Abstract

As the field of Women in Development (WID) has grown within the international development institutions, so has the wariness of many of the professionals involved. Feminists in both the Third and First Worlds, from quite different viewpoints and with particular intentions, raise questions about the power of the massive development institution which distorts the goals and purposes of the women's movement. This paper examines some of the contradictions which arise in the work of development professionals. Its purpose is to contribute a certain reflexivity to discussions by First World feminists about the political and economic setting of their work. The paper proposes that more is needed in WID than just providing new knowledge about the situations of women marginalized in Third World countries. It argues that those feminists who are most directly and closely connected to the power centers of the capitalist world order have a responsibility to investigate and explicate the structures and routine procedures of the ruling apparatus. Feminists must have a solid grasp of the multiplicity of sites and forms of imperialist power if their work is to contribute to the liberation of women – women in the Third World <u>and</u> the First World.

About the Author

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In and Against Development: Feminists Confront Development on Its Own Ground

by

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Working Paper #219

April 1991

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INTRODUCTION

As is true for many feminists involved in Development,[1] the area of international studies appealed to my feminist self because it promised deep and widespread changes in the way the world is put together and works. When I first read the powerful feminist critique of the whole international field, it was electrifying. Now, of course, the arguments in this early work seem tame and we know it has serious deficiencies (Jaquette 1982). But in the mid-1970s, in the male-dominated sociology department at a big midwestern state university, I read Boserup's book, Woman's Role in Economic Development (1970), and the conference book edited by the Wellesley Editorial Committee, Women and International Development (1977), and I thought the feminists were just going to turn the world upsidedown--and then put it right. And I wanted to be part of that.

Then something rather curious happened in the middle of my graduate student work. Where I had been seen as eccentric or insignificant for insisting on asking, "But where are the women?" when I read Wallerstein (1974) on the world system, or Baran and Sweezey (1966) on the capitalist world order, or Frank (1967) on the dependency relation, suddenly I became a properly educable student. There was even a name for my career direction: Women in Development. What happened, of course, was that the U.S. Congress had passed the Percy Amendment, requiring that the principal Development agency in the U.S., the Agency for International Development (USAID), pay attention to women in its Development plans (Tinker 1983). That mandate filtered down to a number of universities including mine in the form of multi-million dollar research projects which needed Women in Development specialists to certify their relevance to women, though rarely did that relevance extend past the simple act of certification itself (Staudt 1982).

I've told a little of my life story because I believe it parallels the progression of the feminist critique, from the first angry excitement of criticizing any and every male-dominated institution in the world, to today, with its incorporation into one of the biggest, most male-dominated, most world-dominating institutions of them all--the "Development institution" (Mueller 1987).

The transformation of the Women in Development field from its early promise of a global women's movement into its present institutionalized form follows a complex process (Flora 1982). Indeed, Development seems to have this character of encompassing challenges to its own core premises, as certainly the feminist critique is, making it difficult to hold onto the more radical elements of our critique.

"Development" is a powerful word which draws the poorest countries into the capitalist world order (Barthes 1973; Escobar 1984-85; Foucault 1980). It is a kind of collector term suggesting that all manner of conditions and situations are lumped together here. As Papanek (1986) says about Women in Development specifically, it represents virtually anything which is written in the First World about women who live outside it. How are we to make sense of the absorption of so much feminist energy, often against strong feminist intentions?

Sometimes a metaphor can provide a scenery from which to begin to understand complex and difficult issues such as those Development raises. Gustavo Esteva (1987) offers a wonderfully evocative image. He calls Development an "amoeba word." As he describes Development, one can almost see it slither this way and that, meaning first this and then that, and then nothing very much at all. But I want an imagery that will do a different piece of work. I want to convey this same slippery outer layer to Development, but at the same time, show how it is embedded in the very powerful apparatus of world domination.

And so I have created "The Development Blob." The original Development Blob is the title creature in a 1950s movie. The creature was this monstrous thing which looked like a giant glob of cherry-red Jell-o (predating Star Wars special effects, it may well have been just that). This Blob just rolled about the landscape, literally embodying everything in its path--trees, buildings, people, "civilization as we know it," ultimately the whole world.

Development is like this same giant glob of Jell-o. This is what it does: having no boundaries, it just gets bigger and bigger as it ingests an array of institutions and countries and people so as to constitute the entire capitalist world order. Thus we watch it reshape the multitudinous and disparate features of social life to contain them within the parameters of market, profit, capital, and expansion (Bernstein and Corrigan 1983).

The Development Blob slurps up the media. Some Third World newspapers use Development as the frame for almost anything that is newsworthy--that promise of a new dam, visits of foreign bureaucrats and experts, and so on (A. Smith 1980). Through tax laws and government regulation of charitable organizations, the Development Blob appropriates so-called Non-Government Organizations (de Wolff 1986). Through the training of Third World bureaucrats at North American universities, it draws in the government bureaus to which these bureaucrats will return (Arnove 1980; Berman 1983; Gendzier 1985). Structural adjustment funding from the Development Blob helps the Third World debtor countries meet their loan repayment schedules. At the same time it tightens their ties to the global financial system, not to mention buoys up the Western financial system itself (Payer 1985). Through its legitimating of Development expertise, the Development Blob

incorporates university faculty and graduate students in the First and Third Worlds (Tendler 1975).

The policy and planning language spoken by the Development Blob conceals the rapaciousness of supra-national corporations, so that the establishment of a free-trade zone can be talked about as "Development" (Fuentes and Ehrenreich 1989; Jayawardena 1986). Through its claims to be an arena for social action it has taken in--and transformed into its own terms--a state-tied version of the potentially radical critique of Development. And through its moral character--who can argue against it? Development is mom and apple pie and black beans and rice--the Development Blob carries away with it the hopes and dreams of the most progressive and committed advocates of global change (Gran 1983; Robertson 1984).

So if Development has this character--that tremendous capacity to absorb everything in its path--what's wrong with putting a little Women in Development in its way? Couldn't it then be molded into the shape we choose?

The trouble is, Development isn't really the Blob. Though Development can be all-encompassing, it is not all that malleable. Indeed, Development has a rock hard center, and at this center are the bureaucratic organization, policy discourse, professional work practices, academic theories, and official imprimatur, all of which taken together constitute particular aspects of the ruling apparatus of the advanced capitalist order.

To this point I have used the word "Development" in the sort of loose, undefined way that is consistent with its Blob-like character. But here I want to be much more specific so as to comprehend the power of the Development institution even as it hides itself within The Blob. I capitalize the word "Development" and related phrases such as "Third World" and "Women in Development" so as to signal to the reader the specifically official Development organizations and their multiple connections into other official, principally state, institutions.[2] Development, that is, Development with a capital "D," is what Development agencies do.

I am concerned in this paper to break the hold which the official Development paradigm, in its Blob-like guise, has over everyday and intellectual notions of global change and improvement in the conditions of people's lives. I want to make clear the character of the Development institution which comprises a set of organizational and discursive practices for planning, managing, administering, controlling, and ruling, exercised by advanced capitalist states over what thereby comes to be named the Third World (Clegern 1979-80; Cohn 1986; Phillips 1977; Preston 1982).

Development, fundamentally anchored in a ruling apparatus, is at the same time highly expansionary. The Development institution

is concerned with nothing less than the creation of a civilization which we know as the capitalist global order (Said 1978), a civilization in which (1) the problems of (capitalist) Underdevelopment are located in one region of the world--the Third/South/Traditional/Undeveloped World--and (2) the solutions for (capitalist) Development are located in another region--the First/North/Modern/Developed World.

Development both promises progress in improving the lives of the marginalized masses and threatens this progress with advanced capitalist forces antithetical to these changes. It is on this contradictory terrain where Western feminists find themselves: searching out every resource which may be used to change the conditions for the poorest women's lives, but simultaneously caught in a power web which intends the perpetuation of present hierarchies of inequality.

THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CONTRADICTIONS IN DEVELOPMENT

The tensions at any forum on Women and International Development are hot and palpable. The atmosphere was taut at the Wellesley conference in 1977 (El Sadawi, Mernissi, and Vajarathon 1977) and at the United Nation's Year and Decade of Women meetings in Mexico City, Copenhagen (Jaquette 1981), and Nairobi, and also at the conferences of the Association for Women in Development in Washington, D.C. (Mueller 1987). These tensions reflect more than mere differences in the concerns of women who come from different countries. Many Third World women do not trust the Development institution. Particularly, women engaged in national resistance and liberation struggles reject the dominating Development paradigm which defines progress as the technological and economic advances made in the First World (Davies 1983, 1987). They know that the Development institution is Western dominated and all too often destructive for women and the poor in their home countries. At the same time, women in the First World are sometimes mystified when they are held accountable for the destructive power of the same major Development agencies from which they are themselves marginalized.

One of the most troubling contradictions arises as Western feminists struggle to transfer Development institution resources to women's needs. They seek to reform present agency information systems and bureaucratic procedures so that women can become legitimate recipients of Development aid. Even as feminists struggle to make space for Women in Development in organizations which are recalcitrant at best, the Development institution generates powerful contradictions in the grounding of women's lives and experiences in specific regions of the world.

Marjorie Mbilinyi is among those who approach the problems of institutionalization from positions outside the Development

metropole. In East Africa Mbilinyi and her academic and activist colleagues must deal with the tremendous growth of the Women in Development field emanating primarily from the United States. This body of knowledge and practice has been generated through the auspices of the official Development apparatus headquartered in advanced capitalist countries. Mbilinyi holds that Women in Development meets the purposes of those states and agencies in defining and managing Development, rather than the interests of women who live in Africa.

> The growth of Women's Studies in the mid-1970s (often identified with the beginning of Women's Decade) is related to growing concern in state and international agencies about women as a <u>problem</u> in production and reproduction. . . .

> As women have been identified as <u>the</u> problem or a problem for capitalist development and imperialist hegemony, funding has increased for WID-type research or the promotion of women's "income-earning" projects. These programmes are primarily funded by international and foreign national agencies, who have often had to insert a women's component into development "aid" packages by force to win state compliance (Mbilinyi 1984:290-291; emphasis in the original).

Katherine Namaddu (1989)[3] raises related issues regarding the relationship between North and South researchers studying conditions in the Third World. She argues that the worldview from the center of the global order locates the priorities of Development within the capitalist paradigm. From this center Africa and Africans are recast by non-Africans as research data, or instances of a theory, or cases of a project, all of which come out of and feed directly into centralized information systems. She quotes Djangman, saying, "Our own history, culture and practices, good or bad, are discovered and translated in the journals of the North and come back to us re-conceptualized, couched in languages and paradigms which make it all sound new and novel" (1989:28).

Far from breaking the hold of the North-South power relation, Namuddu argues, the social organization of global information systems reproduces and intensifies it. In even so-called collaborative projects, Northern researchers draw on resources and discourses which are not available to the professional and academic intelligentsia of the South. Again from Mbilinyi:

> Research proposals are designed outside of Africa, by non-Africans or by the small group of internationally-based African experts taking their places in international agencies and state institutions. As research becomes conceptualized, coordinated, analysed as well as funded from "outside"--be it outside the

continent or outside of the context of mass struggles--
researchers become instruments and technicians, and are
in danger of becoming academic mercenaries (Mbilinyi
1984:290-291).

The situation which Mbilinyi and Namuddu describe for Africa
has been noted by feminists in the Caribbean, Latin America,
Southeast Asia, and elsewhere, wherever feminists rise up within
their own societies (Antrobus 1987; Jayawardena 1986; Sen and Grown
1987; Tadesse 1984). They not only face the indifference or
hostility of countrymen who do not wish to see their own
advantageous positions disrupted but also must take into account
the international distribution of official, state-tied versions of
the First World women's movement, as well as the consistent burial
of other, especially progressive or Marxist aspects. For many
feminists in the Third World, the reach of First World feminism
resembles Western imperialism in yet another version. Feminism as
it is made available through established international
communications media, particularly the Development network, looks
white, professional, bourgeois, and fundamentally inappropriate for
the situations of women in other societies.

Caroline Ramazanoglu[4] offers a particularly strong statement
of the tensions which connect women in the North to women in the
South. She says that the criticisms made by Third World feminists:

...express the pain and outrage of women whose lives,
work, struggles, and suffering had been rendered
invisible not only by the categories of thought available
in male-dominated society, but also by the language and
concepts of new-wave feminism (Ramazanoglu 1989:125-136).

And this anger will only intensify as Western experts theorize the
Development model for the 1990s, Structural Adjustment (Antrobus
1988; Elabor-Idemudia 1990; Meena 1990).[5]

It is painful for feminists in the North to read these words,
but these are matters which we must face directly. When the issues
and political aims of the women's movement become knotted up with
the ruling apparatus, it is no longer on the side of women in
either the Third World or the First World. I want to be very
clear: this is not intended as a damning of feminism as being
imperialist in itself, but rather a recognition of the power of
ruling forces to appropriate women's topics, women's language, and
women's action for imperialist purposes which can never be women's
own. Cross-national and cross-regional connections to span the
great diversity among feminists must be continuously re-thought and
recast, with the certainty that new borders of rule will be raised
against each reformation in liberation movements.

How, then, do we proceed? Barbara Rogers, in her book, The
Domestication of Women: Discrimination in Developing Societies

(1979), offers a fresh beginning. Rogers proposes simply that First World feminists turn their attention to the investigation of the Development institution itself. She argues that it is in centralized headquarters, where the planning of programs and projects originates, that the denial of the needs and interests of the poorest of people, women and their children, is harbored. And, she says, the same professionals who have taught themselves to be experts in the workings of agencies, through their quest to redirect resources to women, are in the best position to make these processes visible to others, in various positions and with different expertise within the Development institution.[6]

When feminists first began to document the exclusion of women from the public sphere, what came to their immediate view were the biased attitudes of the mostly white and, by definition, elite men who were the supervisors, managers, administrators, and decision makers in key formal organizations. Early analyses, such as Rogers' own, are limited in that discrimination in this form is what was visible from outside of management and administration in the 1960s and 1970s. Now, through ongoing struggles, the grounding for feminist understanding has advanced beyond matters of sex bias to the routines and procedures of bureaucratic order. As feminists "infiltrate" the Development institution, a shift in attention becomes possible, and indeed necessary: away from describing new objects locked into the purposes of Development--Women in the Third World, Women in Peru, Women in . . . --to investigating and illuminating the procedures and structures by which Development rules itself. When we attend more carefully to the organizational and bureaucratic procedures which are the modus operandi in neo-domination of the Third World, Rogers' proposal is not so simple after all.

The standpoint of women opens a line of inquiry in feminist epistemology, for this is where an interested and situated investigation of the social world must begin: at the place where the knower herself sits. The knowers here are the professionals, academics, and bureaucrats who call themselves feminists and Women in Development practitioners, the we I address throughout this paper.

I use the term "standpoint of women" here rather differently than it is commonly used in feminist theory. The standpoint of women is ordinarily treated as a definitive location and predetermined concept, often identified as "mother" or as "female body," and held to generate experience and knowledge specific to women and understandable, if not common, to all women. There are problems in a meta-conceptual standpoint; for one, it re-buries the diversity among women and the contradictions in their interests which, ironically, feminist research itself has brought into view. It also reifies rule and lodges it in the public sphere under the power of another essentialist meta-category, men.

Instead I locate the standpoint of women in a relation to the ruling apparatus writ large, for it is here that women experience a certain exclusion or marginalization, a subordination to power. My aim throughout the rest of this paper is to open up a standpoint of women to view, not in order to define it or theorize it in an abstracted language, but to explore a particular location which is a practical grounding for many of the women professionals who work around Women in Development: in and against Development.

A number of contemporary social thinkers, Foucault (1980) importantly among them, observe that the post-modern ruling practices which accompany schooling, the media, and the consumer market move pervasively throughout distant pockets of the society, and, as I argue in this paper, increasingly throughout the global order. Development discourse spreads through micro-capillaries, wherever corporate capitalism reaches deeply into dependent economies. Development—the ideas, theories, organizations, practitioners—all create a global civilization which we recognize as the advanced capitalist world order.

Dorothy Smith[7] provides a critical perspective on the practices of ruling:

> When I speak here of governing or ruling I mean something more general than the notion of government as political organization. I refer rather to that total complex of activities, differentiated into many spheres, by which our kind of society is ruled, managed, and administered. It includes what the business world calls management, it includes the professions, it includes government and the activities of those who are selecting, training, and indoctrinating those who will be governors. The last includes those who provide and elaborate the procedures by which it is governed and develop methods for accounting for how it is done—namely, the business schools, the sociologists, the economists. These are the institutions through which we are ruled and through which we, and I emphasize this we, participate in ruling (D. Smith 1990a:14; emphasis in original).

"We participate in ruling. That bears saying again; it is that important. The standpoint of women must open up to critical analysis the forms and procedures of power as they operate right now, as we have learned to participate in them. We feminists must also make space for resistances and prepare ourselves to follow them into ever new territory. Following Rogers, I propose "simply" that we lay out what we have learned over the years since the Percy Amendment, as that knowledge unfolds from the standpoint of women.

IN AND AGAINST DEVELOPMENT

This long prologue brings me back to the title of this paper: In and Against Development. It serves to locate a position for a feminist critique to be based on the present situation of feminist professionals: from the inside, from the position of people who have become aware of these matters, who have been excited by some of the ideas and possibilities, who have attended workshops and conferences and special institutes, who have learned organizational skills, and who have continued to go about their work as feminists and professionals.

A Feminist Critique Inside the Development Institution.

It is certainly not the case that women have been truly integrated into Development, that the agencies really plan programs as if women mattered, that women professionals in any numbers have gotten jobs where they can be making a difference. But neither is this the 1970s when feminists first began to speak of these matters. Just a glance at any university's library shelves will show the phenomenal growth in knowledge and expertise over the past fifteen years, all of which speaks of change in the position of women professionals. The ground on which we work has been greatly changed by feminists' ongoing efforts to reform Development agencies. But here we are, albeit somewhat tenuously, still in Development.

What about Against Development? The title for this paper was inspired by a book titled In and Against the State (1980), written by an "author" with the curious name London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group. This collective author is a group of "street-level bureaucrats" (Lipsky 1980), that is, social services professionals at a level low enough to have direct contact with clients: teachers, welfare case workers, and so on. They worked in various state agencies and services in England. On the long train trip between home and job each week, they shared their experiences and views of working inside the state apparatus and at the same time being opposed to much of what their employer, the British state, represented. As a collective they set about to understand the contradictions they experienced every day on their jobs and to find ways to "bite the hand that feeds them," meanwhile, of necessity, continuing to feed their families. The book describes this middle ground, this contradictory grounding, this "in and against" position in which many feminist professionals, and not just those in the Development institution, find themselves (Walker 1986).

Feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith sets this new stance for the professional at a beginning position from which to explicate practices of contemporary ruling which are both powerfully centralized and inescapably pervasive.

Working as an Insider means that inquiry into "how things work," into the actualities of socially organized practices, makes what we are part of visible. In exploring social organization, we explore our own lives and practices. Thus critique is investigation and investigation is a reflexive critique, disclosing practices we know and use. As a method of inquiry it has powers to disclose just how our practices contribute to and are articulated with the relations that overpower our lives (D. Smith 1990a:204).

This is a fragile position. The institutional base is ever-shifting; it is always threatening to simultaneously exclude concerns for women and co-opt feminists' knowledge and activism from the critical edge. It is from this position, these places, "inside" that more sophisticated analyses may be made of the business-as-usual procedures, that is, procedures which build gender inequalities into the very structure of formal organizations, as they intersect with class, race, and world order systems of exploitation and oppression.

EXPERIENCES OF CONTRADICTIONS

A beginning point for unraveling the contradictions embedded in Development is through the talk of professionals about their work. This talk is a particularly contentious moment in the Development relation, where the many contradictions of professionalism, policy language, and bureaucratic organizations are centered in the work practices of professionals. When Women in Development professionals go into a project or research field setting, they encounter directly the realities of impoverishment in the lives of the people who cannot escape the setting. They do not, of course, experience what the women who live there do. Yet the professionals see and hear and touch and smell and move around in a world which at least occupies the same geographical space as that of the women they have come to learn about and support.

At the same time, as professionals they are located in the First World. They know the politics of government relations to Third World governments. They know from student and faculty positions how universities operate. They know how to access funding from government agencies in order to do their professional work.

Professional training provides a powerful conceptual apparatus for what professionals will perceive and how they will organize their perceptions in the field setting, the alive Third World. However, the actualities, infinitely more powerful, disrupt these standardized perceptions and demand attention.

Women in Development professionals have lived and worked in Third World countries. They have intimate and ordinary knowledge of the crowded buses and bad roads which connect rural areas to urban centers. When they drink the only water which is available, they know they risk the same diseases which afflict others. They have certainly visited the barrios of the masses and have been inside a few of the shacks which pass for shelters for the very poor. They have seen children begging on the streets during school hours. Hunger, disease, and poverty are immediately visible--everywhere.

One novice wrote about her first few days in a region of Brazil where she would be living and working. She described the ironies of the great complexities she saw and her limited ability to change them--as she was expected, and expected herself, to do.

> The first few days in Brazil were a delightful blur--full of new sights, sounds, and smells. Routine activities were a challenge to my meager Portuguese: ordering a meal, a sorting out cruzieros to pay for it, remembering to use bottled water only: wondering how does the phone work...

> A walk through town provided an incredible catalogue of deprivations, handicaps, injuries, and diseases. Blind, disfigured, or ill beggars were common, as were roaming packs of "street children." ...None of my assumptions about the value of personal effort, and a person's ability to control his [sic] own life seemed to apply here. . . .

> The other Americans [who were part of the same project] seemed to have adopted one of two different strategies for dealing with this. The first is to learn to tune it out, but it appalls me to think I could become so insensitive. The other approach is more difficult--to help where you can, but realize there is little to do. My research to improve dry season forage production is a good example. What good is it to improve livestock production when the food supply can never catch up with the population? It makes me wonder about the importance of resource management in an already desperate situation . . . .

> If so much of the world is like this, how could I live with myself if I did not try to understand it [this world] and to help? I felt stuck with this new, unpleasant knowledge. It's ironic that when the situation was the most depressing it was also the most compelling.... (Hardesty 1982:16-19).

Personal encounters with the actualities of Underdevelopment are powerful, moving experiences which are not readily or neatly transformed into the categories of an orderly and rational Development discourse.

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE POSITION OF PROFESSIONALS

The peculiar position occupied by Western professionals encompasses both the possibilities and the injustices of global Development. This basic contradiction is situated in the very grounding of professionals' work, in the social organization which makes it possible and the practices which carry out the work. Contradictions arise outside the immediate contact of professionals with the subjects/objects of their work, yet at the same time they structure a local, direct connection. Socially organized procedures established long before and far outside the arrival of professionals at the Development site bring the professionals and the Target Group women together for purposes of Development as these procedures have been pre-defined inside the Development apparatus.

The professionals' position is one of mediation between a particular group of women in the Third World (poor, marginalized women who are the targets of projects) and the Development agency sponsor in the First World. It is the work of professionals to select and coordinate information concerning the local setting with information systems originating in the far-off agency headquarters. The professionals are in charge of translating peoples' experiences, interests, significant concerns, and living situations into the policy language of state bureaucracies (Ferguson 1984). They have learned to speak this new language in order to form the connections between marginalized women who live in the Third World and the Development institution which is based in an advanced capitalist nation state.

At the same time, drawing from their own work experience, many professionals express concern about the disjuncture between the realities of women's everyday lives and the information requirements of Development agencies. They know first hand the disjunctures between unbelievable conditions of poverty endured by the masses of women around the world, and a few income generating projects; between the economic marginality of the masses of women, and a credit program in which perhaps five percent of the recipients are women; between the surplus labor force position of women in the international labor market, and literacy programs for a few women.

Work toward "integrating women into Development" has required feminist professionals to learn to write bureaucratic policy language (Mueller 1986). Only the lingua franka of officialdom may be written and read to document the voices of marginalized women to

the Development institution. Professionals have acquired the training and responsibility to carry out work practices which translate the actualities of people's lives into terminology which defines courses of action in bureaucratic organizations, to see the world through the conceptualizations which their professional expertise ordains, and to act in the world which is thereby legitimated to be the official, and therefore the only, arena for social action. This situation both dictates what it is possible for professionals to accomplish and identifies fresh limitations imposed on the work by its new grounding.

From an "inside" position we see the bureaucratic organizations, policy discourse, professional work practices, academic theories, official imprimatur, all of which taken together constitute particular aspects of the ruling apparatus of advanced capitalism. From our own work practices we recognize the organizational and discursive procedures for planning, managing, administering, controlling, and ruling which are exercised by advanced capitalist forces over what comes thereby to be named Underdevelopment.

One place where we can see these contradictions played out is in the relationship of professionals to the reports and books they write. Written texts are given an institutional truth which their authors may well reject on the basis of their own knowledge. In the course of research on how Development organizations structure professionals' work practices (Mueller 1987), I have read texts which had been clearly structured by the interests of the sponsoring Development agency, only to later hear the author say that she would no longer work for that agency because her text had been treated so as to transform her intentions to support the women it was about. I have read articles and books cast in the official Development frame but which were written by professionals who told me they are critical of the imperialist functions of Development. I have listened to professionals complain that the Women in Development component of a project they had worked on provided resources, training, and technology to men but not to women, and later read the standard Women in Development reports they wrote to fulfill funding agency information system requirements. I have listened to detailed accounts of how a text was constructed to look as it does around "policy recommendations" and what the author knew that did not fit in the policy frame.

This dual character of Development professional's position embodies a line of fault along which women professionals often find themselves (D. Smith 1987). The professional is in the position of being not only the "privileged knower" of the lives of women in the Target Group (of course these women are knowing subjects in their own lives, but they are never heard directly in international knowledge circuits) but also a member of a discursive regime which regulates those whom she "knows" and "helps." Her work of knowing is simultaneously the work of the Development institution to

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regulate Target Group populations (Kerven 1984). And her own position in a class society as "one who knows" is dependent on her enacting both sides of the contradiction. The professional/knower becomes

> a "Surveillant Other" not only watching but also producing a knowledge that feeds into the discursive practices regulating families. The "social scientist" [or professional or bureaucrat] is the producer of "truth" which claims to "know" those whom it describes. Together, observer and observed constitute a couplet in the play of power and desire (Walkerdine 1986:190).

The dilemma in this situation can be seen in the story of a Development professional who carried out an evaluation of an adult education program in a Third World country. Once in the field, she had found that the program she was to evaluate was actually based on a political consciousness in opposition to the government. Returning to her university, she became concerned that she possessed information which would enhance her career but might well endanger the people from whom she had learned it. Her thesis would be sent to the funding agency and from there to the "host country," where it might be used to threaten the work and even the lives of the people who had made themselves available to her study. Her responsibility as she saw it was to the people whose political commitments she had come to respect. She decided she could not write about what was actually going on. Instead she chose to write a standardized evaluation of the adult education program. And this thesis now sits on the library shelf at her university and is an item in the agency's data bank. Her thesis has become part of what is known about adult education in that country; it is ready to be picked up in subsequent bibliographies for future adult education projects, each project backing off one step farther from the actualities of people's lives in this particular setting.

This example brings to attention, on the one hand, the irreparable disjuncture between interests represented in the centralized information systems of ruling institutions and, on the other hand, the interests of those who are their objects. It also points to the many ordinary ways, through decisions professionals make as they carry out their regular work practices, as well as methods of social science and bureaucratic reporting, that Women in Development discourse comes to be locked into the capitalist world order.

CONCLUSION

As I have been thinking and writing this paper, I have worked in the methodology of a feminist sociology and have found this way of working invaluable to investigating the Development power that orders, shapes, directs, makes possible, sometimes makes all but

unlivable, women's lives. I have sought to illuminate the territory of the standpoint of women, laying out the complexities and inner contradictions of women's experiences inside Development. Rather than predefining a closed standpoint, I have opened it up to view, and aimed it at viewers who, like me, are situated in it and know it from the inside. It is a place to be to begin.

Still, the standpoint of women cannot be open to any content at all, a relativist stance that places no value on any particular experience or knowledge. What I am after here is a sure and solid stance from which aspects of the ruling apparatus can be made visible. "A sociology for women must be able to disclose for women how our own situations are organized and determined by social processes that extend outside the scope of the everyday world and are not discoverable within it" (D. Smith 1990a:152). It must provide tools for the multiciplicity of resistances and oppositions which women deploy, alongside their men, in liberation movements.

Elsewhere I have told a story about a town square in Peru set next to the train station where tourists get off to buy beautiful sweaters knitted and sold by the cholas at their stalls all around the square (Mueller forthcoming). I use the story to shift sociological attention from the women in the square, from counting them and accounting for them--to whom? in whose interests? surely the cholas already are experts in their own lives--to the train, built originally to connect the Andean alpaca wool market to England and its industrializing machine. Today the square is a local point on a global transportation and communications web in which Peru is positioned at the periphery, while power and resources are centered in the North.

I visualize along the tracks of this train-airline-computer-fax-publishing house-public administration discourse-university department information system: there are women at many different moments all along the line. There are the cholas, of course, and the members of a small social service agency serving the cholas, then ex-patriots who easily use the ruling language (English, of course) to write project proposals for funding from a non-governmental-organization in Toronto, those highly educated professionals who choose to work in an agency which is low-paying but highly rewarding in its direct contact with women's groups in Peru. There are women in women's bureaus in government agencies who direct government funding to private organizations. There are women in the large public universities who teach courses about Third World countries based on their research funded by government or foundation sources, their students, the graduates who take jobs in important international agencies, the woman who is typing these lines on her word processor, the woman who is reading them.

Development is an extended social relation which brings together many women, organizes their vastly different work practices, and coordinates socially, geographically, and temporally

dispersed work places. This is the material basis for commonality; it is what ties all these women together. The standpoint of women opens up on the ruling apparatus, on each of the various moments along the relation. The standpoint of women is poised to grapple with the pervasive powers of ruling.

As feminists we must continue to push against the boundaries of the possible as it exists at any given moment. This will inevitably involve us in the workings of the official Development apparatus.

At the same time we must continuously focus on what feminism promises: nothing less than a major reorganization of the world order, one which will eliminate the hierarchical structures of gender and class as well as the world order that through its operations, places women at the bottom of every ladder: in short, the promise is the liberation of women.

Notes

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Summer Institute in Gender and Development sponsored by St. Mary's University and Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada, June 1988. I am indebted to Jennifer Newton, one of the organizers of the Institute, for her support of my work, and to the participants for their exciting questions and challenges to see beyond national and discursive boundaries.

1. See text below for the rationale for capitalizing words in the Development lexicon.

2. See Gendzier (1985) for a different but related rationale for capitalizing "Development."

3. While Namuddu does not express a feminist stance or limit her observations to women, her argument concerning the contradictions between North and South professionals applies as well to the more specific case of feminists.

4. For clarity, Ramazanaglu, who is English, describes herself thus: "a white, western, middle-class sociologist, now into middle age, married late to a foreigner and with two young sons" (1989:vii).

5. The work of theorizing Structural Adjustment ex post facto was the focus of a conference at the University of Florida titled Structural Adjustment and Its Impact upon African Women Farmers (January 25-27, 1990). Representatives of the World Bank, which helped to fund the conference, used the official language of the international Development institution to set the frame for the meetings on the first day. Thereafter the participants, particularly those from Africa, had little choice but to respond to the dominating frame. This blunted but did not stop deep-cutting criticisms of the role of the World Bank in this new version of impoverishing the masses in the interests of the global ruling class.

6. There is now some work which begins to untangle the organizational knot Women in Development is caught in, including: Staudt, Kathleen. 1985. <u>Women, Foreign Assistance, and Advocacy Administration</u>. New York: Praeger. Staudt, Kathleen (ed.). 1990. <u>Women, International Development, Politics: The Bureaucratic Mire</u>. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Tinker, Irene (ed.). 1990. <u>Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development</u>. New York: Oxford University Press.

7. Dorothy Smith at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, is developing a brilliant feminist sociology which is a significant force in new

feminist scholarship. Three recently published books <u>The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge</u> (1990a), <u>Texts, Facts, and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling</u> (1990b), and <u>The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology</u> (1987), establish a sophisticated and powerful feminist epistemology and methodology. A number of other sociologists have worked within this frame and contributed to it, among them Marie Campbell (1988), Alison Griffith (1986), Roxana Ng (1986), George Smith (1988), and Gillian Walker (1986).

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