

Abstract

Dorothy Day (1897–1980) was a progressive and revolutionary activist who dedicated her life to combating issues of war, poverty, homelessness, and oppressive capitalist policies, yet she continuously stood by essentialist notions of gender and was critical of the gender politics of Emma Goldman, and many second-wave feminist such as Betty Friedan. Therefore, this analysis provides an interpretation of the relationalities, contradictions, embodiments, and silences in Day's autobiography *The Long Loneliness* (1952) in order to gain insight into the way in which she 'frames' her 'self' as a woman amongst Cold War discourse. This analysis seeks to critically examine Dorothy's autobiography through a feminist lens which understands the act of writing an autobiography as a performative act (Smith, 1998), therefore enabling an analysis that focuses on concepts of subjectivity and agency, thus challenging essentialist notions of identity. This interpretation reveals the ways in which Day positions her subjective 'self' through discourse and how the autobiographical 'self' depicts moments of agency, resistance, and potentialities for change as she both conforms to and resists hegemonic discourse regarding femininity in order to speak with and against the public discourse surrounding her as 'Moscow Mary', thus authorizing her work and her role in the Catholic Worker.