

Tribute

**REMEMBERING DOROTHY E. SMITH:
A SOCIALIST STUDIES TRIBUTE**

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“The notion of making change from below offers openings to voices, needs, and interests that are not represented in contemporary regimes of power. It accords with new political realities, particularly when it is joined with recognizing the importance of knowledge of how the ruling relations work and of the ways in which we can intervene to change them.”

~ Dorothy Smith, “Making change from below.” *Socialist Studies*, 2007, 3: 20-21

As the passage above, excerpted from her 2007 plenary address to the Society for Socialist Studies, indicates, Dorothy Smith hued closely to Marx’s thesis eleven, that “philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it” (2004 [1845]). Indeed, Dorothy’s grounding in Marx, and specifically the Marx of *The German Ideology*, was rock-solid. Like Marx, she proceeded from actual people, their practices and social relations, and called attention not only unjust social relations but to the conceptual practices of power that inform those relations, as ideologies. As she wrote in her extensive reflections on that key text,

Ideological forms of thought are manifestations of actual relations worked up in the realm of speculation in such a way that the actual ground of the concepts is occluded. ... The ideological forms of thought express these relations but

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reconstruct them “speculatively”. The relations themselves are concealed behind the ideological screen (Smith 2004: 455).

The starting-point that Marx and Engels established for historical materialism – actual people, active within their social relations – is exactly the starting point for institutional ethnography (IE) the critical research strategy that Dorothy Smith introduced in the 1980s, and which legions of activist scholars within sociology, human services and related fields have subsequently taken up. And the “end-in-view”, if you will – the reason for inquiry in the first place – is the same in both cases: to develop grounded knowledge “of how the ruling relations work and of the ways in which we can intervene to change them” (Smith 2007: 21). We need to understand how the social world has been put together in order to figure out how to re-make it.

Dorothy Smith’s debt to Marx was great, but she was not a disciple. She learned from Marx and endeavored to present a radical epistemology for social science that is “faithful” to his approach (Smith 2004: 446). But faithfulness did not imply dogmatism. Rejecting all orthodoxies, her critical sociology drew upon insights from feminist activism (in particular the consciousness-raising practices of the 1970s in North America) and heterodox sociologies such as ethnomethodology and phenomenology.

Dorothy Smith leaves a rich legacy for socialist scholars and activists. Consistent with her own emphasis on both the embodied and textual character of social life, this legacy is twofold. It consists in an enormous corpus of published scholarship, including more than a dozen major books by Dorothy herself, and hundreds of works squarely within the IE mode authored by herself, her students, and by students of her students. These texts have traveled across national and disciplinary boundaries. As they have been taken up, the texts have supported and inspired a rich community of scholar-activists with growing influence within learned societies such as the Canadian Sociological Association and the Society for the Study of Social Problems. Those texts direct us to the other aspect of Dorothy’s legacy, the embodied part, active in the ongoing practices of the scores of students that Dorothy mentored (and in turn, their students), many of whom have made important contributions to radical scholarship, and some of whom are featured in this collection. Dorothy’s legacy is not only a body of scholarship, but an embodied network reaching widely into scholarly and activist circles, whose central node has been Dorothy Smith. Thanks to her strong commitment to mentorship and collaboration, after Dorothy’s passing the network remains resilient, and poised to support a continuing stream of radical scholarship in coming years. We offer this set of reflections as an appreciation of Dorothy Smith’s remarkable contributions, but with an awareness that her deep insights will live on, through the work of her students and the wider community of practice within which she has been the leading protagonist.

Dorothy and me

I first encountered Dorothy Smith in Toronto, in a Marxist Institute reading group on the capitalist crisis. No, not the 2008 financial meltdown or the 2000 dot.com crisis, but the crisis of the 1970s that begat neoliberalism. As I recall, this was around 1979, when I was just finding my feet as a critical sociologist. At that time, Dorothy was already prominent as a leading socialist feminist and critic of positivism. I remember feeling intrigued that someone with her academic and political interests would show up in a reading group on crisis theory. Dorothy's interests were always wide-ranging, and although she criticized overly-structural formulations she was alert to capitalism's contradictions, including its in-built crisis tendencies.

A few years on, I recall a memorable scene at a 1983 Winnipeg conference to mark the centenary of Marx's death, which was organized by SSS Secretary-Treasurer Jesse Vorst. One of Dorothy's interventions, and a highlight of the gathering, involved a respectful but rigorous dressing down of Zillah Eisenstein, delivered from the floor, after Eisenstein presented her thesis on *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism* (1981). By then a renowned socialist feminist, Dorothy's extemporaneous critique of Eisenstein's rather starry-eyed optimism proved accurate, as others have subsequently shown at length (Fraser 2014). Dorothy could be a sharp critic when the situation called for sharp critique, though I always found her to be a supportive mentor and colleague.

In 1990, when Dorothy received the CSA's Outstanding Contribution award at the Congress of Learned Societies in Victoria, I caught up with her in a stairwell, and floated the idea that she relocate to the University of Victoria after her imminent retirement from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). To my delight, this invitation met with success, and she soon became an Adjunct Professor of Sociology at the University of Victoria, a position she would hold until her passing. Dorothy presented two major papers at that Congress, both of which were included in *Fragile Truths*, a collection commemorating the CSA's 25th anniversary, which I co-edited with Linda Christiansen-Ruffman, Raymond Currie and Deborah Harrison. Dorothy's essay on "Whistling Women" (Smith 1992b), meditating on the 1989 École Polytechnique massacre of 14 women in Montreal, is a *tour-de-force*, meticulously explicating the patriarchal practices, operating in the background of everyday life, that furnished preconditions for the atrocity. Her "Remaking Sociology, Remaking a Life" (Smith 1992a) reflected deeply on how, through her engagement with both the Canadianization and women's movements after immigrating to Canada in the late 1960s, Dorothy came to problematize the malestream, US-centred sociology she had learned in the earlier 1960s at Berkeley. The ensuing "major personal and intellectual transformation" (1992a: 125) catalyzed her distinctive approach to remaking sociology. These essays, from the midpoint of Dorothy's career, comprise a tiny piece of her work; I mention them simply as exemplars of the wide range and relevance of her scholarship, which always incorporated a concern to link theory and practice.

In her last three decades, Dorothy and I co-supervised a good many graduate students as they moved through the UVic Sociology program, and she also gave the occasional seminar course on IE. Her presence in these ways helped move our department from the positivist mode in which it was encased in the 1980s, to a more reflexive, critical place. Of course, the excellent students we co-supervised are just a small fraction of all the activist-scholars Dorothy mentored.

Dorothy stayed intellectually and politically engaged until the end of her long life. Weeks before her passing, she participated in an online tribute that also launched what was to be her last book, *Simply Institutional Ethnography: Creating a Sociology for People*. Coauthored with her former student Alison Griffith (also, sadly, no longer with us), this book once again redeems the promise of Marx's thesis eleven. It offers a popular introduction to institutional ethnography as a sociology *for* people, which will be a valuable resource to those struggling to create change from below in the challenging times that lie ahead.

This collection

This tribute includes contributions from six of Dorothy's former students, along with appreciative reflections from two colleagues who teach at OISE. These essays blend personal observations with scholarly assessments; as a composite, they capture many of Dorothy's most enduring and endearing virtues.

Former SSS Treasurer Debbie Dergousoff (now a lecturer at Simon Fraser University), University of Toronto Professor Daniel Grace and University of Calgary Professor Liza McCoy highlight the warm, supportive relationships Dorothy maintained with her students. Such care takes time, and it is remarkable that Dorothy achieved such stellar academic productivity while nurturing so many young scholars. With Elizabeth Cameron, Liza has recently made a touching documentary, *Dorothy Smith: Discovering a Sociology for People*, which I highly recommend for its intimacy and wisdom (Cameron and McCoy 2022). York University Professor Eric Mykhalovskiy and Laurentian Professor Emeritus Gary Kinsman also reflect on the inspiration and support they received from Dorothy as graduate students, and offer assessments of her academic impact. For Eric, "Smith is Canada's preeminent sociologist", a judgment with which I entirely concur. For Gary, Dorothy's problematizing approach to inquiry is the key not only to producing knowledge from the social standpoints of oppressed peoples, but to grounded criticism of both mainstream positivism and such alternatives as post-modernism and structuralist political economy.

OISE-UT Professors George J. Sefa Dei and Abigail Bakan reflect on Dorothy as a colleague and scholar. George considers Dorothy to have been "an intellectual for all ages", who, taught him "in ways she might not even have been aware of", as he settled into the Sociology Department at OISE in the early 1990s. Abigail, who arrived at OISE after Dorothy had formally retired, offers a concise appraisal of Dorothy's key contributions to radical scholarship, and to transforming the academy, "as a modern-day organic intellectual".

Finally, York University Professor Emerita Himani Bannerji, a former student and close colleague, offers insights on Dorothy's biography and clarifies her enormous contributions to left scholarship. In an incisive extended essay she insists that IE's uptake as a popular research method, if disconnected from Dorothy's broader oeuvre, risks marginalizing the breakthroughs she made earlier in her career. As Himani points out, "institutional ethnography is a necessary development for a much larger project of inquiry into capital and the social forms it gives rise to" (Bannerji 2022, p. 9). Dorothy's unique perspective on the social organization of knowledge significantly advanced the Marxist tradition of ideology-critique, just as her feminist marxism, grounded in "an activist sociology and dedicated to social movements" insists that "it is not only possible, but imperative, for any social/political activist, to be a feminist and a marxist at once" (Bannerji, 2022, p. 10). Again, we are returned to the organic relationship Dorothy Smith developed and maintained throughout her career, between understanding the world and changing it. She has left us with important tools for that, which we need to take up.

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Tribute to Dorothy Smith

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It is with great sadness that I learned of the passing of my mentor and friend Dorothy Smith (6 July 1926 – 3 June 2022). Dorothy has been an inspiration to so many of us, and has done some of her most remarkable publishing in the last 2 decades. In May I attended the launch of her latest book, *Simply Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*. It is surely gratifying that so many of us were also able to attend the virtual tribute held in Dorothy's honour in April, during which the video about her life was released.

I first encountered Dorothy in a Critical Research Strategies course she was teaching in 2002 during my undergrad studies at UVic. While there I also had the privilege of taking her courses in Social Organization of Knowledge and Institutional Ethnography for my Masters degree. Dorothy was always so generous with her time and expertise, and I was delighted when she agreed to be co-supervisor for my PhD studies in 2009. It was truly a privilege to have her supervise my PhD work - her patience and insightful guidance saw me through to completion!

Dorothy continued to inspire me long after my defense through the many coffees we shared over the years (she could make a mean blueberry-apple pie)! I got to know the “Dorothy Smith” she referred to in her video - the one I shared recipes with when she needed some new ideas for her turn to cook the family supper on Wednesday nights. And the one who enjoyed playing Shakespeare characters in the Bard on the Beach group she belonged to.

I was looking forward to meeting Dorothy for coffee this summer, as we had done so many times during the four years prior to COVID, when I lived in Vancouver. I wanted to tell her about how it went using *Under New Public Management* (co-edited with Alison Griffith) as the text for my Social Control course at SFU this past summer. It was so gratifying to watch as the complex IE terminologies students were learning about began to confidently appear in their presentations and discussions over the course of the term. Dorothy would have been so pleased to hear this!

It was always a pleasure to listen to Dorothy talk about her early work in the women's movement. Her role in transforming the discipline of sociology into a “sociology for people” is perhaps her most important contribution. Over the past two decades the IE community has blossomed internationally. Her inspiration and generosity of knowledge, time and spirit will live on in the ongoing work she will continue to inspire.

I am going to dearly miss my dear mentor and friend!

Lessons in Doing Sociology Differently: Dorothy E. Smith's Legacy as an Educator and Mentor

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I first met Dorothy E. Smith in textual form when reading *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge* (1990) during my undergraduate degree. I was studying sociology and social justice studies and was hooked on her brain, her critical feminist sociology, her politics. Years later, I had the great privilege of being co-supervised by Dorothy for my doctorate in Sociology at UVic; this remains an intellectual and personal opportunity for which I will always be deeply grateful. Indeed, it changed the trajectory of professional life.

Dorothy was undeniably brilliant, inspirational, encouraging, and curious. She wanted to know how things were put together as they were. She liked the puzzle of the problematic, everyday world. Her work was deeply political. She was incredibly generous with her time but did not suffer fools. She read everything. Twice. She was a committed educator and mentor. And was she ever funny—dry and cutting and irreverent in the best possible way.

I remember dinners and lunches and sharing a glass of wine; conversations about my doctoral work and the threads to follow as I tried to focus my ethnography and “look up” to examine transnational relations of ruling (e.g., Grace 2013, 2015). “People are not the objects, Dan. Don’t forget that,” she reminded me more than once. She pushed me to think critically about broader social and discursive processes; to read widely and engage social theory but not reify concepts; to ground myself in materiality and never lose sight of the everyday concerns at the heart of my inquiry. Later we would talk about competing demands when navigating academic life as an early career professor. She gave me advice on teaching and practicing sociology in the neoliberal university. We talked about the minutiae of everyday life, our families, and matters of local and global politics. Nothing was off the table.

Dorothy was deeply invested in the intellectual work of both her own graduate students and others who were applying, adapting, and innovating Institutional Ethnography (Smith 1987, 2005). She was excited about the growing engagement of the alternative sociology she had developed. In 2018, she accepted my invitation to deliver an open lecture at the University of Toronto.² *I was thrilled*. People still talk to me about the event, and how engaging her talk and question period with the audience was. Afterwards, she met with my students over dinner to talk with them about their research and questions they had about the *doing* of Institutional Ethnography. Many students told me just how valuable this experience of meeting Dorothy and sharing a meal with her was. “She was so present. Really listened to me and asked questions that made me rethink what I had taken for granted” one student told me later. These students have gone on to complete their doctorates and publish critical Institutional Ethnographies inspired by

² The lecture can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOO9fLT9r-Q>

Dorothy's invitation to do sociology differently (e.g., Ion et al. 2020; Jacobson et al. 2022; MacKinnon et al. 2021; Odhiambo et al. 2022).

I continue to draw tremendous inspiration from both Dorothy's writing and the model she set for me of what it means to be a mentor and educator. She taught me what it looks like in action to be truly curious and supportive of trainees that I have the opportunity to work with and learn from. She is the voice in my head as I now teach courses on Institutional Ethnography and supervise diverse graduate students—from social workers and sociologists to anesthesiologists and public health professionals—using this critical social research strategy. I will miss her deeply and am grateful for the indelible impact she has made on my life.



Dorothy E. Smith delivering a lecture in 2018 at the University of Toronto, Dalla Lana School of Public Health (photo credit: Françoise Makanda).

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Remembering Dorothy

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Photo: Liza McCoy

This photograph of Dorothy Smith was made sometime in the late 1980s, either when I was writing my MA thesis or had started my PhD – I did both under Dorothy’s supervision, one of over 40 graduate students she supervised during a teaching and supervisory career that extended beyond her retirement in 2000. Her first PhD students defended in the early 1980s; she was still mentoring PhD students at the time of her death in 2022.

Having Dorothy as a teacher and then supervisor was the intellectual feast people assume it would be: the chance to learn from a celebrated, pioneering feminist scholar, the privilege of sustained contact with her extraordinary mind, the bracing challenge of trying to understand her more difficult works and the thrill when I realized I did, the benefit of her astute guidance as I developed my own research projects. But when I look at this picture, at her smiling at me behind my Olympus camera, I also remember her kindness and efficacy as a supervisor, which supported me throughout my studies and then served as a model when I began to supervise students myself.

Dorothy took her work with students seriously and never made us feel that we were a distraction from her own writing. She was exceptionally generous with her time, readily available

to meet students and former students for long talks over meals or coffee. Once, early in my program, I tentatively asked her to fill out an administrative document in her role as my supervisor, apologizing for imposing on her time. “It’s my job,” she said simply. She was insistent I should not view her work on my behalf as a favour she bestowed, but as something to which I had a right. And she was reliably prompt in reading and commenting on chapter drafts. She used to tell a story about how she submitted an entire thesis draft to her doctoral supervisor at Berkeley and never heard back from him; she concluded that he considered her work unsatisfactory, so she wrote a second, different thesis. What she has described as a terrible graduate school experience³ functioned for her as inspiration to do things differently.

Dorothy treated her students as colleagues in a shared project of exploration and discovery, and she was enthusiastic about our research -- not just when meeting with us individually, but publicly. She would mention her students’ work in conversation or use empirical details from our research as examples in lectures. And when doing so, often she would not identify us as students; she might just refer to “Liza McCoy’s work on photography” or “Susan Turner’s work on municipal land-use planning” in the same way she’d refer to a well-known published author. (I cannot overstate how affirming this was.) She was intrigued by what she learned from our work. In a documentary film⁴ made in the last year of her life, she explains, “I like people making discoveries. Not necessarily me. This is one of the things I think is exciting about institutional ethnography – that other people make discoveries. I like that. I like learning.” Of course, she often learned things from our research that we ourselves had not seen, did not yet know how to see, and in so doing, showed us where our analysis could go.

Dorothy made people – not just her students – feel that their knowledge mattered. This is a key principle of institutional ethnography, with its starting place in people’s experience and reliance on work knowledge, but for Dorothy it was more than a research technique. It was an orientation rooted in her feminism and in her everyday ways of engaging with the people she encountered: taxi drivers, researchers at a conference, the street people in her neighbourhood, students, her family. It’s not surprising that she developed a mode of sociological inquiry that, to do it well, calls for the same respectful curiosity, the same passion for learning from other people as authoritative knowers of their own experience.

³ Dorothy E. Smith, “A Berkeley Education,” in Kathryn P. Meadow-Orlans and Ruth A. Wallace eds. *Gender and the Academic Experience: Berkeley Women 1952-1972*, University of Nebraska Press, pp. 45-56.

⁴ *Dorothy Smith: Discovering a Sociology for People* (2022), by Elizabeth Cameron and Liza McCoy. <https://vimeo.com/701440448>

Dorothy Smith and institutional ethnography: From a sociology for women to a sociology for people

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In 2018, in an introduction to a talk that she gave at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, I referred to Dorothy Smith as a global rock star of sociology. The metaphor continues to seem apt to me: it captures the reach of her influence, the many awards she received over the course of her career, her irreverent relationship to “established sociologies,” and how she was admired by so many, albeit not through music but through her published writing. Dorothy Smith is Canada’s preeminent sociologist. Her work has indelibly contributed to global sociological discourse and has changed what it means to do sociology. Over the past few months, I, and I am sure many others, have talked with friends and colleagues about the transformative nature of our connections with Dorothy and her scholarship. Let me add one more story to the mix.

I met Dorothy Smith in the early 1990s. I had completed an M.A. in sociology some years earlier but could not see any practical or political value in the mainstream approaches to sociology that I had been exposed to and decided not to pursue further study. Instead, I took a job as the coordinator of AIDS ACTION NOW’s Treatment Information Exchange. There, I met George Smith, a member of the Exchange’s steering committee who was Dorothy’s close friend and colleague. George introduced me to Dorothy’s work when he invited me to join him on a community-based research project exploring access to social services for people living with HIV. The study, he told me, would be informed by an approach to sociology called institutional ethnography. I knew nothing about institutional ethnography or Dorothy Smith at the time, but nevertheless jumped at the chance to work on the project. It was a decision that changed my life.

Dorothy served as an expert advisor for the project. I remember first meeting her with George in the cafeteria at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. By that time, I had worked my way through her book *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (Smith, 1987) and had begun to appreciate the extraordinary vision of an alternative sociology that she was developing. Dorothy was a formidable presence during our meetings. She was a serious scholar, as they say, always offering insights that pushed our thinking, but equally keen to learn from us about the methodological issues we were encountering and what we were discovering in our research.

Over the course of our study, George and I had many conversations with Dorothy about the concept of “work” that she had been developing as a way to ground institutional ethnographic inquiry in people’s everyday, purposeful activities. I learned from Dorothy about how to approach our research interviews in ways that would bracket the forms of reasoning associated with social

service discourses and open possibilities for people living with HIV to speak, from the sites of their often-failing bodies, about trying to secure housing, home care, and income assistance.

Even at this early stage of the epidemic, community-based research was being instrumentalized as technique and process. Institutional ethnography offered an alternative. It resisted a simple mechanics of participation, whereby a project passed political muster when enough people living with HIV populated its advisory committee. It positioned the researcher-scholar as more than a conduit for the voices of research participants and held firm to particular ways of creating knowledge that set it apart from the presumed openness of some traditions of community-based action research. People living with HIV had also become tired of being poked and prodded by researchers eager to study their lives. Rather than studying access to social services as a question of people's individual coping skills, we focused on their experiences of the ruling relations (Mykhalovskiy and Smith, 1994; Smith, Mykhalovskiy, Weatherbee 2006).

We explored access as an actual social relation, produced through the concerted activities of people living with HIV, social service agencies, community workers, and health providers and the shaping of those activities by relations of class, gender, race, and sexual orientation.

Working with Dorothy and George re-established my faith in the possibilities of sociology and propelled me back to the discipline to complete a Ph.D. Since then, most of my research has focused on studies of health care with HIV as a fundamental throughline. Institutional ethnography and Smith's broader work on the social organization of knowledge have provided a vibrant and creative intellectual home for this research as well as a place from which to engage critically with important developments in scholarship that have transpired over the years. Dorothy's unique interpretations of Marx's materialism and the ethnomethodological concept of coordination helped me bypass forms of structural Marxism that were not to my liking and offered an inviting ontology of the social as something always to be discovered in how people's activities are connected across time and place. Her engagement with Foucault (Smith 1999) helped me and others, of my vintage, to study discourse as social organization and link insights from Foucauldian studies of problematization and governmentality with sociologies of how ruling is put together in people's practices. Finally, her steadfast emphasis on how texts act as material constituents of translocal relations (Smith 1990) offered an important alternative to the approach to text analysis championed by the literary turn in the social sciences.

Dorothy initially framed her work as a sociology for women. In recent years she began to speak and write about her work more generally as a sociology for people. There were certainly many factors that contributed to this rhetorical shift. One that is perhaps not well recognized is the extraordinary significance of Smith's work for an important body of Canadian scholarship on HIV. Influenced by Smith's writings and by George Smith's formulation of institutional ethnography as political activist ethnography (Smith, G. 1990), this body of research preserves the embodied local sites of experience of actual subjects, in this case people living with HIV, as the starting point for inquiry. While there are more contributions to this scholarship than I can name, some key examples include work on HIV criminalization (Mykhalovskiy 2011, Grace 2015, Hastings, 2022,

McClelland 2019, Sanders 2015,) prevention (Namaste 2012, Gaspar 2019), immigration (Bisaillon 2022), and clinical care (McCoy 2005, Mykhalovskiy 2008 Odihambo 2022, Ion 2022).

There is an important analogy between how Dorothy's project arose out of the disjuncture between, on the one hand, the sociology she was exposed to at the University of California, Berkeley and her own experience and, on the other hand, how institutional ethnographic work on HIV is fuelled by a discordance between how HIV is known by formal discourses of knowledge—principally biomedicine and epidemiology—and what is known about HIV from the embodied sites of those living with the disease and responding to it from locations of community and activist struggle. Canadian institutional ethnographies of HIV treat the ruling relations through which HIV is managed as a focus of investigation and produce knowledge for people living with HIV and HIV activists. Dorothy has a presence in this work as a scholar whose writing inspired, as a teacher, mentor, colleague, friend, and political ally.

When Dorothy initially began formulating her intellectual project, she certainly could not have foreseen how research on HIV would help to realize institutional ethnography as a sociology for people. Nor could she have foreseen the many other novel directions of inquiry, trajectories of engagement, and forms of application her work inspired. Dorothy always oriented to institutional ethnography as a collaboratively produced project, open to transformation. I am excited to see where subsequent generations of scholars will take it.

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Some learnings from Dorothy E. Smith 1926 – 2022

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Dorothy E. Smith, the feminist marxist sociological thinker and writer, my mentor, feminist critic, and teacher was at the centre of a large international network of scholarship and activism that I was part of. She died in June, 2022.

I learned so much from Dorothy it is hard to know where to start. I first encountered her work through hearing her speak at feminist community discussions in Toronto in the late 1970s. Here was someone who was doing scholarly academic work but was also directly involved in community and movement organizing. I was also inspired by her 1977 pamphlet, *Feminism and Marxism: A Place to Begin, A Way to Go* which provided an important way of bringing feminism and marxism together.

During these years I was a left queer activist and was a fairly isolated student learning about and fascinated by various left wing and feminist approaches. But I did suffer from a major split in my consciousness between more abstract intellectual thought and development and more concrete community/movement and activist organizing. It was only Dorothy's approach that allowed me to bridge this divide and overcome this disjuncture. Dorothy's approach saved my life in the 1980s after I became a student at OISE. It allowed me to bring my experiences and knowledges as an activist into producing knowledge *for* queer people and *for* social movement organizing.

Dorothy and active supporters and co-participants like gay activist George Smith were able to allow me to make major connections between organizing against the anti-queer right wing (through Gay Liberation Against the Right Everywhere) and especially against the police repression of the bath raids (through the Right to Privacy Committee). The two central features of Dorothy's work that directly affected me were the idea of sociology *for* oppressed people and the need for ethnographic investigation of ruling institutional relations organizing both oppression more generally and policing specifically. This was in opposition to "objectivity" and structuralism. In contrast, Dorothy offered a reflexive theory of knowledge. She demonstrated that the social was produced through the social practices of people. The focus was on social doing and accomplishment and how this was organized through institutional relations.

Her marxist feminist critique of sociological theory and methods led her to develop a sociology *for* (rather than about) women, which developed further as a sociology *for* people and came to be known as Institutional Ethnography. She drew not only on feminism, but also marxism and ethnomethodology which disrupts the "natural attitude" towards the social. She used a critical analysis of the social organization of institutional relations to develop a view of social relations of oppression and exploitation that could be used by social movements to transform the situations they found themselves in.

Dorothy's speaking, writing and exploration was diverse and was never simply covered by her focus on Institutional Ethnography. A brief survey of her writing assists here. Her first book, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, was published in 1987. I was then a student at OISE and Dorothy was my Ph.D. supervisor and this provided an exploratory and alternative way of doing sociology. This was followed by other publications like "Femininity as Discourse" in *Texts, Facts and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling*, in which gender is explored as a set of social practices - in a way that is not essentialist at all. Then came the *Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge* where it became clearer how social power was organized and was mobilized through people's concepts and ideological practices. *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory and Investigations (1999)*, was for me in many ways her most insightful and powerful pedagogical book. I used this as a fundamentally important book in teaching graduate students over many years. This book includes a marxist feminist critique of the major limitations of political economy, an exposition of the social construction of "political correctness" and a social relational analysis of language that allows for "telling the truth after post-modernism." In it she was most clear about theory as something other than an abstraction, but rather a concrete exploration of social organization including the social character of language. Following this, Dorothy's writing became more focused on further developing Institutional Ethnography including in collaborations with Alison Griffith and Susan Turner.

My learnings from Dorothy are centrally about producing knowledge for oppressed people from their social standpoints; the importance of analyzing social organization itself; learning how to turn the capacities of ethnography against ruling institutions in this society; and as already mentioned how to tell the "truth" after post-modernism, including the social, relational and active character of language. These learnings continued with the need to critique the limitations of political economy which limits and restrains feminists' and oppressed people's critique of marxism; the conceptual and textual practices of struggle; the dialogical character of social relations. Important instances of this are the need to use the expression "ruling relations" and not the reified concept of "the state"; the need to not reify/fetishize the social; and to focus instead on social doings and social accomplishments. This also entailed the need to see marxism as a critique of ideological practices; the need to critically take apart textually-mediated social relations and social organization and so much more. Finally, Dorothy showed us how writing was about discovery, learning and was fun in a rich social sense. She showed me how marxism could be transformed by feminism and ethnomethodology (a focus on people's doings and never taking the taken for granted for granted).

In my last encounters with Dorothy she was still having fun doing her work of speaking and writing in her 90s. I can only hope that more of us can experience these social relations of fun as we continue to develop our intellectual/activist lives.

Tribute to Dorothy Smith

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It is a great privilege to write this tribute in *Socialist Studies* in honour of a departed colleague and an intellectual giant, Dorothy Smith. Frankly, it is with much pride to not simply be writing about Dorothy, but more so, to have known her as a colleague. There is an African adage that says “it is not what one is called that is most important but what one responds to”. Dorothy was an intellectual for all ages. She responded to an academic call to make a difference in the lives of learning communities and passed with utmost distinction. She will always be in our living and loving memories as a scholar who left giant footprints on the academic /scholar terrain and beyond. To me she was not just “one of the world’s leading socialist feminists and critical sociologists” she was a scholar’s scholar, one to be most admired, respected and trusted for her principled stances. You don’t necessarily have to agree with her all the time. But you can trust that she is sincere in her words and speaks from deep heart knowledge. Her academic and political contributions will be the sort of legendary stories of acclaimed scholars to be told now and in futures to come.

I joined OISE, University of Toronto, in 1991 and Dorothy was the famed feminist scholar in the Department whom I had heard very much about. Sure, there were others in the Department whose names I knew, but Dorothy was frankly in my little circles the most talked about. I remember when preparing for my job interview in 1991, a student asked me to watch out as very likely a faculty would ask me a question about “the theory behind my work”. I was prepared for the question. And when Dorothy asked I was ready for her. It was an opportunity for me to marry my intellectual pursuits and political projects, while expressing a deeply held observation why it is always important for Black, Indigenous and racialized scholars to be firmly grounded in both “academic theory” and “political practice”. You never know when you are asked to “prove” or “defend” your theory. To me this is how we make theory relevant. A theory is not so much an expression of some philosophical principles. Beyond that, we need to focus on the ability of the theories we work with to offer a social and political corrective. As a senior scholar I was privileged to be associated with Dorothy at the University of Toronto in the 1990s. I can say Dorothy taught me in ways she might not even have been aware of. In discussions about student-faculty working relations, I recall her noting to me when I joined the department that there will be a lot of students wanting to work with me. But that I should also think of maintaining a “balance”, meaning striking that much needed balance between personal well-being, the power of our spiritual and inner strength and meeting the huge expectations associated with heavy faculty workload.

I remember vividly an unfortunately sad and yet recurring moment in academia for some scholars. Our department used to display photographs of faculty on our walls. It so happened that

we all got to the department one day to see some of our photographs defaced by clearly a deranged “racist-sexist”. I recall joking with Dorothy that I am in good company with her since we both had met this fate. While not hiding her displeasure and anger about what had happened she still had a gracious smile to share with me. She replied “George, I thought I will say that!”. I felt she was joking but whatever it was her reply made me stronger that maybe, perhaps I was doing “something right”. Later on, she would pull me aside, encourage and embolden me not to be afraid but to be more determined in what I am doing. Coming from her was wondering, wonderful and healing.

Dorothy’s generous teachings and ideas are living knowledge. We all know she loved teaching, inspiring and seeing her students develop a critical and inquisitive academic attitude. She was committed to making an impact with her scholarship and she did. Her academic writings attest to her contributions to the sociology of knowledge in general, including the sociology of critical theory, feminist sociology and most importantly her significant critiques of traditional sociology, which continue to resonate today. Dorothy was interested in centering the lived experiences of the people, and not just their behaviour, which speaks about her compassionate and caring character.

Dorothy’s clear influence on the study of everyday realities and the way people construct knowledge continues to inform sociology research. Her many contributions attest to her brilliant scholarship, from her feminist standpoint theory, to her introduction to institutional ethnography. Smith’s work and scholar-activism were undoubtedly superb.

We all borrowed from her ideas even as we moved in our different directions. My academic learning has benefitted from my early association with Dorothy Smith. The truth is that I began writing this tribute at a critical moment. A time when many of us are dismayed about the US Supreme Court decision to overturn abortion rights, gutting a woman’s right to choose. Sure, people may have different views on this emotional matter. But I always thought if one does not favor abortion then do not get one. But do not force your views on every pregnant person! The hypocrisy of all those claiming “right to life” when they are for controlling “birth” not for protecting “life”. We know well that reproductive justice is not just a women's issue, but a racial justice one. Abortion bans will always impact racialized people disproportionately. I think about Dorothy’s legacy as a staunch feminist and how she would be appalled and furious witnessing such injustice.

As noted in another tribute, I know where Dorothy is now in Heaven, she has a class of Angels that she teaches daily. I know what their class discussions will be about. But I don’t know the new stuff she must be saying now as her knowledge and teachings always grow. As a socialist feminist and critical sociologist, she continually questioned the traditions of the discipline, but also, as she pushed us to think seriously about “what is and why”, she never wanted us to forget the power of striving for “what ought to be and figuring out how and why”. For me this is so important as I continue to grapple with the fact that a lot has happened but not a lot has changed.

Dorothy Smith: With Gratitude

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Sometimes the impact of a life's work is greater than the sum of its parts. Such is the case with the contributions of Dorothy Smith, whose pathbreaking and innovative approach to knowledge can be understood as foundational to contemporary social science in multiple ways. There are three pivotal dimensions to Smith's original contributions that could be noted. First, Smith was a leader among contemporary social scientists to bring to light the importance of what we now refer to as experiential knowledge, focusing on the importance of "everyday life" as a site of contested power (Smith 1987). Second, Smith was an early challenger to the epistemic erasure of marginalized subjects, specifically women both in the home and in paid waged labour (Smith 1974). She forwarded socialist feminist theory and practice, moving women, as bell hooks notes, from the margin to the centre (Hooks 2000). Third, and relatedly, Smith claimed space in and helped to redefine contemporary scholarship in the academic discipline of sociology, and opened grounds for greater interdisciplinary conversations with profound implications for transformative scholar activism. From the perspective of my home discipline of political science, these contributions are, collectively, immeasurable. Moreover, Smith's work marks an important expansion of the breadth and depths of historical materialism.

Each of these points is briefly elaborated below. The discussion concludes with a note of gratitude to Dorothy Smith for gifting us with these important insights.

Experiential Knowledge

While there is now, in educational circles, a certain Gramscian "common sense" (Hoare and Nowell-Smith 2005) regarding the importance of experiential knowledge and experiential learning, this was not so in previous decades. Dorothy Smith was an early theorist in forwarding the centrality of experience as a core element of knowledge production, and expanded on this concept over time. She insisted on the contribution of ideas originating in social movements, focusing on the women's movement. Smith's work also stressed that individual experiences are grounded in specific historical circumstances, and forwarded a method of enquiry consistent with, and advancing, historical materialism.

Marginalized Subjects

Smith named and framed day to day experience, and women's experience in particular, from this methodological starting point. By identifying the everyday world as a pivotal

problematic, Smith established a point of entry into the social organization of knowledge. Rather than being the objects of patriarchy, class and racism, marginalized populations were moved epistemically in this approach to a position of subjectivity and agency.

This framing has proven to be inspirational to others, and has been taken up with considerable impact. Those who have learned from Smith include Himani Bannerji, who indicates that “there is every reason to find this method crucial for understanding ‘race’ and racism” (Bannerji 2014). Smith was insistent that such an approach was not intended to be comprehensive, but rather as a methodology that could be widely applied in different and varied contexts. She engaged in productive dialogue with critical race scholarship (Collins 1992), and noted that research and writing were continuously changing in relation to contexts of time and place (Smith and Griffith 2022).

Breaking Discipline

Significantly, Smith challenged mainstream sociological theory. While embracing a Marxist critique of ideology, and adopting the perspective that the ruling ideas were the domain of the ruling class, she bent every effort to redefine disciplinary borders (Smith 1974; 1990). This has serious implications for other disciplines, such as Political Science, Philosophy, Economics and History. Impactful research on the everyday, the experiential, and the marginalized, requires a close relationship to ideas. Dorothy Smith, in her example and in her writing, allowed us to understand that critique includes attention to institutions, including universities – with all their contradictions – which play a key role in knowledge production.

Conclusion: With Gratitude

Serving as an example of a modern-day organic intellectual (Hoare and Nowell-Smith 2005), Dorothy Smith’s life and legacy have cast a long shadow. Through her rich and productive life, Smith was committed to giving back, in a sense gifting sociology back to the “people” who were, in her view, the central subjects of the discipline. Her insistence on the dialogic character of ethnographic research (Smith and Griffith 2022) is not only an inspiration to future generations. It is a gift of knowledge for today.

I recall when I was a junior scholar in political science, attending the Congress of Social Sciences in the late 1980s. I had the opportunity to hear Dorothy Smith share a presentation at the Canadian Sociological Association. It was a riveting experience. She offered a calm confidence in her radically critical ideas. Without rhetoric, her challenge to sociology was persuasively supported by fluency with multiple literatures, including those with which she disagreed, and extensive field research. I remember musing at the time, that Political Science was no less implicated in the critique, but within the discipline there was little room to name it.

Fast forward to present times, where we see a concerted right-wing movement to dislodge science and fuel public doubt in evidence-based knowledge. Smith's commitment to working both within, as well as challenging, institutions of power is, arguably, more important than ever. Thank you, Dorothy Smith, for sharing this gift of knowledge, a gift that keeps on giving.

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