambition to transform sociology.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DOROTHY SMITH AS A MARXIST FEMINIST

In England women are still occasionally used instead of horses for hauling canal boats, because the labour required to produce horses and machines is an accurately known quantity, while that required to maintain the women of the surplus population is below all calculation (Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. I, 1906).

The use of this text from Das Kapital by Karl Marx has a three-fold purpose. 1) It situates this chapter in Marxism and Marxist organizations which were a highly visible phenomenon at the time of Dorothy Smith's appointments at the University of Essex, 1966 - 1968 and at the University of British Columbia, 1968 - 1977 (Smith, c. v., 1994). 2) It establishes Karl Marx's sensitivity to the condition of women, the primary reason for early feminists' interest in Marxist theory and the consequent consolidation of Marxism and feminism. During this period, Dorothy Smith publicly identifies herself as a Marxist feminist (Smith, 1977, 9). 3) The quote locates women in the area of work, particularly work outside the home. The fact that Marx never mentions women's work in the home is a point that eventually led to the construction of arguments against the practical use of Marxist theory in the Domestic Labour Debate in early feminist theory (Vogel, 1983, 69). These three themes, Marxism and Marxist organizations, Marxist feminism and the Domestic Labour Debate in feminist theory are key subjects for analysis in this chapter, as well as the extent of Dorothy Smith's involvement in these areas.

The following section will be structured in this way: I will begin with the personal - the biographical details of Smith's intellectual life at this time. Then I shall continue with a brief description of the social environment as it pertained to the larger society at the time of the Second Wave of feminism, and then I shall attempt to explain the context of

early feminist theory using the examples of other important Marxist feminists - Michele Barrett, Zillah Eisenstein and Christine Delphy. Following this introduction to the Marxist feminist community, Dorothy Smith's approach to this field will be examined. Another part of the context of Marxist feminism will be a brief examination of the Domestic Labour Debate and Dorothy Smith's feelings about this issue. A final note on Marxist feminism will present arguments that have been raised against the feminist appropriation of Marx.

Attention to social movements in the larger society and within the Women's Movement will put forward a sociology of knowledge component, a framework in which Dorothy Smith's contribution can be examined. I shall include a look at the writing that Dorothy Smith accomplished during this portion of her career, particularly her work on ideology. I hope to characterize feminist standpoint epistemology as it was conceived at the time, i.e., how women were viewed by Smith in relation to this socio-historical interval.

Dorothy Smith returned to England to a position at the University of Essex after her estrangement from her husband. She felt ill at ease in the United States and lacked any family ties and supportive network at the University of California at Berkeley. Therefore she chose to return to Britain, where her family, though not in the immediate vicinity of Essex, were certainly closer at hand (Interview, Lakehead University, 1994). At the University of Essex, Smith identifies herself as a Marxist who is becoming a feminist. She was very active in the political life of the university. During her short term here, some students were suspended, and she helped to organize a protest. She proposed a moratorium on classes at the university based on Ghandi's great march to the sea. Students stopped going to formal lectures and academic activities required by the

University of Essex and formed their own workshops and symposiums. It was very successful as a form of protest (Interview, Lakehead University, 1994).

At Essex, Dorothy Smith was now the single parent of two small children, and a lecturer with an extremely heavy teaching load. She was teaching social psychology, symbolic interaction theory as well as organizational theory. One publication came out of her appointment at the University of Essex, a short article called "Academic Women", which she submitted to the Essex Review in 1968. It was a brief commentary written in a conversational tone. She argued that women at the time had an advantage over men in academic writing. As women had 'perished' already, and had little hope of an academic career, it provided an environment where there was little pressure, so they had the potential to produce better writing. Smith characterizes this writing as "not a feminist article". It contained some of the ideas that were precursors to such essays as "The Ideological Practice of Sociology" 1974a, and "A Peculiar Eclipsing: Women's Exclusion from Man's Culture" (1978c). It should be emphasized at this point that her term at the University of Essex was very temporary, with academic and family responsibilities taking a priority. It was also at Essex that Dorothy Smith met and influenced another well known Marxist feminist, Michele Barrett (Interview, OISE, 1994).

In 1968, Dorothy Smith began an eleven year appointment at the University of British Columbia, a time of great productivity and change from an academic and intellectual perspective. UBC was a comparatively conservative educational institution (as opposed to Simon Fraser University in Burnaby at this time) and whose historic treatment of women parallels other Canadian universities. The first President of UBC,



Frank Westbrook, served a five-year term in this office from 1913 to 1918. His objective for the university was to create a second Cambridge. Note this commentary on the actions of the Suffragettes by one of the member's of Westbrook's 'old boys network', contained in his biography called Westbrook and His University (1973):

His meeting with his good friend, Sir William Osler, was purely social and Osler recounted the activities of the "suffragettes" who had set off a bomb in Westminster Abbey, were burning railway stations and smashing windows; with tongue in cheek Osler advocated that "the Government should buy Iceland from Denmark and deport them there at the menopause (Gibson, 1973, 83).

After several years of student agitation, a Dean of Women was hired by UBC in 1921, a position that was filled until it was disbanded in 1978. The job was originally meant to be "a position of adequate authority", but the office of the Dean of Women was usually excluded from the governing body that created new courses. By 1949, the Dean of Women was officially granted a seat in the senate by a legislative change to the University Act (Stewart, 1990, 72). Student enrollment in the same year, the 1949/50 term, consisted of 5,924 males and 1,684 females (1990, 82). Discriminatory behaviour of men towards women was accepted as the norm (1990, 91).

In 1973, a few years after Dorothy Smith's arrival at UBC, a document sponsored by the Women's Action Group was published called A Report on the Status of Women at the University of British Columbia (Day, 1973). It consisted primarily of a detailed statistical summary of professors' salaries by sex based on a multiple regression analysis, or a model that assumed that each faculty member's salary was "the sum of a number of components" (Day, 1973, 10). This publication stated openly that the university

"punishes women for not being men" and that the condition of the faculty at the University of British Columbia was not unique among other Canadian universities (1973, 10).

This study demonstrated that women constituted a smaller portion of the faculty in every rank; they were paid less; that women, even with equivalent qualifications to men were located in lower professorial categories; there were fewer women in positions of authority and, fewer female than male students were receiving an education (1973, 6). This was the socio-historical environment for a female professor at the time of Dorothy Smith's appointment. The fact that she achieved the rank of full professor in 1976 appeared in the nature of what Bourdieu has called des miracles, or a 'miraculous exception'. This phrase of Bourdieu's describes the phenomenon in educational circles of an exceptionally successful member of a disadvantaged group (Moi, 1991, 1026). Dorothy Smith has testified to the alienating atmosphere for women at UBC at the time. She attended faculty meetings with two other female members of her department. Inevitably, afterwards, one or the other would be suffering either a migraine, an upset stomach or an asthma attack (Lecture, Lakehead University, October, 1994).

Here at UBC, Smith was instrumental in the creation of the first Women's Studies Program, an experience that would change her life dramatically. They began with a library of three books and a badly made film on the Suffragette Movement by the National Film Board. Two of the authors that they included were Mirra Kamarovsky and Catherine Parr Trail. These first Women's Studies classes began with the idea of 'starting from your own experience', in developing any inquiry of a topic for study. Women learned that they could return to this experience, but that it was not an instant authority (Lecture, Lakehead

University, October, 1994).

At UBC, Smith was empathetic to the student movement, which at the time was almost a world-wide phenomenon. She participated as much as it was possible for a faculty member to do so. Her article "The Intersubjective Structuring of Time" (1979), came out of the student protest movement. Here, her identity as a Marxist feminist is solidly established. Her initial investigation of Marx was prompted by a student who asked her in a class how sociology could provide an explanation of the realities of social life. Freed from the constraints of the kind of Marxist theory she had learned at the London School of Economics (Karl Popoff), she discovered something quite different in Marx, beginning with The German Ideology (1845) (Interview, Lakehead University, 1994).

Althusserian Marxism at the time had the same widespread appeal as the contemporary attention to the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, and Smith belonged to an Althusserian study group on a casual basis. She found the entire movement of particular brand of Marxism unappealing, however, and conducted much of her examination of Marx on her own (Interview, Lakehead University, 1994). Part of her aversion to Althusserian Marxism could be interpreted as being based on the beginnings of a widespread revolt against functionalist theory that was beginning in sociology about the time that Smith began teaching at UBC. Terry Eagleton, in his work Ideology: An Introduction (1991), notes a discrepancy in Althusser's essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1969) :

On the one hand, he acknowledges from time to time that any inquiry into ideology must begin from the realities of class struggle. What he calls the ideological state apparatuses - school, family, church, media and the rest - are sites of such

conflict, theatres of confrontation among social classes. Having underlined this point, however, the essay appears to forget about it, veering off into what is really a functionalist account of ideology as that which helps to 'cement' together the social formation and adapt individuals to its requirements (Eagleton, 1991, 146).

Eagleton's argument that Althusserian Marxism is functionalist comprises a large part of his critique of Althusser's view of ideology. He also criticizes Althusser's emphasis on the "materiality" of ideology, that the slightest gesture, or even thought itself is ideology that is "imbedded in material institutions" (Eagleton, 1991, 149). Eagleton states: "if everything is material, even thought itself, then the word loses all its discriminatory force" (Eagleton, 1991, 149). Dorothy Smith has been openly critical of functionalist theory as it applies to Marxism (Smith, 1987, 68). I interpret Althusser's functionalist approach to Marxist ideology as the basis for Smith's aversion to it.

The University of British Columbia in 1968 was experiencing on a lesser scale the effects of a world-wide Student Protest Movement which had begun with the Free Speech Movement at the Berkeley Campus of the University of California in 1964, spread to Columbia University, and eventually triggered events in Canadian universities. The same year that Dorothy Smith arrived at UBC, other Canadian universities were involved in conflicts that usually surrounded the issue of student power, or the right of students to have a greater control in the decision making process of the university (Quarter, 1972, x). The Student Protest Movement was only one part of a revolutionary movement throughout the whole of the larger society to combat injustice. Other parts of this social movement were the Black Power Movement, the Anti-Vietnam War Movement, the Gay Liberation Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement (Quarter, 1972, x).

One of the specific events of the year 1968 included accusations of racism toward Biology Professor Perry Anderson at Sir George Williams University in Montreal. This incident escalated in a few short months to the occupation of the university's computer centre on January 29, 1969 (Sheffe, 1970, 12). By February 10, when police attempted to dismantle the students' barricade, three fires broke out destroying computers and equipment valued at approximately \$2.8 million (Sheffe, 1970, 14). There were 97 occupiers, 69 of whom were Sir George Williams University students. These activists represented several factions, "ranging from black nationalists, Marxists and New Leftists, to liberals" (Quarter, 1972, 22).

Other episodes of student unrest in Canada at this time included 'the Gray Affair' at McGill University, where political theory lecturer Stanley Gray, a self identified Marxist and a thorn in the side of the administration because of his support of "direct action and confrontation politics" was fired by the university (Sheffe, 1970, 17). The University of Toronto in 1968/69 was also involved in issues of 'student power' under SAC President Steven Langdon. Student protest was avoided here, however, because the University President succumbed to student demands that there be liberalization of the university's disciplinary procedures, and agreed not to make any crucial policy changes in the university's administration without student participation (Quarter, 1972, 17).

Nineteen sixty-eight is also credited as the year of the genesis of the radical wing of the Women's Movement, also known as the Women's Liberation Movement and the Second Wave of Feminism. When President Kennedy inaugurated the President's Commission on the Status of Women in 1961, it resulted in the report American Women

(1963), which documented the inequities still endured by women in the United States (Merton, 1974, 193). On June 30, 1966, in Betty Friedan's hotel room, 28 women paid five dollars to join a civil rights organization for women called NOW or the National Organization for Women. By the time of its organizing conference on October 29-30, 1968, NOW had three hundred members, both men and women (1974, 194). This was considered to be the older and more 'reform' branch of the Women's Movement. The younger, and more radical element was more loosely organized, and, in fact, prided itself on its "lack of organization". These women were connected by an underground network of "papers, journals, newsletters and cross-country travellers" (1974, 192). They held a National Conference at Thanksgiving Weekend, 1968, but it did not become a regular event. This portion of the movement required no membership dues, had no elected leaders and no structure of membership requirements (1974, 192).

Dorothy Smith became aware of this 'underground network' of women in a rather unexpected way. Her early paper, "Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology" (1974b), was presented in an unpublished form at the University of Oregon, and afterwards, it acquired an unanticipated currency. Smith received letters about the paper from places as far away as Hungary (Smith, 1987, 45). She realized that this underground network of women was very important:

I could not understand how a paper that had never been published could circulate so widely... My experience with how that paper travelled changed my view altogether. I saw that a paper could be a way of reaching other women, of talking to them. The academic linkages could be used as a medium of communication among women (Smith, 1987, 46).

Within this larger frame of reference, i.e., the Women's Movement, there emerged

what came to be characterized by feminist writers, more specifically, Heidi Hartmann, as the 'marriage' of Marxism and feminism (Sargent, 1981, 2). Marxist feminism evolved from the writing of the Utopian socialists - Owen, Fourier and Saint-Simon. Their ideas on the emancipation of women were appropriated by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Women at the time of the Second Wave of feminism lacked a theory of their oppression, so that Marx and Engels were a palpable choice as a starting point for women's theory (Vogel, 1983, 6).

In a book called Marxism and the Oppression of Women (1983), Lise Vogel studied Marx's writing, specifically looking for evidence of his approach to the 'Woman Question'. There are several important examples of Marx's attention to women provided by Vogel in this work. She states, for instance, that Marx employs a rewording of Fourier in The Holy Family, when he writes that "the degree of emancipation of women is the measuring stick of general emancipation" (Vogel, 1983, 42). Vogel argues that Marx and Engels move beyond the theorizing of the Utopian socialists in The German Ideology, by beginning to analyze family relationships and social reproduction (1983, 49).

The German Ideology is essential to a study of the way Marx has been appropriated in Dorothy Smith, because it is this book that she returns to at the University of British Columbia prompted by a student's question. Note the passage from this work in the section on Feuerbach. It forms a theme in much of Smith's writing:

The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstractions can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity, and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can be verified in

a purely empirical way (Marx, 1939, 7).

Marx, Lise Vogel maintains, becomes 'more than descriptive' about the condition of women in Das Kapital. She states that the most important ideas in this work for the construction of feminist theory are individual consumption, the value of labour power and the industrial reserve army (Vogel, 1983, 63). Das Kapital is a significant place to begin feminist theory precisely because Marx places 'the Woman Question' in the reproduction of labour and the working class (1983, 63). Engels' Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (1972) constitutes another work that early feminists could not avoid coming to terms with, even though its value is "limited as to women's issues" (Vogel, 1983, 75). Dorothy Smith does deal with Engels, but at a later stage of her intellectual development in Women, Class, Family and the State (1985).

The categories of feminist thought that were the most prominent during the early part of the Women's Movement, when Dorothy Smith began teaching at the University of British Columbia were Marxist feminism, socialist feminism and radical feminism (Sargent, 1981, xx). Among the many theorists that situated themselves in Marxist feminism, I have chosen to briefly examine Dorothy Smith's approach to this kind of theorizing in relation to three other writers in this sisterhood: Michele Barrett, Zillah Eisenstein and Christine Delphy. My purpose here is to establish a pastiche or patchwork of Marxist feminist thinking, and another context for Smith's theory. I hope to give a sense of the way that these women saw one another within this framework. Attention will be given to the chronological development of the debates within Marxist feminism. When Smith began teaching at UBC, Marxism and feminism were separate entities, but eleven



years later, when she accepted a position at OISE in 1977, the union of these two concepts was well established, and this kind of theory was highly developed. There were fierce debates in the feminist community around the relevance of Marx to women's theory. The ensuing glimpse of Marxist feminism spans an entire decade.

Michele Barrett was a colleague of Dorothy Smith's at the University of Essex from 1966 to 1968 (Interview, Lakehead University, 1994). Early feminist theorists, Barrett included, were interested in locating the source of women's oppression or its exact cause (Barrett, 1992, 2). Barrett's Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist feminist analysis (1980) sought to find the origin of women's oppression "in the capitalist relations of production" (1980, 9). A large part of this work is devoted to the concept of ideology and whether or not ideology can be located within the material realm. Barrett agrees with the Althusserian argument that "ideology exists in material apparatuses", but she is careful to distinguish between "material apparatuses" and ideology itself as being material.<sup>2</sup> Barrett keeps an open mind, not only to Althusserian Marxism (which she seems to want to hang onto despite the appearance of discourse theory), but to its functionalism. She identified one of the principles that needed to be re-evaluated in her chapter on ideology as "an insistence that functionalist formulations are always and necessarily incorrect" (Barrett, 1980, 87).

Zillah Eisenstein completed a Ph.D. dissertation on Marxism and feminism in 1972 entitled: "The Concept of Species Being in Marx and Durkheim: Its import for feminist ideology." She was, in 1979, a professor of feminist theory at Ithaca College, New York

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<sup>2</sup> See Terry Eagleton's criticism of Althusserian ideology documented above.

(Eisenstein, 1979, 392). R. A. Sydie characterizes her as a revolutionary Marxist who explained the oppression of women in economic relationships. She credits Eisenstein as combining the ideas of patriarchy and capitalism to advance the notion of "a system of capitalist patriarchy" (Sydie, 1988, 116). Eisenstein's essay, "Developing a Theory of Capitalist Patriarchy" (1979), attempts to merge two concepts that are identified as opposing categories of early feminist theory: the alliances were Marxism/capitalism and radical feminism/patriarchy. Here is a passage that points out this attempt at unification:

The historical development of capitalist patriarchy can be dated from the mid-eighteenth century in England and the mid-Nineteenth century in America. Both of these periods reflect the developing relationship between patriarchy and the new industrial capitalism. Capitalist patriarchy, by definition, breaks through the dichotomies of class and sex, private and public spheres, domestic and wage labour, family and economy, personal and political, and ideology and material conditions (Eisenstein, 1979, 23).

Although Dorothy Smith does not refer a great deal to Christine Delphy or to Michele Barrett, she does on several occasions refer to Zillah Eisenstein in the context of Marxist feminist analysis. Smith's essay, "Women, Class and Family" (1985), refers to Eisenstein's categories of patriarchy: feudal, capitalist and socialist (Smith, 1985, 2). Smith posits instead that "we must begin by including women from the outset". The ordinary world of sociological thought must, if necessary, be remade (1985, 3).

Christine Delphy provided yet another unique approach to Marxist feminist theory. She was a well known activist in France's Women's Liberation Movement. Her essay called, "The Main Enemy" (1970), contained an early analysis of women's unpaid domestic labour in the home. Christine Delphy is best known for her materialist

evaluation of women within a "domestic mode of production" (Delphy, 1984, 7). She claims to uphold the basic principles of Marxism which other feminist theories have overlooked:

Historical materialism is based on the analysis of social antagonisms in terms of classes; classes being themselves defined by their place in a system of production. While these principles have supposedly been used to analyze the situation of women as women, the specific relations of women to production have in fact simply been ignored. That is to say there has been no class analysis of women (Delphy, 1984, 57).

At the same time, Delphy is not a slave to Marx and does not attempt to bolster her writing with a Marxist 'dogma of infallibility':

I won't shed one tear for Marxism if it has to be abandoned because it is seen to be useless in analyzing oppression (Delphy, 1984, 155).

By bringing attention to these three women, Christine Delphy (France), Michele Barrett (Great Britain) and Zillah Eisenstein (United States), I have attempted to give a sense of the deep differences that quickly unfolded, not only within the larger Women's Movement, but within Marxist feminism, of which Dorothy Smith was a part. As Smith words it:

...there [was] an emergence of a discourse among women - writing to one another - quarrelling, sometimes bitterly with one another. In the last twenty years, women have begun to refer not to men, but to one another (Lecture, Lakehead University, October, 1994).

The following section analyses and describes Dorothy Smith's particular contribution to a community of Marxist feminists.

## SMITH'S METHOD OF MARXIST FEMINISM

When Dorothy Smith took up feminist scholarship and began publishing at the University of British Columbia, her marginal position as a woman in sociology and as a theorist in relation to Marx were fundamental realities. Dissatisfied with the dominant paradigm of Althusserian Marxism, and free of the constraining kind of Marxism taught at the London School of Economics, Smith felt free to explore Marx's writing with her own theoretical objectives, i.e., to develop a sociology that was a 'truer' representation of the realities of people's lives. The first article she published reflecting an appropriation of Marx to assist her in her new way of thinking sociologically is "The Ideological Practice of Sociology" (1974a) in Catalyst. The first critical article concerning Smith's writing was published as a companion piece to this article in the same issue of Catalyst written by Pradeep Bandyopadhyay. "The Ideological Practice of Sociology" was meant to be a critique of Marxism (Interview, Lakehead University, 1994). Further, it establishes not only Smith's view of Marx's approach to ideology, but her own concept of ideology which is a refinement and extension of Marx's original writing.

Smith's definition of ideology includes a juxtaposing of the words "ideology" and "social science". She asserts that ideology is usually viewed as a false representation of the world, while social science is considered a true one (Smith, 1974a, 39). Smith argues that the predominant value in sociology at the time was that of a "disinterested" science, a value that in "itself was an ideology of social science" (Smith, 1974a, 40):

The practice of objectivity in the social sciences is less concerned with such values as 'truth' and 'knowledge', than it is with the constitution of a body of statements about the world which those who make them can use as the currency

of their discipline. The practice of objectivity in the social sciences is constitutive of that science as it serves to separate its corpus of statements from the subjectivities of those who have made them. It has very little to do with the pursuit of knowledge (Smith, 1974a, 40).

The study of the original Marx by Dorothy Smith was initiated because "...I have been concerned with how to make use of his work" (Smith, 1974a, 41). From her observation of Marx, she concludes that he saw his own theory as completely oppositional to ideology. The German Ideology documents Marx's belief that descriptions of social reality must be "the representation of the practical activity of men" (Smith, 1974a, 42):

Marx' example instructs us not to treat a concept as a theoretical primitive, in the logical sense, nor as interpretable solely in terms of other concepts. Rather, a concept requires to be discovered again in the actualities of what living people do (Smith, 1974a, 44).

To Marx then ideology was a method or a "critical procedure". It was a way of looking at a social reality and separating the ideological from knowledge. Marx thought that a totality need not be contaminated because part of it was ideological (Smith, 1974a, 41) The practice of ideology in sociology is considered unproductive by Smith because it "stops the thinker in the realm of theory":

For the ideologist, then there is a fundamental bifurcation of consciousness, a separation between the world as it is known directly in experience, i.e. the world of actual living individuals and the world as it is known "in the realm of theory" (Smith, 1974a, 50).

Dorothy Smith makes use of Marx's method to identify what she sees as a serious problem with mainstream sociological inquiry, in that sociologists usually work in a

"symbolic" mode with little attention to the lives of real living individuals. She sees Marx's procedure as providing a starting place for sociologists to examine their own practices to see where they have become ideological and therefore problematic. She sees the return to Marx as "a problem for investigation" for sociologists in order to rectify a split between theory and lived experience (Smith, 1974a, 54).

Bandyopadhyay declared that Smith's article is "in a few respects misleading and inconsistent", and criticized Smith's interpretation of the way that Marx understood the practice of ideology (Bandyopadhyay, 1974, 56). This discussion predated by twenty years the postmodern concerns of the 'standpoint debate' by pointing out the difficulties that arise when Smith insists that sociological concepts must have a clear relation to 'what men actually do', i.e., the problems concerned with representation. In addition, Bandyopadhyay interpreted Smith's rejection of the 'three tricks', enumerated in Marx's The German Ideology, and widely used in survey research, as "a complete rejection of aggregation as necessary in science" (Bandyopadhyay, 1974, 59). Bandyopadhyay perceives that only the single case study, which is true to the actual context, would be acceptable to Smith, and that "this is an extreme and narrow form of operationalism" (1974, 59). It is Smith's methodology that elicits his reservations.

### **"FIRST, MEN PRETENDED THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT CLEAN WAS"**

Twenty-five years ago, in the early days of the second wave of feminism, many radical organizations co-existed with the Women's Liberation Movement. Groups like the

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC), the Black Panthers, Marxist and New Left Groups, rather than being a source of support for the establishment of feminist consciousness raising, were often themselves guilty of blatant discriminatory and sexist behaviour towards women. First, women were most often responsible for the mundane and thankless tasks that kept these groups functioning: coffee-making, office cleaning, mailing, typing, etc. (Sandage, 1992, 282). Secondly, women were denied access to power and to positions of leadership, and lastly, women were objectified as sexual beings. Men would often admit women to the membership of a group through a sexual relationship and remove their membership by terminating the relationship (Sandage, 1992, 282). The model for male behaviour of this type was Stokely Carmichael of the SNCC, who snidely remarked that "the only position for women in the SNCC was prone" (Sandage, 1992, 282). This facet of the socio-historical environment of the early days of the Women's Movement did not go unnoticed by Dorothy Smith.

Lydia Sargent has examined this issue in a rather sardonic, but light-hearted manner, in a collection of papers called Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism (1981). In "New Left Women and Men: The honeymoon is over", she describes in accurate terms the struggles that early feminists had with the sexist behaviour of males. She pinpoints the root of the most rancorous debates in the issue of whose turn it was to clean the organization's office. Sargent lists the extremist strategies employed by men to avoid any 'emasculating' participation in 'women's work':

First, men pretended they didn't know what clean was. Then, there was the buy-them-off-by-doing-a-big-cleaning-job-once-in-a-great-while strategy in which men did something **REALLY BIG** like washing windows or painting rooms (which usually caused more mess than they cleaned up) while ignoring the garbage, the food lying around, the boxes of leaflets blocking the doorway and so on. After the **REALLY BIG** job was done, men felt that they had proven that they could clean as well as or better than women (Sargent, 1981, xvii).

Despite Sargent's bantering tone, however, women were often in serious difficulty in radical organizations - practical problems such as who should lead, who cleaned the office, and who spoke at meetings, became the basis of theoretical struggles for early feminist writers (1981, xvii).

In 1977, Dorothy Smith published her first major work, a little book designed to fit into one's pocket, called Feminism and Marxism: A place to begin, a way to go. It is the textual account of a tape recorded speech that Professor Smith gave in celebration of Women's Week at the University of British Columbia. She introduced the book by stating that she has made few changes to the wording, so that the presence of her female audience will not be excluded. The text was written at a time in the social history of Canada when to read Marx, and to be publicly identified with Marxism and feminism was an act of defiance and had the stamp of rebellion. It was an act of courage. Marx's thought embodied the idea of oppression with which feminists in the early 1970s identified so strongly. Women had been so thoroughly excluded from the intellectual world of men that there was no woman that Dorothy Smith could turn to as a recognized authority as a beginning place to build theory. Marx, who had a marginal place in North American society at the time, and had at least in a minor way identified 'the Woman Question', was



one of the few choices that women had to begin gathering their strength. Like Marx, they too had been marginalized. The combination of Marxism and feminism was originally a mutually enhancing one as "a place to begin". By the mid-1970s, however, feminist writers had begun to question the limits of this particular alliance.

In the lecture, Smith defines herself as a Marxist feminist. She says that as a young woman she became a socialist, but that she had very little feeling or understanding for what she was doing (Smith, 1977, 10). She discovered Marxism and feminism at about the same time, although Marxism came first:

So becoming a Marxist has been an enterprise in trying to discover and trying to understand, the objective social, economic and political relations which shape and determine women's oppression in this kind of society (Smith, 1977, 12).

This small book takes a critical perspective on Marxism as a theoretical framework, Marxists and Marxist organizations. She notes that Marxism at the time had rejected feminism, because the Women's Movement, as an entity, had been "peculiarly lacking in analysis" (1977, 33). What Marxists failed to understand, was that women were only just forming a consciousness of gender oppression and its depth, so they could hardly be expected to be detached enough from their oppressive circumstances to analyze them. Women at the time were very angry. Marxists made little effort to empathize with the standpoint of women; in point of fact, Dorothy Smith saw the whole of the Marxist Movement as one that enabled the oppression of women:

...the claim on Marxists who are feminists to think first of the unity necessary for struggle, the unity of organization, can be seen as something that covers a fundamental division. It covers it over because that division involves the subordination and dependency of women...it involves their silence...The

unity that is required from men and women as Marxists is one that is based on and takes for granted the oppression of women. It is a unity based on division (1977, 36).

One concrete example of a Canadian Marxist organization that enabled the oppression of women at this point in time was a group called In Struggle, based in Montreal, Quebec. John Cleveland, a graduate of Simon Fraser University, used his experience as a former member of In Struggle as the foundation for a Master's thesis entitled "The Political is Personal: Why women in the Canadian group In Struggle changed from opposing to supporting the feminist ideology of the autonomous Women's Movement" (1983). This thesis is a direct examination of the sexist practices of the males in the organization, based on interviews of male and female members. In Struggle was based on Althusserian Marxism. Dorothy Smith, opposed to the dogmatism of Marxist groups like In Struggle, lost a friend over the Marxist line on feminism, an experience which she characterizes as a profound disappointment and a betrayal. She felt that her friend was a woman with a brilliant potential and had been absorbed by a sexist, fanatical group (Interview, Lakehead University, 1994). Other examples of Canadian militant groups were the Vancouver Partisan Organization, Toronto Red Morning and Halifax New Morning (Cleveland, 1983, 35).

In Struggle was originally established as a collective whose primary task was to publish a communist newspaper. They wanted to build a new Canadian Communist Party which was based on Marxist ideology: they were working "for a Canada-wide socialist revolution" (Cleveland, 1983, 35). Their dues system was evidence of the dogmatism that Dorothy Smith has mentioned. The dues system of the organization was,

in fact, a kind of taxation system - a fixed sum was to be paid by members each week on a scale that was graduated according to income. If a member happened to earn more than a specific 'ceiling income' she/he had to forfeit 75% of the surplus income over that amount. For the most part, all of the excess wealth of the members was confiscated (Cleveland, 1983, 193).

The organization had an intellectual hierarchy, wherein leadership positions that required research and analysis skills were occupied entirely by men. One interviewee (Martin), said that women, even if they had top posts, were never able to break into the network of men that actually developed political theory (Cleveland, 1983, 166). Before 1977, female members of In Struggle also suffered from an 'anti-maternity' posture on the part of male members. If women argued for sufficient maternity leave, they were ridiculed because they did not live up to the example of Vietnamese women who bravely returned "to the battlefield a week after childbirth" (Cleveland, 1983, 168). The primary objective of In Struggle, besides the publication of the newspaper, was to expand the political work done by members outside of the home. It was considered quite acceptable that if a woman was a non-member, she would have to accept responsibility for all of the housework. Here is an interview portion exemplifying this expectation of the organization:

Ginette was one of those people who's really highly organized and she insisted on Ronald doing a 50 - 50 share. But his work on the newspaper meant every weekend away from home. She protested but the newspaper leadership said she would just have to do more than half, because his tasks were more important. That left her at home or dragging the kids shopping with her every weekend. She was criticized for failing to subordinate her personal interests to those of the revolution (Cleveland, 1983, 145).

John Cleveland grounded his study in four theoretical observations: 1) that Marxism alone was gender blind; 2) that the accuracy of Engel's evidence was being challenged; 3) analyses of the family as an economic unit had been unable to account for the different identities and activities of women as mothers, sexual partners or housewives - the socialization of housework in socialist countries had failed; and 4) Feminism as a social movement was challenging Lenin's vanguardist approach to "taking power" (Cleveland, 1983, 11). It was a debate on the question of vanguardism (the beliefs and activities of the leaders) in the last year of In Struggle's existence that was its final undoing. The organization disintegrated after a majority vote in 1982 (Cleveland, 1983, 26).

Dorothy Smith initiates the theorizing of Women's standpoint by being critical of Marxism as a Movement, and defining women's position as subordinate, dependent and oppressed. This deprecating tone does not extend to Marx's actual writings or the 'pure' Marx. To Karl Marx she gives the gift of her respect. She is rarely critical of Marx's first-hand writing. She continually turns to him, like an old friend, in the following years of her intellectual development, using his text as the starting place for a variety of analyses. She builds a theory for women on writing where women's experiences have been marginalized. In fact, she has not, until recently, let go of this attachment, even though she is no longer starting out and a substantial body of feminist knowledge has grown up around her, to which she could easily refer. Why is this?

I will diverge now briefly to a later study that Dorothy Smith has published as an exemplar of how this relationship with Marx has been sustained. This is a journal article

she wrote for Human Studies in 1981 called "On Sociological Description: A method from Marx". (This is also published in a revised form in Texts, Facts and Femininity, 1990b.) Here she uses Marx's assumption that there is a relationship between the kind of language used in political economy and the language of the life-world. She lists the problems that an ethnomethodological description presents, i.e, a kind of solipsism, where subjectivity is isolated from objectivity. The method from Marx assumes a "world out there", or an independent world. Marx's categories for analysis (wages, profits, commodities, etc.) were not concepts that he created, but were ideas that he borrowed from the life-world of ordinary people. Smith uses Marx's simple method to construct the categories for an ethnographic account of the practices of a newsroom.

### **THE DOMESTIC LABOUR DEBATE IN FEMINIST THEORY, 1969 - 1985**

If our wageless work is the basis of our powerlessness in relation to both men and to capital, as this book, and our daily experience, confirm, then wages for that work, which alone make it possible to reject that work, must be our lever of power (Dalla Costa, 1972, 3).

This quotation was written by Selma James, and formed a part of the introduction to The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community (1972). It was written by Mariarosa Dalla Costa, who is credited by Lise Vogel as the initiator of the Domestic Labour Debate (Vogel, 1983, 19). This polemic in early feminist theory was a struggle on the part of feminist writers like Margaret Benston (1969); Peggy Morton (1970); Mariarosa Dalla Costa (1972); Dorothy Smith (1971; 1975b; 1985); Ann Oakley (1974);

Meg Luxton (1980); and Bonnie Fox (1980), to legitimize and make visible women's work in the household. It was a successful attempt to give credence to the fact that women's domestic labour was productive and had value in capitalist political economy. Previous to this kind of theorizing, domestic labour had a low social status. Dorothy Smith explains the social denigration of women's domestic labour this way:

Her skills become irrelevant with the elaboration of household technology. 'Keeping house' becomes something which anyone can do, and as this is so, the woman becomes simply the anonymous executor of the imaged order (Smith, 1975b, 87).

Women began to openly admit how they detested the monotony and loneliness of housework, and that they thought of it as "being on a treadmill that requires the same action to be repeated again and again..." (Oakley, 1974, 46). In the 1990s, women (and men) may still resent the drudgery of housework, but as a result of this original feminist writing, the value of women's contribution to the household in the form of domestic labour is certainly no longer concealed, is no longer besmirched, and is considered work. The time frame of this debate was about fifteen years, from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s. Usually, the feminist writers who engaged in writing about this topic sought to apply Marxist categories of 'use value' and 'exchange-value' to its analysis (Vogel, 1983, 21).

I would like to proceed to a description of the Domestic Labour Debate in feminist theory with the idea that it will provide a look at an important part of the socio-historical mise en scène of the early days of Marxist feminism. It will situate Dorothy Smith's unique contribution in the feminist community at that time. I will organize this account in the following way: 1) Some prefatory remarks on the topic by Dorothy Smith; 2) The

inclusion of early feminist work on the subject (Benston, 1969; Morton, 1970; Dalla Costa, 1972; Oakley, 1974) to compare with Smith's approach to domestic labour (Smith, 1971; Smith 1975b); and finally, 3) A review of later Canadian studies (Fox, 1980; Luxton, 1980; Smith, 1985). This will of necessity be selective and does not include a large amount of Canadian feminist writing on the subject of women's work in the household.

When Dorothy Smith was studying at Berkeley and she was trying to establish an appropriate topic for a doctoral dissertation in the late 1950s, it occurred to her that housework was difficult work, and an interesting thesis could be constructed with the concept of "housework as work". Her department supervisor, Erving Goffman, responded to the idea in ominous tones:

Do not do this Dorothy or you will be a dead duck. You write a doctoral thesis on this and you will never get a job (Lecture, Lakehead University, October, 1994).

In a lecture on the history of Women's Studies, October 17, 1994, at Lakehead University, Smith described the conditions of the Domestic Labour Debate in feminist theory. She stated that in the mid-1970s housework began to be conceptualized as real work, as a result of the extensive writing on the subject by feminist theorists in the late 1960s and early 70s. Time budget studies were conducted to look at the ways in which men and women contributed to labour in the household and it was discovered that women did most of the labour. These studies had a masculine standpoint built into them, so that a lot of the work that women did simply disappeared (Lecture, Lakehead University, October, 1994).

Theorizing women's domestic labour was not easy when it came to the utilization

of Marxist categories in a way that would be suggestive as to whether this work was "productive or unproductive" (Vogel, 1983, 22). Dalla Costa (1972), asserted that the family in a capitalist economy was a place where there was social production. Marxist thought at the time had argued that a family under capitalism did not produce and did not engage in social production, therefore women's contribution simply disappeared. Consequently, it was important for feminist theorists in this debate to establish women's productivity as essential to capitalism using a Marxist analysis (Dalla Costa, 1972, 10). Dalla Costa calls the household a "social factory" and the family a unit that is in a social relationship with capitalism. She regarded the home as the integral part of the community and the female in the household as the central figure in the subversion of the community (Dalla Costa, 1972, 16). Dalla Costa argued in Marxian economic terms, that not only did women's work produce use values, but it was also a crucial part of the creation of surplus value (Dalla Costa, 1972, 33). Establishing this, women were finally in a position to do something about their oppression and "unwaged slavery":

...rather we must discover forms of struggle which immediately break the whole structure of domestic work, rejecting it absolutely, rejecting our role as housewives and the home as the ghetto of our existence, since the problem is not only to stop doing this work, but to smash the entire role of housewife (Dalla Costa, 1972, 36).

Margaret Benston, a Canadian feminist scholar, also advances this kind of theorizing in her essay called "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation" (1969). Canadian analysis of the topic of domestic labour predated the Dalla Costa article by several years. This particular essay marks an important turning point in feminist theory. Benston argues that the origin of women's subordination is economic, that women do, in



fact, have a relationship to the means of production, therefore this qualified them to be analyzed as a class (Benston, 1969, 13). Benston points out the low status of domestic labour, which is related to women's inferior position in the money economy:

...women as a group ...work outside the money economy. Their work is not worth money, therefore it is valueless, is therefore not even real work. And women themselves who do this valueless work, can hardly be expected to be worth as much as men, who work for money (Benston, 1969, 16).

In effect, the proletarian, who sells his work in return for a wage in Marxist theory, is also selling the labour power of his wife, or, as Benston puts it, "the wages of a man buy the labour of two people" (Benston, 1969, 20). This article authenticates the relationship of women to the means of production and verifies issues which become the underlying structure of future feminist theorizing on domestic labour: women as a reserve army of labour, a working woman's double work load, and the private nature of women's work which results in an economic/emotional dependency on men.

Similarly, Peggy Morton's article called "A Woman's Work is Never Done" (1970) focusses on the "family as an economic unit" (Morton, 1970, 211). Morton sees Margaret Benston as identifying the problem of women's oppression in the family, but wants to carry the theorizing of women's work a step further by employing it as a 'strategy' on which the entire Women's Movement can be based. Morton wanted to employ it as a tactic for the organization of women. The gist of Morton's essay, then, lies in her call for Marxist feminists to stop trying to prove to the males in Marxist organizations that they are really Marxists, and that they have developed an "economic analysis", and to develop concrete approaches to combat women's oppression, for

example, to work for housing arrangements in which people are not isolated into the family as a unit (Morton, 1970, 213).

Ann Oakley wrote the first comprehensive study of women's attitudes to housework called The Sociology of Housework (1974). She begins by identifying an inherent sexism in sociology, and uses as an example the way that male sociologists romanticize the happiness of Marx's and Durkheim's wives, ignoring the fact that Jenny Marx's domestic life was most probably "appallingly wretched and difficult" and Durkheim "refused to talk to his family except at mealtimes" (Oakley, 1974, 23).

Oakley's study was based on the interviews of forty women who were chosen from the files of two family physicians in London, England (Oakley, 1974, 198). Attitudes of women toward housework are analyzed by tasks and Oakley points out how the women's perceptions of domestic labour parallel observations that have been gathered on the sociology of work - individual tasks are deemed satisfying or unsatisfying and their equivalents are found in the work scenarios of offices and factories. Although her treatment is not specifically a Marxist-feminist analysis, Marx's attitude toward women is dealt with:

Marx provided the bones of analysis of marriage as female domestic slavery, although he was personally something of a rearguard romantic (Oakley, 1974, 22).

Oakley's final chapter addresses the oppression and the emancipation of women. The opinions of the women interviewed for the study on the subject of women's liberation are interesting, given that this study was carried out in 1971. On the whole, most of the women expressed reservation about the Women's Movement:

Eight of the forty women had not heard of the women's liberation movement, and many of the rest referred jokingly to the image portrayed by the mass media - of militant women angrily burning their bras. A few simply said that they knew about the movement, but were not personally interested in it (Oakley, 1974, 190).

This passage demonstrates in the socio-historical sense, the level of women's consciousness of their oppressive situations, and Oakley spends a large part of her conclusion recommending the Women's Movement's ideological strategy of consciousness raising (Oakley, 1974, 189).

When examining Dorothy Smith's contribution to the topic of household work, it is important to remember her background in organizational theory, which she spent an entire year studying for her doctoral dissertation (Meadow-Orlans, 1994, 51). Further to this, she taught organizational theory at the University of Essex, from 1966 to 1968 (Interview, OISE, 1994). Her representation of women's work in the household distinctly reflects this orientation. Two early articles by Smith deal both indirectly and specifically with the issue of domestic labour. In 1971, a publication called "Household Space and Family Organization" examined the patterns of organization in the home in various classes and types of households, and the ways in which organization encourages or inhibits interaction between the inhabitants of a dwelling space. This is not a feminist paper per se, nevertheless, the position of women is addressed directly on two occasions. Firstly, she looks at one of the historical origins of the public/private split - the classical Greek practice of the separation of dwelling space by sex, the men's court (the andronitis) and the women's court (the gunaikonitis). The women's court was secluded and located at the rear of the building (Smith, 1971, 86). This is an indirect look at the way that women

have been historically assigned to the private or domestic sphere. Secondly, she alludes to the architectural work of Frank Lloyd Wright, unusual because "his conception eliminated the physical segregation of the cooking housewife" (Smith, 1971, 91). He designed the kitchens in his houses as extensions of the family living space. She demonstrates an awareness, not only of the routines of the housewife, but of mothering practices as well:

Yet another problem arises from the performance of the cleaning functions in the home. If the housewife and mother does it all, which is common in our culture, she then has access to any room and storage space, and, in consequence, also "traces" of activities otherwise not displayed - diaries, letters, the condoms in her growing son's pocket, and so on (Smith, 1971, 93).

As has already been stressed, Dorothy Smith's method of dealing with domestic labour is based on organizational theory. A paper published in 1975, "Women the Family and Corporate Capitalism" is an extremely sophisticated Marxist feminist analysis of women's position located in the organization of the family, first in Marx's day and then in contemporary corporate capitalism. The organization of the family is juxtaposed with the "organization of the productive enterprise" (Smith, 1975b, 55). Smith begins her account with Engels' The Origin of the Family and his observation that the household has become a private space and the work of a woman in the home a private service (Smith, 1975b, 57). She then proceeds to a critique, first of Talcott Parsons conception of the family, and then a model of the family put forward by Neil Smelser, part of his theory of structural differentiation. The criticism is aimed at Smelser's universal version of the family, which she asserts is ideological:

Essentially, then, from this point of view, the home is a place where people are stored when they are not at work, where they are maintained and serviced, fed and cleaned, where they are psychologically repaired and the injuries of the daily routine and the tensions generated on the job made good, and where the next generation of employees is produced and trained for their future occupational roles. Translated thus it appears as an account of the family in terms of its uses to the political economy of capitalism. The cynicism is not mine. It is Smelser's (Smith, 1975b, 61).

Smith differentiates between the capitalism of Marx's day, where an economic enterprise was usually owned by an individual and the corporation of contemporary capitalism (1975b, 63). When Marx wrote the family was not important to capitalism - work was organized so that there was no such thing as an intimate family life for the worker. The whole family worked gruelling hours just to survive, and there was no time for the development of familial ties, just "a perpetual temptation to drink" (Smith, 1975b, 68). However, the family is relevant to the organization of corporate capitalism and the woman's role is the same as "executives', analogous to their husband's positions of manager" (Smith, 1975b, 80).

Smith is careful here to identify mothering, and the tasks associated with this role as separate and distinct from domestic labour. She describes the position of mother as associated with "an ideology of love" and "an ideology of service without reward" (Smith, 1975b, 84). If a woman fails to transfer the ideology of corporate capitalism (consumerism, good behaviour, scholastic achievement) to her children, it is evidence that she supposedly does not love them. Smith gives a chilling account of the insidiousness of the ideology of love perpetrated by the order of corporate capitalism:

The ideology of love also, of course, seals off consciousness

of the contradiction between the relation of the mother as agent of the external order and the mother as simple mother who wants to touch, hold, be with, care for, protect her children as individual and immediate presences. The mother too recognizes her love in the mode of the external moral order, and refers to it as the standard of care for her children. The ideology sets up a conceptual interchange between the two dimensions which makes possible the deepest inauthenticities (Smith, 1975b, 85).

Marxist feminist analysis of women's unwaged labour continued up to the mid-1980s. The Toronto Women's Press published a "Domestic Labour Series" during the early 1980s. Two Canadian feminist sociologists who have devoted a large part of their careers to this subject are Bonnie Fox of the University of Toronto, and Meg Luxton of York University. Both of these women had books published in the "Domestic Labour Series" - Luxton's More Than a Labour of Love: Three generations of Women's work in the home (1980), and Fox's Hidden in the Household (1980). Luxton's book is an actual study of three generations of women in the single industry town of Flin Flon, Manitoba (Luxton, 1980, 23). Using a Marxist feminist theoretical foundation, Luxton's study identifies two primary objectives: to examine women's work in a setting of industrial capitalism and to observe how domestic labour is experienced by real women in that setting in order to establish how this experience may have changed over several generations (Luxton, 1980, 24). Women's work is characterized as revolving around the rhythms that are set in place by the shift work in the mining operation in Flin Flon (Luxton, 1980, 26). This is a sensitive study which includes interview portions taken directly from the conversations that Luxton had with the women. Their lives were extraordinarily difficult:

When I wake up early I like to lie in bed and have a think about my life. It's the only time I have to myself and what I need, you know, to get me through my day. Like I know what he needs - his lunch box and a hot supper - and what they need - clean clothes and their lunch. And they all need love I guess. But what do I need? (Luxton, 1980, 73)

These words were spoken by a second generation participant in Luxton's study who was born in 1936. Like Oakley's study, Luxton concludes by examining the impact of the Women's Liberation Movement on the lives of the women of Flin Flon. Many women were unaffected, but several women admitted to being profoundly changed by it. The final chapter is called "Bread and Roses" after a song by the same name. The song says "hearts starve as well as bodies. Give us bread , but give us roses" (Luxton, 1980, 208). Most of the Flin Flon women really liked the song, and agreed that they needed "bread", but what they really wanted were the "roses" that symbolized a better life (Luxton, 1980, 208).

Bonnie Fox's doctoral dissertation was written about married women's waged work (Fox, 1980, 7). Hidden in the Household (1980), a collection of essays edited by Fox, includes an example of her own work, "Women's Double Work Day: Twentieth century changes in the reproduction of daily life". It is concerned with the fact that Marxists saw women's emancipation in the form of involvement in waged labour, and therefore assumed that women could be organized in much the same way that men were. Nevertheless women, because of domestic responsibilities, were generally resistant to unionization (Fox, 1980, 174). This is an extension and critique of Margaret Benston's ground-breaking article, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation" (1969), using the categories that Benston originally identifies. Although it accounts for such domestic

chores as laundry, cooking, fabrication of children's clothing, etc., specific tasks associated with mothering remain invisible. A recent essay of Dorothy Smith's, "What did you do in School Today?" (in Miller, 1990) is quick to identify this. This becomes the basis for Dorothy Smith's criticism of early Marxist feminist analyses of domestic labour:

The theorizing of "domestic labour" conforms to a functionalist logic. Paradoxically, in seeking to make women's work in the home visible to political economy, it compounds its traditional invisibility by reducing it to a service to capital. Work in the home is analyzed using categories that select only those aspects of the household and familial relations relevant to the production of surplus value or to the "reproduction" of the worker. Caring, particularly as embodied as the work of mothers, does not become observable using this framework (Miller, 1990, 6).

Another appraisal that Dorothy Smith has made of the majority of the analyses of domestic labour reveals that they are usually restricted to accounts of working class women. "Women, Class, and Family" (1985) is an essay that includes a look at the wives of the owners of the means of production, or the wives of 'petty bourgeois'. By this time Smith has begun to initiate inquiries from 'the standpoint of women', and she argues that women's subservience to men extends to women in this class, especially in the domestic sphere:

For the smaller entrepreneur, the petty bourgeois, owning and working in his own shop as well as employing others, women's domestic labour (of wife, daughters and servants) was integral to the subsistence organization of the enterprise (Smith, 1985, 11).

Therefore Dorothy Smith has provided Canadian sociology with a distinctive contribution to the Marxist feminist debate on domestic labour. Her writing in this area can be linked to the personal, as well as her intellectual experience. Smith's attitudes to



this debate are based on a background in organizational theory, on the fact that she was the single mother of two children, hence her interest in mothering practices, and the fact that her father was an entrepreneur. This last fact would make her sensitive to the subservient position of 'petty bourgeois' women. For these reasons, she was able to observe what was lacking in the domestic labour debate, and add to it from her own standpoint.

### **FEMINIST ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE APPROPRIATION OF MARX**

Drafts of a well known paper by Heidi Hartmann called "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a more progressive union" began to appear in the mid-1970s. This essay did not offer direct criticism of Marx's thought and his approach to women except to argue that the relationship of men to women is made invisible under the worker's relation to capital. Hartmann points out the early socialist belief of Marx, Engels, and Lenin that the sexual division of labour would dissolve as women entered the labour force (Sargent, 1981, 4). Lise Vogel's Marxism and the Oppression of Women (1983) offered more direct arguments "that Marxist theory was incapable of incorporating sex differences" (Vogel, 1983, 25). Radical feminists began to present a questioning attitude towards Marxist feminists' ability to theorize "sexuality, interpersonal relations, ideology and the persistence of male domination" (Vogel, 1983, 2).

Lise Vogel has conducted a comprehensive study of Marx's original writings and offers a direct portrait of his attitude to women with evidence both supporting and against

the origination of feminist theory in his writing. Firstly, Marx was part and parcel of the patriarchal attitudes of his day, and the Woman Question was only one of several examples of oppression under capitalism in his writing. His writing focussed mainly on the wage labourer, sometimes giving attention to women and children. His attention to women's standpoint was limited (Vogel, 1983, 41). Vogel argues that Marx saw society as developing in stages in The German Ideology, and within society, the division of labour is 'natural' and has its foundation in sexual relations (Vogel, 1983, 90). Finally, Vogel states that Marx:

...scarcely mentions the unpaid domestic labour performed as a part of the tasks that result in the reproduction of the worker, and accords it no clear theoretical status (Vogel, 1983, 69).

In other words, Marx presents the basis for an analysis of women's experience from the idea of social reproduction, but it was not "fully developed" (Vogel, 1983, 72).

To summarize Dorothy Smith's specific approach to Marxist feminism, I would characterize it as follows: Smith builds theory directly from the textual Marx, not from the paradigm of Althusserian Marxism that was prevalent throughout the 1970s. She does not concentrate entirely on building a dual systems theory (a theory based on a combination of Marxist concepts and patriarchy), such as Zillah Eisenstein. She does deal with the two concepts of social reproduction and patriarchy in "Women, Class and Family" (1985).

In a reflexive statement at the beginning of an article called "The Deep Structure of Gender Antitheses: Another view of capitalism and patriarchy" (1984b), Smith condenses her feelings about Marxism:

Though I agree with many of the feminist criticisms about Marxism, I have also seen in Marxism a source of understanding which feminists can use without necessarily buying into the sexism. My thinking about patriarchy and capitalism has focussed on how gender oppression has become a part of class oppression. This doesn't mean reducing gender oppression to class oppression, but trying to see how they are related (Smith, 1984, 395).

She successfully appropriates Marx to analyze ideology, in "The Ideological Practices of Sociology" (1974a) "Women, the Family and Corporate Capitalism" (1975b) and in "On Sociological Description: A method from Marx" (1981b). Smith is sensitive to mothering practices and insists that they be included in any analysis of domestic labour. Dorothy Smith's method of appropriating Marx is the utilitarian act of acknowledging a gifted writer, who has demonstrated an awareness of 'the Woman Question', and employing it in the construction of her own thought. In her early career as a Marxist feminist, she exhibits what I would consider limited epistemological autonomy. She was becoming more and more interested in the standpoint of women.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE STANDPOINT OF WOMEN

It is useless to go to the great men writers for help, however much one may go to them for pleasure. Lamb, Browne, Thackeray, Newman, Sterne, Dickens, DeQuincy, - whoever it may be - never helped a woman yet, though she may have learned a few tricks of them and adapted them to her use. The weight, the pace, the stride of a man's mind are too unlike her own for her to lift anything substantial from him successfully (Emphasis mine) (Woolf, 1945, 76).

The predominant theme of this thesis is Dorothy Smith's appropriation of the thought of male theorists to construct her concept, 'the standpoint of women'. She maintains passionately that she is not dependent on these men for her ideas, nor do they dominate her thinking, not even Marx. She downplays the importance of the male writers she has appropriated and states that their function is purely a utilitarian one. When she needed to conceive of something, she would make use of their work. Smith asserts unequivocally that she owes no debt to Hegel, but instead, she owes a huge debt to the Women's Movement as the inspiration and the genuine source of her writing. Her precise words enunciated in a clear and vehement tone of voice were: "The standpoint of women doesn't come from Hegel, it comes from the Women's Movement".<sup>3</sup> I understood immediately what she meant. The well-spring, the emotional, the spiritual, the powerful political and intellectual source of the 'standpoint of women', originated from women as they expressed themselves in the Women's Movement. The textual, the pragmatic, the expedient, the impersonal source of this theory came from the male writers who were connected in some way to the patriarchal discipline of sociology. Therefore, Dorothy

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<sup>3</sup> The statements about the appropriation of male theorists in Smith's writing come directly from my interview with her at OISE on November 11, 1994.

Smith's approach to the male theorists in her writing has been merely to have "learnt a few tricks from them and adapted them to her use" (Woolf, 1945, 76).

I would like to develop this chapter's topic employing the following design: 1) to describe the personal/intellectual environment of OISE; 2) to establish Smith's choice of male theorists; 3) to look at the ways in which their thought has been extrapolated to construct 'the standpoint of women', and how she has been influenced by such male writers as Hegel, Marx, Schutz and Garfinkel; 4) to give a concise examination of Sandra Harding and three other standpoint feminists, Jane Flax, Hilary Rose and Nancy Hartsock, locating Smith in a feminist community with a similar theoretical orientation; and 5) to include the criticism of standpoint epistemology that has surfaced in the last decade.

The acceptance of a position at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in 1977 was a critical career move for Dorothy Smith. Toronto has been described as an academic 'centre of economic and political control' by David A. Nock in his book Star Wars (1993). He is referring to Arthur K. Davis' conception of a hierarchical relationship between a "hinterland-metropolis" - in this case, Toronto is the metropolis and the University of British Columbia, where Dorothy Smith came from, is the hinterland (Nock, 1993, 84). What Nock is referring to here is an intellectual hierarchy. Smith accepted a position at one of what David Nock calls 'the Core Five' Ontario Universities: Toronto, York, OISE's Department of Sociology in Education, McMaster and Carleton (Nock, 1993, 84).

Smith's orientation to life in Toronto was a difficult one. She dealt with her

problems of adjustment by throwing herself into her work - conferences, writing, and teaching. Dorothy Smith found herself doing a lot of work to establish a feminist curriculum at OISE. Part of the reason for her heavy involvement in her work was a feeling that for a long time, she was cut out of the activist community in Toronto. Here is the way that she described it to me:

When I was out in Vancouver I was very politically active. When I came here [Toronto] I was absolutely cut out of any activism in the Women's Movement. I think it had something to do with my being a professor and being older. I remember going to one meeting of a women's organization in a woman's living room. They were all sitting in a circle and they all came and sat in front of me and nobody spoke to me and nobody looked at me. Being cut out of that was a dreadful, dreadful pain and I went on feeling that for a long time. It was like a big piece of me had been wrenched out. There are some people that I still can't see without feeling the pain and resentment (Interview, OISE, 1994).

Her children at the time were teenagers, and she describes it as a 'nutty' time of life - "nutty teenagers with nutty friends". The pressures of single parenthood and a demanding academic career took their inescapable toll. She became ill for about four years with chronic fatigue syndrome, a condition whose symptoms manifested itself in an almost constant feeling of tiredness, and she would not be able to work for more than two hours at a time. It took a long time to get a diagnosis, and she recovered by making a drastic change in her diet, and by taking up jogging. She still keeps a little mat in her office, where she naps when she gets tired, as even now she suffers recurring bouts from time to time. Dorothy Smith says she feels very fortunate to have recuperated from this malady (Interview, OISE, 1994).

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education was a relatively new educational

institution when Dorothy Smith began teaching there in 1977. Established in 1965, "amid great fanfare and lavish funding" (Stamp, 1982, 209), its first director was R.W.B. Jackson. OISE was touted as a 'breakthrough' in the area of post-graduate studies in education and in research. Ontario teachers, because of the poor level of graduate educational programs in the province, had previously enrolled in droves in places like Wayne State, Buffalo and Syracuse Universities in the United States (Stamp, 1982, 209). In the 1970s, OISE began to receive criticism from the teaching profession and the general public, especially since it allocated only 1% of its budget of \$10 million toward developing new classroom materials. There was a large proportion of American teachers on the faculty at OISE, who were accused of not knowing or caring about education in Ontario (Stamp, 1982, 210). When Dorothy Smith began the latter part of her career there in the late 1970s, "the University of Toronto was attempting to cut or reshape its links with OISE" (Stamp, 1982, 210). Therefore Smith was in the fortuitous position of being part of an institution whose traditions were largely unformed, and she was given the opportunity to participate in the way that OISE developed as an institution.

### **SMITH'S CHOICE OF MALE THEORISTS**

Dorothy Smith has always extended herself in an open-minded and uncritical way to distinctive male thinkers. Usually these men have been connected to either the discipline of philosophy, or sociology, or in some cases, both. Although she is critical of a male universe that has oppressed women, she has unhesitatingly appropriated men's

ideas on an individual basis. She is unusually tolerant of most male writers.<sup>4</sup> (Of course there are exceptions - Smelser, Durkheim and David Cheal, for example, have felt the lash of her pen). Her tolerance is a characteristic that is not true of all feminist writers, Mary Daly, for instance. Daly displays an unparalleled revulsion for the male province of meaning:

The sado-society is the sum of the places/times where the beliefs and practices of sadomasochism are The Rule. It is formed/framed by statutes of studs, decrees of drones, canons of cocks, fixations of fixers, precepts of pricklers, regulations of rakes and rippers. It is bore-ocracy. In effect, sadosociety is snoldom, schooled by snools. Pre-eminent among these pseudosages and saints who expound/expose the ideology of sadospirituality (Daly, 1984, 35).

Here is the way that Dorothy Smith has described the writers she has used as a textual source:

Of course this method has not come from nowhere. It has both its visible and invisible preceptors from whom, in the long course of trying to find a different way of thinking sociologically, I have learned. The most important among them have been George Herbert Mead, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Karl Marx and Harold Garfinkel, though there have been many others. I have not hesitated to learn from men (Smith, 1987, 8).

I intend to encapsulate and give a brief introduction to the male writers who are included in this chapter's analysis, and the mode in which Dorothy Smith has appropriated them. Karl Marx has already been dealt with extensively in Chapter Three. The exception here will be George Herbert Mead, for two reasons: 1) In the overt or visible

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<sup>4</sup> Tolerance is a word which imputes a moral tone on the part of Dorothy Smith. This is my personal choice of terminology. My argument for the use of words which impute morality is that sociology has a moral tradition which dates back to the Chicago School.



sense, Mead plays what I feel is a minor role in her work; and 2) Mead did not contribute to Smith's ideas on the use of ideology, or her conception of the sociology of knowledge, which is the focus of this thesis. I will argue that the writers I identify assumed a larger purpose until the Montreal Massacre (1989), and that now, she is less inclined to refer to them, or to appropriate their thinking, citing instead other members of the feminist community, or her own ideas. (The time of the Montreal Massacre will be conceptualized as the possible epistemological break in Smith's work in Chapter Five.)

Hegel's role is primarily that of providing the textbook source of Smith's concept, 'the standpoint of women' (Smith, 1979). She turned to Hegel initially for the purpose of achieving a fuller understanding of Karl Marx (Interview, OISE, 1994). Schutz performs a considerably lesser function than Marx in Smith's feminist theory; nevertheless, he does contribute to her construction of 'the standpoint of women'. From Schutz she extrapolates her use of the subjective standpoint, and he also assists Smith in the creation of her notion of 'bifurcation of consciousness' (Smith, 1979). Schutz has, for Smith, described the scientific half of her bifurcated realm, the other half being the subjugated everyday world of housework that was/is largely inhabited by women. Garfinkel's work, Studies in Ethnomethodology (1967), is often included in the bibliographies of her writing, particularly studies in ethnographic description. (For example: Smith, 1963, 1974c, 1978b, 1979, 1981b, 1987, 1990b.)

## HEGEL: THE TEXTUAL ORIGIN OF THE STANDPOINT OF WOMEN

The textual origin of Dorothy Smith's 'standpoint of women' comes from the philosophy of Hegel, specifically The Phenomenology of Mind, first published in 1807. Hegel was thirty-seven years old at the time of its publication, and the work was considered "the first fruits of Hegel's maturity" (Baillie, 1961, 11). The translation that I employed was one by J.B. Baillie, revised most recently in 1949. The portion appropriated by Dorothy Smith for the feminist standpoint is a parable that Hegel created concerning the master and his servant. The terminology differs among the various authors for this relation: Baillie uses the terms 'Master' and 'Bondsman'; Sandra Harding's explanation (1986) employs the words 'master' and 'slave'; and Dorothy Smith refers to the relationship as 'master' and 'servant'.

Hegel's original text is the careful building of an allegorical story beginning with the idea that "self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself" and then proceeds to "Recognition of its own self in the other" (Baillie, 1961, 229). Hegel describes these two different ways of being:

Both moments are essential, since, in the first instance, they are unlike and opposed, and their reflexion into unity has not yet come into light, they stand as two opposed forms or modes of consciousness. The one is independent, and its essential nature is to be for itself; the other is dependent, and its essence is life or existence for another. The former is the Master, or Lord, the latter the Bondsman (Baillie, 1961, 234).

Hegel then begins to describe how the relationship changes between the Master and the Bondsman, once the Master asserts his authority, and demands that the Bondsman labour upon an "object of desire":

The truth of the independent consciousness is accordingly the consciousness of the Bondsman. This doubtless appears in the first instance outside itself, and not as the truth of self-consciousness. But just as lordship showed its essential nature to be the reverse of what it wants to be, so, too, bondage will, when completed, pass into the opposite of what it immediately is: being a consciousness repressed within itself, it will enter into itself, and change round into true and real independence (Emphasis mine) (Baillie, 1961, 237).

Lukacs has explained the part that epistemology plays in Hegel's philosophy, which would ground, at least in the textual sense, the standpoint of women in a theory of knowledge:

...there is in Hegel a definite unity between ontology, logic and epistemology, which is a consequence of the systematic nature of his philosophy. Hegel's concept of the dialectic, by its very nature, immediately unifies these three fields, and in such a way as to lead to their actual merging with one another (Lukacs, 1978, 1).

Lukacs also points to the fact that it was Hegel's idealism that Marx and Engels opposed in the formation of "their own new materialism" (Lukacs, 1978, 2).

The concept 'standpoint of women' first appeared in Dorothy Smith's work in a collection of essays entitled: The Prism of Sex: Essays in the sociology of knowledge (1979). Smith's explanation of this idea is as follows:

When we take up the standpoint of women, we take up a standpoint outside this frame (as an organization of social consciousness). To begin from such a standpoint does not imply a common viewpoint among women. What we have in common is that organization of social relations which has accomplished our exclusion (Smith, 1979b, 163).

Hegel's analogy is not only oppositional; it is hierarchical. Smith points out that this allegory forms the 'model' of the hierarchy of a ruling class versus a working class in Marx's theory. In addition, she saw the standpoint of labour as a kind of special site from

where the relations of capitalism could be made visible (Interview, OISE, 1994). The linking of Hegel to Marx's analysis of class is the stage of development that Dorothy Smith takes in the creation of the standpoint of women:

The basis for a political economy from the standpoint of labour, according to Marx, is precisely that it is grounded in the work and activity of actual individuals producing their existence under definite material conditions. The standpoint of labour provides, therefore, a basis for knowledge corresponding to the position of the servant in Hegel's exemplary tale (Smith, 1979b, 165).

The transition from Marx's class relationship to the standpoint of women is executed smoothly by Smith: she simply extends the analogy to women in the social division of labour. Women do the practical work (typing, coffee-making, bookkeeping, etc.) that enables the existence of an "abstracted conceptual mode of ruling" (Sherman, 1979, 165). The hierarchical nature of Hegel's illustration suggests the logical transition to women as the slave/servant part of this relationship (Sherman, 1979, 165). Therefore the standpoint of labour in Marx becomes the standpoint of women in Smith.

### **ENGAGING THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SCHUTZ**

I have already established Dorothy Smith's interest in the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty. Accordingly, her attention to the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz would hardly be considered atypical. Schutz was passionately interested in theorizing subjectivity. Feeling that most sociologists produced their work under a rather naive realism (that is, their sociology was not grounded philosophically), Schutz adapted the

thought of Husserl to include the social realm. He had the idea that the sociologist should begin where the philosopher ended (Grathoff, 1978, x). Schutz relied heavily on Husserl's phenomenological conceptions. The idea of the life-world, or Lebenswelt, comes directly from Husserlian philosophy; it was a place where all human experience emanated. The Lebenswelt can be defined as the everyday world as men and women experience it. For phenomenological sociology, it is considered the paramount reality and the primary source for sociological study. The Lebenswelt is not problematic and is oppositional to the scientific realm of sociologists where objects of study are problematic and are not "taken for granted" (Abercrombie, 1988, 138).

Schutz also tried to solve the problem of intersubjectivity, which Husserl had failed to do. Intersubjectivity, then, was treated as a pre-condition by Schutz to the life-world; it was not a problematic - a solitary human being takes the existence of others as a given (Wagner, 1970, 31). There are many examples of sociological theory where the initial place of inquiry is the individual subject. When a subjective theory has to give an explanation of how individual subjects are relational to each other, it is an intersubjective theory (Abercrombie, 1988, 127). Dorothy Smith has on several occasions dealt with the topic of intersubjectivity in her writing (For Example: Smith, 1974c, 1978b, 1979, 1982).

In Schutz' view, interpreting the life-world, or everyday life, is the most important task of the social scientist. Identifying the 'natural attitude' meant the introduction of the subjective standpoint to social scientific theory. To argue this, he used the authority of "the irreducibility of consciousness, of the spontaneous, the internal and the individual..." (Lachowska, 1988, 54). To Schutz, facts related to the life-world were always subject to

interpretation. A sociologist who is committed to reality must take into account the subjective consciousness of the social actor in everyday life:

I experience the world within my actual reach as an element or phase of my unique biographical situation, and this involves a transcending of the here and now to which it belongs. To my unique biographical situation pertain, among other things, my recollections of the world within my reach in the past... (Schutz, 1970, 98).

To understand everyday life, Schutz constructed a theory of multiple realities. A human actor experiences the life-world that is shared with other people. This experience is dominated by two principles for the actor: 1) a desire to subdue or master the world around her/him; and 2) an intrinsic anxiety stemming from the reality of death (Wagner, 1970, 245). Each reality is "biographically located" and has its own particular difficulties and chronicles. Schutz thus describes this multiple reality:

I was born into a preorganized world that will survive me, a world shared at the outset with fellow men who are organized in groups, a world which has its particular open horizons in time, in space and also in what sociologists call social distance (Wagner, 1970, 245).

Schutz identified four standpoints: that of a colleague, a spectator in everyday life, a social scientist, and the philosopher (Embree, 1991, 209). A simple act of a handshake or whistling, would be analyzed differently according to the standpoint, and could be further defined by giving the act a linguistic or non-linguistic limitation. In this way a social construct would begin at the ordinary level in ordinary language, but it would evolve to a "construct of constructs" when expressed by a social scientist in scientific language (Embree, 1991, 209). Dorothy Smith appropriates the subjective component of Schutz with an extension of his four identifiable standpoints that become a part of 'the

standpoint of women', as the following passage of her work illustrates:

But like everything else she also exists in the body, in the place in which it is. This, then, is also the place of her sensory organization of immediate experience, the place where her co-ordinates of here and now, before and after, are organized around herself as centre; the place where she confronts people face to face in the physical mode in which she expresses herself to them and they to her as more and other than either can speak. It is in this place that things smell. The irrelevant birds fly away in front of the window. Here she has flu. Here she gives birth. It is a place she dies in (Smith, 1979, 167).

Schutz also assists Smith in the creation of her concept of 'bifurcation of consciousness'. She started to think of a divided mind in the days when she was writing her doctoral dissertation at Berkeley. Her days were spent in two different worlds or modes of consciousness. One was the place where she cared for and played with her children and the other was the academic sphere, the 'conceptual mode' of operation. The bifurcation of consciousness is an important part of the standpoint of women, where a subject as centre experiences two separate ways of being in the world (Smith, 1979, 169).

The Everyday World as Problematic (1987) contains a revised version of "A Sociology for Women" (1979). Here Smith describes the phenomenological method of epoche or suspension. This again is a reference to Schutz, who analyzed the 'scientific attitude' as well as the 'natural attitude'. The scientific attitude is one that is adopted in the world of scientific theory:

In entering the 'world' of science, consciousness is reorganized to drop away the particular and local organization from subject as centre, as well as relevances arising out of work or activity in relation to the subject's own interests to

projects in the everyday world (Smith, 1987, 70).

In this circumstance, the 'scientific attitude', the subject as focal point ceases to exist and is replaced by 'an impartial detached mode'. Smith argues that the male social scientist, upon entering the world of science, experiences no shift, or 'bifurcation of consciousness'. A woman, on the other hand, who has spent most of her time in the subordinate part of a bifurcated world, upon entering the conceptual mode, experiences a deep shift in her consciousness (Smith, 1990a, 17). Moreover, women's participation in the subjugated everyday world of housework enables men to participate as they do in scientific practice. Schutz describes for Dorothy Smith the scientific half of the bifurcated consciousness.

I have until now concentrated on Schutz' part in the creation of the feminist standpoint epistemology. I would like to give an example of how Smith employs Schutz in the construction of her notions of an 'ideological mode' (Smith, 1990a, 143). In the essay "No One Commits Suicide" (in Smith 1990a), Smith differentiates between the two common phrases, "she killed herself" and "she committed suicide". The former is located in the language of everyday life, while the latter phrase is situated in the language of 'relations of ruling', and is therefore ideological (Smith, 1990a, 143). Beginning with the centre 'O', a concept of Schutz which denotes a subject for inquiry, Smith bases her essay on the inauthenticities that arise when the lived experience of a subject is represented by an external order. Schutz' 'O' is the starting place for the analysis, or the standpoint of women.

So far, I have been describing the expedient use of Schutz' phenomenological



sociology to build Smith's standpoint of women and to elicit support for her concept of 'bifurcation of consciousness'. To be fair, I would like to digress briefly to another origin of her 'divided mind', one that is feminine this time. This source came not from sociology, but from the work of Virginia Woolf. The following passage demonstrates this quite clearly, and although Dorothy Smith admits this is not her exact point of reference in Virginia Woolf, she does agree that Woolf's writing did contribute to the idea of a 'bifurcation of consciousness' (Interview, OISE, 1994):

Again, if one is a woman one is often surprised by a splitting off of consciousness, say in walking down Whitehall, when from being the natural inheritor of that civilization, she becomes, on the contrary, outside of it, alien and critical. Clearly the mind is always altering its focus, and bringing the world into different perspectives. But some of these states of mind seem, even if adopted spontaneously, to be less comfortable than others (Woolf, 1945, 96).

**"Scientific Inquiry is a very Artful Kind of Thing":**

### **GARFINKEL AND ETHNOMETHODOLOGY**

Ethnomethodology and a method called institutional ethnomethodology are sociological practices that influence much of Smith's writing, particularly on ideology and the social construction of knowledge. She became interested in this sub-discipline as a graduate student, and much of her doctoral dissertation consists of ethnographic description, which is based on ethnomethodology. (See Chapter Two for an account of her doctoral thesis.) Chris Doran of the University of New Brunswick, states that ethnomethodology, particularly in its unconventional beginnings, gave Smith "insights to mount her critique of conventional sociology for having silenced women's voices" (Doran, 1993b, 5). The Everyday World as Problematic (1987) devotes an entire section to

institutional ethnographic methods. One chapter is a rich ethnographic stroll through the institution of single parenthood based on her own experience as a single parent. Here, she stresses the notion that the ideology of single parenthood works against a child's development in the classroom. The concept of 'single parenthood' has an implicit meaning that this kind of a family is somehow improperly formed: "The category provides an interpretive procedure that presupposes the defect regardless of the mother's actual practices" (Smith, 1987, 173).

Harold Garfinkel and ethnomethodology are usually thought of simultaneously in sociology. I would like to include a short commentary in the way of an introduction to Garfinkel and ethnomethodology, to demonstrate its avant-garde character, which would certainly be appealing to Dorothy Smith. Subsequently, I will examine three essays by Smith that distinctly portray her use of Garfinkel's method with regard to ideology and the social construction of knowledge. These are: "The Active Text" (1982), "Femininity as Discourse" (Smith 1990b), and "No One Commits Suicide" (Smith 1990a).

Much of the richness and literary quality of Dorothy Smith's writing comes not only from her love of literature, but through her acquaintance with the techniques of ethnographic description. When Harold Garfinkel stated that "scientific inquiry is a very artful kind of thing" (Hill, 1968, 170) at the Purdue Symposium on Ethnomethodology in 1968, he had already sparked an intense controversy or "a strange social movement within sociology" (Hill, 1968, iii). At the Purdue Symposium, Garfinkel was asked to explain the origin of the term. He said that he had been working one summer with Saul Mendlovitz analyzing tape recordings of jurors as they conducted their work of

deliberating after a trial. He noticed that they developed their own method, or procedures in their work, which were taken very seriously, and were part of their own unique set of circumstances. While working in the Yale Library examining some cross-cultural area files and hoping to create a word for the kind of interaction he had observed among the jurors, Garfinkel stumbled across a list which included words like: "ethnobotany, ethnophysiology, and ethnophysics" (Hill, 1968, 7). Since he considered the work of the jurors a methodology which they themselves had created based on the common sense knowledge of its members, he created the term to help him remember this sort of a process (Hill, 1968, 8). Here is his definition of ethnomethodology, from the transcripts of the Purdue Symposium:

Here I am talking about "ethnomethodology", because there are now quite a number of persons who, on a day-to-day basis, are doing studies of practical activities, of common-sense knowledge, of this and that, and of practical organizational reasoning. This is what ethnomethodology is concerned with. It is an organizational study of a member's knowledge of his ordinary affairs, of his own organized enterprises, where that knowledge is treated by us as part of the same setting that also makes it orderable (Hill, 1968, 10).

The uproar in sociology connected with Garfinkel's 'shibboleth' was also largely due to the publication of Studies in Ethnomethodology (1967), which included a chapter called "Passing and the managed achievement of sex status in an "intersexed" person Part I". It was an account of 'Agnes', who at puberty, developed "a severe anatomical anomaly" (Garfinkel, 1967, 117). Agnes was born and raised as a boy, but at puberty began to manifest the secondary sexual characteristics of the female. Agnes, on this basis, was eventually able to undergo reconstructive surgery to become a female (Garfinkel, 1967,

121). Agnes' depiction of her sexuality was, to Garfinkel, "the discussion of ... a practical methodologist" (Hill, 1968, 137).

Garfinkel is also renowned for his breaching experiments, which usually involved "incongruity-producing procedures". For example, one method involved a student/experimenter getting an unknowing participant to explain in detail remarks that were held to be common sense (Heritage, 1984, 80). This procedure could produce extreme irritability in the participants who were unaware that they were being studied. Essentially, what Garfinkel was reproducing was a 'breach of trust', which caused some in sociology to question the ethical criteria of Garfinkel's work. Here is an innocuous and rather humorous example of one of many variations of his technique:

Case 6: The victim waved his hand cheerily.  
 S: How are you?  
 E: How am I in regard to what? My health, my finances, my schoolwork, my peace of mind, my....  
 S: (Red in the face and suddenly out of control.) Look! I was just trying to be polite. Frankly I don't give a damn how you are! (Heritage, 1984, 80)

Garfinkel generated what has been called "a cognitive revolution in sociology" (Heritage, 1984, 308). The key words in this hasty portrayal of his work in relation to Dorothy Smith are 'artful' and 'controversy', both facets of his approach to sociology that would be attractive to her, acknowledging what has already been documented in this thesis with respect to her intellectual background. At the time of the publication of Garfinkel's Studies in Ethnomethodology, the avante-garde had a wide appeal.

Dorothy Smith's essay, "No One Commits Suicide" (in 1990a), has already been

referred to in the section on Alfred Schutz. Smith distinguishes between the two almost identical terms, "she killed herself" and "she committed suicide" - the former is connected to ordinary conversation and the latter is part of the language of a bureaucracy that would work up an account of a suicide; therefore, it is ideological (Smith, 1990a, 143). Smith uses a passage from Garfinkel to construct a concept which she names "the ideological circle", which she has used in several other analyses (i.e., "The Active Text", 1990b, "Femininity as Discourse", 1990b). Garfinkel employed Mannheim's work to develop a method of interpretation called "the documentary method", and Smith has taken it a step further to identify the ways in which ideology is reproduced within a particular organization of social relations.

Dorothy Smith usually employs the ideological circle as a way of explaining a macro-social phenomenon. As a means of interpreting the nature of this concept in a micro-social way, the construction of this thesis could be said to be part of an ideological circle. It is a text that is being produced under a 'ruling apparatus', the university administration, the sociology department, the thesis committee, the textual authorities employed for its construction both in and out of the feminist community, and in and out of the discipline of sociology. The content of this thesis is constrained by the discipline, by department protocol, by an external examiner and by the pencil marks of my thesis advisor in the margins of its various chapters. The ideological circle connected to this thesis, according to Dorothy Smith's construction of the concept, means that I interpret her life's work according to the constraints imbedded in a 'ruling apparatus', and use these constraints/protocols/procedures to organize the way in which I interpreted her work

as being presented. This paragraph is reflexive, in that it looks back at the social relations involved in the construction of this particular text. I am a part of the ideological circle in that I bring to this thesis a set of experiences which are unique and which are instrumental in the formation of my particular biases and standpoint.

Here is Dorothy Smith's framework for the ideological circle:

The circle arises as a product of two phases: an interpretive method analyzing the occurrence of events as documents of an "underlying" schema originating in a textual discourse - for example, Goffman's strategies for the management of impressions, or Parsons' value systems - and the uses of the schemata identified by "Goffman's strategies' or "Parson's value systems" as procedures for selecting, assembling, and ordering those facts or observations as their documentation (Emphasis mine) (Smith, 1990a, 156).

This ethnographic method, a method that is reflexive, is further put to use in "The Active Text" (in Smith 1990b). Here, Smith analyzes two accounts of a single event that takes place on September 9, 1968 in Berkeley, California, involving members of the Berkeley Police Department and some ordinary citizens. One account is that of an eyewitness, which is published in an underground newspaper, and the other is worked up as an official account by the Mayor's office, to be presented to the public. Smith is concerned with the 'schemata' that is employed to construct the Mayor's account, which reflects the ideology of the Berkeley Police Department, but is also at work in the account of the eyewitness (a university professor). The reader is compelled to commit to the ideology of either one side or the other (Smith, 1990b, 142). Similarly, Dorothy Smith uses the ideological circle to examine the circular nature of an ideology of femininity that is put forth in women's magazines, the poster's at cosmetic counters, or the instructions

in the jars of anti-wrinkle cream, and so on. In "Femininity as Discourse" (Smith, 1990b) she employs Garfinkel's documentary method to analyze the organization of femininity as it is observed in everyday life and how it becomes actively interpreted by the actual practices of women in the creation of their femininity:

The texts of femininity provide paradigmatic interpretive circles, supplying images, icons, descriptions of behaviour, etc., coupled directly or indirectly to the doctrines of femininity that interpret, and are exposed by them. It is a 'documentary method of interpretation' (Smith, 1990b, 177).

### **FEMINIST STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGIES**

Sandra Harding initially refers to the origins of the standpoint of women in The Science Question in Feminism in 1986. She locates it with Hegel and subsequent interpretations of the 'master and slave' relation by Marx, Engels and Lukacs (Harding, 1986, 26). Furthermore, it is in this work that Dorothy Smith is defined as a 'standpoint feminist', a category that has generated a growing body of criticism from post modern/poststructuralist feminists (Hennessey, 1993; Clough, 1993). This is Sandra Harding's explanation of the feminist standpoint:

...this proposal argues that men's dominating position in social life results in partial and perverse understandings, whereas women's subjugated position provides the possibility of more complete and less perverse understandings. Feminism and the women's movement provide the theory and motivation for inquiry and political struggle that can transform the perspective of women into a 'standpoint' - a morally and scientifically preferable grounding for our interpretations and explanations of nature and social life (Harding, 1986, 26).

The feminist standpoint is a theory that has been adopted by several feminist writers in a variety of disciplines, including sociology. Hilary Rose, Nancy Hartsock, and Jane Flax have all appropriated Hegel's allegory as a basis for their writing. Hegel's 'Master' sees the work of the 'Bondsman' as inseparable from the Master's desire and being, and men, likewise, have never viewed the work of women as a consciously chosen activity - they see it as an instinctual or natural pastime emanating from love (Harding, 1986, 156).

Dorothy Smith met Sandra Harding in 1981, when she came to OISE to speak. Smith characterizes Harding as taking pleasure in dialogue and argument in a distinctive way. Smith says she is more clever/playful than aggressive. Smith met Harding again in 1983, when Harding came to a seminar on Smith's work at George Washington University. Harding had read Smith's work for the seminar. At the time, Sandra Harding was working on Feminism and Methodology: Social science issues (1987). Harding arbitrarily classified Dorothy Smith as a 'standpoint feminist': it was a category that was thrust upon her (Interview, OISE, 1994). Smith herself has never identified herself as a standpoint feminist and it was not a catch word that she deliberately cultivated. Nor does she identify the standpoint of women as an epistemology, or a theory of knowledge (although she admits it may have become one). She insists that it is a sociological method of thinking, a method of locating the knower, and a way of opening inquiry (Interview, OISE, 1994).

Harding presents a small community of women - Rose, Flax, Hartsock, as examples of feminist writers who have incorporated the same approach as Dorothy Smith.



She points out that these writers are not competitive, but complement one another (Harding, 1986, 146). Hilary Rose at first began publishing with her husband, Steven Rose, in a book of essays called The Radicalisation of Science (1976). This essay concentrated on New Left critiques of the abuses of science at the time, and Marxist inquiries about science in a capitalist culture (Rose, 1976, 5). Hilary Rose advances to independent work that is post-Marxist in character that analyzes women's activities within the scientific community as well as in the home. Like Dorothy Smith, she believes that a feminist theory of knowledge should come from the women's movement (Harding, 1986, 143). Nancy Hartsock's theory is also post-Marxist, and very similar to Dorothy Smith's analogy to the standpoint of labour:

I hope to show how just as Marx's understanding of the world from the standpoint of the proletariat enabled him to go beneath bourgeois ideology, so a feminist standpoint can allow us to descend further into materiality to an epistemological level at which we can better understand why patriarchal institutions and ideologies take such perverse and deadly forms... (Hartsock, 1983, 231).

Jane Flax is the most overt advocate of a "postmodern direction" and identifies the oppositional nature of postmodernism versus the argument of a feminist science to succeed a patriarchal one (Harding, 1986, 151). Flax is a psychotherapist and a political theorist. Her reasoning for a postmodern scepticism is based on the belief that it will impose epistemological constraints on any lingering masculinist dualities left over from the Enlightenment (Harding, 1986, 155). Flax is the most hesitant to commit to a standpoint of women, saying, "Any feminist standpoint will necessarily be partial" (Harding, 1986, 154).

## CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM OF 'THE STANDPOINT OF WOMEN'

Recently, the theories that have evolved into what is now termed 'feminist standpoint epistemologies' have taken a critical battering, not only by male writers in sociology such as Cheal (1990); Lemert (1992); and Doran (1993a), but by feminist sociologists who have aligned themselves with postmodern/poststructuralist theory. Dorothy Smith referred to the standpoint of women as " a framework in which you get slaughtered" (Interview, OISE, 1994). When one considers the sheer volume of Dorothy Smith's work, seven books and 60 articles, many translated into languages other than English, (Lemert, 1992, 63), the small amount of criticism pales in comparison. In Chapter Four, I examined a critique of Smith's approach to ideology and methodology by Pradeep Bandyopadhyay (Bandyopadhyay, 1974). In this section, I will look at the critiques that have been published, and Dorothy Smith's rebuttals excluding the book reviews. This grouping consists of the following: the standpoint of women as an example of delegitimation in sociology by David Cheal, of the University of Winnipeg (1990), articles emanating from a symposium on her work published in Sociological Theory in 1992, a critique concerning ideology by Chris Doran of the University of New Brunswick (1993a), and the postmodern feminist criticisms of Patricia Clough (1993) and Rosemary Hennessey (1993).

David Cheal's criticism of the standpoint of women comprises a small part of an article which he wrote on the topic of delegitimation in both modernity and postmodernity (Cheal, 1990, 129). In this article, he discusses Dorothy Smith's work as an example of feminism and its impact on Canadian sociology. Cheal defines delegitimation according

to Lyotard, who wrote that science, in the process of presenting itself as legitimate, "throws its own unstated assumptions open to critical reflection" (Cheal, 1990, 134).

Cheal also uses Dorothy Smith's work to exemplify how delegitimation is a practice that is widely used in sociology (Cheal, 1990, 136). In his article "Authority and Incredulity: Sociology between modernism and postmodernism" (1990), he says that Smith initiates her delegitimation of sociology "from the base of a carefully argued position that women are everywhere systematically discriminated against" (Cheal, 1990, 136). Cheal makes the careless, inflammatory and simplistic statement that "the standpoint of women is therefore judged to be superior to that of men" (Cheal, 1990, 137). Smith responds with a brief rebuttal called "Ironies of postmodernism or Cheal's doom" (1990). She claims that his representation of her work is "Cheal-invented" and what it in fact amounts to is a "reinterpretation" (Smith, 1990, 335). Smith dismisses Cheal's argument that women are judged to be superior to men as a superficial assertion, and makes it clear that she has no desire to delegitimize sociology (Smith, 1990, 334). Finally, Smith characterizes Cheal's work as a "narrative of the doom of modern sociology [that is] not reflexive" (Smith, 1990, 335). Smith rightly points out that the standpoint of women is a concept that is much more complex than simply "a matter of status and privilege" and the patchwork that he has chosen for his example of feminism is hardly representative of its "rich, enormous, variegated, quarrelsome, multiple-voiced literature" (Smith, 1990, 335).

In the spring of 1992, a Symposium organized around Dorothy Smith's work, more specifically perceived problems surrounding the theorizing of the standpoint of women,

was published in Sociological Theory. The symposium was arranged by Barbara Laslett of the University of Minnesota and Barrie Thorne of the University of Southern California. Charles Lemert, Bob Connell and Patricia Hill Collins, three sociological theorists with varying intellectual approaches and differing critical styles, developed papers and Dorothy Smith was invited to respond to their work. The objective for the symposium was to encourage readers of Sociological Theory to become more aware of feminist theory and issues of gender in the discipline of sociology. Laslett identifies "sociological theorists neglect of Dorothy Smith's work" as an individual case of what she views as a general malaise in sociology, an "invisibility of feminist scholarship" that continues to persist (Laslett and Thorne, 1992, 61).

Patricia Hill Collins, whose interest is particularly in sociological inquiry into the lives of black women, begins her examination of Dorothy Smith's theory with high praise for the work that Smith has done in changing "the inner circle of sociological theory" (Collins, 1992, 74). Collins points out that Smith's creation of a sociology for women means "that men talking to men about what they deem important can no longer be acceptable sociological practice" (Collins, 1992, 74). Collins constructs her criticism of Smith's theory around two central issues: 1) there is a lack in Smith's theory of other standpoints that incorporate the sociality of marginal groups; and 2) there is not enough emphasis on the dialectical character of all types of social relations (Collins, 1992, 78). According to Collins, people of colour theorize in a distinctive way. Collins quotes Barbara Christian to describe this mode of theorizing:

...I am inclined to say that our theorizing (and I intentionally use the verb rather than the noun) is often in narrative forms,

in the stories we create, in riddles and proverbs, in the play with language because dynamic rather than fixed ideas seem more to our liking" (Collins, 1992, 77).

Charles Lemert, a theoretician who is interested in postmodernism, situates Dorothy Smith at one end of a historical continuum of sociological theory beginning with Parsons, Goffman, C. Wright Mills and Homans (Lemert, 1992, 66). The 1950s was a time, he argues when decorum was maintained in sociology by perpetrating a myth of "objective unity" (Lemert, 1992, 66). This exploded into a variety of sociological theories in the 1960s when, as a result of Kuhn's writing, sociology became known as a "multiple-paradigm science" (Lemert, 1992, 66). Lemert equates Dorothy Smith's theorizing with Bourdieu and Giddens in that all these theorists attempt to remake sociology's conventional abstractions. According to Lemert, Smith's work is different in that her sociology emanates from a woman's ordinary life (Lemert, 1992, 67).

Lemert is concerned that a standpoint epistemology might still be "susceptible to the charge of essentialism" (Lemert, 1992, 69). Further, he states once again that standpoint theory is unable to account for "fractured identities", i.e., Chicano or Africana, that Patricia Hill Collins describes as "a more complex matrix of dominations" (Lemert, 1992, 70). Lemert's critique of the standpoint of women is similar to that of many other postmodern theorists, but he admits that the riddle of the standpoint in sociological theory may remain "unsolvable" (Lemert, 1992, 71).

The final theorist included in the Symposium for Sociological Theory is R.W. Connell, a Marxist. He wrote his review of Dorothy Smith's work from Australia, where sociology is considered to be a "subversive trade" rather than forming a part of the ruling

apparatus as it does in North America (Connell, 1992, 82). Connell describes the standpoint of women as "a weighty structural fact about the way the world works" (Connell, 1992, 82). He argues that the standpoint of women qualifies as the kind of "extralocal abstraction" that Dorothy Smith is trying to avoid. In addition, he queries whether the standpoint of women can apply to the growing number of women who are beginning to work within the relations of ruling. As a final criticism, Connell refers to the now hackneyed problematic of the feminist standpoint epistemology, that it cannot adequately deal with the experience of women of colour (Smith, 1992, 83).

Dorothy Smith stated that her response was difficult to construct, given the differences in theoretical perspectives in Lemert, Connell and Collins - Lemert is interested in criticizing modernity from a postmodern stance; Patricia Hill Collins comes from an experience of critical theory and writing about the lives of black women; and Connell is a Marxist (Smith, 1992, 88). Smith is troubled with the fact that these theorists all seem to have built their own versions of her work which she refers to as 'straw Smiths' (Smith, 1992, 88). She also points out that these writers seem to have divorced themselves textually from the origin of the standpoint of women (Smith, 1992, 90). She carefully explains the origin of the standpoint of women is an active one, one that is ongoing, and emanates from the lives and actual practices of real women. In many respects, she feels that these theorists have misunderstood her intent. The group has accused her of synthesizing a number of theories to construct the standpoint of women (Marx, Schutz, Merleau-Ponty), but she insists that what she has attempted to do is create a sociology that is an ongoing process, where each sociological inquirer has the

world as a common ground (Smith, 1992, 93).

Chris Doran of the University of New Brunswick has commenced a tentative criticism of Smith's work based on concerns about ideology, published in 1993. Doran's "The Everyday World is Problematic: Ideology and Recursion in Dorothy Smith's Micro-sociology" talks about a 'strange recursive loop' in Smith's work, which becomes, he argues, ideological (Doran, 1993a, 43). Not only does he fail to enlarge the argument; he neglects to properly identify clearly what he means by this 'loop'. He does point out what he feels is one of the few flaws in her work, in an unpublished paper presented in June, 1993, at the annual meeting of the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association. He concluded this paper by stating that "Marxism has to be resisted", but his writing does not fully explicate what he actually means by this statement in concrete terms (Doran, 1993b, 27).

Smith's attention to texts and discourse has attracted critical reviews of women's standpoint theory from a postmodern perspective. One of these women, Rosemary Hennessey, has recently reproved Smith for not properly explaining the connection between women's 'direct experience' and the text:

...her analysis of women's 'direct experience' as the basis of feminist knowledge tends to jockey between the objective conditions of women's lives and the discursive construction of the feminine, rather than explaining more fully the material relationship between the discursive and the non-discursive (Hennessey, 1993, 19).

Patricia Clough of Fordham University, another postmodern critic, attacks her more forcefully from a "psychoanalytically oriented, semiotic approach" (Clough, 1993, 169).

Dorothy Smith has a rather lukewarm, sceptical view of postmodernism/poststructuralism.

Some of the postmodern feminist writers, such as Patricia Clough, are closely identified with psychoanalysis. I interpret some of Smith's aversion to the dominant paradigm of postmodernism as stemming from that portion of postmodern theory that aligns itself with psychoanalysis, particularly the writing of Freud.

Smith's distaste for psychoanalysis is quite evident early in her academic career, and it is on this basis that I argue that she has an arms length attitude to poststructuralism and deconstruction theory. Women Look at Psychiatry, published in 1975, is the critical examination of the oppressive practices of psychiatry as a discipline. Her personal experience with psychiatry was an unpalatable one:

When my marriage was working badly a good many years ago, I went for three or four years to a number of different psychiatrists. My husband did not. The work that those psychiatrists were committed to was the working through and thereby eradicating whatever it was in me that made me discontented and difficult in my marriage (Smith, 1990a, 5).

Women Look at Psychiatry effectively damns psychiatric methods, by including personal accounts of women who have sought psychiatric therapy with disastrous results. Smith referred to Freud at one point as "the psychological ethnographer of the upper-middle-class nineteenth century family", hardly an enthusiastic endorsement of his theory (Smith, 1975b, 83). Given that the on again/off again feminism of Julia Kristeva, for instance, has had an on-going love affair with Freudian psychoanalysis, it is understandable that Smith's 'politically involved' sociology would not be interested in such an approach to feminism. Many writers have argued that Julia Kristeva is representative of an anti-feminist standpoint (Oliver, 1993, 94), which may perhaps present another barrier to Smith's interest in postmodern theory.



Nevertheless, Smith is forced to deal with the omnipresence of deconstruction theory, as evidenced by her intense interest in the "text" and "textually-mediated discourse". Her examination of the text brings her to "the brink of deconstruction" (Clough, 1993, 169). Smith is focussed, not on the radical inversion of hierarchies that deconstruction demands, but the study of the 'relations of ruling' through the text:

The text is analyzed for its characteristically textual form of participation in social relations. The interest is in the social organization of those relations and in penetrating them, discovering them, opening them up from within, through the text" (Smith, 1990b, 4).

Smith is bent on "discovery", not on deconstruction. She feels that this theory is valuable and interesting, and that "the two camps should not be seen in opposition" (Smith, Lecture, Lakehead University, October 18, 1994). However, she sees the dogma of poststructuralism as problematic. The postmodern paradigm that everything is discourse, that the sign invades the way we think, is too pervasive. She describes deconstruction theory as a "theory that says we can't" (Smith, Lecture, Lakehead University, October 18, 1994).

To date, the influence of postmodernism/poststructuralism has been felt mainly in the disciplines of cultural studies and literature (Clough, 1993, 169). Its impact on sociology has begun only recently. Clough's criticism of Dorothy Smith is based on a very small portion of Smith's work: two recent articles and two of her books, Texts, Facts and Femininity (1990), and The Conceptual Practices of Power (1990). In this respect, I feel that Clough's analysis is superficial and that she has misinterpreted Smith in a number of ways.

One example of Clough's misreading of Smith is founded on the differences between Smith's location of the subject (in the actual activities of real people) and the 'psychoanalytic, semiotic' location of the subject (embedded within the text). Since Smith's subject (in the standpoint of women) is located outside of the text, it is not available for deconstruction (Clough, 1993, 170). She argues that the standpoint epistemology is a 'methodological mix' of Marxism and ethnomethodology (Clough, 1993, 170). The above chapter has just documented that the origin of the standpoint epistemology is extremely complex, emanating from a number of textual sources, as well as the Women's Movement. By restricting the background of her argument to an ethnomethodological and Marxist "mix", Clough identifies the source of her interpretation as one that is not entirely correct. Further, Clough is inaccurate when she asserts that Smith "fails to reflect on sociology as itself a dominant discourse of experience" (Clough, 1993, 169). There are many examples in Smith's writing where she locates sociological discourse as a part of the relations of ruling. For example, her essay, "No One Commits Suicide" (in 1990a), locates the formation of textual accounts as part of the practices of a "ruling apparatus":

The analysis of ideologically formed, factual accounts makes visible a phase of the extended relations of a division of labour among different sections of a ruling apparatus (Smith, 1990a, 155).

A few paragraphs before this statement, she clearly identifies the members of this division of labour as "...news reporters, social scientists, professional colleagues and associates, and the family and friends of the person who killed herself..." (Smith, 1990a, 152). Clough is incorrect when she states that sociology is unavailable for

deconstruction. Deconstruction method holds that anything can be deconstructed, even the placement of a comma, because it may drastically shift the meaning of a phrase. What is resistant to the method of deconstruction is Smith's subject, who is located outside the text, in the actual practices of women.

Smith thereby refuses to extend her criticism of sociology to the notion of actual experience itself. She refuses the possibility that actual experience is itself a construction of what she describes as "the power of founding (sociological) conventions" (Clough, 1993, 172).

For this reason, Clough sees sociology (at least Smith's sociology) as unavailable for deconstruction. She interprets the feminist standpoint epistemology, rather than relying primarily on women's actual experiences, as "a demand, made in women's name, for a shift in the figure of discursive authority, from masculine to feminine" (Clough, 1993, 174). Clough deconstructs the standpoint epistemology by attempting to bring Smith's subject into the text, a process which she achieves this way:

While Smith would insist that her sociological practices refer to actual women, I would suggest that the knowing position which she ascribes to the woman outside the text, outside the relations of ruling, derives from the unifying transcendence of the subject position of Smith's own narration or discourse. That is, women's standpoint might be understood as a narrative to authorize the woman, to figure the knower as feminine, thereby informing knowledge production with a fantasy of oneness which denies the differences within and between women, a fantasy of unity against oppression... (Clough, 1993, 174).

Clough's 'psychoanalytic, semiotic approach' includes language which is extremely foreign to sociology, particularly the word fantasy, as in "the fantasy of being beaten, the fantasy of the primal scene, the fantasy of castration" (Clough, 1993, 175). In a similar

vein, Clough fails to understand the 'job description' of the sociologist when she states that:

Smith's standpoint epistemology not only fails to grasp the working of unconscious desire, it therefore offers a limited approach to reconsidering the relationship of sociology, mass media communication technologies, and a criticism of discourses and textuality" (Clough, 1993, 178).

Clough lays claim to the authority of a dominant paradigm by asserting that "textuality and discourse are therefore understood to be informed with fantasmatic constructions of authorial desire..." (Clough, 1993, 179). Clough fails to recognize that the area of "the working of unconscious desire" is not the work place of the sociologist and is itself a discursive construct which needs to be analyzed.

The interdisciplinary chasm between Dorothy Smith and Patricia Clough is so profound that finding a bridge between these two modes of thinking is an almost impossible task. About the only common ground between the two writers is a mutual interest in textuality and discourse. Dorothy Smith's rebuttals often take on the flavour of an all out intellectual battle with the imaginary 'Twanda, the Amazing Amazon Woman' depicted in the recent movie "Fried Green Tomatoes", with Dorothy Smith starring as Twanda. Smith's "High Noon in Textland" points out the penetrating differences between her and Patricia Clough:

A central and quite fundamental difference is that I propose a point d'appui for sociology in the actualities of people's lives. I'm talking about a place to begin, not a topic, nor a subject matter, nor an object. From this beginning, we can, I hold, discover something at least of how this leviathan we live in is put together (Smith, 1993a, 183).

Clough's criticism of the standpoint of women as a "fantasy of oneness which

denies the differences within and between women" is one of the most prevailing arguments against women's standpoint theory (Smith, 1993a, 184). Smith accuses Clough of manufacturing a "StrawSmith" out of bits and pieces of her writing in order to deconstruct it. Smith's idea of the standpoint was created with the idea that it can "open up to diversity" which includes 'the relations of ruling' (Smith, 1993a, 184).

Smith also answers Clough's statement that there is no reality other than that which is embedded in texts and discourse. She ascribes this as the "postmodern denial of the possibility of representation" (Smith, 1993a, 187). Smith places this tenet in the realm of theory, and says that postmodernists find it impossible to think of representation in terms of "everyday social practice", as well as what is held to be scientific. Everything becomes meaningless. Smith draws on her experience to show how representation can and does work through discursivity in actual practice:

If I describe the water filter for my aquarium over the phone to my son in Toronto, I draw on my experience of how it works and what it looks like, discursively informed, of course, by the original set of instructions it was packaged with. Sure our conversation is shot through with desire, our desire to rescue my fish from expiring in their own muck. We do get a bit upset, but, between the two of us, me telling, he looking and checking, representing and referring get done (Smith, 1993a, 187).

Clough is claiming a "special privilege" from her position within the dominant paradigm of postmodernism (Smith, 1993a, 188). Dorothy Smith positions herself outside of this dominant paradigm in the area of scientific practice that Kuhn identifies as "the area of an anomaly" (Kuhn, 1970, 52). Perhaps Dorothy Smith's mode of analysis will provide an anomalous irritant for a paradigm shift away from postmodernism's

domination of the text.

Smith does not respond with a wholesale 'slaughter' of postmodernism. On the contrary, she does not reject it completely and says she "valued what she learned from feminist and literary cultural theory" (Smith, 1993a, 183). Her complete altruism toward postmodern theory could be questioned though when she notes "I look forward one day to the opening of diplomatic relations between Erving Goffman and Jacques Lacan" (Smith, 1993a, 191).

To briefly summarize this chapter: the origin of the standpoint of women has less to do with the textual sources that Smith has turned to in the course of building her theory, sources that have quite often been men, than it does with the early days of the Women's Movement. Smith feels that her appropriation of the theory of men does not mean that her work is any way "less feminist" (Interview, OISE, 1994). This theory begins in the early days of Dorothy Smith's involvement in the Women's Movement, in the Second Wave of feminism. It is a theory grounded in the realities of women's lives:

My project is a sociology that begins in the actualities of women's experience. It builds on that earlier extraordinary moment, unlike anything I've experienced before or since, a giving birth to ourselves - slow, remorseless, painful, and powerful. It attempts to create a method of inquiry beginning from the site of being that we discovered as we learned to center ourselves as speaking, knowing subjects in our experience as women (Smith, 1992, 88).

## CHAPTER SIX

### A RENAISSANCE FOR WOMEN

It is very hard I think to assess the extraordinary wealth of work that has been produced. It's hard to remember back to those three books I had on my shelves 22 years ago. At one time I still thought that I could keep up with reading everything and I'm a rather fast reader but I gave up about eight or nine years ago. Those of us who teach in the field are now faced with quite a different problem ... faced with perhaps what may now be called a renaissance for women ... because as you perhaps know from the historical critiques of the Renaissance in Europe that was a renaissance which was largely within a masculine intellectual and cultural community. This is our renaissance. This is an extraordinary period for us ... an extraordinary inheritance (Dorothy Smith, Lecture, Lakehead University, October 17, 1994).

Dorothy Smith says we are now living in an intellectual environment which constitutes a renaissance for women. The Women's Movement has gained momentum over the last twenty-five years and is enjoying a period of wider acceptance and success, particularly in the area of Women's Studies in the university. This success has not been achieved without struggle. The place that women came from in the late 1960s and early 1970s was one of intellectual deprivation. Smith describes the formidable challenges that were faced by the early Women's Movement:

...it was taken for granted that women couldn't write poetry, for example, only a 'meepsy' kind of poetry that nobody would really want to read, at least not take seriously...I mean you might actually read it in the Sunday newspapers you know in a little kind of box...a nice little weepy piece about something or other which was written by a woman...but serious poetry was something that only men did... only men did mathematics...only men did science...only men could really think those rather large thoughts you may have noticed sociologists thinking...only men could organize...we had adopted in many ways, we had taken into our souls this view of ourselves as less...we had come to view ourselves as being without authority...as without power...one of the things

that we struggled with was that we learned how to be different...how to be otherwise...we learned to claim authority...we learned to have authority for one another as women (Dorothy Smith, Lecture, Lakehead University, October 17, 1994).

The growth of the Women's Movement has been spurred on by a social environment that has been largely hostile to its objectives. It has thrived despite an intellectual environment which was at first and in some ways still continues to be less than encouraging. The Women's Movement encounters a phenomenon similar to that experienced by early Christianity - it has flourished because of a set of circumstances that actively worked against its progress.

Women were openly murdered because of their sex on December 6, 1989 at L'École Polytechnique. Early Christians as well as the Jews have been murdered because of their religious beliefs. Black people have been murdered because of their colour. The Rwandans were murdered because of ethnic intolerance. The victims of the Montreal Massacre were murdered because they were women and because, in the mind of Marc Lepine they were feminists. These young women's lives were the price that women paid for the success of the Women's Movement. The renaissance for women did not come without struggle, without suffering and without a terrible cost.

I would like to review some of Smith's work which was published after the event of the Montreal Massacre on December 6, 1989. This episode had a profound effect on women in the feminist community, especially the Women's Movement in Canada, and I would like to document the precise effect it had on her as a woman and as a writer. I contemplate the effect of this tragedy as the basis for the emergence of a phenomenon



which quite often occurs in writers that have produced a volume of work over a considerable length of time, that of an epistemological break. Accordingly, I intend to look at the origin of this term in the work of Louis Althusser. It is also possible that the effect of the Montreal Massacre may have triggered an epistemological break in feminist theory as a whole of which Dorothy Smith is a crucial part. I am aware that there is not much accumulated evidence for such an argument because the Massacre is recent in terms of development of a theory. Nevertheless I hope to provide a preliminary study in this line of thinking which could be expanded in my future work.

### **THE MONTREAL MASSACRE**

The year 1989 constituted the bloodiest year in Quebec's history for women. It was a record year in which ninety women were murdered (Ouimet, 1992, 45). In this account of the Montreal Massacre, I would like to begin with the personal, examine the effect on the larger Canadian society and conclude with its significance to Dorothy Smith. Like a lot of people of my generation, I remember exactly where I was and what I was doing when I received the news that John F. Kennedy had been shot. I was seventeen, and had just written an English literature exam, and was walking out of the gymnasium. Several people were weeping in the hall. The Montreal Massacre had the same numbing effect on me - I was watching my favourite soap opera, *The Young and the Restless*, when Peter Mansbridge came onto the television and said there had been a mass shooting in Montreal. I was incredulous. At the time, I was a dance teacher. My boss

in the studio where I taught had been killed two weeks before in a head-on collision. My mother died quite suddenly two weeks later. In the space of about four months, four people close to me died one after another, and I found it impossible to dance any longer, and had to leave the studio. In the exact centre of this personal nightmare, fourteen young women lost their lives at the hands of a man who said he hated women, especially women who wanted to become engineers. There is no measuring the effect that this incident in Montreal has had on the lives of Canadian women. Every year since, their deaths have been remembered in Canadian universities and women's communities across Canada. Women who never knew the victims personally still grieve over their loss.

Most of the public grief for the murdered women seems to have emanated from the Women's Movement. Ursula Franklin, a professor in the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering at the University of Toronto, gave a commemorative address for the victims, which was published in Canadian Woman Studies (1991). She states that the horror of this incident was compounded by the realization that these women were abandoned by their peers:

...our memory should not block out the fact that Marc Lepine, at one of his killing stations, went into a classroom in which there were men and women. He asked them to separate into two groups, and when this didn't happen he fired a shot to the ceiling. Then it did happen. The men left. Fourteen women were killed and Marc Lepine could leave this classroom (Franklin, 1991, 9).

The Montreal Massacre was the inspiration for innumerable poems, letters, and public expressions of sadness by women who identify themselves as feminists. One such collection of published and unpublished letters is The Montreal Massacre (1991), edited

by Louise Mallette and Marie Chalaugh. Many of these letters are simply an emotional expression of anger and grief by members of the Montreal community, but one letter, by Francine Pelletier, described the social significance of the shootings. Pelletier stated that there were two social phenomena behind the Montreal murders: 1) an increasing occurrence of pathological homicide in North American society; and 2) a 'glut' and glorification of violence in the news media (Mallette and Chalaugh, 1991, 34). Moreover, Pelletier relates the characteristics of the mass murders that have increased in recent years, for the most part, in the United States: 1) the killer has a pre-established plan; 2) he has every intention of being viewed as a Rambo-like figure in the public eye; 3) he bears a tremendous grudge against society, which continually flashes its power, wealth and luxury, but does not see fit to share any of it with him; 4) he kills innocent people, in front of television cameras where possible; and 5) the killer is a man (Mallette and Chalaugh, 1991, 34).

At the time of the Montreal Massacre, Dorothy Smith was the Chairperson of OISE's Department of Sociology in Education. Her first consideration was the security of the department's women students, so her time was spent arranging precautionary security procedures. Because of the extensive media coverage of the event, there was a widespread fear of copy cat killings. Smith feels that the impact of the killings was probably greater for younger women, that this incident had an "informing effect" on them. It told them in a blatant and shocking way that they were really despised by men. Years before, in the early days of Women's Studies, Smith read a great deal about the witch trials. Through this, she discovered the hatred that men felt against women and had come

to terms with it. Despite Dorothy Smith's brave attitude of detachment to the Montreal incident, there is no doubt that it had a profound emotional effect on her:

A lot of the women were really, really fearful. I was not fearful, I was furious. I was not going to show fear because I thought this is how it works when something like this happens, women are very intimidated. And if I was intimidated, I was goddamned well not going to show it. That's how they put us down... they make us afraid. I was going to take all the precautions and make sure we were protected. My photograph was defaced in the department ... I didn't see it but... (Interview, OISE, 1994).

She feels that the incident has had no effect on her writing. This is a point where Smith and I are at variance with one another. I would like to argue that in fact the Montreal Massacre had a profound effect on the entire feminist community of which Dorothy Smith is a part. Particularly there is evidence in her writing since this event that points to a change in her consciousness. I contend that Smith exhibits a lessening of the influence of male writers in her work and demonstrates a stronger recognition of the contributions of the community of feminist writers. By examining some of her writing in the last five years, concentrating on an analysis of her article on the subject of the Montreal Massacre called "Whistling Women: Reflections on Rage and Rationality" (1992), I hope to demonstrate that if there is not an epistemological break, per se, there has certainly been a deep shift in her awareness of the growth of women's writing, and her willingness to acknowledge it.

## THE CASE FOR AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL BREAK IN SMITH'S WORK

The term 'epistemological break' was used extensively by Louis Althusser to analyze the writing of Karl Marx in his book For Marx, first published in France in 1965. Althusser borrowed the term from Gaston Bachelard for the purpose of naming what he perceived as "the mutation in the theoretical problematic" in the work of Marx (Althusser, 1965, 32). Althusser locates this break specifically in The German Ideology, published in 1845, and describes it as a fundamental change in Marx's philosophy. He presents the argument that Marx divorced himself from an ideological philosophy (the philosophy of Hegel), and created another philosophy, one that combined the historical and the material, and that this new philosophy formed the basis for his "theoretical maturity" (Althusser, 1965, 34). Althusser began his quest by a thorough examination of the early writing of Marx and by asking himself, "What is Marxist philosophy?", and how did it differ from the philosophy he had "espoused or traversed", i.e., Hegel or Feuerbach (Althusser, 1965, 31).

In a similar vein, David A. Nock has applied the phrase 'epistemological break' to the life work of the Canadian sociologist, S. D. Clark, the long time Chairman of the Sociology Department at the University of Toronto. Nock bases his reasoning on the fact that S. D. Clark began his career with a radical political philosophy which he learned from agrarian movements like the United Farmers of Alberta. In the early days of Clark's writing, he was clearly a democratic socialist, and a "sympathizer of Communism" (Nock, 1993, 40). A dramatic change in his social environment, from Lloydminster, Alberta to the conservative academic surroundings at the University of Toronto, resulted in a

metamorphosis from a radical standpoint in his youth to a rather reactionary posture in his later career. A shift occurred not only in Clark's politics, but in his style of doing sociology. He turned to the use of American Sociological methods which elicited the disdain of young sociology students caught up in the radical politics of the late 1960s. Lamentably, he became "a supporter of corporate capitalism and the academic establishment" (Nock, 1993, 39).

To analyze a similar phenomenon in the work of Dorothy Smith I have begun by asking the question, what is the source of her fundamental philosophy? She herself has answered this question and locates it in the birth of the Women's Movement, in the early days of feminism (Smith, 1992, 88). Her emotional loyalties, the grounding for her feminist theory came from the lives and practices of real women with whom she worked, and the social relations she engaged in the nascent days of the Second Wave of Feminism. They are not solely connected to the male writers that she has appropriated, including Marx. Each of these men was chosen for an individual intellectual purpose. To create a sociology for women, to re-make sociology, she had to confront a patriarchal discipline, a discipline where only the writing of men was important. This was accomplished by executing an extraordinary wisdom -- that of acceptance. Rather than continuing a dialectic, a dialogue with men, she embraced them and beat them at their own game. Twenty years of women's intellectual growth went by, wherein women began to experience something wonderful, which Smith describes as a women's renaissance (Lecture, Lakehead University, 1994).

Then, without a warning, the mass murder at L'École Polytechnique erupted,

leaving the feminist community shaken, their accomplishments of the last twenty years abruptly attacked. Complacency was shattered. Kearl's Endings: A sociology of death and dying (1989), explains the social effects of mass murder:

...only when our cultural death denial system is punctured do we have a glimpse of the chaos posed by death, and for many even this glimpse can destroy the complacency and security they have in the social order. On the first anniversary of the 1984 San Diego McDonald's mass murder of 21 people, it was obvious that life for the survivors would never be the same. For them the very fabric of society was ripped when death was let in. Mass death can lead one to think and act as if the world itself were dying (Kearl, 1989, 72).

I argue that life for the feminist community, of which Dorothy Smith is a part, will never be the same after the trauma of the mass murders at L'École Polytechnique. The experience of the Montreal Massacre was a catalyst for change, even a change in fundamental philosophy, from an intellectual acceptance of the writing of male theorists out of necessity, to the acute awareness of the incredible scholarly advances made by women in the last twenty years. These deaths constituted a violent social upheaval, a change in the social environment of the Women's Movement, especially in Canada. My argument for an 'epistemological break' begins with Dorothy Smith's essay "Whistling Women: Reflections on rage and rationality", published in 1992.

The inspiration for this superlative essay was the Montreal Massacre. In an attempt to create a meaning for the killings, people in the mass media, Barbara Frum, for example, described the tragedy in terms of it being the isolated act of a deranged madman. The Women's Movement disagreed with this interpretation. The feminist position on the shooting was that it had more to say about the violence perpetrated by

men against women, than it did about "a single act of madness" (Smith, 1992, 207). Dorothy Smith looks at the incident through the eyes of a feminist sociologist. She demonstrates how the underlying rage of men, in an atmosphere of rationality, the university, is a social construction that was put in place two hundred years ago by philosophers during the Enlightenment. She traces the social construction of male rage against women, in the "regime of rationality", from the French Revolution to the contemporary university.

Smith bases her title on an old English Proverb: "a whistling woman and a crowing hen lets the devil out of his pen." The important consideration of this saying is the assignment of gender roles, and what happens when an anomaly, or an inversion of behaviour, occurs, especially in women. When the 'natural order' is disrupted, when women whistle and hens crow, when women become engineers, encroaching on a preserve that is traditionally male, this 'lets the devil out of his pen'. The devil is analogous to male rage (Smith, 1992, 207). Smith begins by questioning how such a violent emotion, male rage, could exist in a seemingly rational institution, the university. She substantiates empirically how Marc Lepine's rage, rather than forming a freakish event, is a common place occurrence in the university sphere when women attempt to "address the inequality they are experiencing" (Smith, 1992, 208). Quite the contrary, she has heard innumerable instances of male anger recounted in other universities across Canada.

Certainly, episodes of male wrath are not an uncommon experience for activist women. She gives the example of the savage attacks on Sheila McIntyre, a law



professor at Queens and a well-known supporter of the Women's Movement. When she made a suggestion in class that a case should include women as well as men, she experienced a torrent of male anger:

About six men were deliberately disruptive, uncooperative, interruptive and angry...they belligerently tried to prevent students who disagreed with their position from speaking by a combination of insult, interruption, hostile gestures and increasingly voluble but untenable argument (Smith, 1992, 209).

Masculine animosity towards women is understood by Smith to be a manifestation triggered by a disruption to 'familiar practices' and a "taken for granted ordering of power" (Smith, 1992, 210). Anomalies, or women encroaching on the traditional social realms of men, "endanger the coherence of a regime and are experienced as a threat" (Smith, 1992, 210). When modes of behaviour are attributed to one sex or another, it is not an example of a natural form, but it is "part of the practice of a regime". The system that Smith is describing is what she labels "the regime of rationality".

This system of domination and control involves a set of practices that are real. They are engaged in by real people in the living out of their lives. The regime of rationality is observed by Smith to be the contemporary outcome of an historical process. Smith begins her treatment by an examination of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

The Enlightenment was comprised of a male community of philosophers who built their thinking based on the idea of Reason. The outcome was a putatively objective knowledge that purported to be equally available to women as well as men. Genevieve Lloyd, however, points out that intellectual equality in the Age of Reason was far from

being the case:

The reality of the lives of women, despite their supposed equality in Reason, precluded them, too, from any significant involvement in the collective endeavours of science, the developing forms of which quickly outstripped the private procedures of Descartes' method (Lloyd, 1984, 49).

Descartes, one of the Enlightenment philosophers, created what Dorothy Smith calls "the transcendent subject" of rationality, a subject that is separated from his or her own unique history (Smith, 1992, 213). Descartes produced a discourse that included the idea of equality, but at the same time created a rational 'community of subjects', where one subject can arbitrarily be substituted for another. This regime that Descartes was partially responsible for eventually became absorbed by the larger society. It was adopted by the French Government, the military, the developing technology and was incorporated in the strategies of the nobility (Smith, 1992, 213). It excluded, but was secretly dependent on, the work of women for its creations. Schiebinger includes a reproduction of an artist's portrait of Lavoisier. Madame Lavoisier is portrayed as 'the loving assistant', which illustrates this hidden dependence quite clearly:

A scientific wife became an increasingly private assistant, hidden from view within the domestic sanctuary (Schiebinger, 1989, 261).

Bacon, another Enlightenment philosopher mentioned by Smith, used figurative language to describe nature as female, and the domination of nature was the goal of science. He masculinized scientific practice - he saw it as a science that had "a remorseful insistence on penetrating and dominating his object" (Smith, 1992, 212). Lloyd explicates Bacon's infamous use of sexual imagery with regard to science:

Let us establish a chaste and lawful marriage between Mind and Nature, he writes. The right kind of nuptial dominance, he insists, is not a tyranny, 'Nature is only to be commanded by obeying her'. But it does not demand a degree of force: 'Nature betrays her secrets more fully when in the grip and under the pressure of art than when in the enjoyment of her natural liberty' (Lloyd, 1984, 12).

Bacon's notion of science as masculine was an English attack against the French, who depicted science as feminine. Science as feminine was an older, more traditional practice, so to present science as masculine was thought by Bacon and his English contemporaries to be more modern, as well as an attack against the French, the feminine and the establishment (Schiebinger, 1989, 138).

Dorothy Smith cites several instances where women were deliberately excluded from education during the Enlightenment and the early nineteenth century. She attributes this to the position of privilege extended to a phenomenon called 'the sentimental family', in which women were expected to "preserve the values of love and sentiment", and men were the masters of the "terrain of Reason" (Smith, 1992, 215). The division between public and private, where men lived in the public sphere and women inhabited the private, became increasingly more entrenched as the 'sentimental family' was given more legitimation. Even if women did manage to obtain an education, they were still barred from the regime of rationality. Schiebinger notes the example of Piscopia:

When Piscopia was allowed to sit for her Ph.D. exams in the 1670s...university officials decided that her case was not to set a precedent; indeed, for nearly three hundred years no other woman was awarded a doctorate at Padua (Schiebinger, 1989, 16).

Nor did achievement or international eminence mean that women would be

included in the world of men. Madame Curie, the renowned physicist and the only person to ever win the Nobel Peace Prize twice, was disallowed membership in the prestigious Académie des Sciences in Paris, by a margin of two votes. The Académie later voted 90 to 52 to never allow a woman to become a member (Schiebinger, 1989, 11).

Smith then teaches us that the Enlightenment philosophers, whose thought eventually became written down in the constitutions of countries, assisted in the social construction of women's limited access to mathematics and science. She goes on to exemplify how this exclusion of women is still operational in the contemporary university.

She refers to Jessie Bernard's Academic Women, published in 1964, where the 'stag effect' is identified as a manner of doing things whereby male academics were "condescending and patronising" to their female peers (Smith, 1992, 218). Bernard's 'stag effect' is still in evidence in the modern classroom, where women's restricted participation has been widely documented. Women are less likely to be spoken to, have less occasion to speak out, and are more likely to have what they say taken less seriously (Smith, 1992, 218). Teachers have been noted to direct their attention first at white men, then coloured men, then at white women and lastly, women of colour.

Dorothy Smith writes that younger single women in the university are objectified as sexual entities and "assumed to be available to the male faculty member". Older women are conjured up as 'battle axes', 'old witches' and 'neurotic spinsters' (Smith, 1992, 218).

In the discipline of engineering, the exclusionary practices of the regime of rationality amount to the sexual debasement of women. Smith cites a study of engineers

at M.I.T. that indicates that jokes ridiculing women were second only to jokes about technical incompetence. In this study, it was noted that male engineers were encouraged to become obsessed with their jobs, and were advised to use work as a remedy for dealing with human emotions. The culture of engineering is a masculinized one, where competitiveness is promoted, and scientific progress can sometimes involve "heated verbal attacks" and can be spurred on by motives of revenge (Smith, 1992, 219).

Dorothy Smith successfully argues that the regime of rationality that was accountable for the deaths of fourteen young female engineering students in Montreal "is more than an intellectual practice; it is a highly organized set of social relations" (Smith, 1992, 219). Although she does not say so explicitly, the implicit statement of "Whistling Women" is that Rousseau, Bacon and Descartes are the authors of a regime that was guilty of the exclusion of women from learning, from achievement, from mathematics and from science. These philosophers created the anomaly of women engineering students at L'École Polytechnique, and although Marc Lepine pulled the trigger, the male Enlightenment community (which include the exclusionary practices still maintained by the contemporary university), must take their share of the responsibility for the deaths of these women.

"Whistling Women" is an essay in the sociology of knowledge -- how knowledge production occurred and continues to occur in a male dominated intellectual environment. This paper has the character of a profound change in Smith's philosophy, firstly because there is no mention of any 'Fathers of Sociology'. There is no appropriation of Marx, Merleau-Ponty, Mead, Garfinkel or Schutz to explain the social construction of the male

rage that killed the women engineering students. How could Marx possibly explain such blind savagery? Instead, Dorothy Smith turns to other women and the feminist community, to Jessie Bernard's 'stag effect', to writers like Londa Schiebinger and Genevieve Lloyd to assist her in her analysis.

As a final analytical note on Dorothy Smith's continuing work on the topic of ideology, I would like to include a few words on a very recent publication called "The Standard North American Family: SNAF as an ideological code" (Smith, 1993b). It is based on research that was conducted with Alison Griffith on the mothering practices that were associated with children's schooling. Incorporated into the study were Smith and Griffith's own experience as single parents (Smith, 1993b, 50). Smith uses the term ideological code in connection with the reproduction of a particular ideology:

I am using the term ideological code as an analogy to genetic code. Genetic codes are orderings of the chemical constituents of DNA molecules that transmit genetic information to cells, reproducing in the cells the original ordering. By analogy, an ideological code is a schema that replicates its organization in multiple and various sites (Smith, 1993b, 51).

The Standard North American Family is conceptualized by Smith as a form identical to the nuclear family, consisting of a married heterosexual couple and one or more children. The man is primarily responsible for the economic survival of the family and while the woman may contribute economically, her first obligation is the care of the children and the household (Smith, 1993b, 52). This is the ideological code against which all other forms of the family (single parents, same sex couples) are judged.

This code is embedded in what Smith and Alison Griffith came to recognize in the

course of their research as mothering discourse, an ideology that was propagated by the 'relations of ruling' in the early part of this century (Smith, 1993b, 54). Despite their efforts to avoid it, Smith and Griffith were dismayed to discover "the extent to which our thinking and research design were organized by the mothering discourse and by conceptions of SNAF" (Smith, 1993b, 55). One example of where this ideology emerged was in the interviewing of mothers who worked outside the home, where the "SNAF ordering" of the structure of the interview implicitly suggested this as a deviant practice (Smith, 1993b, 57). Women are held responsible in this ideology, for an increase in families that are female-headed. The increase of black women who head single parent families were especially targeted for this kind of blame. The female-headed family is viewed as a defective or "deviant" form:

The SNAF code, operating as a set of conventions selecting vocabulary, as well as relations posited syntactically, selects women as protagonists of the decline of the intact and the increase of the nonintact, female-headed family (Smith, 1993b, 58).

The article "SNAF as an Ideological Code" (1993b), qualifies in several ways as an example of an epistemological break. This article documents clearly the way that women, particularly women that head up single-parent families, are victimized by ideology. It is a negative ideology that presents the female-headed household as deviant or defective. The responsibility that men hold in this relation is invisible (Smith, 1993b, 58). Dorothy Smith actively promotes the work that women have done on the family, for instance, she mentions the writings of Alison Griffith, Mary Romero, Rayna Rapp and Carol Stack. She is openly critical of the work that some male writers have done on the

family, particularly G.P. Murdock and W.J. Wilson. There are no references to the often-used sources of her arguments: Marx, Merleau-Ponty, Mead or Schutz. This example of her writing is more overtly critical of an ideological code which presents women as somehow deviant, and the male writing that actively reproduces it. It represents a change in philosophy in that this piece of writing does not actively engage with men's writing on an intellectual basis.

In conclusion, to support the hypothesis of an epistemological break based on the sex of the writer that she appropriates, one would have to find objective evidence for this by conducting a citation count of her writing before and after the Montreal Massacre. There is not time to conduct such an investigation here. I am basing my argument on an interpretation of "Whistling Women" and her writing to the present. What I sense in Smith's writing is a willingness to engage the feminist community of writers and more acute awareness of their accomplishments. An extended analysis along these lines would be the substance for a doctoral dissertation. Here I am merely identifying what I feel may be the beginning of a profound change in philosophy, which may extend to the entire feminist community, even if Dorothy Smith does not yet recognize it as such. The fathers of sociology are no longer an intellectual necessity, not in the writing of Dorothy Smith or in feminist theory "however much one may go to them for pleasure" (Woolf, 1945, 76).



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

When I began this project, I tried to formulate some specific objectives, some of which were personal, most of which were intellectual. My personal objective was to create a positive outlet for the rage that is engendered when a woman becomes a victim, either of male violence or of sexual abuse. My intellectual objectives were to trace the development, or the creation, of Dorothy Smith's standpoint epistemology, from her intellectual beginnings to the present. The method that I wanted to use involved a sociology of knowledge, an account of Smith's development that would include the socio-historical events that helped to shape her thinking. I wanted to create a representation of Dorothy Smith that could not be accused of being a "StrawSmith". I wanted to write an account of Smith's work that revealed a Dorothy Smith that is not the huge public image of her that now exists, and gave an accurate portrait not only of her intellectual character but also her human "nature".

Further to this, I was fascinated by Smith's acceptance, tolerance and open-minded attitude to male theorists in the course of her commitment to re-make sociology. My own attitude to men was more or less (mostly more) along the lines of Mary Daly's feelings, ie., that men were 'drones', 'prickers', 'rippers', and 'snools' (Daly, 1984, 35). I believed, then, that Dorothy Smith had something to teach me about acceptance and tolerance. At the same time, I was concerned that her tolerance and appropriation of male writers would somehow have a negative effect on her intellectual autonomy as a writer. In my personal world, dependence on men had usually meant an actual threat to my existence. I wondered if this extended to the conceptual realm. Since autonomy from men is a value

that feminists generally espouse, I wondered if Dorothy Smith's use of male theorists would in some way generate a negative impact on her writing. Therefore I was interested in epistemological autonomy, and in forming the boundaries of what this might entail.

This conclusion will examine how these objectives have been brought to fruition in the course of writing this thesis. I will summarize the sociology of knowledge component, how Smith's writing and the standpoint of women were not created in a vacuum, but within a larger social realm which affected her. I will survey the issue of epistemological autonomy examining first Dorothy Smith's thoughts on the topic. I will comment on what I feel has been the effect of her choice of male writers on her work. Finally I include what I contemplate as the guidelines for an appropriate autonomy for women in the course of their writing and working in sociology.

### **SUMMARIZING A SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE**

During the course of writing this thesis, I wanted to include accounts of the micro and macro social worlds that impinged on Dorothy Smith's production of knowledge as well as significant socio-historical events, such as the Free Speech Movement and the Montreal Massacre that have had a direct influence on her thinking. In giving examples of the way her intellectual development has evolved, I wanted to concentrate on her work in the areas of ideology and the sociology of knowledge. In this section, I would like to briefly summarize the creation of the 'standpoint of women', through its several intellectual phases that were also accompanied by dramatic changes in geographical location.

Dorothy Smith was brought up in a family with a feminist tradition - both her mother and her grandmother publicly identified themselves as feminists and actively took part in the radical behaviour of the Suffragette Movement. The potential for the growth of a feminist consciousness in Smith existed from the day she was born. As she was fortunate to come from a middle class background, she was presented with opportunities that probably did not exist for a working-class woman in England. She had experience in social work, which was likely to have triggered an early awareness of people's social conditions. She learned political activism from the men in factories in Northern England, where she was placed as a social worker. Smith became openly socialist and a supporter of the Labour Party. Another fortuitous opportunity was her acceptance at the London School of Economics.

At LSE, Dorothy Smith was surrounded by a lively political atmosphere. Here she fell in love twice-over, first with the discipline of sociology and secondly with the man that she married after she graduated, Bill Smith. After the completion of an undergraduate degree with a major in social anthropology, Smith and her husband moved to the United States and enrolled in the University of California at Berkeley. Her intellectual growth was constrained by the birth of her two sons and serious marital problems. Nevertheless, she continued to advance steadily, beginning research with her husband at the state mental institution which was the basis for her doctoral dissertation. Around the time of the completion of her doctorate in 1963, she engaged with two significant influences on her thinking: 1) the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty; and 2) Jessie Bernard's Academic Women (1964). This was the point at which her feminist consciousness began to surface,

and the Women's Movement, although it already existed, remained 'hidden' (Meadow-Orlans, 1994, 50). Social unrest had begun to manifest itself in the Free Speech Movement, which was not politically radical, and based many of its protest strategies on the Civil Rights Movement (Interview, Lakehead University, 1994).

Smith was abandoned by her husband at Berkeley when her youngest son was only nine months old. She was forced into the initial stages of her career as a matter of survival - her colleague, John Clausen, gave her a job at Berkeley. Single parenthood motivated a brief return to England, for two years of teaching at the University of Essex. Student protest was beginning to emerge as a world-wide phenomenon and she organized a moratorium on classes at Essex. It was here she met Michele Barrett, who would also become an important contributor to feminist theory, and at Essex she began to gravitate towards the writing of Marx.

When Dorothy Smith arrived at the University of British Columbia in 1968, the Student Protest Movement was at its height in Canada. She came to an institution that was politically conservative, and where female faculty were the subjects of blatant discriminatory practices on the part of the university administration. It was a period of astounding intellectual growth. At UBC, Dorothy Smith became publicly identified with Marxism and with feminism. She began teaching the first courses in Women's Studies, where women were encouraged to return to their own experience at the beginning of inquiry into a topic for study. She began to study Marx in earnest, divesting herself of the interpretations of Marx she had learned as an undergraduate. Her interpretation was markedly different from the dominant paradigm of her day - Althusserian Marxism. Her

intellectual development took place in the re-birth of the Women's Movement, in a feminist community which, for the first time in history, began to actively theorize women's oppression. One of women's first theoretical tasks was to examine the issue of women's domestic labour, which became known in feminist theory as the domestic labour debate. Dorothy Smith began to characterize the 'standpoint of women' as 'women's perspective', and she describes women's position as subordinate, oppressed and dependent (Smith, 1977, 10). She was openly critical of Marxism as a movement and of Marxist organizations.

In 1977 Smith made an important career move to Toronto, to the fledgling graduate institution called the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Her adjustment to the feminist community took some time and she threw herself into her career at a furious pace - writing, going to conferences, the developing a feminist curriculum at OISE, as well as engaging in activist enterprises. She became ill from the demands of her career and the heavy responsibilities of single parenthood. Despite chronic fatigue, OISE can be pinpointed as the place where Smith achieves theoretical maturity, and where she put forth 'the standpoint of women' (Smith, 1979), as a method of initiating sociological inquiry. Smith, as well as the rest of the feminist community, begin to experience a renaissance for women in the late 1980s. Smith's characterization of the 'standpoint of women' evolves from its original starting point in Marxist feminism as one that is dependent and oppressed to something more positive: "Women are not the passive products of their socialization; they are active, they create themselves" (Smith, 1990b, 161).

The Montreal Massacre in 1989 violently shattered this happy scenario. It shook the feminist community to its foundations, and inspired Smith's essay in the sociology of knowledge "Whistling Women" (1992). This is an essay that I have argued indicates a profound change in her philosophy and her approach to writing. Today, she enjoys a world-wide reputation, one within sociology, and another one that is beginning to surpass the boundaries of the discipline. 'The standpoint of women' has attracted the critical reviews of intellectuals from a variety of sources, including postmodern writers. The 'standpoint of women' has achieved the status of an epistemology, or a theory of knowledge, largely due to the influence of an American feminist sociologist, Sandra Harding. Harding labels Smith as a 'standpoint feminist' along with Rose, Flax and Hartsock, women who share a common theoretical style (Harding, 1986).

### **EPISTEMOLOGICAL AUTONOMY**

Have the male writers employed in the creation of Dorothy Smith's 'standpoint of women' affected her feminist autonomy, or indeed, her independence as a writer? When I questioned Dorothy Smith on the subject of epistemological autonomy she laughed and said: "What's that?" (Interview, OISE, 1994) After my explanation of the term that I had borrowed from Lorraine Code, she made the following comments:

You have to remember that I am not a philosopher. And although actually I know quite a lot of philosophy I know it mainly because I have seen rightly or wrongly that in order to develop adequately the method of dealing with how things are put forward you have to be epistemologically adequate. In other words I have got to know what I'm doing in that area.

I am not an epistemologist (Interview, OISE, 1994).

Smith has a writing style that is easily recognizable and well developed. She has not displayed a dependence on any one writer, but has employed the writing of a variety of male authors. She has a public identity which is not connected to male writers, with the possible exception of Karl Marx. Her contribution to sociology has been enormous, and sociology will never be the same because of her work; it is re-made.

What would be the suggestions for an appropriate autonomy, or conditions in which feminist theorists could cautiously appropriate the writing of men? Here they are: 1) When a male writer demonstrates a palpable support of women in their intellectual endeavours; 2) When a male writer is a feminist; 3) A male writer that actively appropriates feminist theory to assist him in his theory building; 4) A male writer that gives evidence of a trust in the intelligence of women and is not intimidated by the term 'feminist' or the collective strength of women; and 5) When the examination of a male intellectual biography reveals an empathy for women. Any one of these suggestions could constitute a possible criteria for the appropriation of a male theorist.

These are my final thoughts on women's autonomy. They are somewhat in the nature of the conflicts felt by Simone de Beauvoir. Independence for me has meant life without violence, but not without difficulties. There have been periods for me when independence has meant 'the Lord's test'. My autonomy, however, has been a balanced one - I have been able to dance; I have been able to 'do sociology', and was fortunate enough to meet and to learn from a woman named Dorothy E. Smith.

## APPENDIX A

December 1, 1994

NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY, PROVINCE  
POSTAL CODE

Dear Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:

I am an MA student in Sociology at Lakehead University, in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. My research project is an exploration of the contributions of a prominent feminist theorist to the development of theory in discipline of Sociology.

As one means of exploring her influence within the discipline, I am conducting a brief survey of feminist sociologists and relevant sociology/women's studies journals following an identification technique that has been used by Michele Lamont of Princeton University. I am writing to request your participation in the survey.

The survey is divided into two brief sections and should only take a few minutes of your time to complete:

You are asked to:

- 1) Rank the names of the five writers who you feel have been most instrumental in the overall development of feminist theory within the discipline of sociology (rank from one to five - one being the most important); and
- 2) Rank the five writers who you feel have been the most influential in feminist theory in sociology in the past five years. The names you choose may appear in both places;

A section for additional comments/elaboration is included at the end of the form.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. Thank you for taking part in what is, for me, a very exciting project.

Yours truly,

Deirdre M. Smyth,  
Department of Sociology,  
Lakehead University,  
955 Oliver Road  
Thunder Bay, Ontario  
CANADA P7B 5E1



## Survey of Feminist Theorists

**Note: the names you choose may appear in both sections 1 and 2.**

- 1. List the names of the five writers who you feel have been most instrumental in the overall development of feminist theory within the discipline of sociology (rank from one to five - one being the most important):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

- 2) List the five writers who you feel have been the most influential in feminist theory in sociology in the past five years (rank from one to five - one being the most influential):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) Additional Comments/Elaboration (please feel free to add any additional comments which may be relevant).**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Optional:**

Name:

Affiliation:

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### INTERVIEW ONE - LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY - OCTOBER 18, 1994.

I am interested in the shifts that take place in your work that concur with the changes in your geographical location, the differences in intellectual atmosphere and the socio-historical events that are taking place concurrently in the development of your writing. In particular, I want to know your impressions of these various locations and events, and how and in what ways you see that they have affected you. Due to time constraints, I would like to concentrate on your experiences at the London School of Economics, Berkeley, the University of Essex and the University of British Columbia.

#### The London School of Economics

- 1) How did you get 'hooked' on sociology? Was there a particular course or teacher that you loved and was an inspiration?
- 2) What are your impressions of the political and historical climate of England at the time? Were you a socialist at this time?
- 3) How did you meet your husband?
- 4) Was your family supportive of your interest in sociology?

#### Berkeley, California - 1955-1966.

- 1) In "A Berkeley Education", you talk about 'an already happening women's movement, still hidden...'. You mention a meeting where you talked to women graduate students about the realities of their situation, and how you walked out of a party after someone repeated a sexist joke. Were there any other instances at Berkeley where you supported women at risk to your own career? Were these the only times at Berkeley where you rebelled openly against this kind of inequity?
- 2) You describe your time at Berkeley as unhappy and difficult in a number of ways. Could you tell me more about the African American therapist who was a source of strength, and other people and things that sustained you in this difficult time?
- 3) You mention the Free Speech Movement, the student movement, and the anti-Vietnam War activities on the campus, the teach-ins and the demonstrations you attended. You say this was 'the beginning in me, of the women's movement.'

Was this also the beginning of your interest in Marx and in Marxism?

- 4) How did you choose the topic for your doctoral dissertation? You describe your relationship with Irving Goffman as a distant and unsupportive one. What prompted you to choose Goffman as your advisor?
- 5) What were the actual conditions on the women's ward at 'Western State Hospital' and how did you feel about them?

### The University of Essex

- 1) Could you describe your relationship with Michele Barrett and in what ways you were alike and in what ways you differed?
- 2) Do you identify your time at Essex as the consolidation of your interest in Marxism and in feminism. If so, could you elaborate?
- 3) Could you describe your impressions of the student movement and the political environment at Essex?

### The University of British Columbia

- 1) The radical student movement was at its most powerful by the time you began teaching at the University of British Columbia? What are your memories of this and in what ways did you participate? As a faculty member, did you feel constrained, or limited in this participation?
- 2) Marxist and radical organizations at this time were often blatantly discriminatory against women. (For example, Stokely Carmichael's remark that 'the only place for women in the SNCC is prone'.) Can you remember any specific examples of this kind of discrimination at UBC?
- 3) You mention a Women's Studies Course that you taught at UBC that took on the significance of a life-changing experience. What sort of things did you study?
- 4) Was it at UBC that you first began to conceive of the standpoint of women? How did the concept first come to you?
- 5) What were the ideas in Marx's writing that first attracted you? What sustained this attraction?

**INTERVIEW TWO - OISE - NOVEMBER 11, 1994.**

- 1) How would you characterize your class background? How did you come to be politically active in the Labour Party? What circumstances led to your being able to attend the London School of Economics?
- 2) What does the notion 'epistemological autonomy' mean to you?
- 3) Could you describe how you conceive of and how you constructed 'the standpoint of women'? More specifically, how were you introduced to Hegel's parable of the Master and the Bondsman?
- 4) How did you meet Sandra Harding and how did she come to include your epistemology in The Science Question in Feminism?
- 5) Was the category of 'standpoint feminist' one that was thrust upon you, or was it something that you deliberately strived for?
- 6) Can you remember the details of your circumstances personally and intellectually at the time of the Montreal Massacre? What was your immediate reaction to the tragedy?
- 7) Do you feel this event had a direct effect on your writing, in the sense of a shift from male influence to a more autonomous standpoint and a more definite support of other feminist authors?
- 8) How do you feel now about the appropriation of male theorists and under what circumstances would you consider this appropriate?
- 9) Do you wish that you had been more directly critical of individual male writers, the way that Mary Wollstonecraft was of Rousseau, for instance?
- 10) Have you ever read Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own, in particular, the portion on a divided consciousness? (p. 96) Did this section have anything to do with the creation of the concept of 'bifurcation of consciousness'?
- 11) Please outline your intellectual influences - at the various geographical and socio-historical locations we have discussed.

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