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Autobiography, Subjectivity, and Agency:

Dorothy Day's *The Long Loneliness*

Master thesis

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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.

Keywords

feminism, gender, autobiography, subjectivity, McCarthyism, Dorothy Day, agency, experience, identity, resistance

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Introduction

"I am quite ready to concede now that men are the single-minded, the pure of heart, in these movements. Women by their very nature are more materialistic, thinking of the home, the children, and of all things needful to them, especially love."
Dorothy Day, The Long Loneliness (Day, Loneliness, 68)

Dorothy Day wrote this statement in her autobiographical book *The Long Loneliness* (1952), where she chronicles her history of involvement with socialist movements, work as a journalist, her conversion to Catholicism, to her eventual founding of the Catholic Worker movement with Peter Maurin. In this statement, she is criticizing the sexual promiscuity of the anarchist political activist and writer, Emma Goldman, as being a distraction to the 'true' revolution. Day continues her statement expressing how "men who are revolutionaries . . . do not dally on the side as women do, complicating the issue by an emphasis on the personal" (Day, *Loneliness*, 68). Though Day was a progressive and revolutionary activist who dedicated her life to combat issues of war, poverty, homelessness, and oppressive capitalist policies, the discourse used in her autobiography *The Long Loneliness* presents seemingly essentialist ideas of gender and presents the belief that issues related to gender, feminism, and sexism were distinct from issues that she thought were the most important, such as war and poverty. However, as Day's autobiographical presentation of her 'self' and her views of gender are historically contingent and socially situated, this research will seek to analyze Day's discourse regarding gender in *The Long Loneliness* by asking the questions; How does Day position her identity/subjectivity through discourse in her autobiography *The Long Loneliness*? Does, and if so, how does, the autobiographical subject presented by Dorothy Day, subjected through the hegemonic discourse of her time, depict moments of 'agency', resistance, and potentialities for change? As autobiographies have the potential to be a tool in which a subject can re/invent themselves, an analysis of autobiographical discourse is useful because it can reveal the way in which identities are fluid, contextual, constructed, and subjected through discourse. Exploring these issues through Day's autobiography, *The Long Loneliness* in particular, is analytically significant because Day presents the ways in which she navigated, confronted, and challenged various institutions traditionally deemed

as ‘masculine’, such as the journalism industry, the public platform of Socialist politics, and Catholicism. Yet she continuously asserts traditional views of gender, which seem contradictory to her own actions. Therefore, this research aims to read Day’s autobiography as a form of discourse in which Day works to assert her identity as a woman and as a Catholic, while also revealing the fluctuating concept of the ‘female subject’ as Day reveals moments of contradictions, movement, and change as various gaps in her discourse challenge and resist the dominant image she seeks to present of herself. *The Long Loneliness* presents the discourse of a woman who occupied public arenas, participated in activities typically forbidden or unprecedented for women at the turn-of-the century in the United States, and took on roles as a progressive leader thus participating and creating change and transformation in both the political arena within the United States and within hegemonic expressions of gender.

I first learnt of Dorothy Day whilst living in Catholic Worker communities in Duluth, Minnesota and Chicago, Illinois. As she was one of the two founding members of the Catholic Worker, various books she authored and stories about her were continuously passed around the community. Upon reading Day’s autobiography *The Long Loneliness*, I was immediately inspired by her ability to fuse her religious beliefs and political philosophies through the creation of a radical and progressive movement. As I had been raised in an ultra-conservative and performative religious environment, I had never understood that there could be connections between politically progressive ideals, direct action, and religion. I abandoned all religious beliefs I had grown up at an early age due to the hypocrisy of the religious environment I grew up in in exchange for politically progressive ideals. Yet upon discovering the Catholic Worker and Dorothy Day, I felt a deep connection to Day’s words and philosophies because she was a living example of all that I had thought my religious upbringing was missing: direct action, egalitarianism, care, and a focus on justice. Though I remain unreligious, the impact and the importance of Dorothy Days’ life and actions in my own life are invaluable because working and living in solidarity at the Catholic Worker gave me the opportunity to see how Day’s life and actions have played a significant role in resisting oppressive capitalist policies in the United States and in providing an alternative forms of community and social support for those subjected to a vulnerable status.

However, as I began to engage in feminist and queer theories, my understanding and inquiries into the life of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker became more critical as I questioned Day's presentation of her gendered self and her views regarding gender. I began to question the manner in which she expressed essentialist views, the way she placed many of her political and philosophical accomplishments in the hand of her male counterpart, Peter Maurin, as well as the way she managed organizational elements with both *The Catholic Worker* newspaper and the Catholic Worker houses of hospitality, which typically enabled men's role in social change over women's role. As Day's writings are continuously circulated throughout the Catholic Worker movement around the world, it is important to understand what Day's discourse regarding identity conveys because as her texts and words are circulated, so too are her discourses and ideologies. My goal in analyzing Day's discursive expression of her autobiographical subjectivity using feminist theories is to gain insight, firstly, into historically contingent gendered discourse and subjectivity, and secondly into the way in which change happens and agency is revealed. As Day participated in change on various levels by challenging oppressive capitalist policies in the United States, opposing war and maintaining a pacifist philosophy, creating communities for individuals subjected by capitalist and discriminatory policies, I hope to understand how she presents her gendered identity, what discourse she is speaking 'to' and 'against' as she presents her gendered 'self', and thus gain insight into where points of agency and change are revealed in the creation of an autobiographical subject.

Chapter 1: Situating Dorothy Day

1.1 Historical Context

As Dorothy Day was born in 1897, she grew up during the turn of the century as the Gilded Age (circa 1870-1900) was coming to an end, and the so-called Progressive Era (circa 1890-1920) was beginning (McDonough). As a result of the Gilded Age, a time of rapid expansion and technological development, society faced immense changes due to "industrialization, the growing concentration of economic power, urbanization, and a great wave of immigration" (McDonough). Schneider remarks how the "results of free-wheeling capitalism of the robber barons of the 19th century" lent to massive inequality as 1% of the population owned more of the wealth than the other 99%, whilst a majority of the 99% belonged to the working class (Schneider, 6). Therefore, the Progressive Era was a time of political and social reform which worked toward securing labour rights and workplace safety and toward expanding government accountability and representation (McDonough). Muckracking, a form of journalism which exposed social issues such as "the harshness of child labor, the ruthlessness and conspiratorial tactics of big business, the brutalities inflicted on striking workers and their families…" grew out of the Progressive Era due to the journalistic work of those such as Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, and Upton Sinclair (Schneider, 6).

The Progressive Era was also a time in which the 'New Woman' emerged as a representative of the 'American woman' of the new century. The 'New Woman' came about as expansion and industrialization lent to the need for more labour, and progressive reform lent to more possibilities for women in society (Matthews, 4) The New Woman was defined as being "young, well-educated, probably a college graduate, independent of spirit, highly competent, and physically strong and fearless" (Matthews, 12). Schneider expresses how the New Woman was "a type unique to the United States" (Schneider, 16), though this claim can be challenged as the New Woman had also emerged in post-WWI Europe (Sohn, 94). The New Woman insisted on 'personal freedom' which consisted of earning one's own living, participating in the public and political sphere, engaging in comradery with men, expressing one's opinion, and at times drinking and smoking in public, though this was still a rarity (Schneider, 16). The New Woman was, by some, praised for being

independent, fit, and strong-minded, and was criticised, by others, as being selfish, egotistical, and 'too' assertive" (Schneider, 17).

Though outside of sexist judgements against New Women, legitimate criticism of the New Woman exposed how "the role of the full-fledged New Woman was reserved for a relatively few women privileged by birth, education, luck, or their own endeavors…" (Schneider, 18). The reform and progress of the Progressive Era also revealed that advances in social and political access did not result in "equality or security of participation…" (Matthews, 36). For example, though women during the Progressive Era had more access to jobs, their prospects were generally limited to low-level positions without access to promotions, particularly due to the assumption "that women sought gainful employment only for the short term, until they married (Schneider, 15). Schneider importantly points out how this assumption does not take into consideration the challenges which single women, working class women, women who lost their partner through death or desertion, and women of colour faced as the conditions these women experienced necessitated economic means beyond the 'male breadwinner' (Schneider, 15).

Though as more women gained access to education, they were often instilled with a sense of social responsibility as "college professors, particularly at women's colleges, provide[d] impressive role models of working women…[and] told their students that as educated women the students had an obligation to contribute to society through their work" (Schneider, 53). Therefore, according to Schneider, women throughout the United States found roles outside of the home, in club work, volunteer services, and reform movements (Schneider, 19). Progressive reform movements often included participation in settlements, which were homes established in economically segregated and marginalized neighborhoods in which young college educated men and women, though primarily women, "lived and learned and laboured" in service of those subjected to a low economic status (Schneider, 107). College graduates had the opportunity to engage directly with social issues which they had studied in university, in which they could teach English or provide other educational services, support individuals with bureaucratic matters, and act as an "ombudsman for the local people in dealing with city authorities" (Matthews, 53). Settlement homes, according to Schneider, were often places in which hope and progress were supported, though importantly, much of the hope and progress was due to the fact that settlement homes placed their work on "the most likely candidates for upward

mobility, the working poor" as opposed to those facing abject poverty and critical unemployment (Schneider, 107). This brief examination of the Progressive Era, particularly in relation to the New Woman, provides the context in which Day was embedded in during her formative years regarding the gendered discourse of this era, and the context of the settlement homes provides insight into Day's formation of the Catholic Worker houses for hospitality – in which Day sough to provide support not only for those with 'potential for upward mobility', but also for those subjected to abject poverty, unemployment, and subjugation.

1.2 Dorothy Day Biography

Day was born in Brooklyn, New York on November 8th, 1897 into a white middle class Republican Anglo-Saxon Protestant family, and as her father believed that women and children belonged in the home, she was brought up with traditional ideas about gender such as the view that his profession, journalism, was a 'male' profession (Roberts, 18). Though Day was raised in a position of relative privilege as her father was a white-collar journalist, her family did experience periods of economic instability as Day's father occasionally experienced unemployment which led their family to move to and from New York, California, and Illinois (Klejment, 67). Throughout these moves, Day's family relocated back and forth between neighborhoods considered 'good' and neighborhoods considered 'bad', depending on her father's fluctuating employment (Klejment, 67). Klejment argues how these moves "increased Dorothy's awareness of the fragility of the economy and of family prosperity" (Klejment, 67). One formidable experience of instability in Day's life was when a devastating earthquake hit San Francisco whilst they were living there in 1906 (Klejment, 67). As a result of this loss, the family moved into a flat in Chicago's South Side, which is an area that has experienced historical economic segregation and subjection (Klejment, 67). Though Day herself had never experienced extreme economic oppression, she later reflected how *The Jungle*, a novel by Upton Sinclair which portrays industrialized labour and housing exploitation faced by immigrants in South Side Chicago in the meat industry in the 1900's, was a considerable influence throughout her life as "the very fact that *The Jungle* was about Chicago where I lived,

whose streets I walked, made me feel that from then on my life was to be linked to theirs, their interests were to be mine; I had received a call, a vocation, a direction to my life" (Day, *Loneliness* 43). She declares her experience in Chicago as providing her with a path which would involve caring for those subjected to an impoverished status and those experiencing exploitation as a result of capitalist policies.

Day was enabled to attend university in Chicago due to a Heart Scholarship which she was awarded as a result of her writing skills, and in university she shifted away from her Republican upbringing as she became engrossed by writings which exposed issues related to social injustice and extreme poverty, such as work by Vera Figner and Peter Kropotkin (Roberts, 19). Whilst in university, she began to join Socialist groups, withdrew from any religious beliefs, and she "was in love now with the masses" (Day, *Loneliness* 51). Through her education, supplemental readings, and encounters throughout her early life, Day became engaged in progressive principles (Klejment, 70). She left university early both to be with her family in New York, and because she expressed the belief that she was unable to participate in society in the way she desired, which was to "live fully and to write authentically from experience whenever possible" whilst in university (Klejment, 70). Therefore, in New York, Day sought to "record, to advocate, and to participate in social change as an 'advocacy journalist'" (Klejment, 70).

Against her father's desires, and even with his efforts to prevent her from being hired, she obtained a job at a socialist newspaper, *The Call*, and edited for an anarchist journal, *Mother Earth* (Day, *Loneliness* 63). Her goals at this point in her life were to "go on picket lines, to go to jail, to write, to influence others and so make my mark on the world" (Day, *Loneliness* 69). She admired how Marxists "were the ones who were eager to sacrifice themselves here and now", where most Christians she encountered were lukewarm, only caring for going to church on Sunday (Day, *Loneliness* 72). During this time, she had the opportunity to interview Leon Trotsky, and was surrounded by the rousings of those such as Alexander Berkman, Emma Goldman, and Bill Haywood and Arturo Giovannitti of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) (Day, *Loneliness* 60). Though she claims to have never solidified any political identification, she affiliated herself most with left wing socialists and anarchists, the so-called "Lyrical Left," and therefore participated in direct action (Klejment, 72). For example, in 1917 Day demonstrated and was arrested with suffragists, and as the U.S. entered WWI she travelled

to Washington to protest the draft (Hinson-Hasty, "Timeline"). As many nurses had gone abroad to serve and support the armed forces in WWI, Day enrolled into nurses training in New York in 1918 in order to nurse the sick amidst the flu pandemic (Day, *Loneliness* 99). During this time, she had a tumultuous relationship with Lionel Moise which she fictionalized in her book *The Eleventh Virgin* (1924). Day became pregnant by Moise, who then forced her to have an abortion, which was an event she rarely wrote about (Bowers). As WWII came to an end and as hospitals were less burdened by the pandemic, Day married Berkeley Tobey and moved to Europe for 8 months (Hinson-Hasty, "Timeline"). This marriage ended as soon as she arrived back to the United States, and Day rarely wrote or spoke about her time in Europe nor her marriage with Tobey.

After her travels and the war's end, Day continued to focus "less on activism and more on finding domestic bliss" as she bought a house on Staten Island after selling a novel she wrote to be made into a movie, and eventually built a domestic life and had a baby with her partner Forster Batterham (Klejment, 72). This was a significant experience for her due to her previous experience of being coerced to have an abortion in order to save her relationship with Moise (Zwick, 8). She sought spirituality as a means for support for her new born child, and decided to baptize her child and convert to Catholicism, which led to her eventual separation with Batterham as he was staunchly atheist (Hinson-Hasty, "Timeline"). Day's vision of social change, however, was reignited as she sought a way to coalesce her newfound Catholicism and her desire for social progress and community. Therefore, she found work at the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), "which advocated opposition to war and promoted economic justice", and here Day began to participate in religious efforts that focused not on charity, but on socially engaged and politically progressive actions (Klejment, 72).

As Day was in a constant "search for meaning, and an authentic way of life, for synthesis of ideas, spirituality, and action, for family, and for community," this transition gave her the opportunity to find a union of religion and social justice, which eventually became the Catholic Worker with the help of Peter Maurin (Zwick, 6). Maurin was a French Catholic who had the opportunity to participate in movements which incorporated both religion and radical politics such as the Christian Brothers, a community which "stressed simplicity of life, piety, and service to the poor" from a young age (Forest). Eventually he moved to the Americas where he homesteaded and participated in other

manual labor such as bricklaying and digging ditches, which led him to believe that the best way to reach people in poverty was to *be* a person living in poverty (Forest). Maurin and Day met in New York in 1932, and Maurin became her teacher, thus providing her with an education in Catholicism, community, and his philosophies regarding social change. Eventually they began "a newspaper to publicize Catholic social teaching and promote steps to bring about the peaceful transformation of society" called *The Catholic Worker,* which would later become a larger movement in the United States and parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia (Forest). *The Catholic Worker*, founded amidst the Great Depression, provided a revolutionary alternative to the hegemonic capitalist model as it focuses on creating intentional communities committed to communitarianism, egalitarianism, and activism, and hospitality. Day and Maurin never regarded their work as charity, but instead emphasised ideas of justice by understanding and focusing on the systemic issues that caused war, poverty, and other injustices (Nepstad, 99). The houses of hospitality sought to promote pacifism and anti-war visions, and to support those subjected to an impoverished status by providing shelter, food, and community (Weiler, 184).

Upon founding *The Catholic Worker* newspaper and houses of hospitality, Day's life reveals a significant dedication to direct action, service toward those subjected to poverty, and a mission to educate and inform the public of her visions of care, service, and justice. With the initiation of *The Catholic Worker* newspaper, which sold and continues to be sold either for free or a penny a copy, Day utilized her journalistic skills and wrote and published stories exposing issues related to poverty, capitalism, and the labor movement (Allaire and Broughton). As the Catholic Worker grew with the inclusion of more guests and volunteers, Day, when not directly participating in the houses of hospitality and the newspaper, was travelling, lecturing, and participating in direct actions (Allaire and Broughton). Day's life and actions also served as an example of pacifism as "she proposed that Catholics use only spiritual weapons as their shield against enemies", therefore those who refused to register for the draft and conscientious objectors found safety in the Catholic Worker houses of hospitality (Klejment, 75). Though she faced much criticism for her pacifist stance, particularly as she took a pacifist stand against the Spanish Civil War, she maintained her pacifist position as the United States entered WWII and throughout her life (Allaire and Broughton). As a result of war drafts and higher

employment rates for the purpose of war during WWII, various Catholic Worker houses closed, which led Day to spend time in solitary retreat (Allaire and Broughton).

Then in 1943, Maurin's health began to deteriorate which resulted in him growing silent as he recognized the confused state of his mental capacities (Allaire and Broughton). Therefore, Day sought spiritual and philosophical nourishment through the creation of a retreat house in Pennsylvania which "challenged participants to examine their conscience about the work they did, their material goods, and their attachments" (Allaire and Broughton). Throughout Day's life, she utilized the retreats to speak for, with, and against social concerns such as the "atomic age, civil rights, and later, to pacifism again when Vietnam dominated national life", and thus supported her work toward anti-war and anti-capitalism (Allaire and Broughton). As WWII came to an end, Day sought to revitalize the movement, and continued her work in writing and educating others on critiques of industrial capitalism, labour, and poverty. Much of her post-war life included participating in the Catholic Worker movement newspapers and houses, conducting retreats, and spending time with her daughter. Then, on May 15th 1949, she and the community experienced the loss of Peter Maurin (Allaire and Broughton).

In the 1950's, Day and the Catholic Worker became significantly involved in nuclear disarmament efforts such as an event in 1955 when Day and members of the Catholic Worker "led protests against New York City's civil defense law" (Allaire and Broughton). Throughout the period of air raid drills, Day and members of the Catholic Worker opted to sit on park benches during the drills in order to expose the false sense of safety the air drills attempted to create, and Day was arrested three times for anti-nuclear protests throughout the six years of air raid drills (Allaire and Broughton). As the Cold War was largely a period of McCarthyism, and thus anti-communist sentiments, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker were often charged with supporting communism, and thus as 'anti-American' (Allaire and Broughton). It was within this context that Day wrote her autobiography *The Long Loneliness* in 1952. On the one hand, Day was 'greatly disturbed' by the unjust treatment toward communists and by the fact that an abundance of public resources were being used to fight communism that could otherwise be used for efforts toward economic justice, and, on the other hand, Day recognized the way in which the anti-communist sentiment and charges of communism against the Catholic Worker were obstructing the Catholic Worker's efforts and visions of pacifism and personalism

(Hinson-Hasty, *Armchair*, 130). Therefore, Day worked to gain support from the Catholic community which was an effort that was at times effective, and at other times discouraging (Hinson-Hasty, *Armchair*, 130). Yet throughout this period, Day sought to maintain her personalist philosophy, and her dedication to the mission of the Catholic Worker.

In the 1960's, as the country was faced with the Vietnam War and as the Civil Rights Movement became central to social movements in the United States, *The Catholic Worker* newspaper sought to continue their work in providing voices speaking to issues of racial equity and sought to support conscientious objectors (Allaire and Broughton). Day, herself, favoured war resisting efforts which were considered more traditional in the context of the 1960's, such as picketing, tax resistance, and non-violent actions, and she was largely critical and skeptical of the 'sexual revolution' (Hinson-Hasty, *Armchair*, 153). As the 'second wave' of feminism emerged, Day was largely critical of this as well. Day makes it clear that she was disillusioned with the women's movement because she "felt that most feminist activists were too narrowly and selfishly concerned with the needs of the middle class" (Barnette, 51). She even criticized Betty Friedan, a well-known liberal feminist, by reflecting on an event they both spoke at at New York college in 1970 by stating;

> [Friedan] spoke also for the middle class, pointing out the technological advances which freed women from drudgery and gave them more time for a public life, and again I could only point to my own experience among the poor and the most recent one of travelling through India and seeing women with baskets and trays of cement and bricks on their heads which they fed in long lines to the men who were working on the bamboo scaffolding around the new buildings going up for housing. The struggle as far as I could see was still a class struggle and the big issue today was world poverty (Day, "On Pilgrimage").

As Day "had already accomplished many of the things authors such as Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir were now advocating as women's right" such as managing a family and work and having an influential public life and presence, Day viewed the feminist movement as a middle-class effort and thus placed her efforts toward issues such as pacifism, class, poverty, and war (Roberts, 92).

Along with Day's anti-war efforts and criticism of the 'middle class' focus of the feminist movement, she remained largely invested in labour movements her whole life, and utilized her role in direct action and imprisonment as an element of spirituality through

her ‘works of mercy’ (Allahyari, 36). Hinson-Hasty expresses how the Catholic Worker focused further on the rights of farm workers from 1965 to 1975, and Day’s last arrest significantly “took place in solidarity with César Chávez and the United Farm Workers (UFW) movement” (Klejment, 77). On November 29th, 1980, Day’s life came to an end, though even before her death and confined in bed, she sought to write and share her message and vision (Allaire and Broughton). Dorothy Day’s life and legacy continue today as Catholic Worker houses of hospitality and Catholic Worker farms continue to provide hospitality, community, and refuge all around the globe (“Directory”**).**

1.3 Dorothy Day Literature Review

Previous research on Day has focused primarily on theological analyses of Day’s life and philosophies, particularly focusing on her conversion to Catholicism (Cavanaugh, 2001; Holben, 2010; Mize, 1998; Parachin, 2000), explorations and reflections on Day’s possible canonization (Woodward, 1990), as well as Day’s views regarding labour (Gregory, 1996; Gregory 1999), personal responsibility (Murray, 1999), and pacifism (Klejment and Roberts, 1996; Klejment, 2009; Mize, 1997). More recently, research and explorations into Days’ life and legacy has shifted to issues concerning Day’s views and approaches regarding race and anti-racism (Rice, 2019; Traux, 2018), Day’s relationship with patriarchal norms (Dick, 2019), Day’s affiliations with socialism and anarchism (Cook, 2018; Pauli, 2017; Rademacher, 2018), as well as Day’s example of social responsibility and social action which remain relevant to this day (Boehrer, 2018; Ellsberg, 2016; Rakoczy, 2019). This brief review will summarize various topics which have most recently been explored in the context of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker. The review will then turn to a deeper analysis regarding the research relevant to gaining insight into Day’s gendered subjectivity.

Rice’s topical research investigates the Catholic Worker, focusing on the influence of Day, to argue that although Day and the Catholic Worker spoke and worked against racism, the movement was not actively anti-racist. Rice expresses that “anti-racism refers to intentional acts to create a culture in which institutionalized patterns of discrimination

against people of color are deemed unacceptable and rectified" (Rice, 56). Though the Catholic Worker newspaper did explore issues related to racism such as poverty, the Scottsboro case, segregation, slavery, and lynching, Rice argues that Maurin and Day's "example bordered on paternalism, and they failed to capitalize on the insights of black writers and activists" (Rice, 58). Rice expresses how Day's later life and writings "illustrate a greater understanding of the pervasiveness of white superiority and prejudice", such as Day's 'pilgrimage' to Memphis and Mississippi to document the racism institutionalized in white citizen council's response to Black resistance as a result of the murder of Emmett Till and the Montgomery Bus Boycott (Rice, 64). Despite these later observations and documentation, Rice states how Day rarely "utilized black sources nor integrated the insights of racial justice into her discussions of related injustices such as war and poverty" (Rice, 67). Rice acknowledges the important role that Day's autobiographies, *The Long Loneliness* and *Loaves and Fishes*, play in the Catholic Worker movement, though expresses that their focus on poverty and nonviolence, with the omission of issues related to race and racism, lends to "further omissions on the topic of racism by those who admire or participate in the movement", therefore influencing the Catholic Worker to be complicit in racism as it has not actively sought to be anti-racist (Rice, 64). Traux, a Catholic Worker in St. Louis acknowledges how philosophies of the Catholic Worker inspired by Day, such as its stance of pacifism, can lend to the Catholic Workers complicity with racism as Traux states that "the term 'nonviolence' has been used to silence the voices of people of color to actually promote the status quo" as behavior labeled as 'violent' is "often a reflection of a culturally-white practice of politeness and compliance with police and state power" (Truax). Further research into concepts of race and 'whiteness' regarding Day's subjectivity, philosophies, and influence within the Catholic Worker continues to be necessary as these concepts have only recently begun to be thoroughly investigated by scholars and by those involved and interested in the Catholic Worker movement, and will be essential in the work toward anti-racism.

Another current focus on Day is research which seeks to gain insight into her secular affiliations with socialism and anarchism. For example, Cook focuses on understanding how Day's political philosophies have been downplayed and on how scholars have had a difficult time identifying her political affiliations as most scholars focusing on Day are Catholic scholars who trace Day' conversion from a "Communist

sympathizer, to Catholic radical" (Cook, 72). Therefore, Cook understands how Day's application of secular sources such as Leo Tolstoy, Peter Kropotkin, and Ignazio Silone lend to Day's creation of "a new kind of socialism, a post-Marxist, inclusive, and spiritual socialism, cultivated from the bottom-up, through community and fellowship" (Cook, 72). Rademacher also focuses on Day's political philosophies and her secular influences (i.e. Kropotkin and Tolstoy) through a reflection of Day's Christian anarchism. Rademacher expresses how Day used the term 'anarchism' "to shock serious students into looking into the possibility of another society...where there is a possibility of liberty and responsibility for all men" (Day, "Father Duffy"). Rademacher writes how Day integrated her secular radicalism and her Catholic spirituality to promote "a decentralized society where responsibility for caring for one another would be undertaken by the parish, family, and individual" (Rademacher, 97). Therefore, Day challenged dualistic thinking and language by bringing aspects of radical politics and the Catholic Church together in the effort toward revolutionary change which would lend to a society in which individuals were enabled to care for one another, "unconstrained by authoritarianism" (Rademacher, 97). Inquiries into Day's political affiliations reveal that Day's commitment to social change and anarchist philosophies as well as to Catholicism and spirituality, rather than being contradictory, were a means to find balance and to envision a "decentralized society where responsibility for caring for one another would be undertaken by the parish, family, and individual" (Rademacher, 97). Research into Day's secular influences is useful as it seeks to deconstruct the view that religion is apolitical and reveals the way in which religious and political philosophies intertwine.

Current research into Day also focuses on the influence her philosophies, vision, and actions has had on modern society. Boehrer, for examples, reflects on the way in which Day can teach us how direct service and political action are linked through a 'both/and' approach (Boehrer, 78). He writes that Day's example reveals how it is necessary to assist individuals with food, housing, and various other forms of social support through immediate actions (i.e. homeless shelters, soup kitchens, etc.…), *and* to participate in protests, strikes, and other actions which lend to structural change which alleviates the need to access care through services such as soup kitchens and food pantries (Boehrer, 78). He also expresses how gaining insight into Day's life and example can allow us to reflect on how we care for one another. Through Day's personalist philosophy,

she strove to view Christ in everyone, therefore we can learn, according to Boehrer, how to see dignity and value in each person (Boehrer, 78). Ellsberg also explores the way in which Day is relevant today, particularly in terms of her influence on the Catholic Church. Ellsburg follows Day's life and legacy and explores questions related to Day's possibility of being canonized. An argument Ellsburg makes for the canonization of Day is that it would lend to the "ongoing program of renewal of the Church," which has been an effort within the era of Pope Francis (Ellsberg, 19). By canonizing Day, while also maintaining her radical vision without 'softening' her edge, Ellsberg supports the canonization of Day as a part of the effort to achieve what Day's vision and efforts sought; "a church of and for the poor, a church that embraces those on the margins, that cries out for peace and the good of creation, that exemplifies the spirit of mercy, compassion, and forgiveness" (Ellsberg, 18). Explorations, research, and reflections into Day's modern relevancy and her influence reveals that though Day's vision has not yet been achieved, her example continues to inspire revolutionary action and change.

Scholars of religion, gender, philosophy, autobiography, and various other fields have approached Dorothy Day's life and her writings in order to gain insight into her moral vision, her gendered experiences, religious conversion, and a multiplicity of other topics. June O'Connor, for example, is a prolific Day scholar who has opened questions about Dorothy Day which center the importance of gender and feminist perspectives in her analysis. She approached her research with the understanding that "Day's life must be examined as if gender matters, even though she did not define herself as a feminist and was often a critic of feminist causes" (Greene, 123). In gaining insight into Day's moral vision, O'Connor utilizes social scientific research by Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan. She explained how Kohlberg's "theory of moral development makes universalizable judgements about moral growth", and was based in research on men and boys, therefore the feminist researcher, Gilligan, sought to criticise and expand on the limits of Kohlberg's research, as well as conduct research regarding moral development which included women in order to expand on Kohlberg's conclusions (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 62). Gilligan argues that Kohlberg's theory presents a "neutral and impartial point of view to equality and justice", which is in fact neither neutral nor impartial as it is a theory developed from a specific subjective male lens (Huttunen and Kakkori, 18). Gilligan also criticized

Kohlberg's construction of the highest stage of morality as lacking an analysis of and understanding of "care and human relationships, which are essential parts of the morals of maturity" (Huttunen and Kakkori, 18). Therefore, Gilligan understands moral 'maturity' from the dual context of justice and care (Huttunen and Kakkori, 18). The ethic of justice, as summarized by O'Connor is "a concern for rights and rules, fairness and equality as categories central for dealing with mature moral decision-making", where an ethic of care is characterized as a "concern for relationships and responsibilities-in-relation" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 62). Gilligan herself asserts in her book *In a Different Voice* that "the ideal of care is thus an activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need, taking care of the world by sustaining the web of connection so that no one is left alone" (Gilligan, 62). According to Kakkori and Huttunen, Gilligan asserts that the ethics of care and justice are gendered in that, "men think in terms of rules and justice and women are more inclined to think in terms of caring and relationships", though Gilligan argues for both an ethics of care and an ethics of justice to be values in society (Huttunen and Kakkori, 17). This argument is further elaborated on with an exploration of what an ethics of 'care' means through the use of Noddings' analysis of 'caring for' and 'caring about'. In the book *Caring*, Noddings expresses how 'caring for' involves "direct attention and response" as well as the development of "a caring relation" which includes a personal connection (Noddings, xiv). 'Caring about', on the other hand, involves attentiveness, but a lack of response as "one is attentive just so far" (Noddings, 112). Noddings argues that although men and women have the capacity to learn to 'care for' and that individuals are formed in relation to one another, the concept of 'care ethics' is central to women's experiences (Noddings, xiii). She argues that due to the 'mother-child' bond, women are psychologically developed to be "better equipped for caring than men are", where men identify with the 'absent' father, and therefore do not have access to affiliate themselves with an ethic of caring (Noddings, 97). Noddings clarifies in her revised introduction, however, that when referring to 'caring' as central to women's experiences, she is not referring to an essential characteristic, but rather a "mode of experience" due to women's relational experiences (Noddings, xxiv).

O'Connor utilizes these concepts in order to understand Day's moral approach to her vision and her life commitments toward vulnerable communities. O'Connor finds that

Day's writings do not reveal an "emphasis on rights, rules, fairness, and equality", but rather reveal a focus on human experiences such as suffering, love, and community (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 62). O'Connor argues that Day's moral vision was based in an ethics of care which placed importance on "dignity, respect, and love" with an understanding of one's relationality with others (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 63). Though O'Connor clarifies that that claims about the 'nature of things' are subjects of debate and that her arguments about Day are not based on empiricism, but that the theories of caring and justice provide 'avenues' in which to understand Day's distinctive moral voice and vision (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 63). Therefore, O'Connor does not explicitly make gendered claims regarding her analysis of Day's approach to care, but instead expresses her ethics of care in the context of various 'stories' Day writes about which O'Connor signals as framing her moral vision. For example, O'Connor writes how Day's illustrations of her experience with the San Francisco earthquake, her observations of poverty, and experiences of imprisonment all present Day's 'will to love' and lent to her vision of commitment to communities, care, and direct action based in consciousness (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 66).

O'Connor also elaborates on various 'doctrines' which Day developed throughout her life which played a large role in the formation of the Catholic Worker and reveals details regarding Day's moral philosophy. One system of belief which Day implemented in her life was that of 'gentle personalism', which is a belief in the "uniqueness of the individual and the dignity due to the individual"' which also encourages communitarianism (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 93). This position was influenced both by her experiences with Marxism and Emmanuel Mounier's philosophies. Though Day never directly studied Marxism, her embeddedness in the U.S. bohemian radical culture in New York at the time of the Russian revolution led her to be surrounded with Marxist theories both in conversation and in practice (Mize, 199). However, it wasn't until she met Peter Maurin in 1932 that she became familiar with Mounier's philosophy of 'personalism', which became the dominant belief system which Day lived by throughout the rest of her life (Zwick, 98). The 'personalism' which Maurin introduced to Day was that which was articulated by the French philosopher Emmanuel Mounier (Zwick, 98). Mounier's *Personalist Manifesto* expressed how the term 'personalist' can be applied "to any doctrine or any civilization

that affirms the primacy of the human person over material necessities..." (Mounier, *Personalist* 1). As Mounier believed that the most critical issue of modern capitalism is the "primacy of economics over history, over the life of the people, over community, over living out one's faith and one's values", the personalist philosophy calls for "a certain kind of poverty" which is defined as;

> a contempt for the material attachments that enslave, a desire for simplicity, a state of adaptability and freedom, which does not exclude magnificence or generosity, nor even some striving for riches, providing such endeavors are not avaricious (Mounier, *Personalist* 192).

This aligns with Dorothy Day's adoption of "voluntary poverty", one philosophy which O'Connor argues was deeply connected with Day's moral vision (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 85). For Day, voluntary poverty was a way in which to live in solidarity with those subjected to poverty, which "clarified the purposes of labor" and worked to reject materialism and war through "nonpayment of taxes and as a way of identifying and sharing with the poor" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 85). Another element of 'personalism' that was integral for Day's philosophy in the Catholic Worker was that of 'personal responsibility' (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 92). According to Mounier, personalism is "a philosophy of engagement…inseparable from a philosophy of the absolute or of the transcendence of the human model" (Mounier, *Not Afraid* 135). This view placed great importance on engagement, responsibility, and action in the world rather than isolation or distance from pain and suffering (Zwick, 98). Unlike Marxism, personalism asserts the "autonomy of the spiritual", which means acknowledging the importance of communitarianism for the sake of "the full development of every individual" (Deweer, 9). Therefore, living within a personalist philosophy involves a cooperative society which seeks "mutual emancipation and recognition" which comes through the ability to empathize with others, and the necessity to be available for others as one's well-being relies on another's well-being (Deweer, 10).This, according to O'Connor, aligns with Day's insistence on responsibility over freedom (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 42). O'Connor expresses how Day's "insistence on responsibility illustrates the focus Day placed on the communitarian feature of human existence" as well as "on the obligations to one another that arise from the social nature of human persons", and this insistence is clearly featured in many of her writings in which she emphasized the importance of "we" in order to accent the "interdependent relationship

between individual and community" which would come from a sense of 'personal responsibility' each individual would have in caring for one another (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 43).

As O'Connor expresses, Mounier's personalist philosophy was central to Day's moral vision as Day participated in and advocated for voluntary poverty and personal responsibility as Day, rather than seeking structural change through the power of the state, sought change through taking 'personal initiative' and believed in "the power of the person as the starting point for the good society" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 80). This aligns with the personalist perspective which declares that

> the coercive power of the state has to be restricted to those situations when the material or spiritual freedom of a person is threatened or when someone refuses the social duties that the political community imposes. This restriction of state power has to be guaranteed from the top-down, by the supreme authority of a high court, but also bottom-up, by the social fabric of communities that together constitute the nation (Deweer, 9).

O'Connor argues how Day distrusted the state, and thus refused to vote, rejected war and war-related taxation, and was invested in a bottom-up movement (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 81). Day viewed the government as "dominated by commercial and financial interests and deeply implicated in supporting the means of warfare", therefore she continued to affirm various anarchist sensibilities even as she converted to Catholicism. In line with the personalist philosophy, Day understood the spirit as in relation to one another, and therefore espoused direct action and the works of mercy as integral to her Catholicism (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 79). According to O'Connor, personal responsibility and community were interdependent as "the good of the individual could effect the group", therefore Day emphasized 'participation' over 'equality' and believed in affirming "the dignity and respect due to human persons regardless of gender, class, employment status, religion, or race" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 43) Ultimately, O'Connor argues how Day's use of language reveals how her approach to social justice and equity materialized from her ethic of caring, sense of personal attachment and relationality, as well as her desire to seek change which challenged the power of the state and sought revolution grounded in a personal level within community.

Day's approach to religion and spirituality must also be considered when gaining insight into Day's moral vision and philosophy. As O'Connor writes, Day found her spiritual meaning in "the Catholic doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ", which is a doctrine that emphasizes the interdependence of all, a united 'spiritual body' (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 21). Therefore O'Connor expresses that Day, as a result of her ethic of care and her understanding of the spiritual union amongst people, believed that "when one is injured, the whole body hurts, when one is healed the whole body feels better" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 62). Mize's analysis of Day's spiritual vision argues how Day's autobiography, *The Long Loneliness,* presents "its integrity as a self-contained apology for faith after Marx" as Day seeks to challenge the idea that spirituality distances people from hardship and suffering (Mize, 199). As Day expresses in *The Long Loneliness,* she had, at an early age, embraced the Marxist slogan that 'religion is the opiate of the people', which led her to reject religion and spirituality in turn to work for and with 'the masses' (Mize, 199). Mize suggests, however, that the narrative in *The Long Loneliness* works to reveal how religion, rather than an opiate, can be "a response to joy which overflows into a communal faith" (Mize, 199). Communal faith, for Day, necessitated "solidarity with the suffering world, the masses" (Mize, 199). *The Long Loneliness* reveals experiences of "hardship, sacrifice, and dedication to the joys and sorrows in the present", which opposes the understanding of religion as an opiate (Mize, 208). Mize's analysis aligns with various other Day scholars who present the way in which Day felt a strong sense of 'personal responsibility' and adhered to the philosophy of personalism, which was heavily influenced by her chosen Catholicism. As personal responsibility and personalism require great sacrifice on part of the individual, Mize argues how "redemptive suffering, sacrifice for the sake of each individual neighbor encountered, can hardly be administering or ingesting an opiate" (Mize, 211). Mize concludes that Day's autobiography, *The Long Loneliness,* conveys the way in which spirituality demands material responsibility 'in the here and now' (Mize, 213). Therefore, according to Mize, Day's perspective presented in *The Long Loneliness* both challenges and is influenced by "the Marxists' natural aspirations in...concreteness"(Mize, 213). Day reveals how spirituality, rather than an opiate, can serve to support an "embrace [of] Christ's suffering for the sake of the

neighbor's redemption" and therefore is grounded both in 'concrete' materiality and spirituality (Mize, 213).

Another essential aspect of Day's life and writing that O'Connor and various other scholars explore is Day's relationship with and to feminist and gendered perspectives. O'Connor questions Day's view of women, the women's movement, and feminism (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 35). Though Day participated briefly in the Women's suffrage movement, she was disappointed with both the Women's suffrage movement and the fight for the vote as she understood the movement as a middle class effort which would only have a limited impact and lend more power to a top-down movement, where Day was invested in radical systemic grassroots change for the masses (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 35). Day viewed the Women's suffrage movement as a 'middle of the road' path which isolated those she lived with and among, those subjected to poverty and unemployment (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 35). As referenced in an exploration of Day's philosophy, she was critical of the government and placed value on personal responsibility and community, therefore she thought the vote would simply enable women "to participate in a way of life that had a skewed sense of values: materialism, violence, and social patterns that promoted injustice and indifference toward the working poor, the unemployed, and the homeless" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 36) Rather than working toward the vote, Day was invested in strikes, direct action, the works of mercy, and unionizing efforts which led her to admire those such as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and others who placed their efforts on the working class and revolutionary change rather than reformist change (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 36). Day, rather than standing with the contemporary 'hegemonic' white-middle class suffragists, positioned herself from the standpoint of "the poor, the homeless, the unemployed and unemployable", and was therefore critical of the feminist perspectives of her time (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 42).

O'Connor also references aspects of Day's views regarding marriage and children which reflected traditional gendered views and explores how Day's "sense of self as a *woman and mother* pervades the pages of her books" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 30; emphasis in the original). Throughout Day's writings, according to O'Connor, Day regards herself as a mother and grandmother not only to her immediate child and grandchildren, but as an 'all embracing' mother and grandmother to those she worked to provide care for

as she willingly adopted the responsibility to love, comfort, and feed those who were socially and economically dispossessed (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 30). O'Connor expresses how Day interpreted Maurin's reiterated statement that 'woman is matter, man is spirit' as meaning that women are most themselves when participating in work which allows them to care for, feed, and clothe others in the effort to support others development (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 37). Along with her traditional, yet contradictory views on 'mothering', O'Connor references how Day reflects traditional views concerning marriage and family conventions, despite the fact that she herself was never legally married (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 37). For example, as she understood men as being the head of household, she expresses how men "did not need to consider the wife when making social action commitments", where women, on the other hand, had to consider her husband and children when making social action commitments (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 37). O'Connor, however, expresses that Day may have accepted these traditional gender roles as they were operative to her visions of care and justice (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 37). As an advocate of 'distributism', i.e. a position which stands for the distribution of control "as widely as possible by means of direct family ownership of land and capital", the family unit was an essential component of her communitarian ideal (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 83). Some views, however, are reflective of Day's lack of tolerance due to her persistent focus on issues of class, poverty and war such as her "critical views of extramarital sexual encounter, her discomfort with and disapproval of lesbian lifestyle, and the social acceptance of abortion" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 99). These views are particularly interesting due to the fact that Day had an abortion, was never married, and that Day's visions of care and personalism would, theoretically, instill in her a desire to see herself in all others, including those with non-heteronormative sexual orientations. Therefore, a deeper analysis into Day's expressions of sexuality and views of the body would be beneficial into gaining further insight in understanding Day's gendered subjectivity.

Though Day viewed the home and 'caring roles' as most suitable for women's fulfillment, she herself unconventionally "lived the life of working woman and working mother... [and]...voiced approving thoughts about women working outside the home" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 45). Day, according to O'Connor, understood and was sympathetic to the various reasons why women would be driven to work in the public

sphere such as "economic necessity, the need to overcome the isolation of the nuclear family context, and the desire to make a contribution to the larger community in addition to one's immediate family" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 46). She was also, however, critical of the idea of 'having it all', as O'Connor explains that 'having it all' refers to consumption and 'productivity' (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 46). O'Connor suggests Day would advocate, instead, for the idea that women can 'do it all', which refers to aiding others and attending to the needs of individuals and communities (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 46). Though within the Catholic Worker, tasks such as feeding, clothing, caring for, and instructing those subjected to economic and social poverty "was a mission that engaged men and women alike, encouraging the sharing of tasks regardless of gender" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 47). Therefore, tasks deemed as traditionally 'women's work', such as cooking and cleaning, were shared by both men and women alike (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 47). Day viewed 'caring' work as a source of spirituality as "mutually engaged-in work... symbolized the heavenly kingdom promised in the gospels" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 48).

O'Connor seeks to show how the contradictions in Day's expressions of gender, both in her writing and in her lived experiences challenge dominant binary belief systems and are engaged in various feminist goals such as the "connections between the personal and the political, the spiritual and the material, the religious and the social-historical features of human experience" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 48). O'Connor argues that Day's philosophies as a communitarian radical supported her ability to integrate the public/private, personal/historical dichotomies, particularly when it came to operational views that supported her work to alleviate the suffering of those subjected to an impoverished status (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 31). Though, as mentioned, Day never actively affiliated with the suffragists, held intolerant views regarding sexuality and birth control, and was generally critical of feminists movements. O'Connor borrows from Rosemary Reuther's arguments that a dissenting consciousness necessitates support from a dissenting community in order "to isolate and rethink a dominant idea or body of material and see it as a problem rather than as normative" (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 48). O'Connor utilizes this argument in order to express how Day's lack of participation in any communities which challenged gender ideology may have influenced her lack of feminist

consciousness (O'Connor, *Moral Vision* 48). Though this argument may be challenged as Day was, in fact, embedded in radical circles and was even involved briefly in the Women's suffrage movement. Therefore, various other scholars have further explored Day's context and writing in order to gain insight into her ideology concerning feminism and gender.

Dick's analysis of Day, for example, focuses on exploring the way that Day navigated the "social, political, religious, and occupational structures she inhabited by both subverting and leveraging the gender norms of her time" by analyzing three key elements: 1. The fluidity through which she performed her gender in various spaces and how the presentation of her gendered self altered throughout time. 2. How she utilized notions of gender as a tool to support her vision. 3. By gaining insight into her status as a "respected female leader in both Church and movement spaces" (Dick, 3). As Dick expresses, Day's life reveals various contradictions which enable a nuanced analysis of gender and authority (Dick, 2). Day participated, was criticised by, and was critical of "two of the most powerful enforcers of patriarchal hegemony of the time: the newspaper industry and the Church", and though she never identified as a feminist or with the feminist movement, Dick argues that Day leveraged traditional beliefs to gain access to male-dominated spaces and "gain legitimacy within the patriarchal structures" in order to disseminate her radical faith-based vision in the effort to enact change (Dick, 2). Dick expresses that while Day was a public and active leader within the Catholic Worker movement, her own personal views and philosophies were "strongly influenced by the normative beliefs of the time in which she lived", which was reflected in the way that "she diminished her own role as a female leader" and wrote in a self-deprecating manner when referring to her gender and the view she had of herself as a woman (Dick, 7). Dick understands the self-deprecation in her gendered presentation both as a result of her upbringing and context, and as a way to 'police' and show awareness of her expected gender role, whether consciously or subconsciously (Dick, 7). Whether intentional or not, Day's adherence to traditional gender norms, according to Dick, lent to Day's credibility in the church.

Another element Dick importantly explores is the way Day utilized Peter Maurin's 'status as a man' and as a 'co-founder' of the Catholic Worker in order to further lend to her visions credibility (Dick, 10). Though both in her criticism and her expressions of love

toward the Catholic Church, Day often cited notable Catholic women, such as Mary Mazzarello, which reveals the value she placed on women in the Catholic Church (Dick, 12). Overall, Dick summarizes that Day "both adapted and conformed to traditional gender roles when it was beneficial to her, and broke with them when being a woman did not get in the way of her mission" (Dick, 15). One such adaptation that Dick notes is Day's shift from a 'confrontational' tone toward the Catholic Church to a more 'traditional' approach which enabled her to be praised as a female leader in the church (Dick, 15). In navigating the space as a radical woman, and as a faithful traditionalist, Dick argues that Day was able to participate in traditionally patriarchal spaces as a woman, and thus pursue her vision of progressive social change centered on issues of war and poverty (Dick, 15).

Another prominent Day scholar, Nancy Roberts, emphasises the role Peter Maurin had in legitimizing the Catholic Worker and Day's vision by arguing that "Day herself consistently argued for a greater recognition of his role as co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, in public and in private" (Roberts, 85). Roberts analysis aligns with Dick's as Roberts expresses how much of Day's presentation and performance of her gendered self is rooted from her traditional upbringing, though also questions whether Day intentionally leveraged traditional norms in order to gain legitimacy within the patriarchal spaces to take part in (Roberts, 86). Though, according to Roberts, an analysis of Day's life and writings demonstrates that she genuinely believed that Maurin's "day-to-day role in the Catholic Worker movement was pivotal or perhaps unconsciously tried to convince herself of it" despite the fact that Maurin explicitly distanced himself from day to day activities (Roberts, 86). Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day founded the Catholic Worker around the time of the Great Depression, which, according to Roberts, was a time of "the century's most repressive anti-women legislation" as a reaction to the emaciated 'New woman' who sought to challenge the traditional role of women as 'homemaker and mother' as they were "often accused of depriving family men of needed jobs" despite the fact that most working women of the time were employed in traditionally 'non-male' roles (Roberts, 87). Therefore, the legislation put in place restricted employment among married women, and "the mass media all joined in a campaign urging females as a patriotic duty to refrain from taking jobs" in order to open employment for men (Roberts, 87). Roberts provides this context in order to elaborate on the challenge Day faced as a single parent, a

radical working woman and as a Catholic convert as she worked toward creating a progressive Catholic movement and publication as women during the Great Depression had little to no support as leaders (Roberts, 87). Whether as a result of leveraging, or simply upbringing, Day, through her publications in *The Catholic Worker* and elsewhere, expressed traditional views concerning women, such as the view that women's place was in the home, not the factory, and the view that men should be paid a family wage in order for women to be able to stay home and care for their children as she expressed essentialist views that a women's job is to care, love, and to worship God through her care of house and children (Roberts, 91). Through Day's writings, Roberts understands that Day viewed women's role as being 'bittersweet' in that they were born with a 'burden' of care and fragility without the benefits of being able to be "refreshed by invigorating outdoor work" which men 'naturally' have access to (Roberts, 91).

Roberts' analysis argues that as a result of "the financial and social disaster of the Thirties", progressive women of this time such as Day, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and Ella Reeve Bloor focused their efforts on economic causes as these were the most pressing concerns of the time, therefore feminist concerns were viewed as 'middle class' and entitled in an era of extreme poverty and unemployment (Roberts, 92). Roberts' argument overall seems to suggest that the intersections of Day's upbringing, historical context, and Catholic conversion lent to her conservative view of women and women's roles, though she was often able to utilize this role and gender stereotypes in order to pursue her vision and ethics of care and justice, which was previously covered in the analysis of O'Connor's work on Dorothy Day (Roberts, 92).

The prominent Day scholar, O'Connor, has approached Day's works and writings from a lens of autobiographical analysis by exploring Day's self-presentation as an autobiographer. In O'Connor's analysis of Day as an autobiographer, she utilizes Jelinek's theory that women's autobiographies "tend to emphasize the personal over the historical, family life over career, and utilize a disjunctiveness in literary form rather than a progressive and tightly unified narrative form" in order to understand whether or not these binaries apply to Day's writings (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 292). In O'Connor's analysis of the emphasis of the personal over the historical , O'Connor states that Day's personal stories are embedded in historical events such as the labor movement, the San

Francisco earthquake of 1908, various wars, and the influenza pandemic of 1918 (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 292). As these historical events are entwined with the personal in Day's narrative, she records her lived experiences, emotions, and struggles amidst the historical events, therefore, "history is personalized and the personal is charged by the events of history" (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 292). O'Connor expresses how Day reveals a sense of ease with writing seeming 'contradictions'/'oppositions' into her life narrative, and thus preconceived notions of binary oppositions of the personal/historical are blended and shown to be constructed (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 292). O'Connor expresses how in Day's autobiographical writings, "the personal becomes public and the public is appropriated in a powerfully personal way", therefore obstructing the assumed binaries of the personal and historical.

The second binary opposition which Jelinek defines is the opposition of 'family life' and 'career', which O'Connor also argues is challenged in Day's autobiographical writings. Though Day distinctly understood and expressed herself in terms of being a woman and a mother, she also felt no conflict with herself as a worker in the public domain (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 292). Due to her pacifist views, she understood work related to resisting war as 'women's work' just as much as she viewed washing, cooking, and caring for babies as 'women's work' (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 293). Therefore, O'Connor argues that Day's narrative, rather than simply blurring the lines between family life and career, is a challenge to the concepts of 'career' and 'family life' in themselves. According to O'Connor, the notion of a 'career' implied "self-concern, professional development and the conscious envisagement and shaping of one's future", all of which stand in opposition to her social vision and responsibility to support those subjected to an impoverished status (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 292). Rather than a 'career', Day promoted responsibility and work directed toward serving the community (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 292). In this regard, Day also challenged the concept of 'family' as she acted as a caregiver and 'mother' both toward her own birth daughter as a single mother, and toward all those she supported in the Catholic Worker houses of hospitality (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 292). Due to the responsibility she was inclined toward, O'Connor argues that her work as a woman and as a mother was guided by her efforts toward social change (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 292).

The third binary opposition Jelinek presents is that 'women's narratives' are disjunctive in form as opposed to being a unified narrative. O'Connor argues that Day's narrative generally reveals a disjunctive narrative, with one exception which is Day's autobiographical novel *The Eleventh Virgin*. O'Connor expresses how this distinctiveness, rather than simply being a result of a 'women's style' of writing, is due to the fact that Day wrote in sporadic increments because of the challenge she faced whilst writing "when she knew that people needed her" (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 293). Though, according to O'Connor, the works of mercy, which were central to Day's vision and direct action movements, included;

> ...feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, burying the dead, informing the ignorant, persuading the doubtful, protesting and resisting evil, comforting the victims of evil, challenging (and also forgiving) the doers of evil, and praying for the living and the dead (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 293).

Therefore, the works of mercy necessitated the act of writing as one of many means to inform, persuade, protest, comfort, and resist (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 293). Writing was, then, one of many elements of the 'works of mercy' which Day participated in, and O'Connor argued how the disjunctiveness in Day's narratives are a result of Day's dedication to a multitude of social responsibilities rather than being a gender 'characteristic' (O'Connor, "Autobiographer" 293).

Overall, O'Connor's analysis of Day as an autobiographer provides an insightful analysis into an understanding of Day's autobiographical self as a woman, a worker, and importantly as a resistor. She conveys that Day's narrative writing challenges traditional notions of what makes a 'women's autobiography' as Day's writing does not fit into the binary distinctions made by early feminists about women's writings. This is a significant analysis which reveals how binary distinctions are constructed, contextual, and historically contingent. O'Connor's analysis challenges previously defined binary distinctions of what makes a 'women's autobiography', though questions concerning Day's presentation of discursive subjectivity and elements of agency within her subjective presentation of her 'self' remain. Though much of the research on Day, by those such as O'Connor, Dick, and Roberts, provides incredible insight into her gendered experiences, much of the research assumes her identity as a woman as a given and utilizes multiple writings to place them all

into one larger analysis of Day rather than focusing on the subjectivity presented in a specific piece of writing (Dick, 2019; O'Connor, 1990; O'Connor, 1991; Roberts, 1984). Therefore, the analytical approach in this research will expand on the research already conducted on Day's life and writings by understanding gender as an analytical category and exploring the subjective elements of Day's gender and gendered presentation through an analysis of the autobiographical self she constructs in one specific text, *The Long Loneliness*.

Chapter 2: Feminist Approaches to Autobiographies

Theoretical approaches toward autobiographies are, themselves, historical and contextual as social systems, politics, and gender theory have all influenced the way in which feminist scholars throughout history have approached the interpretation of autobiographies. Therefore, this literature review will seek to provide an overview of historical and contemporary research regarding the genre of 'autobiography', and varying aspects related to analytical and feminist approaches to autobiographies. This will first provide an analysis of what traditionally qualifies as an autobiography and problematic aspects of the 'autobiographical canon', and will then provide a background of various feminist approaches to autobiographies. This background will lend to this research by providing a framework to the analytical approach to Dorothy Day's *The Long Loneliness.*

2.1 Early Approaches to Women's Autobiographies

Sidone Smith, a distinguished professor who specializes in autobiographies and women's life writing expresses how the genre of 'autobiography' may seem self-evident at first glance, though with a deeper analysis it becomes clear that the genre of 'autobiography' "is ultimately as complex as the subject it seeks to capture...and as various as the rhetorical expression through which...that subjectivity reads itself into the world" (Smith, *Poetics* 3). In order to explore the complexity of the genre of 'autobiography', particularly from a feminist perspective, it is essential to understand the background of the genre and the ways in which it has traditionally been understood. According to Robert Folkenflik, the term 'autobiography' emerged in the West during the late 18th century (Folkenflik, 1). During this time, 'autobiography' described writing produced during the early modern period in the West which focused on conceptions of the soul, the self, and personal achievement in the public (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 2). Notions of the self (i.e. self-interest, self-consciousness, and self-knowledge) were deeply influential during the Enlightenment period, and are notions which "informed the figure of the 'Enlightened individual'" in the 18th century (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 2).

According to Smith and Watson, during the Enlightenment the term 'autobiography' was used to describe a practice of life narrative which focused on and celebrated an individualized and autonomous notion of self-hood which was universal; as opposed to contextualized life narratives that elaborate on societal and interactional influences on one's life (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 4)**.** Smith and Watson express how theorists of autobiographies have tended to privilege the narrative of a 'sovereign self' and have identified a canon of autobiographies which project an individualized notion of selfhood (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 4). A problematic aspect of this form of canonization and privileging of the term and focus of 'autobiography', according to Smith and Watson, is that it assigns "lesser value to many other kinds of life narratives", and makes a distinguishment between what is considered a 'true' autobiography and what is not (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 4). As a result, feminist, postmodern, and postcolonial theorists have worked to challenge and critique Enlightenment views of autonomy and selfhood that are validated in life narratives (i.e. narratives focusing on 'bourgeois subjects'), and have been critical of the term 'autobiography' (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 4). They argue that the term 'autobiography' in its traditional and commonly used meaning, as a genre which presents the life narration of an autonomous being, does not sufficiently express the range of life narratives and narrators throughout history and around the world (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 4).

Therefore, Smith and Watson suggest a working definition of autobiographical/life narrative "as a historically situated practice of self-representation" (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 14). According to this working definition, an autobiography can include any text in which a narrator elaborates on their "lived experience through personal storytelling", and "engages in dialogue with the personal processes and archives of memory" which are embedded in a specific context (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 14). Thus, a feminist perspective of autobiographies would require an expansion of "what constitutes the field of women's autobiography" in order to complicate normative notions of an 'autobiographical self' and challenge traditional approaches to autobiography (Costello, 130). However, feminist approaches to autobiographies have varied throughout time, and have been largely influenced by contemporary academic theories.

One of the earlier approaches to feminist literary criticism began with the mapping and legitimization of women's writing and feminist scholarship (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 5). Throughout the 1970's in the Euro-American context, works such as Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* worked to analyze and critique "the history of patriarchy and the invisibility of women's texts and voices in dominant literary and academic culture" (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 6). Showalter expresses how "feminine, feminist, or female, the woman's novel has always had to struggle against the cultural and historical forces that relegated women's experience to the second rank", and her work seeks to challenge canonical literary traditions and bring women's voices that had previously been erased to a space of analytical and theoretical importance (Showalter, 36).

As Patricia Meyer Spacks, a literary scholar, mentions in 1972, "theories by women about women have only recently begun to appear in print, where theories by men about women are abundant" (Spacks, 9). Therefore, various works such as Patricia K. Addis' *Through a Woman's* "*I*," which is a bibliography of American women's autobiographies published in 1983, provided a platform which brought women's autobiographies into the foreground and gave space for women's historical autobiographical writing to be valued (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 7). As women's autobiographies gained a platform for analytical criticism, feminist critics such as Spacks and Germaine Brée worked to analyze women's autobiographies to present a 'positive'/'heroic' female identity, interpreting struggle as a sign of strength. In *The Female Imagination,* a literary investigation into women's autobiographies, letters, and journals, Spacks explores patterns of 'female expression', and looks for modes of 'female feeling' that are expressed through narrations and literary writing that are persistent throughout history (Spacks, 1). Through this exploration, she argues that women's writings "demonstrate that the experience of women has long been the same, that female likeness are more fundamental than female differences" (Spacks, 4). Spacks expresses, however, that the similar themes women write about tend to be negatively interpreted. For example, she illustrates how women's writings generally express themes of masochism, and rather than challenging this claim Spacks points to the way in which masochism is negatively interpreted by expressing that "to prefer suffering to pleasure may seem perverse from one point of view, [yet can be] profoundly wise from another" (Spacks, 406). She interprets how a refusal to accept

‘happiness’ may stem from an “unwillingness to conform to the social definitions of what should constitute happiness” (Spacks, 406). Thus, Spacks’ interpretations reveal how the goal of analyzing women’s writings was to shift the understanding of ‘feminine traits’ which carried negative connotations by interpreting these traits with a lens that gave power and significance to women’s writings. Yet many early approaches to women’s autobiography continued to be dismissed, ascribed as ‘feminine’ and marginalized, or were analyzed without attention to gender (Smith and Watson, “Situating Subjectivity” 7).

In the 1980’s, it began to become more clear for feminist critics that women’s writings continued to be analyzed from the perspective of the ‘other’, even by many feminist critics (Smith and Watson, “Situating Subjectivity” 8). This led feminist critics to challenge traditional approaches to literary and autobiographical analysis which marginalized women’s writings (Smith and Watson, “Situating Subjectivity” 9). Second Wave feminist literary critics read women’s lives as “inextricably embedded in patriarchy” and understood women as a ‘sisterhood’ in which all women were equally subordinated by the patriarchy (Smith and Watson, “Situating Subjectivity” 10). The first anthology of women’s autobiography, *Women’s Autobiography: Essays in Criticism,* was edited by Estelle C. Jelinek and published in 1980. In this, Jelinek reveals the second wave approach to literary criticism as she argues that women’s autobiography reveal gender difference, such as the idea that women’s narratives were “disconnected, [and] fragmentary” as “the multidimensionality of women’s socially conditioned roles seems to have established a pattern of diffusion and diversity when they write" (Jelinek, 17). Where men, on the other hand, “project their universal import” and present a unified self due to their consistent power within the patriarchal system (Jelinek, 15). Smith and Watson problematize this approach by expressing how it takes ‘experience’ as ‘readable truth’, essentialises gender, and views women as a collective and undifferentiated by race, class, or geography (Smith and Watson, “Situating Subjectivity” 9). Therefore, various scholars worked to reclaim and amplify autobiographies by women of colour such as Joanne Braxton’s *Black Woman Writing Autobiography: A Tradition within a Tradition* which was published in 1989, though a majority of women’s autobiographical anthologies and approaches to autobiographical analyses remained within the primarily white Euro-American context (Smith and Watson, “Situating Subjectivity” 14).

2.2 Contemporary Feminist Approaches to Autobiographies

As postcolonialism and postmodernism became a significant scholarly approach, feminist critics began to explore questions related to context, ontology, subjectivity, identity, and conceptions of 'self' and embodiment during the late 1980's and throughout the 1990's (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 15). For example, in 1989 the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies published a book entitled *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narrative*, in which they argue that knowledge, truth, and reality have conventionally been constructed with the understanding that "men's experiences were normative, as if being human meant being [cis]male" (Personal Narratives Group, 3; 'cis' added by myself). The Center for Advanced Feminist Studies argue that an analysis of personal narratives enables a deconstruction of (cis)-male as normative because in writing an autobiography the narrator is required to, whether implicitly or explicitly, consider and interpret both individual and social aspects that have been consequential in influencing their life (Personal Narratives Group, 4). The Center for Advanced Feminist Studies state how autobiographies allow space for the interpretation of both historical and cultural context while also connecting deeply with the personal, and have the potential to provide insight into the system in which a life is embedded, as well as "the logic of individual courses of action" within a specific historical time and geographic location (Personal Narratives Group, 6).

The Center for Advanced Feminist Studies elaborates on the importance of analyzing personal narrative with an understanding of the dynamic relationship between the individual and society, rather than focusing simply on the polarities of societal constraints vs. individual agency (Personal Narratives Group, 5). This is due to the theory that the relationship between social construction and human agency are interactional and relational. Analyzing the life conditions and systems represented in an autobiography enables an analytical engagement with the systems and boundaries an individual is embedded in, and provides insight into the sources/systems which enable social change/agency (Personal Narratives Group, 6).

Another collection which engages in a postmodern approach to autobiographies is *Autobiography and Postmodernism* edited by Leigh Gilmore and published in 1994. In this

collection, Gilmore expresses how attempts to authorize and base the genre of 'autobiography' on autobiographies by those such as St. Augustine and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are engaging in "a politics that maintains identity hierarchies through its reproduction of class, sexuality, race, and gender as terms of 'difference' in a social field of power" (Gilmore, "Postmodernism" 20). Therefore, *Autobiography and Postmodernism* seeks to lend an interest in various forms of representation and conceptualizations of the 'self' in relation to ethnicity, gender, race, sexuality (Gilmore, "Postmodernism" 16).

The turn toward a postmodern analytical approach to autobiographies lent significance in the analysis of 'subjectivity', yet conceptions of subjectivity were theorized differently by various scholars. For example, Nancy Chodorow focused on feminist psychoanalysis and argues in *The Reproduction of Mothering* that the institution of the family informs subjectivity, and that as men and women "experience different interpersonal environments as they grow up, feminine and masculine personality will develop differently and be preoccupied with different issues" (Chodorow, 51). Chodorow claims these differences are mainly defined as "women are themselves mothered by women, they grow up with the relational capacities and needs," where men do not (Chodorow, 209).

Another approach to subjectivity is defined by French feminists inspired by Jacques Lacan and theories of psychoanalysis and structural linguistics (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 18). Smith and Watson express how "Lacan's theorizing of the split subject, the privileged phallus, sexual difference, the function of the capital-O Other, and the Law of the Father" influenced theories related to subjectivity, feminist theories, and approaches to autobiography as this theorization places emphasis on "the etiology of sexual difference, the relationship of the subject to its constitutive others, and the rhetorics of the self" (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 19). French feminists Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, and Julia Kristeva, have all been variently influenced by Lacan, though they all have influenced approaches to autobiographies by emphasising "the subject's foundational relationship to language", motivating readers to read into the silences/gaps in texts, challenging ideas of a 'coherent' self/narration, and emphasizing a relationship between language, representation of self, and body (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 19). In "The Laugh of the Medusa", Cixous emphasises the importance of women writing as, she argues, the act of writing in itself is a form of

creation/reclamation of the self. Cixous states; “Write your self. Your body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth” (Cixous, 880). This reveals one way in which French feminists, inspired by Lacan, have enabled a space and a vocabulary in which to explore subjectivity in relation to language, embodiment, and relationality.

Those critical of a psychoanalytic approach argued that this analysis did not situate material realities within their analysis, and therefore materialist approaches to subjectivity and feminist analysis of autobiographies were informed by the works of Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault (Smith and Watson, “Situating Subjectivity” 21). Althusser challenges the idea of the ‘coherent’ self and expresses that “the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting ' concrete individuals as subjects” (Althusser, 171). Althusser conceptualizes ideology as centralized in institutions, as representing “the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (Althusser, 162), and as having ‘material existence’ (Althusser, 165). Smith and Watson argue how Althusser’s theory of ideology and subject formation enables a reading of autobiographies “that attend to the ways in which literary genres are complicit in reproducing dominant ideologies” and gaining insight into the “politicization of subjectivity” (Smith and Watson, “Situating Subjectivity” 21).

Foucault, on the other hand, argues that power, rather than being instituted by the ‘dominant class' as Althusser argues, is ‘everywhere’ and is discursive (Foucault, 33). In regards to power, Foucault states that a focus should be on exploring and discovering how “subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc.” (Foucault and Gordon, 97). He also argues that discourse, rather than “being simply a technical accomplishment (linguistic or interactional) on the part of pre-existing sovereign subjects”, is what can or cannot be said or thought within a specific historical context and is contingent on the power dynamics as previously defined (McHoul and Grace, 36). Smith and Watson argue how this influences the interpretation of autobiographies as his focus “on the discursivity of texts, on historically specific regimes of truth/knowledge, and on genealogy” can be used to challenge the conceptions of ‘authentic’ truth/experience and ‘authentic’ women’s voice (Smith and Watson, “Situating Subjectivity” 22). With a critical

approach, scholars focusing on women's autobiographies have utilized Foucault's theories on power and discursive practices in order to explore how the narrator situates/makes meaning of their lived experiences, how available discursive practices influence how/if a narrator 'knows'/represents themselves, and encourages a view that understands texts "as sites of the re/production of knowledge" (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 22).

Leigh Gilmore's work on 'autobiographics', for example, is inspired by Foucault. In her analysis, she uses the term 'autobiographics' to describe aspects of self-representation "which are not bound to philosophical definition of the self derived from Augustine" (Gilmore, "Autobiographics" 184). Autobiographics, are, rather, the discursive strategies used to shape the 'self' in an autobiography historically, culturally, and geographically, and are elements which reveal how the 'self' is a site of multiple solicitations, multiple markings of 'identity,' multiple figurations of agency" (Gilmore, "Autobiographics" 184). The act of writing an autobiography, argues Gilmore, is an act of construction in itself and expresses how reading with a frame of 'autobiographics' would emphasize a focus on "cracks and hypocrisies, made by discourse autobiographical strategies, and which the subject created by the author opposes" (Janiak, 156).

Felicity Nussbaum's work on eighteenth-century British autobiographical writing also utilizes a Foucauldian conception of 'self' and subjectivity. She argues that an analysis of quintessential eighteenth century conceptions of the 'self' through a lens of postmodern theory enables scholars and critics to "rethink the autobiographical subject" and challenge "notions of a coherent, stable human self who originates and sustains the meaning of his experience" (Nussbaum, 160). Nussbaum asserts that the act of writing an autobiography, whether acknowledging the "existence of a private self" or not, is an act which is implicated in the production of the 'self'" (Nussbaum, 166). An analysis of eighteenth century autobiographical writing by women, according to Nussbaum, serves to expose modes of articulation and discourse which unsettle views of an 'authorized' self/'authorized' reality (Nussbaum, 166).

Some criticism of Foucault, however, is that his earlier conception of institutions, power, and discourse is too 'functional', and has led critics to question and explore issues related to agency within and outside of Foucault's theorization (McHoul and Grace, 70). Joan Scott, in theorizing how change occurs and how gender works in "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis", employs Foucault's conception of power in order to

express how “conceptual language... at once sets boundaries and contains the possibility for negation, resistance, reinterpretation, the play of metaphoric invention and imagination” (Scott, “Useful Category” 1067). Scott, according to Smith and Watson, offered a space for agency in arguing that subjects, while “simultaneously implicated in contradictory and conflicting discursive calls, discover or glimpse spaces through which to maneuver, spaces through which to resist, spaces for change” (Smith and Watson, “Situating Subjectivity” 23).

Other feminist scholars, such as Raewyn Connell and Barbara Risman, have also utilized a Foucauldian lens in order to theorize concepts of agency within feminist theories. In her seminal book *Gender and Power*, Connell points to three interconnected structures; labour, power, and cathexis, which provide a framework to analyze structural gendered dynamics and relations which lend to inequality (Connell, 97). According to Connell, these interconnecting structures contain both limitations and potentialities because as humans engage in action and reflexive knowledge, the ability to act in a way which turns against constraints exists, though this resistance still exists within the structure as “practice cannot escape structure” (Connell, 95).

Risman applies Connell’s argument that although individuals cannot escape the structures that are embedded within the context of their time/place in absolute terms, humans can “reflexively reject the worlds they inherit, and...transform them” (Risman, *Gender Vertigo* 103). Risman expresses that “change is historically uneven and is the result of internal contradictions between structural arrangements...as well as the conscious struggle of the people involved” (Risman, *Gender Vertigo* 105). She also engages with Connell’s understanding of gender as “beyond the voluntarism of sex role,” and argues for a conceptualization of gender that integrates individual, interactional, and institutional levels of analysis (Risman, *Gender Vertigo* 103). Risman elaborates that using a structural analysis must include an exploration of “how and why actors choose one alternative over another” (Risman, “Social Structure” 431).

Feminist theoretical approaches regarding discourse, power, agency, structure, and subjectivity influenced analytical approaches to autobiographies as questions, rather than focusing on how to give a platform to ‘women’s’ voices, how to analyze differences in texts written by men vs. women, or on how to give analytical power to women’s texts, sought to explore how a narrator situates themselves discursively in a text, how/if the

narrator presents knowledge of the 'self', how the narrator's presents their social conditions and context and reveals spaces of change/agency, and on how/where/to what effect the narrator expresses contradictory elements about the 'self' (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 23). These questions give space to an analytical platform on which to understand change and agency, work to deconstruct essentialist notions of gender, challenge the idea of a 'coherent' and 'knowable self', and erode the category of 'woman'.

For example, Isabel González Díaz's work on analyzing the discourse in Emma Goldman's autobiography *Living My Life* utilized a Foucauldian lens regarding discourse and power, and a feminist lens, inspired by Scott, regarding agency and identity. Through this lens, she argues how autobiographies can "be understood as an element of power, an instrument which individuals can use to become agents of change" as the narrator works within a specific context and conditions to discursively construct the 'self' and present a 'subject' which may enable the narrator "to penetrate the discourse, reinvent his or her self and acquire that autonomy" (Díaz, 90). Thus, Díaz seeks to deconstruct the concept of identity as an 'essence' and to convey how autobiographical discourse can be a discourse of resistance, agency, and opportunity as an autobiographer can resist and respond to discourses "that have circulated about the identity of the autobiographer" (Díaz, 90). Moreover, Díaz expresses how an autobiography, specifically focusing on *Living My Life*, can be representative of Scott's theory that the notions and significations of 'woman' and 'gender' can "change and fluctuate depending on the historical moment in which they are generated", as a subject in an autobiography presents a 'self' which resists traditional conditions imposed on them (Díaz, 91). Díaz's analysis concludes that in writing an autobiography, Goldman presented and constructed knowledge of her life and 'self' which opposed negative discourse that circulated about her at the time, unfavourably framing her as 'Red Emma' (Díaz, 99). Therefore, Goldman engaged in showing agency by challenging hegemonic contemporary conceptions "about politics and human relations, [and] about the role of women" (Díaz, 99). Díaz reveals how exerting "discursive power, [and] by creating knowledge", autobiographers, specifically Goldman in this case, produce alternative discourses which can circulate and "trigger the production of many other discourse", thus enabling change and restructuring normative notions of gender and sex (Díaz, 99).

Analyzing autobiographical narratives through the lens of discourse, subjectivity, agency, and power lent to significant and instrumental research in exploring and theorizing race, ethnicity, and class in relation to notions of gender, sex, and sexuality. Scholars which challenge white feminist and Euro-American centric notions of 'sameness', such as Gayatri Spivak and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, explore subjectivity with attention on context, spatiality, and temporality. Mohanty expresses how she wrote her seminal piece "Under Western Eyes" in order to "expose the power-knowledge nexus of feminist cross-cultural scholarship expressed through Eurocentric, falsely universalizing methodologies that serve the narrow self-interest of Western feminism" (Mohanty, 501). Various scholars of autobiographical narratives thus engage in analysis which strives to speak to the ways in which dominant cultural, economic, and sociopolitical values and discourse have unjustly claimed hegemonic power.

For example, in *Rhetoric and Resistance in Black Women's Autobiography*, Johnnie Stover focuses on nineteenth-century African American women autobiographers, such as Harriet Jacobs, in order to argue how they "triumphantly claimed agency for themselves and confounded the attempts of their oppressors to render them powerless (Stover, 60). Stover expresses that nineteenth-century African American women autobiographers took control of and shaped traditional language "with hidden, veiled, masked meanings" and sought to challenge notions of powerlessness (Stover, 60). This reveals how questions concerning subjectivity and discourse in autobiographical analysis lent to an importance in exploring questions concerning intersections of identity, and their material and discursive implications. Stover aims to show that through challenging white hegemony, black autobiographers used narratives to fight their battle against chattel slavery and to engage in the search for political and psychological emancipation. Questions of racial, ethnic, gender, sex, sexual, spatial, and temporal difference provided a space in which to rethink how subjects are differentially constituted, and how these constitutions influence how/if a subject voices their 'self' and how/if their discourse is circulated in order to influence change (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 22).

Theoretical inquiries regarding subjectivity and identity have led some theorists such as Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to investigate the concept of identity and identity politics in itself, arguing that 'race', 'ethnicity', 'sex', 'gender', and 'sexuality' are "historically specific social constructs, materially realized in the discursive

practices of everyday life" (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 27). Sedgwick places sexuality, particularly the concept of 'hetero/homosexuality' at the center of her analysis in order to "resist in every way it can the deadening pretended knowingness by which the chisel of modero homo/heterosexual definitional crisis tends, in public discourse, to be hammered most fatally home" (Sedgwick, 12). She approaches her analysis through a deconstructive analysis in order to ask questions regarding categorization, enactments, and relations of homo/heterosexuality in order to disrupt the notion of an essential sexual orientation (Sedgwick, 27). Butler also engaged in theory which challenges an 'essential' sexual orientation and gender by exploring the "tacit cruelties" which play a role in the production of 'coherent identities' which are "constructed through opposition…[and] constructed through rejection"(Butler, *Bodies* 115). She argues that the politics which seek to claim a 'coherent identity' diverts the possibility to engage in politics which works "toward the rearticulation and empowerment of groups that seeks to overcome the dynamic of repudiation and exclusion by which "coherent subjects" are constituted (Butler, *Bodies* 117). Therefore, questions of 'identity' remain important, though with an emphasis on how identity is a "part of a dynamic map of power in which identities are constituted and/or erased, deployed and/or paralyzed" (Butler, *Bodies* 117).

Queer theory and criticisms of identity politics are invaluable to the analysis of autobiographies as they enable an analysis which explores the construction of an autobiographical self through the resistance of essentialist and binary conceptions of gender, sex, and sexual orientation. For example, in "Lesbian Identity and Autobiographical Difference(s)", Biddy Martin utilizes queer theory in order to explore how "reconceptualization of identity and of community have emerged in recent autobiographical writing and on the very grounds of identity and community" (Martin, 381). She elaborates on the invention of homosexuality in the late nineteenth century and cites Foucault in order to argue how 'laying claim' to one's sexuality and claiming an 'essence' involves regulatory and normalizing mechanizations (Martin, 382). Therefore, her research aims to explore autobiographical writings by queer women that challenge the "homogenous conceptions of identity" (Martin, 383). Martin acknowledges how lesbian autobiographical writing which presents an emergence of a 'coherent' and 'true' self can be useful in giving "lesbian identity a coherence and legitimacy that can make both

individual and social action possible" as it enables a sense of shared history and community (Martin, 384). Though, as Martin points out, narratives of a 'coherent' self often "erase the individual's and the group's active participation in their formation as social beings" (Martin, 388). The anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*, according to Martin, provides examples of autobiographical writing which provokes a complex analysis of race, gender, sex, and sexuality by "demonstrating the complex discursive and institutional intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality and their inscriptions on the bodies and psyches of women" (Martin, 388). Rather than presenting identities as essential and coherent, *This Bridge Called My Back*, according to Martin, reveals how conceptions and categories of identity are complex, discursive, and historically contingent (Martin, 388). Through this, the writers in *A Bridge Called My Back* reveal how forms of solidarity, rather than being formed through shared identity or shared oppression, can be formed through "shared perspective, shared competences, and shared pleasure" (Martin, 388). Martin concludes that autobiographies which challenge homogenous conceptions of identity, while enacting powerful critiques of the idea of an 'essential' self, also present "the political and psychological importance, indeed, the pleasures too, of at least partial or provisional identifications, homes, and communities" (Martin, 390).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Approaches

3.1 Method

The approach of this analysis will borrow both from the understanding of autobiography as a performative act (Smith, 1998), as well as from the concept of autobiographics (Gilmore, 1998). Smith expresses how post-Enlightenment emergent capitalist economies required subjects to, on the one hand see themselves as autonomous, and on the other hand required "disciplining through an internally generated program of self-scrutiny" which lent to the reification of self-regulation, and thus to an assumed interiorized self" (Smith, "Performativity" 109). However, the materiality of the flesh, according to Smith, determined differentiations as to the 'kind' of interiority of the self-regulating subject (Smith, "Performativity" 109). Therefore, regulation lent to a presumed interior self of sexed, gendered, racialized, and classed bodies, erasing social conditions and the regulatory mechanisms themselves. The constitution of an internalized self led autobiographical storytelling to become an effective tool to structure and present autonomous selves (Smith, "Performativity" 110).

Butler expresses how 'sex', referring one's gendered self, "is a regulatory ideal whose materialization takes place (or fails to take place) through certain highly regulated practices" (Butler, "Introduction" 368). Gender, rather than a 'fact' or essential self, is a materialization of 'regulatory norms', an identity which is constituted in time and is instated "through a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler, "Performative Acts" 519). Butler expresses how bodily gestures and movements themselves shape and constitute the appearance of a fixed and free-acting gendered self (Butler, "Performative Acts" 519). Therefore gender performativity, rather than referring to a single 'act', is "a reiteration of a norm or set of norms" which hide the normalizing apparatus, yet Butler contends that the compliance to norms contains instabilities and thus potentialities to resist normative regulatory processes (Butler, "Introduction" 374). Therefore, the binary concepts of 'man', 'woman' 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are materializations that can be challenged, both in unconscious and conscious manners (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 35). Gender performativity is a crucial theory for queer theorists as it denaturalizes foundational binary categories regarding sex, gender, and sexuality and reveals the way in

which the material body is a site of social construction (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 35).

Smith argues that approaching autobiographical writing as a performative act is useful because autobiographical writing does not consist of writing a fixed 'self' that existed prior to the act, "for there is no coherent "self" that predates stories about identity, about "who" one is" (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 47). In the way that Butler argues that gender is constituted in time and presents an appearance of a fixed 'self', Smith expresses that autobiographical practices express the idea of an essential interiority which is produced through dominant discourse (Smith, "Performativity" 109). As autobiographical storytelling has been utilized in the West as a tool through which subjects present their 'selves', autobiographical storytelling is a manner in which the "power of discourse...produce[s] effects through reiteration" (Butler, *Bodies* 20). Understanding autobiographical practices as a performative act destabilizes previous theoretical perspectives which analyzed autobiographies as presenting a fixed self that could be uncovered/understood. The view that autobiographical practices are performative enables scholars and theorists to question claims of fixed identities and to challenge traditional theories of autobiography as being a form of 'self-expression' which emerges from the interior (Smith, "Performativity" 110). As an autobiographical subject presents their lives and experiences, they find themselves "on multiple stages simultaneously, called to heterogeneous recitations of identity" (Smith, "Performativity" 110). As the autobiographical subject never perfectly aligns, autobiographies contain "spaces or gaps, ruptures, unstable boundaries, incursions, excursions, limits, and their transgressions" which are essential both in unfixing identity claims, and well as in revealing spaces of agency, change, and productive transgressions against hegemonic norms and discourse (Smith, "Performativity" 110).

Smith and Watson express the importance of continuously working toward critiquing the cultural construction of 'woman' and essentialist notions of sexual and gender 'difference', though they also express the importance of not only critiquing the notion of 'woman' itself, but also working to understand the *processes* of "the cultural production of women" (Smith and Watson, "Situating Subjectivity" 41). Though an analysis of autobiographies will not reveal historical fact nor "settle the argument concerning the location of the self,"' autobiographies often portray the way in which the

self has been constructed, and also enables an analytical perspective into the way in which the author presents their own sense of self/subjectivity. Therefore, autobiographies can be an excellent analytical resource to gain deeper insight into 'gendered self-identity', can serve as a site to analyze the process of the cultural production of gender, enables insight into the way in which society and the individual interact regarding the construction of gender, and reveals ruptures and gaps which lend insight into spaces of agency and change.

As autobiographies have traditionally been understood as narrations which reflect an autonomous subject, autobiographies tend to be read as an expression of the narrators 'true self' and as evidence of 'human agency' and 'free choice' (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 42). Autobiographies seem to reflect a complete, linear story of the narrator's life, however Smith and Watson argue that there is no unified 'self' that predates the creation/narration of an autobiography. Being embodied subjects, our experiences of living, breathing, and feeling impact us in significant ways, both materially and discursively (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 26). Our "[b]odies bleed. They manifest illnesses. They get hurt. They feel hunger, thirst, and desire" (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 26). Embodied subjects are embedded in a specific cultural, social, geographic, and economic context, therefore the 'narrating body' is also embedded within a context (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 38). The localisation and situatedness of an embodied subject impacts whether or not a subject can tell a story, the types of stories a person can tell, as well as the way they tell the story (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 39). Smith and Watson argue that through embedded/embodied experiences, we work to make meaning/experience of our life events in language, and through recollection we develop a narrative of our life events which can be presented through storytelling (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 26). The stories we tell and the way we tell them both develop and are developed by discursive patterns which lend to the particular way in which we convey the constructed meaning of our life events (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 26). Therefore, the act of remembering itself is an act of creation, and so a memory which is narrated is an interpretation of the events themselves (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 16). Smith and Watson express how an autobiographical subject becomes aware of themselves through their embodied experiences and, as a result, attach a particular identity/social status to these experiences which they often present as 'given' or 'natural' in their life

narrative (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 25). Autobiographical subjects "become readers of their experiential histories," and thus engage with their socially and culturally available patterns in order to narrate their embodied subjective experiences (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 27). Thus the 'authority of experience' is made to be unstable, and reveals how "experience itself is socially, culturally, historically, and politically negotiated" (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 28) Smith and Watson borrow from Joan Scott, and argue that both identities and experiences are constructed, are embedded in language, and are discursive (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 33). The discourse that surrounds a subject is what serves to bring a sense of awareness of their identity (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 34).

Leigh Gilmore, the author of *Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women's Self-Representation,* offers the concept of 'autobiographics' as elements within a life narration which enable feminist researchers to approach the study of autobiographies with a lens that recognizes how "the *I* is coded in a range of discourses: it is a site of multiple solicitations, multiple markings of 'identity,' multiple figurations of agency" (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* 42). As overviewed in Chapter 2, feminist criticism of autobiographies has previously approached an analysis of autobiographies with gender stereotypes, such as making claims of 'coherence' among women, and approaching autobiographies with the theory that women present themselves narratively as relational beings as a result of the 'mother-daughter bond', where men were interpreted as representing themselves as 'autonomous' beings at the center of their narratives (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* xiv). Through these interpretations, Gilmore claims that the 'women' in 'women's autobiography' has become a stabilized identity, thus erasing the way in which gender is constructed through social historical conditions and discourse (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* xiv). Gilmore, therefore, puts forth 'autobiographics' in order to position the interpretation of autobiographies through an exploration of "discourses that construct truth, identity, and power" and how these discourses produce a 'gendered subject', though she importantly notes how subjects negotiate discourses in a variety of ways as a result of variant embedded and embodied realities (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* xiv).

As Gilmore theorizes, 'individuals' (i.e. 'subjects') are produced through discourse, therefore autobiographies are a source in which the individual/identity is "produced and maintained" (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* xv). She argues how "....autobiographies perform

powerful ideological work" as they have been utilized in political motives, have strengthened notions of individualism, and have 'codified' various identities that have been assimilated to political agendas" (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* 10). She provides the example of the 'myth of American self-sufficiency' that has been circulated through discourses of various American autobiographers which relay stories of 'capitalist know-how' and 'success' through one's own means (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* 10). The discursive authority and the ideological power that autobiographies claim, however, depend on the historical, positional, and temporal context. Therefore, Gilmore expresses how any interpretation of autobiographies must focus on exploring elements of "cultural and discursive histories of self-representation", as opposed to gender stereotypes and gender differences (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* 10). Approaching autobiographies through a lens which focuses on the theory of gender as constituted and constructed within historical and social contexts and discourse acknowledges both the lived and material experiences of gendered beings, as well as the discourses and elements of power which lend to varying material experiences of oppression and privileges (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* 10).

In autobiographies, "[s]ex becomes gender becomes experience becomes book", therefore gender, as well as class, race, and sexual orientation, and other cultural 'codings', are inscribed onto the narrator and thus into the autobiography, though in autobiographical writings narrators can both 'resist' and 'inscribe' cultural codings as the narrator situates themself rhetorically (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* 11). Therefore, Gilmore suggests that a texts autobiographics, the elements of a life narration "where self-invention, self-discovery and self-representation emerge within the technology of autobiographies", consist of;

> ...an emphasis on writing itself as constitutive of autobiographical identity, discursive contradictions in the representation of identity (rather than unity), the name as a potential site if experimentation rather than contractual sign of identity, and the effects of the gendered connection of word and body (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* 185).

Thus, exploring the autobiographics of a life narration enables feminist scholars to understand how the 'autobiographical *I*' is produced discursively and plays a role in the construction of a 'self' which is historically and socially contingent.

A focus on the autobiographics of a text can enable an interpretation which focuses on how the autobiography and autobiographical subject are a "part of a historically and

formally changing discourse of self-representation", and therefore enables a space to gain insight into how human agency and institutional norms are negotiated (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* 80). As a result, autobiographies have the potential to be "a site of resistance" as understanding elements in an autobiography which reveal contradictions and subjectivity can challenge hegemonic views of identity and hegemonic versions of history (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* 80). Autobiographical narrators, engaged in the act of writing, have the opportunity to "experiment with reconstructing the various discourses" that have constructed their subjectivity (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* 85).

3.2 Limitations and Reflexivity

As England expresses, "a part of the feminist project has been to dismantle the smokescreen surrounding the canons of neopositivist research – impartiality and objectivist neutrality –" by understanding the subjectivity of knowledge, experience, and discourse (England, 81). Therefore, as I seek to analyze Day's discursive subjectivity, it remains necessary to reflect on my own particular standpoint and subjectivity that can lend to various biases and blind spots within my analysis. England defines reflexivity as "self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher" (England, 82). This is critical in research and analytical endeavors as reflexivity enables an examination of the knowledge being created through the research process itself, and also allows an openness to critical inquiries about the research analysis and findings (England, 82). My standpoint includes, but is not limited to particular lived experiences of marginalization and privilege concerning my gender, sexuality, race, and class. I find it necessary to explicitly state my subjective identity in order to lend insight into the positionality of my research. Within the current identifiable structures, I would 'classify' myself as a white queer cis-woman from a lower-middle class family in America with socialist, anti-racist, and feminist leaning political philosophies. My goal in presenting this information is to ensure that my position is visible, and thus lend context to the interpretations I present in the following analysis.

An essential element of my position is the access to higher education that I have been enabled to receive. The privileges of participating in academic knowledge entails the

"access both to material resources and to the power inherent in the production of knowledges about others" (Rose, 307). The privilege of obtaining a higher education is congruent to the privilege I have had to access online databases, a reliable laptop and wifi connection, and to the time afforded to me throughout this thesis writing process. Though I must also acknowledge various significant barriers which impacted the time I was enabled to commit to this analysis such as a personal emergency, the covid-19 crisis, as well as my own personal, political, work, and financial obligations.

Another major aspect which limits my analytical perspective is my lack of a critical perspective into race and race studies. Though I have gained much education and insight into anti-racism, I had previously believed that writing a thesis critically analysing race would make me complicit in racism as I had believed that taking any platform on the topic of race as a white woman would inevitably result in me being complicit in 'speaking for' or 'in place' of others (Alcoff, 9). As "who is speaking, who is spoken of, and who listens is a result, as well as an act, of political struggle", I essentially opted out of a critical analysis of race out of a fear of participating in a 'power over' dynamic (Alcoff, 15). It was only through the resources, conversations, and knowledge that became widely available and accessible as a result of the unjust murder of George Floyd that I recognized the obligation I have to talk about race, particularly whiteness, in an effort to undermine whiteness and challenge the structure of white supremacy (Kendi, 2019; Oluo, 2018; Smith, 1998; Haddix and Theoharis, 2011). I lacked this insight through the process of my research, and I therefore acknowledge that I have failed to critically analyze the system of whiteness which Day was embedded in. And as this research uses a majority of white scholars, I have failed to utilize critical research and insight by scholars of colour. Therefore, an invaluable anti-racist perspective and a critical analysis of whiteness is severely absent in my research.

Further reflection into the barriers and blindspots of my analysis has also enabled me to acknowledge the position of power I am in in making claims and analyses that cannot be corroborated by Day herself as it is not a possibility to speak to Dorothy Day nor her contemporaries themselves. Alcoff states that "in order to evaluate attempts to speak for others in particular instances, we need to analyze the probable or actual effects of the words on the discursive and material context" (Alcoff, 26). Therefore, I will seek throughout my research to explicitly analyze, elaborate on, and question the potential

implications of the meaning and interpretive knowledge I create as I seek to interpret Day's autobiographical subjectivity.

3.3 Analysis Forward

In order to gain insight into Day's expressions of her gendered experiences/views of gender, I read *The Long Loneliness* whilst taking note of portions of the text which explicitly refer to women and sexuality, and portions that referenced gendered norms. After my first critical reading of the autobiography, I examined the portions I had noted and found reflections of various themes relevant to my studies into autobiographical subjectivity. These themes included, but were not limited to relationalities, contradictions, embodiment, and silences. I then read the text again, this time critically analyzing the autobiography to find portions reflective of the themes I had identified. I then organized the portions of the text I had noted into the various themes. Finally, I used the portions of the text I had noted that had the most analytical potential, meaning the portions which enabled me to gain the most insight both into Day's historical, political, social, and economic context as well as her subjective discursive strategies, in order to understand how she both subscribes to and resists cultural codings (Gilmore, *Autobiographics* 11). I have thus aimed to gain insight into the questions of this thesis which are (1) How does Day position her identity/subjectivity through discourse in her autobiography *The Long Loneliness*? (2) Does, and if so, how does, the autobiographical subject presented by Dorothy Day, subjected through the hegemonic discourse of her time, depict moments of 'agency', resistance, and potentialities for change? Though I seek to understand Day's presentation of 'self' and subjectivity, it's important to note that I do not intend to make any claims about Day's active intentionality/unintentionality as this cannot be known. Instead, I seek to participate in an ongoing conversation regarding questions of the 'self', subjectivity, agency, rebellion, and discourse.

Chapter 4: Dorothy Day's *The Long Loneliness* Analysis

4.1 Relationalities

Within an autobiographical analysis, Smith and Watson express how relationality, which implies "that one's story is bound up with that of another", reveals how the subject of the narrative, or the 'I' is destabilized as the 'others' in which the subject are entwined with play an important role in the presentation of the self (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 64). This portion of the analysis of Dorothy Day's *The Long Loneliness* will focus on what Smith and Watson define as 'significant others' "whose stories are deeply implicated in the narrator's and through whom the narrator understands her or his own self-formation…", and 'idealized absent' significant others, "whether secular or divine" (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 64). An analysis of Day's expression of her relational experiences is important to the question of autobiographical subjectivity because understanding the way in with the self presents the 'I' "through its relational others undermines the understanding of life narrative as a bounded story of the unique, individuated narrating subject", thus the 'I', rather than being autonomous, reveals the subjectivity of its 'self' through others (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 67). This chapter will analyze Day's expression of her relational experiences with two goals: (1) to explore and question how Day places her autobiographical subjectivity through the presentation of her 'self' with 'others' (2) to provide further context to the subjectivity of Day's life and experiences which will lend insight into a further analysis into questions of the way in which Day depicts moments of agency, resistance, and potentialities for change.

As Day's autobiography is written in a manner which presents a chronological sequence and a sense of growth and discovery (from radical to Catholic convert) in her life, she begins the autobiography by presenting details of her childhood and formative upbringing in her family. Day presents her father as, what Smith and Watson would define, an 'idealized absent other' as Day's family rarely saw him and knew little of him "so stood in awe of him…" (Day, *Loneliness* 29). Though she presents her father as physically absent, she conveys his influence as being prominent, thus placing his role as a 'traditional' male authoritative figure from a young age (Day *Loneliness* 27). Her father's commanding role is portrayed, for example, as Day writes how her "first job in New York

was on the *New York Call,* a Socialist daily paper...I had tried other newspapers but without success, in some cases because my father had told his city editor friends to lecture me on the subject of newspaper work for women" (Day, *Loneliness* 57). The 'self' she constructs in relation with her father is one which is both subjected by the influence of her father due to his views of 'women's roles' and recognizes his authority, and one which resists his authority by obtaining a newspaper job despite his opposition. Day, however, significantly frames her experience of getting a job at a socialist newspaper as seemingly the only possible option due to her father's imposition. Through the presentation of her father, Day is enabled to provide 'justification' as to why she began working at a socialist newspaper, as opposed to 'non-socialist' newspaper, which is significant as she wrote *The Long Loneliness* during the era of McCarthyism (1940's-1950's) and the time she had written for *The Call* was during the first Red Scare (1917-1920).

The first Red Scare was a time "shaped by gendered political ideas about male power both within and outside of families" and a time in which progressive women were viewed as a threat to the dominant order (Nielsen, 9). This was largely due to "stories of gender chaos in the Russian Revolution" which presented gender anxieties in the United States fueled by a formulated fear of any policies which were actively socialist or even perceived as socialist (Nielsen, 6). As a result of intense campaigns against socialism and the Russian Revolution in the United States, women affiliated with Bolsheviks were portrayed and perceived as "power-hungry masculine women" and as participating in "unnatural gender roles", thus those participating in 'nontraditional gender roles' were formally or informally 'charged' with participating in so-called 'un-American' activities (Nielsen, 28). Therefore, as a politically progressive woman working for a socialist newspaper, Day was significantly resistant to the dominant narrative of womanhood and perhaps would have been charged as being 'unnatural' in her gender presentation/enactment or as 'un-American', though these exact charges are currently unknown.

As she frames her father as representing traditional masculine norms and herself as subject to these norms as she was unable to get a newspaper job other than *The Call* as a result of her father's authority, Day reveals a mode of discursive power. Through this presentation, she is enabled to separate herself from the perspective that her job at *The Call* was active and sought-after, and thereby separates herself from direct associations with

socialism (and hence to non-conforming gender roles) which lends to the capacity to frame herself as distinct from women classified as challenging the structures of 'manhood' and 'womanhood'. Day further asserts her conformity to traditional 'womanhood' through the way in which she presents her 'self' in relation to her mother. Day credits her mother with influencing Day's acquisition of a 'philosophy of work' as Day and her sister helped with the housework which, Day expresses, enabled her to enjoy "the creative aspect of it as well as getting satisfaction from a hard and necessary job well done" (Day, *Loneliness* 25). Therefore, the 'self' presented in relation to her mother is one which adheres and values the norms of 'traditional' womanhood as she expresses her satisfaction in caring for the home with her mother.

In presenting her formative experiences and relationalities with her family as adhering to traditional gendered norms, Day not only separates her 'self' from those who actively supported the Russian Revolution during a time in which Day herself was actively involved in progressive moments, but also engages with the hegemonic discourse of the period in which she wrote/published *The Long Loneliness*. The autobiography was published in 1952, in the midst of the Cold War and thus McCarthyism (i.e. the 'second Red Scare'). This is significant context to the way in which Day frames her gendered self as the era of McCarthyism was a time, similarly as the first Red Scare, of anxiety regarding gendered norms as "the Soviet Union loomed in the distance as an abstract symbol of what Americans might face if they became 'soft'" (May, 12). Thus, May argues that public sentiment and discourse sought to assert 'normative' notions of gender (i.e. 'hard' masculinity for men and 'soft' femininity for women) through "widespread purges of those whose political or sexual inclinations might make them security risks" which disproportionately impacted those who identified as queer, and also impacted men and women who did not conform to traditional standards of gender (May, 12). Though May's research primarily focuses on middle class men and women who formed families amidst the Cold War era, which Day was not an active part of, May's research is significant to Day's representation of her 'autobiographical self' as May's research reveals the confluence of the Cold War and hegemonic (white, middle class, protestant) regulation of gendered norms at the time Day wrote *The Long Loneliness* (May, 15). May expresses how "the ideological connections among early marriage, sexual containment, and traditional gender roles merged in the context of the cold war", and institutions enforced

domesticity as a form of service to the nation in the context of the Cold War for women (May, 98). Therefore, women who participated in the public sphere, "or even inside the home without a strong male authority" would be viewed as a "dangerous, destructive force" (May, 105).

This context lends insight into the way in which Day presents her 'self' in relation to Peter Maurin, the other founder of the Catholic Worker. Maurin is first presented in the autobiography as Day states "when I returned to New York, I found Peter Maurin...whose spirit and ideas will dominate the rest of this book as they will dominate the rest of my life" (Day, *Loneliness* 189). In placing Maurin in a dominant position, even from his first introduction in her autobiography, Day separates her 'self' from the views expressed in the rest of her autobiography, and instead attributes the rest of her autobiography as being authorized by Maurin. In placing Maurin in a position of incredible influence over Day's vision and presentation of her 'self', Day asserts her 'self' as a woman who adheres to traditional gendered norms by placing herself in a 'secondary' position and Maurin in the position of a 'strong male authority'. Day presents her 'self' as 'secondary' in the Catholic Worker even in moments when Day conveys disagreements and conflict with Maurin. For example, Day writes how she insisted on using *The Catholic Worker* to speak out against WWII, where Maurin argued, according to Day "'perhaps silence would be better for a time than to continue our opposition to war...'" (Day, *Loneliness* 205). In the end, Day insisted on speaking out against the war and expresses;

> though we opposed the war and upheld the stand of the conscientious objector and the absolutist who advocated nonpayment of taxes and nonregistration we were able to continue and there was no attempt made on the part of Church or state to suppress us (Day, *Loneliness* 206).

Though there hadn't been any active negative consequences to speaking out, Day follows this statement proclaiming that "Peter may have been right...silence may have been better..." thus, even in an instance of disagreement and conflict, Day retroactively places Maurin in a position of authority and validity (Day, *Loneliness* 206). Though Day is actively and explicitly pacifist, Day frames her autobiographical 'self' as questioning how she puts her pacifism into practice, thus framing her 'self' as ultimately conceding to Maurin's authority. Thus, through the presentation of her relational experiences with

Maurin, Day is enabled to step away from any image which may position Day as an active threat to the dominant gender order defined by traditional masculinity/femininity.

Day also presents her relational experience with the 'divine' as an 'idealized absent other', which, similarly to Maurin, is presented as an authority figure which enables validation for Day's vision. She refers to having some connection with God from a young age and her relation with God is presented as being central to her political philosophies as she states "I felt even at fifteen, that God meant man to be happy, that He meant to provide him with what he needed to maintain life in order to be happy... (Day, *Loneliness* 43). This line is significant firstly because as Day asserts her relation with the divine as beginning at a young age, she presents a version of her 'self' that was always, in some manner, connected with God and that (as we will see further) the time in which she was a non-religious radical was a 'deviation' from her 'true' self. Secondly, she expresses the view that she felt God 'meant to' provide for all, thus affiliating distributist, egalitarian, and seemingly socialist perspectives as being a part of God's vision, rather than simply her own political philosophies. In presenting a time in which she was distant from religious affiliations when she was in university, she states;

> ...I knew the rich were smiled at and fawned upon by churchgoers. This is all that I could see. Children look at things very directly and simply. I did not see anyone taking off his coat and giving it to the poor. I didn't see anyone having a banquet and calling in the lame, the halt and the blind….I wanted everyone to be kind….One step I made toward it was joining the Socialist party when I went to the University of Illinois a year later (Day, *Loneliness* 44).

She presents her reason for joining the Socialist party [1] both through the hypocrisy that she witnessed among 'churchgoers' and through her desire for kindness and service. She attributes her 'direct' and 'simple' vision as preventing her from seeing anything other than the lack of service, care, justice, and kindness amongst churchgoers, thus her choice to join the Socialist party is framed as a decision of a 'simple child' as opposed to an active young adult.

Day states that her separation from God "certainly was a most conscious gesture. Because I was unhappy and rejoiced in my unhappiness, I felt harsh" (Day, *Loneliness*

[1] Galston and Dionne, Jr. write how in the post-war period, Western Socialist parties were democratic, non-totalitarian, and "did not seek government control of civil society", where under Soviet-style communism, the state controlled both the economy and civil society, though as "Americans viewed socialism through the prism of Soviet communism", socialism and the Socialist party was wrongly associated with Soviety-style communism and "government ownership and control" (Galston and Dionne, Jr.)

46). She states that her rejection of spirituality was due to pain she felt in her life, thus she sought 'hard' things such as swearing, socialism, and impiety, as opposed to "home, faith, and all the gentle things in life" (Day, *Loneliness* 47). In this statement, Day is participating in the 'soft'/'hard' discourse that was prevalent amongst the Cold War era as anticommunist sentiment framed communist men as 'feminized' and communist women as either victims or as 'masculinized', and thus as presenting a threat to the so-called 'natural order' (May, 93). Day presents her rejection of faith, gentleness, and home as a 'deviation' as she rejected these ideals in a 'conscious gesture' as opposed to being naturally inclined to what she defines as 'hardness'. Therefore, both her relationality to the divine and her expression of her early rejection of the divine serve as a manner in which to placate her early communist affiliations, to validate her 'authentic' connection with God, and to affiliate her political philosophies of caring for those subjected to an impoverished status as being in alignment with her relation to the divine.

Day also significantly forms her 'self' in relation to her common-law partner Forster Batterham. In presenting details regarding their relationship, Day writes how Batterham "had always rebelled against the institution of the family and the tyranny of love. It was hard for me to see at such times why we were together...he never allowed me to forget that this was a comradeship rather than a marriage" (Day, *Loneliness* 137). Here Day presents her views and ideals of relationships as 'traditional' as she portrays her struggle to understand how her relationship with Batterham worked when he had views which opposed the 'traditional' family. Thus Day portrays Batterham's views as the cause of her unconventional partnership, thus Day can maintain her position as a 'traditionalist' who desired marriage. In presenting her pregnancy with Batterham, Day states that "no matter how much one was loved or one loved, that love was lonely without a child. It was incomplete", thus further establishing her adherence to hegemonic femininity which affiliated motherhood with womanhood (Day, *Loneliness* 154). Batterham's anarchism and unconventionality is set up in relation to Day presenting a contrast and a conflict to Day's seeming desire for a traditional family life (i.e. a husband, a baby, and a family), thus Day presents Batterham, rather than herself, as the reason for not having a 'traditional' family.

The hegemonic discourse throughout the Cold War era led to "the concurrent politicization and sexualization of 'the American way of life'" and thus to "questions of

compulsory heterosexual coupling, to questions of 'proper' familial arrangements, child-rearing practices, parenthood, and especially motherhood" (Jacobson and González, 139). Therefore, as Day presents her 'self' as unable to have marriage and family due to Batterham's convictions, Day conveys her 'self' as fulfilling 'traditional womanhood' through her relationality to 'community'. Day states "I found myself, a barren woman, the joyful mother of children" (Day, *Loneliness* 317). In this expression, Day is enabled to assert that she has achieved a sense of community, and through this she has gained 'children' whom she cares for and loves as a symbolic mother and presents herself as being able to achieve her 'traditional' desires of a family through the Catholic Worker community. As May states, amongst the discourse of the Cold War era, "motherhood was the ultimate fulfillment of female sexuality and the primary source of a woman's identity" (May, 135). Day participates in this discourse by maintaining her adherence to so-called 'family values' by presenting a desire for a traditional relationship and family with Batterham, and expresses a fulfillment of this desire through community.

Through various relationalities presented throughout the autobiography, Day asserts her 'self' in two important ways. The first is as a woman who values and follows male authority, and the second is as a woman who values traditional ideals for women and seeks to have a family, children, and care for the home. The language, values, and ideologies of the time in which Day wrote *The Long Loneliness* (i.e. the Cold War/McCarthyism) provides significant context as it reveals the discourse in which Day was embedded, and thus the discourse which she would have been speaking to, with, and against. Through the presentation of her compliance to male authority and to the divine, she separates her 'self' from active socialist affiliations and places the impetus of her political vision on Maurin and on her conception of the divine, and through her expressions of desire for a family, children, and caring for the home, Day validates her political actions as being in line with the 'family values' of the time, as opposed to being a threat. Therefore, Day's presented 'adherence' to 'traditional femininity' and 'family values', rather than reflecting the essence of Day's 'womanhood'/'femininity', reveals, instead, the frame in which Day places her 'self'. Though on the surface, Day's presentation of her 'self' appears to stabilize the concepts of 'woman'/'womanhood'/'femininity', though with closer inspection, the 'self' is destabilized as the 'self' is constructed in relation with and

through not only the 'others' she presents in the autobiography, but also in relation with and through the context in which she wrote *The Long Loneliness*.

4.2 Contradictions

Smith and Watson express how "autobiographical storytelling...is drawn from multiple, disparate, and discontinuous experiences and the multiple identities constructed from and constituting those experiences" (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 35). They express how the identities expressed through an autobiographical self may at times be conflictual, and the narrator may present an awareness of or thematize the conflictual self, where other times the narrator may not express an awareness of a conflict at all (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 35). An autobiographical 'self' may also be presented in a manner which rejects certain identity markers, or may "obsessively work to conform their self-representation to particular identity frames" (Smith and Watsons, *Reading Autobiography* 35). Reading for gaps, contradictions, inconsistencies, and "boundaries breached" can reveal the tensions of the 'self' being constructed by the narrator (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 35). Though as the expression of 'multiple identities' and the 'framing' of oneself is presented through 'experience', it's essential to understand, as Joan Scott argues, that "it is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience" (Scott, "Experience" 26). Scott expresses how experience, rather than being "authoritative evidence that grounds what is known", is an analytical category in which to interrogate and "about which knowledge is produced" (Scott, "Experience" 26). Analyzing the operationality of the category of 'experience' means to focus on the "processes of identity production" (Scott, "Experience" 38). Therefore, this chapter will seek to (1) analyze gaps, contradictions, tensions, doubts, and ruptures in Day's discursive expressions of her experiences, and (2) utilize insight gained from the contradictions in Day's discourse to analyze the 'self'/'selves' being produced through her narrative. This analysis will be useful in gaining both an understanding of the frame Day produces for herself, as well as the way in which the presentation of her 'self' 'breaches' this frame, thus destabilizing the constructed 'self' and revealing moments of agency as breaches can reveal discourse outside of hegemonic norms.

An experience Day narrates, which is of analytical significance as it reveals a gap in the discursive production of her 'self', is a situation in which she was at a dance and had

either pushed or slapped a man (though she can't recall which, thus revealing a moment of misremembering), and the man had slapped her back. She had known this man, but hadn't felt comfortable with him and expresses that she slapped him because upon seeing Day, he had "rushed to embrace" her, though she omits any other details regarding the context that led her to slap him (Day, *Loneliness* 67). She previously described the man as "an unbalanced youth" and states that although she had been radical at this time, whilst writing for *The Call,* he was the only anarchist she knew and that she "was extremely conventional, and disliked his long hair, his ragged clothes, his emotional speech", and relays how she 'dreaded' his constant telephone calls and how he would walk her home every night from work (Day, *Loneliness* 66). Here, Day discordantly seeks to assert an identity that is both 'conventional' and 'radical', and cites his expressions of anarchism as partly the cause of her distance from him. She states that "I only endured his company because I could not get away from him", yet goes on to express that "perhaps also I pitied him, his poverty and impending jail sentence" (Day, *Loneliness* 66). The use of 'perhaps' is revealing as she explicitly reveals uncertainty of the 'truthfulness' of the feeling of pity toward him, yet uses this statement to construct a frame of her 'self' as feeling compassion concerning the man's vulnerability, rather than simply vexed by his continual and persistent presence.

This narrative reveals the way in which Day seeks to frame her 'current self' as a fitting in with normative 'womanhood' through her motherly traits as a protector of the vulnerable whose mission it is to sacrifice her own needs and desires for the purpose of caring for others by contrasting a 'previous self' before her conversion, who was a socialist and "not a good radical" as she had sought to defend herself at the expense of another (Day, *Loneliness* 67). In portraying an experience in which she slaps a man, particularly a man whom she expresses as being in a vulnerable situation, she presents a version of her 'self' that breaks out of her constructed frame as a 'sacrificial' 'motherly' woman who cares for those subjected to a vulnerable status as she reveals a circumstance in which she sought to care for/protect herself at the expense of another. Though she quickly seeks to reassert the construction of herself as being 'motherly' and concerned more for the well being of those in a position of lesser power as she reflects on these actions with a sense of regret for having not been "on the side of my poor friend" (Day, *Loneliness* 67).

She further contrasts her 'past' vs. 'current' self by expressing an inquiry regarding her 'past self's' intention by stating, "was this desire to be with the poor and the mean and the abandoned not mixed with a distorted desire to be with the dissipated? I write these things now because sometimes I am seized with fright at my presumption" (Day, *Loneliness* 68). In this expression, Day questions whether her socialist pre-conversion 'self' was self-indulgent, as opposed to being selfless in her endeavors to caring for the vulnerable, though she switches to the present tense as she expresses the fear she feels regarding her 'presumptuousness' thus blurring the lines between her distinction of her 'pre-conversion self' and her 'current self'. As she reflects on her past 'self' and 'experiences', Day further blurs the line between the distinct 'selves' and constructed frames as she states, "I am afraid, too, of not telling the truth, or of distorting the truth. I cannot guarantee that I do not, for I am writing of the past" (Day, *Loneliness* 68). This admission of uncertainty regarding the way she reflects and writes about the past reveals the constructedness of the way in which she frames her 'self' in the past, and exposes gaps in the construction of a coherent self which is knowable.

Day's distinction/construction of a 'past' self which is distinct from her 'current authentic' self is discursively significant as Day, and the Catholic Worker itself, was under criticism and threat by the dominant political powers at the time Day wrote *The Long Loneliness*. Conservatives often opposed *The Catholic Worker* due to its defense and at times mutuality with Communists, particularly in their agreed opposition to oppressive capitalist policies (Roberts, 143). Roberts expresses how "Senator Joseph McCarthy himself took notice of the Catholic Worker", which resulted both in intense pressure on the Catholic Worker to dismiss communist ties, and resulted in McCarthyites and reactionaries nicknaming Dorothy Day 'Moscow Mary' (Roberts, 143). Another instance which reveals the vulnerability of the Catholic Worker in the era of the Cold War occurred in 1949 when Day sided with grave diggers who went on strike against the Archdiocese of New York. Cardinal Spellman refused to meet with the labourers, and dismissed them by labelling them communists, though the gravediggers had expressed their lack of affiliation with the Communist party. As a result of the lack of action by the Archdiocese, Day reached out to Cardinal Spellman in an effort to influence the cardinal to meet with the labourers. As a result, Monsignor Edward Gaffney ordered Day to change the name of *The Catholic Worker* because it sounded 'too communist' (Nepstad, *Catholic* 35). Day responded both

by asserting that they would not change their name as it was already established and by affirming her obedience to the Bishop, though also by clarifying that "Catholics are not innately capitalists" (Nepstad, *Catholic* 35). After some time, the archbishops abandoned the order for *The Catholic Worker* to change its name (Nepstad, *Catholic* 35).

Amongst the ethos of the Cold War Era, labourers were portrayed as being prosperous, thus labourers and their supporters who spoke of dissatisfaction in the workplace were viewed as dangerous as the sentiment of the Cold War led to the view that "conflict within the United States would harm our image abroad, strengthen the Soviet Union, and weaken the nation, making it vulnerable to communism" (May, 9) Thus, any labour efforts which "hinted of a redistribution of wealth" were perceived as 'un-American' and as a provocation against American capitalism, and were therefore suppressed in exchange for legal and political rights in accordance with 'equal opportunity' (May, 10) Therefore, Day's support of the grave diggers would likely have been viewed not only as a challenge to the Church, but also to American ideology amongst the Cold War, therefore lending to public discourse surrounding her as being 'Moscow Mary', and thus as a threat to be suppressed. Her past affiliations with socialism would likely have only spurred these fears, thus in order to continue her work in challenging oppressive capitalist policies within the context of the Catholic Worker, constructing a 'self' (intentionally or not) which creates distinction from her 'past self' and 'current self' would have been operational in distancing herself from the discourse which labels her as 'Moscow Mary' and thus as a threat to be suppressed. Though, as Day clearly expressed her support of labour rights and various other views in line with socialism both as a 'young radical' and later as a 'Catholic convert', the presentation of her current 'self' as distinct from her socialist 'past' self is blurred and contains breakages in the constructed frame.

Gaps in her distinction between her 'past socialist self' and 'current Catholic convert self' is revealed, for example, as Day seeks to separate her 'self' and her political philosophies with that of the prominent anarchist Emma Goldman. Day expresses how she had written in her previous book "of my own self-love, my own gropings for the love of others, my own desires for freedom and for pleasure" (Day, *Loneliness* 68). Yet she continues this expression with a criticism of Emma Goldman, whom she describes as being "the great exponent of free love in those days, and lectured on the subject, as well as on birth control, literature, anarchism, war, [and] revolution..." (Day, *Loneliness* 68). She

critcizes Emma Goldman and her autobiography, *Living My Life*, by expressing how she originally would not read the autobiography as she "was revolted by such promiscuity and...I was offended in my sex" (Day, *Loneliness* 68). Therefore, in one line she expresses that she wanted a sense of 'freedom' and 'pleasure' in her life, yet in the next line she is critical of, even 'revolted' by, Goldman's expressions of these values (for further analysis into Day's presented views of sex, sexuality, and embodiment see Chapter 4.3). In her expressions of Goldman and her autobiography, Goldman seemingly presents an antithesis to Day's expectations of 'womanhood' as she is promiscuous and expresses notions of 'free love', yet Day also essentializes and generalizes women through Goldman as an exemplar of her 'sex' which she is offended by. Thus Day engages in the discourse framing of Goldman as 'Red Emma', "enemy of God, law, marriage, the State" and in doing so, Day establishes her distinction from Goldman, and therefore her distinction from political ideologies affiliated with Goldman (Shulman, 47).

In her criticism of Goldman, Day further blurs the line between the 'selves' she seeks to construct as Day states that her 'past self' believed that "men who are revolutionaries...do not dally on the side as women do, complicating the issue by an emphasis on the personal" (Day, *Loneliness* 68). She then continues by asserting that her 'present self' is "quite ready to concede now that men are the single-minded, the pure of heart, in these movements" (Day, *Loneliness* 68). Day seeks to attribute her view of men as being the 'revolutionaries' to her 'past self', and presents that her 'current self' has come to fully accept this view. Therefore, as Day seeks to place her 'past self' as being distinct from her current self, she also seeks to present how her 'past self' was at times in alignment with her 'current', (i.e. 'authentic self'), though she seeks to present her 'past self' as too 'self-interested' (as we will see further), thus preventing her from being her 'authentic self'. In Day's statement, she associates being a 'revolutionary' with the characteristics of being 'single-minded' and 'pure of heart', which are characteristics she attributes as being 'essential' to men. However, the first time Day uses the phrases 'single-minded' and 'pure of heart' is in affiliation with her close college friend Rayna. Day states that "she was single-minded, one of the pure of heart" (Day, *Loneliness* 53). Therefore, the distinct and 'essential' characteristics she places onto men in justification as to why they are the 'revolutionaries' are also characteristics she places onto her female friend, thus causing a breakage in the gendered distinctions she attempts to create and

exposes how the concepts of 'men' and 'women', rather than being a reflection of an 'essence' or 'truth', are constructed through discourse in her narrative.

She further constructs conceptions of gender by continuing her statement about men being the 'pure of heart' by stating that "women by their very nature are more materialistic, thinking of the home, the children, and of all things needful to them, especially love. And in their constant searching after it, they go against their own best interests" (Day, *Loneliness* 53). In this line, Day presents a generalized and essentialized construct of women, though the context in which she makes this statement is essential as it can lend insight into the way in which she frames her 'self' , particularly her gendered 'self' through discourse. Day writes this generalized and essentialist statement about women in a portion of the narrative in which Day also presents a sense of doubt and regret concerning her 'past self's' actions. Therefore, Day utilizes a normative notion of gender as a discursive tool in order to legitimize her 'past self's' actions, as she had been a radical socialist, a journalist, had had an abortion (as will be explored further in Chapter 4.4), and never had what would be considered a 'traditional relationship'. Day's essentialized statement about women provides justification for why she had a radical past as she seeks to frame her 'past self' as seeking normative notions of womanhood (which Day expresses as being home, children, and love). Day is enabled through her discourse to relay that even through her radical past, she was seeking these 'ideals', but in doing so, went against her 'best interests'. Therefore, Day's essentialist statement, rather than reflecting or revealing any 'truths' about gendered norms or essential gendered characteristics, reveal the way in which Day seeks to frame herself as fitting in traditional notions of womanhood, and thus provides her with a sense of legitimacy in the institutions, particularly through the discourse of the Cold War era, which she seeks to confront through the Catholic Worker.

Through Day's essentialist expression of gender, she seeks to stabilize the notion of 'woman' and thus stabilize her own commitment to ideals of home, children, and love. Yet, she continues her statement expressing,

> so, I say, I do not really know myself as I was then. I do not know how sincere I was in my love of the poor and my desire to serve them. I wanted the privileges of the woman and the work of the man, without following the work of the woman. I wanted to go on picket lines, to go to jail, to write, to influence others and so make my mark on the world. How much ambition and how much self-seeking there was in all this! (Day, *Loneliness* 69)

In this statement, Day reveals the unknowability of her 'past self', and thus further exposes the constructedness of the way in which she presents her experiences. Though the presentation of this unknowability is also useful in maintaining the constructed frame of her 'past self' as she is enabled to express uncertainty of the 'sincerity' of her past self in an effort to distance her 'current self' from her 'past self'. She frames her 'past self' as being wrapped up in 'ambition' and as being 'self-seeking' which conveys a sense of disapproval of her 'past self', thus providing further social legitimacy to her 'current self''. Day's statement also further constructs gendered norms as she speaks about the 'work of the man' as opposed to the 'work and privileges of the woman'. She expresses the 'work of the man' as being on the picket lines, going to jail, writing, and influencing others and expresses that her 'past self' desired to participate in these actions, though her 'current self' views these actions as self-seeking. This, again, reflects a contradiction as she previously calls men 'the single minded' and 'pure of heart' in their actions, and on the other hand she states how her own pursuit of 'mens' work' was self-seeking. She further seeks to stabilize the concept of 'woman' and her own 'current self's' compliance to normative notions of gender, yet this frame is exposed as Day continues throughout her life to write, to go on the picket lines, and to go to jail as a form of protest and even narrates an instance when she went to jail in Chicago further into her autobiography. It is also exposed as later in the autobiography Day states "that women especially are social beings, who are not content with just husband and family, but must have a community, a group, an exchange with others ", thus revealing additional gaps in her discursive construction of gender (Day, *Loneliness* 180).

Through the contradictions, gaps, and contentions in Day's narrative, it becomes clear that Days' expression of her 'self', particularly her 'self in terms of gender, is productively constructed through her discourse rather than a reflection of her 'essential self'. She seeks both to present her 'past self' as distinct from her 'present self', whilst also presenting her 'past self' as simply being 'unthinking' which prevented her being her 'authentic self' and thus from seeking what she determines as 'women's work'. However, the gaps reveal that the frames she constructs around her various 'selves' serve to lend to the view that her 'current self' fits within normative notions of gender, and thus provides her with the status of a 'motherly' caring woman, as opposed to a socialist agitator. This is useful as it enables her to stand in the positions as both a Catholic and as an 'acceptable

radical' within the context of the Cold War as her radicalism, which she expresses within the Catholic Worker, is justified as coming from her 'essential' characteristic of a woman as desiring home and family. As experience, according to Joan Scott, is "neither self-evident nor straightforward" and "it is always contested, always therefore political", agency in Day's autobiography can be seen in Day's negotiation of her 'experience' as being in opposition to the public discourse surrounding herself (i.e. 'Moscow Mary') within the context of the Cold War (Joan Scott, "Experience" 38). Meyerowitz importantly explores the way in which "...women used their culturally sanctioned authority as mothers, as caretakers for children, to legitimate their public demands for social justice" amongst the Cold War era (Meyerowitz, 7). Therefore, agency in Day's discourse can further be understood through an interpretation of her discourse and presentation of her 'self' as motherly and centering the home and family as confronting and opposing the public discourse of her as 'Moscow Mary' and as a threat to the social order, thus enabling a space to make public demands for systemic change.

4.3 Embodiments

As "the body is a site of autobiographical knowledge, as well as a textual surface upon which a person's life is inscribed", the material body plays a significant role in autobiographical subjectivity (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 37). Smith and Watson explore the way in which the memory is constructed through embodiment and materiality, thus life narratives are situated in embodiment and embodied knowledge and memory (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 37). They state that "embodied subjects are located in their bodies and through their bodies in culturally specific ways", therefore the body which is narrating the life narrative is positioned through their "language, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, and other specificities" (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 38). The material body of the narrator is coded with particular cultural interpretations, and these codings impact the type of stories a narrator can tell, as well as the manner in which they tell it (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 39). Understanding the "body and embodiment as sites of knowledge and knowledge production", this analysis will aim to explore (1) the way in which Day presents her

embodied self, (2) how these presentations "engage, contest, and revise cultural norms" (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 42).

Day writes of various experiences which present her embodied self, particularly an embodied self whose physicality is attributed to codifications of 'woman-ness'. One instance which reveals the codifications placed onto Day as a woman is when she shares a situation in which a priest from the Midwest expressed that he would find more validity in her work and writings about personalism and community in *The Catholic Worker* if she "were a woman of family" (Day, *Loneliness* 265). Day expresses how she had initially accepted the criticism because, as she states, "I was thirty-eight, wishing I were married and living the ordinary naturally happy life and had not come under the dynamic influence of Peter Maurin" (Day, *Loneliness* 265). In this statement Day credits Maurin for the cause of her role in the Catholic Worker, as had been analyzed in Chapter 4.1, and she associates an 'ordinary happy life' as being married. Day expresses, however, that as she thought about the priest's comment, she thought to herself that she is a woman of family and is "a mother, and the mother of a very large family at that" (Day, *Loneliness* 265). In the priest's comment, Day's validity is put up to question due to her embodied 'self' as a woman and the cultural and social codification attributed to 'woman-ness'. Her validity is questioned not simply due to her being a woman, but is questioned because Day does not represent hegemonic femininity as she is a single woman whose life is defined more by her participation in community work and public work than in private work and 'traditional' family life. Day's response to the priest's comment reveals how she seeks to assert her validity through hegemonic femininity, as opposed to framing her work as being valid particularly because she is outside of hegemonic norms and thus enabled to access knowledge outside of normative constructions of knowledge. Therefore, in this presentation of her embodied self as a woman, Day both engages in and revises cultural norms as she codifies herself as a mother whilst also utilizing this codification to validate her work regarding personalism and community.

Day's embodied experience is also portrayed meaningfully in her expressions of the position of privilege she held which enabled her in various ways. She states how those who participated in the Catholic Worker movement often felt guilt and a sense of responsibility due to their privileges (Day, *Loneliness* 231). She writes how many involved

in the movement, including herself, were "born in a certain environment, were enabled to go to school, were endowed with the ability to compete with others and hold our own, that we had few physical disabilities–all these things marked us as the privileged in a way" (Day, *Loneliness* 231). She presents an acknowledgement of the way in which various aspects of her embodiment afforded her certain privileges as she uses the word 'enabled' in various instances. For example, she writes how she was 'enabled' "to go to Memphis and Arkansas to visit the Tenant Farmers' Union" in which she bore witness to systemic racism and economic segregation in the South (Day, *Loneliness* 239). The way in which she presents this trip is significant to her embodied experiences as she expresses various sights which contrast her own embodied experience; "I saw children ill, one old man dead in bed and not yet buried, mothers weeping with hunger and cold" (Day, *Loneliness* 240). She writes how "going around and seeing such sights is not enough," but rather, in order to help one "must live with them, share with them their suffering too…" (Day, *Loneliness* 242). Therefore Day presents her embodied experiences of privilege as being the reason for her work within the Catholic Worker movement, and as she witnessed embodied experiences which lacked the structural affordances which enabled Day to conduct her work, she presents her vision of care as being situated embodiment and embeddedness in itself. This vision is reflective of her 'materialistic' vision which centers community, family, and home as she expresses that living with and sharing with those who are subjected due to oppressive capitalist policies as a means for social change. Thus, even in sharing deeply political details, Day maintains her frame as fitting in with traditional views of femininity.

Another important aspect of Day's embodiment is represented through the expression of her sexual and 'fleshy' embodied experiences. She relays experiences that she had in her childhood in which she first experiences modesty and shame in relation to her body. She states;

> modesty at first had to do with our bodies. We used to dress around the big kitchen range down at Bath Beach and if anyone came in, the grocer, the laundry boy, we would *back out of* the room to hide our nakedness. We did not know why and whatever obscure sense of shame we had may have been connected with that part of our anatomy which was seriously smacked for punishment...we did not learn

> shame as children until we learned about sex (Day, *Loneliness* 18; emphasis in the original).

In this statement, Day presents a significant awareness of her body in relation to shame and modesty from a young age, and she seeks to uncover that source of shame as a child as being related to smackings children received when they were being punished. She makes this statement, however, as a universalized experience and generalizes the relationship between feeling shame and learning about sex. In generalizing notions of shame, embodiment, bodies, and sex, Day erases the culturally specific and subjective experiences of shame. Munt argues that shame, rather than a universalized experience attributable to knowledge of sex and the body, is an embodied and 'sticky' emotion which can attach to emotions of "envy, hate, contempt, apathy, painful self-absorption, humiliation, rage, mortification and disgust...Shame becomes embodied, and the body begins to speak for itself, in specific ways" (Munt, 2). Thus Day's projection of shame in relation to her body and to sex reveals significant codifications of her 'self' in relation to her body. As Shefer and Munt express, "shame is endemic to everyday experiences of being a woman" (Shefer and Munt, 146). Thus, as Day codifies her body as shameful and the shame of her body is also attributed to sex, she is speaking to, with, and from the cultural entanglements which affiliate the female/feminine body as intrinsically shameful through universalized statements regarding shame.

Day attaches certain social attitudes to experiences of shame, though she does not actively acknowledge the entanglements of the social attitude and her embodied shame, but rather associates the social attitude to social shame and sin. Day writes;

> we understood the social attitude too. If a girl had a baby out of wedlock, she sinned against God and society. Society would have to support it, and that was wrong. The child had no father. That was a sin. So a stigma fell upon her. She was deprived of the baby, which was put in an orphanage, and she herself was left to starve to death. Thus was the classic picture in our twelve-year-old minds….We imagined ourselves in the place of these tragic heroines, these Hester Prynnes... (Day, *Loneliness* 18)

In this statement, Day presents views she had as a young girl regarding sex and portrays the correlation between social stigma, religion, sex, particularly outside of the context of marriage, pregnancy, and perceptions of 'the female body'. The shame which Day presents is related to the way in which the family and society are contingently structured, in which

an unmarried woman is solely responsible for pregnancy, and due to the lack of social support and the lack of social responsibility falling on men regarding a pregnancy outside of marriage, women who have a pregnancy (i.e. have sex) outside of marriage are ultimately, according to Day's socialized perception as a young girl, 'left to starve to death'. She also reveals the association of the literary figure in *The Scarlet Letter,* Hester Prynne, to feelings of shame and tragedy, as opposed to presenting interpretations which understand Hester Prynne as a heroic, subversive, and rebellious symbol of agency in a repressive Puritan society (Wang, 2010; Baym, 2004). Hence, Day's presentation of social stigma, shame, and sin are revealed to be socially and historically contingent, as opposed to essential characteristics of the female body, sex, and pregnancy outside of marriage.

Shefer and Munt write how considerable feminist scholarship understands how shame serves "as a mechanism of surveillance and policing of gender binarisms in maintaining idealised, 'respectable' femininity" (Shefer and Munt, 146). Importantly, shame is differentially distributed across geopolitical, historical, and cultural contexts (Shefer and Munt, 147). Therefore, Day's presentation of shame reveals how her embodied experiences are socially and discursively associated with shame through her positionality. Day reveals an awareness of her positionality, particularly in the context of her relationality to her family, as she explores how she was uncomfortable with physical contact because "there was never any kissing in my family, and never a close brace…. but I don't see any particular virtue in that attitude" (Day, *Loneliness* 39). In this statement Day presents both the context which influenced her uncomfortability with physical contact, and as she expresses that she doesn't see virtue in her family's lack of physical contact, she alludes to the perspective that she sees value in physical contact but lacked that influence in her upbringing. She relays this information in a situation in which she is describing correspondences she had with her childhood friend Henrietta, whom she describes as "sensual and very good", and describes how "she kissed and hugged her friends with great abandon, clinging to them and I was repelled by her soft arms and breasts against me" (Day, *Loneliness* 39). In this expression, the embodied and 'sticky' emotion of shame is expressed through both an act of repulsion and an expression of admiration for her 'sensual' friend. Both the context she presents with her family, as well as the presentation of her response to Henrietta's touch reveal and complicate Day's embodied experiences of

shame as these expressions present the way in which Day negotiates her 'self' in relation to notions of 'respectable femininity' (Munt, 2).

Day expresses both value and shame as being affiliated with physical contact, 'fleshiness', sensuality, and sexuality, which is important in the context of the Cold War era as the 'sexual containment' strategy of this era understood 'respectable femininity' as linked to women who were "sexual enthusiasts whose insistence on conjugal satisfaction would contribute to erotically charged marriages" (May, 99). Therefore, social and cultural regulations enforced women to be sexual, but only in the context of marriage. Outside of the context of marriage, which is the space in which Day existed in, popular culture and political discourse presented female sexuality as dangerous (May, 62). According to May, "a direct connection between communism and sexual depravity" was institutionalized through medicine, psychology, politics, etc. (May, 91). Notion of 'sexual depravity' included, though was not limited to, sexual behaviour outside of the context of marriage as well as to asexual behavior (Storrs, 129). Storrs writes how Communist women were presented as "the domineering asexual (or lesbian) and the irresistible seductress, [who] served the Soviet state instead of their husbands" (Storrs, 129). Therefore, Day's embodied experience, not only as a woman who held public and political spaces, but also as an unmarried woman would likely have furthered the discourse surrounding her as being a threat. Day challenges this discourse by directly speaking to her validation of sexuality as she writes how "the very sexual act itself was used again and again in Scripture as a figure of the beatific vision", and challenges discourse which situated her as leaving her partner and converting to Catholicism because she "was tired of sex" by expressing how "it was because through a whole love, both physical and spiritual, I came to know God" (Day, *Loneliness* 160).Therefore, Day presents a 'self' who is sexual (hence not 'asexual') and is spiritual (hence not a 'seductress'), thus framing her 'self' as both outside and inside the bounds of 'respectable femininity' in the context of the Cold War.

Through the presentation of her embodied experience, associations of sex and shame, providing context regarding her situatedness in a reserved family, whilst also acknowledging the value that she sees in physical connection and sexuality, Day frames her 'self' as neither asexual nor as a 'seductress', but rather complicates binary notions regarding sexuality, sensuality, and shame. Thus Day reveals a more complex and

contextual self who, rather than fully subjected through shame, presents shame as both limiting and as influencing a "desire for re-attachment" (Munt, 103). As shame is embodied, and "is also intrinsically relational, correlative, and associative", Munt utilizes Foucauldian theory to suggest that one can seek to envision an "aesthetics or technology of the self that reinscripts the bio-power of bodies, that builds ethical futures out of shame, that perceives shame as a sort of muscle, an energy that can make things happen" (Munt, 221). Thus, embodied shame, rather than wholly a repressive force, can also be perceived as a productive force. In writing of her shame and framing her 'self' as navigating complex terrains of familial repression and 'repulsion' of sensuality, as well as presenting her skepticism toward her own experiences and feelings of antipathy toward physical contact, Day discursively utilizes shame as a productive force which enables her to frame her 'self' in a manner which is both physical and spiritually, sensual and chaste, and body and soul, thus challenging binary understandings of femininity and masculinity.

4.4 Silences [2]

As bodies are coded with cultural meanings which impact the stories they tell, the cultural codings placed onto bodies also impacts the kind of stories one is unable to tell, and thus to the silences which exist within narratives. Smith and Watson provide the example of 'respectable middle-class women' who could not tell any story related to sex/sexuality due to the cultural "myths of the corrupt nature of female sexuality" which equated female expressions of sexuality with shame (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 39). Tillie Olsen's influential book, *Silences*, addresses the intersecting relationship between context, embodiment, identity, and various other factors which play a role in the in/accessibility one has to create written work, and thus how silence is contextual, political, and analytically significant. She references various types of silences such as "deletions, omissions, abandonment of the medium...publishers' censorship, refusing subject matter or treatment as 'not suitable' or 'no market for'.... self-censorship.

[2] As this chapter speaks of Day's abortion, I seek to present an analysis that is respectful and responsible in order not to speak to Day's experience with her abortion, but rather to gain insight into a contextual understanding of the silence of her abortion in *The Long Loneliness*. I also seek to actively give power and agency in Day's silence regarding this topic in her autobiography.

Religious, political censorship..." (Olsen, 48). Interrogations into silences have continued to be understood as analytically significant as scholars have sought to explore the productive power of silence (Duncan, 2004; Foucault, 1978; Li, 2006; Minh-ha, 1989). Significantly, in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I*, Foucault analyzes examples of discourse, "which also administer silences", and the production of power "which sometimes have the function of prohibiting", therefore, discourse, which includes speech and silences, is understood as both productive and restrictive (Foucault, 12). With this understanding, an analysis of silence and its context in Day's autobiography can lend insight into (1) the ways in which Day both complies to and resists hegemonic discourse through her silences (2) the ways in which her resistance through silences reveals agency.

Day explicitly refers to silences in her autobiography in various instances, such as when Day introduces her autobiography with an acknowledgment of details of her life she had omitted in her previous autobiography, *Loaves and Fishes.* She states that "when I wrote the story of my conversion twelve years ago, I left out all my sins but told of all the things which had brought me to God, all the beautiful things…" (Day, *Loneliness* 8). This admission of silence in her previous autobiography is significant because it reveals, intentionally or not, a recognition of the way in which she constructed a version of her own 'self' and 'experience' as she wrote it. This statement also presents the view that *The Long Loneliness* will address the 'sins' which she had previously left out, thus presenting *The Long Loneliness* as, more or less, a 'confessional' and therefore representing a more 'truthful' version of herself and experiences. This view, however, is challenged as Day thoroughly omits any details regarding her relationship with Lionel Moise and the abortion she had as a result of their relationship, and her marriage and divorce to Berkeley Tobey. She only briefly mentions her year in Europe whilst married to Berkeley Tobey by writing about various sights and quintessential experiences such as bus rides in London and time "spent beside the Mediterranean, or wandering around the streets of Naples" (Day, *Loneliness* 111). By simply referring to sights and inconsequential escapades in Europe, Day engages in an act of silence by actively leaving out further details regarding this period of her life, and thus reveals how Day frames herself not only through speech, but also through silence.

Olsen asks; “What if the writers, as in some of these silences, must work regularly at something besides their own work—as do nearly all in the arts in the United States today” (Olsen, 51). This question is significant to Day’s presentation of her ‘self’ in her autobiography as she explicitly states how she struggles with the act of writing “when there are human beings around who need me, when there is sickness, and hunger, and sorrow, is a harrowingly painful job”, and due to her conflict between engaging in writing and engaging with those around her, she states that “I feel that I have done nothing well. But I have done what I could” (Day, Loneliness, 9). In this statement, Day admits to the way in which the ‘self’ she constructs in *The Long Loneliness* is neither complete nor absolute. It also reveals the way in which her embeddedness plays a role in the ‘self’ she writes and the ‘self’ she cannot write as her work in caring for those subjected to a vulnerable status and various other life obligations outside of the act of writing the autobiography actively interacts with the discourse she creates in *The Long Loneliness.*

As Day’s ‘framing’ of herself is a result of various intersecting aspects, it’s essential to explore the context of Day’s silences; personally, culturally, and socially. In *The Long Loneliness,* Day more or less omits details from her life from the years 1918-1921. During these years, Day was in a relationship with Moise from about 1918-1919 whilst she was a nurse during the Flu pandemic, and she had an abortion after becoming pregnant with Moise. In 1920, Day married Tobey with whom she travelled for eight months in Europe, and in 1921 she returned to the U.S. and dissolved her marriage (Hinson-Hasty, “Timeline”). She simply refers to these years in *The Long Loneliness* by stating;

> in trying to write about the next few years of my life I find that there is little to say. I have never intended to write an autobiography. I have always wanted instead to tell of things that brought me to God and that reminded me of God. I cannot write too intimately of the next few years, because I do not want to write about other people with whom I was intimately associated (Day, *Loneliness* 111)

She expresses that she does not want to write about these years in order to avoid speaking of others with whom she was close to, yet does not express why she does not want to speak of these individuals. It may be inferred that she wants to protect those individuals’ identities, that it’s too painful to speak of these individuals, or that perhaps she does not want to refer to her intimate associations. Yet all of these views are challenged as Day has

spoken of various others she has had intimate relations with such as Forster, Maurin, and Rayna in *The Long Loneliness,* and can also be challenged as Day has written of this period of her life in her semi-autobiographical novel *The Eleventh Virgin*. Day refers to this novel as "a very bad book" in her book *From Union Square to Rome*, and various anecdotes exist which refer, on one hand, to the 'truthfulness' reflected in *The Eleventh Virgin*, and on the other hand, to Day's desire to get rid of the book in order to ensure it no longer exists in the public (Day, "Intro").

In *The Eleventh Virgin* (Day, 1924)*,* Day fictionalized her life from her childhood, radical associations, romantic affairs, to her abortion, and she, significantly, wrote this book previous to her conversion to Catholicism. In representing her experience with her abortion, she writes in the *Eleventh Virgin* that "she was not sorry she had fallen. Only sorry that she was going to have a baby. Sorry because she had been caught….", then continues by describing the procedure the main character, 'June', had in "a single cot bed in the home of Dr. Jane Pringle", and finally concludes her experience with her abortion by writing about how she expects 'Dick' (i.e. Moise) to arrive to pick her up, but instead receives a telegram stating that he believes it is time for them to split up (Day, "Eleventh"). Day had an abortion and wrote of it during a period of time sociologist Kristen Luker refers to as 'the century of silence' (1890's to the 1950's) due to the lack of public discourse regarding abortion, though historian Leslie Reagan points out that women did have abortions during these times and would speak of them in private settings (Gillette, 664). Luker argues that the silence was due to control of medical discourse regarding abortion by the medical profession, where Reagan argues that the context of the Red Scare lent abortion to be affiliated with the legal abortion in Soviet socialism (Gillette, 664). Gilette argues that writing about abortion can and has served as "an action against capitalist inequities, or as a consequence of women's liberation, or as a referendum on segregationist policies, etc.…", all of which brought public attention to abortion and lent to public discourse through the language of fiction (Gillette, 667). In writing about her abortion through a fictionalized portrayal, in *The Eleventh Virgin*, Day participated in a powerful act of agency against the dominant discourse of silence regarding the topic.

Though the question remains whether Day was participating in an act of agency or was being silenced as she omitted any reference to her abortion in *The Long Loneliness.*

Similarly as Day wrote of her abortion in *The Eleventh Virgin* amongst the period of the First Red Scare, she omitted any details about her abortion in *The Long Loneliness* amongst the period of McCarthyism. As Reagan expresses, during the period of McCarthyism, "abortion symbolized subversiveness, as did these other ideas and activities. In fact, abortion was linked to communism at this time…" (Reagan, 165). Therefore, in participating in the discourse of silence regarding her abortion, Day is negotiating with the hegemonic discourse of the time as well negotiating with her 'current self's' identity as a Catholic woman. As Day had previously written of her abortion, her silence regarding her abortion in *The Long Loneliness* reveals a sense of agency as she inscribes her 'self' in a manner that neither rejects nor affirms the experience of the abortion she presents in *The Eleventh Virgin.* Her silence regarding her abortion, therefore, can be interpreted as discursively powerful as she does not seek to justify her abortion to fit her constructed frame. She, instead, frames a 'self' who, having had an abortion or not, is valid in the hegemonic constructions of 'womanhood' as a mother and as a woman who centers home and family life within the Catholic Worker.

Therefore, the silences in Day's autobiography, rather than revealing a 'self' who is fully autonomous and complete or a 'self' who is actively silenced through hegemonic discourse, the silences reveal, instead, spaces of agency and discursive power. Agency can be interpreted through Day's acknowledgement of the aspects in her life which would have impacted her act of writing, thus challenging the notion of *The Long Loneliness* as a 'truthful confessional'. She reveals an awareness of the situatedness of her writing self which is influenced by her life outside of the act of writing, thus acknowledging the breakages, silences, and constructions produced in the text. Agency can also be interpreted through Day's silence regarding her abortion as this omission signals a 'self' which neither has to justify nor condemn her abortion. Instead, through her silence regarding her abortion, Day frames a 'self' whose abortion does not need to be a defining aspect of her 'self'. Her 'self' can, instead, be defined through her constructed frame as a motherly figure whose work in the Catholic Worker enables her to adhere to 'traditional femininity', thus she seeks to frame her 'self' in a way that validates her work within the Catholic Worker.

Conclusions

This thesis sought to explore questions regarding Day's autobiographical subjectivity, namely; (1) How does Day position her identity/subjectivity through discourse in her autobiography *The Long Loneliness*? (2) Does, and if so, how does, the autobiographical subject presented by Dorothy Day, subjected through the hegemonic discourse of her time, depict moments of 'agency', resistance, and potentialities for change? In order to explore these questions, I first provided context to Dorothy Day and her life in order to present background for the focus of the research. I then summarized literature which focused on Dorothy Day, which included literature exploring topics regarding Day's relevance today (Boehrer, 2018; Rakoczy, 2019; Ellsberg, 2016), her approaches to race and anti-racism (Rice, 2019; Traux, 2018), her political affiliations (Cook, 2018; Pauli, 2017; Rademacher, 2018), her relationship with patriarchal norms (Dick, 2019), her moral vision (O'Connor, 1991), as well as her relationship with feminism and gendered subjectivity (O'Connor, 1991; Dick; 2019; Roberts, 1984). This literature review sought to gain deep insight specifically into previous research focusing on Day's perception of feminism and gendered subjectivity (O'Connor, 1991; Dick; 2019; Roberts, 1984) in order to find spaces in which my inquiries into subjectivity and agency had already been explored, and spaces in which my inquiries into subjectivity and agency were still in need of further analysis and exploration.

Through this literature review, I summarized interpretations by O'Connor who understands Day's distance from feminism as resulting from her view that it was a middle class movement, arguments which express how Day presentation of her 'self' as traditional may have been utilized operationally, and the view that Day's lack of feminist consciousness may have stemmed from her lacking opportunities to participate in communities that challenged gender ideology (O'Connor, 1991). I also present Dick's argument, who expresses that Day both subverted and leveraged gender norms as she altered her gendered presentation in various spaces and used gender operationally (Dick, 2019). I also present how Dick argues that Day's presentation of traditional femininity stems from her upbringing, and expresses how Day utilized the role of Peter Maurin to lend to the validity of the movement (Dick, 2019). I then provide Roberts interpretations into Day's gendered self as her analysis also confers the interpretation of Day's traditional

'self' as stemming from her upbringing, and lends historical context to the argument, and Roberts also speaks to the argument that Day presented Maurin as an authority figure in order to uphold the authenticity of the movement (Roberts, 1984). Though as none of these analysis specifically spoke to the topic of Day in relation with her autobiographies, I also provided a review of O'Connor's analysis of Day as an autobiographer which presents the ways in which Day's autobiographies challenges early approaches which make distinctions about what makes a 'women's autobiography'. O'Connor argues that Day's autobiographies challenge traditional ideas about 'women's autobiographies' as Day's various narratives blur the binaries of the historical/political, personal/political, masculine writing/feminine writing (O'Connor, 1990).

Through this literature review, I found various gaps and questions regarding Day's autobiographical subjectivity and gendered 'self'. These gaps included questions concerning Day's discursive subjectivity outside of the lens of 'women's autobiography', concerning agency presented through her discursive 'self', and concerning the analytical category of 'woman' in itself in Day's autobiographies. I also found that much analysis concerning Day focused on a variety of writings and lacked a more specified and contextual lens. Therefore, this thesis sought to lend to and expand on these arguments through an analysis that provides historical context and focuses on one specific text, *The Long Loneliness* and through an analysis which understands gender as an analytical category (Scott, 1986) and autobiographical writing as a performative act (Smith, 1998).

The analytical lens utilized in this thesis was presented through an investigation of past and current approaches to autobiographical analysis, primarily utilizing work by Smith and Watson (Smith, 1987; Smith, 1998; Smith and Watson, 1998; Smith and Watson, 2001). I first sought to complicate the notion of 'autobiography' by providing historical context into the construction of the idea of an 'autobiography' itself, which traditionally is understood to be a genre which presents a cohesive and autonomous self, as opposed to a constructed narrative written in a specific context with a specific lens (Smith and Watson, 2001). I utilized theories by Smith and Watson, Jelinek, and Spacks to present early feminist approaches to autobiographies, and problemitized this approach by exploring how early approaches essentialize gender and interpret autobiographies as presentations of 'truth' as opposed to contextual interpretive, and discursive (Smith and Watson, 1998; Jelinek, 1980; Spacks 1975). I then utilized theories by Smith and Watson,

Personal Narrative Group, and Gilmore to introduce the turn to a postmodern approach regarding autobiographical analysis, which lends to a lens that analyzes the 'self' presented in an autobiography as subjective as opposed to previous constructions of the autobiographical 'self' as cohesive and autonomous (PNG, 1989; Smith and Watson, 1998; Gilmore, 1994). I presented various feminist approaches to subjectivity such as feminist psychoanalysis, which lends deep insight into the entanglements of language and embodiment, though lacks an approach which situates materiality into its analysis (Chodorow, 1978; Cixous, 1976). Therefore, I explored 'materialist' approaches, primarily focusing on Foucault and scholars informed by Foucault, to present an analytical lens which understands autobiographies as discursive, contingent, and productive (Althusser, 1971; Foucault, 1980; Gilmore, 1998; Nussbaum, 1998). This lens then lent to an analysis of scholars who situated agency in their theoretical perspectives, which enabled a space to analyze autobiographies not only as discursive, contingent, and productive, but also as a space in which to resist, engage in action, and create change (Smith and Watson, 1998; Risman, 1998; Scott, 1986; Connell; 1987). The lens into subjectivity and agency then lent to theorizations of the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sex, and sexuality, thus lending to queer theories which questions conceptions of identity in itself (Smith and Watson, 1998; Sedgwick, 1990; Butler, 1993; Martin, 1998).

Through a literature review of theoretical approaches to autobiography, I found that the theoretical approach that would be most effective in exploring questions regarding Day's autobiographical subjectivity would be a 'materialist' approach which centers questions of discourse, agency, subjectivity, context, and identity. Therefore, I provided a summary of my method which focuses on understanding autobiographies as a performative act (Smith, 1998) and centers autobiographies in its analysis (Gilmore, 1998). This approach was useful in my interpretation as it provided a lens which enabled me to avoid essentializing, include the importance of context, history, subjectivity, and materiality, challenge the idea of a cohesive/fixed self, provide space to understand agency, and seek to destabilize the 'fixed' concept of 'woman'.

In order to begin with an approach which seeks to destabilize the concept of an autonomous self, I began the analysis of Day's autobiography *The Long Loneliness* with an exploration of how she frames her 'self' through 'others' by gaining insight into the relational aspects within her autobiographical self, which includes the 'significant others'

(Smith and Watson, 2001) she presents in her text, as well as the context in which she wrote *The Long Loneliness.* Through this analysis, I found that many of my interpretations concur with findings by previous scholars who have interpreted Days life and writings, which argue that Day both presented her gender in a traditional manner and utilized Maurin's role in the Catholic Worker operationally to achieve her political vision (O'Connor, 1991; Dick; 2019; Roberts, 1984). Through her relation with others such as her father, mother, Maurin, Batterham, and her conception of the divine, Day frames her 'self' as a woman who adheres to 'traditional femininity' and validates the authority of her father, Maurin, and the divine. However, the interpretation in this thesis provides a more contextual lens as it situates Day's autobiography in the context of the Cold War. This context is significant as it reveals a perspective that challenges Day's presentation of her gendered self as simply a result of her upbringing and her conversion to Catholicism by presenting Day's autobiographical self and discourse not simply as speaking of her 'self', but as speaking to, with, and from the discourse surrounding her at the time in which she wrote the autobiography. Thus, the 'self' and the presentation of her 'self ' as a woman are destabilized and revealed to be subjective through her embeddedness within the discourse of the Cold War era.

I then analyzed the contradictions and gaps in Day's autobiography with the purpose of gaining insight into the 'selves' Day produces within her narrative in order to both understand the frame she seeks to fit herself into, and in order to identify the ruptures and cracks in the frame. This approach was useful in both continuing to challenge the idea of a 'coherent' 'essential' self, and in gaining insight into agency within her discourse as the ruptures and cracks provided insight into a self situated both within and outside of hegemonic conceptions of gender. Day frames her 'self' as adhering to 'traditional femininity', and thus as motherly, sacrificial, and desiring home and family by contrasting her 'current authentic self' with her 'past socialist self'. Though within her discourse, ruptures which break this frame reveal the entanglements of the various 'selves' she constructs in her narrative. Therefore, as the ruptures reveal 'selves' which at times conform to hegemonic norms and at times resists hegemonic norms, Day's agency can be understood in the way she seeks primarily to frame herself as fitting in with 'traditional femininity'. This framing can be interpreted through the concept of agency because at the time she wrote *The Long Loneliness*, discourse surrounding Day and the Catholic Worker

framed her as ‘Moscow Mary’ and as a threat to American capitalist ideals in the context of McCarthyism and the Cold War. Thus, Day speaks to and speaks against this discourse and creates discourse regarding her own ‘self’ in a manner that challenges the idea that she is a threat to the dominant order. She, instead, creates discourse surrounding herself as motherly, and family and home centered, thus giving legitimacy to her identity as a woman and validating her work in the Catholic Worker in a manner which could be perceived as maternal as opposed to threatening, thereby enabling her to continue her work challenging oppressive capitalist policies through the Catholic Worker.

Analyzing Day’s embodied ‘self’ presented in *The Long Loneliness* further enabled interpretations regarding agency and subjectivity as the presentation of her embodied self reveals both the codifications placed onto her as a white woman, as well as the ways in which she at times engaged in and at times challenged the normative codifications placed onto her embodied self. Day reveals how at times she was invalidated due to the codifications placed on her as an unmarried woman who does not have a ‘traditional’ family and home life. She confronts this discourse by asserting her validity through presenting a ‘self’ which does, in fact, adhere to traditional femininity and framing her ‘self’ as having a family and as a mother of those who she cares for in the Catholic Worker. Day also represents how she recognizes the privileges of her embodied self as a white woman who has been afforded an education and various other means, and expresses how social change can come from embedding oneself in a context of lesser privilege (i.e. living with and among those subjected to an impoverished status). Therefore, Day’s vision of social change, as influenced by her embodiment in privilege, is presented as a maternalistic vision which centers home, family, community, and relationality thus maintaining her adherence to traditional femininity even through her vision of social justice. Another essential aspect regarding Day’s embodied subjectivity within the creation of an autobiographical ‘self’ is Days’ presentation of her ‘fleshy’ self. Discourse surrounding female sexuality in the context of the Cold War influenced the perception that Communist women were either ‘asexual’ or ‘seductresses’, thus the containment strategy in the United States sought to define female sexuality as acceptable within the confines of marriage. Therefore, in order for Day to frame her ‘self’ as fitting in with the standards of ‘acceptable femininity’ as an unmarried woman, she utilizes the concepts of shame, religion, and desire in order to carefully frame herself as both sexual and chaste. She

presents a sense of agency and rebellion by challenging binary conceptions of masculinity and femininity, and places her 'self' within the crack; between physical and spiritual, sensual and chaste, and body and soul.

Lastly, I sought to understand the productive discursive power of the silences within *The Long Loneliness*. I provided context to the silences in *The Long Loneliness* by providing a brief biography of the aspects of her life which she omits. I then provided historical context regarding the legal and social status of abortion in the United States as one significant silence in Day's autobiography is her own experience of having an abortion. I sought to focus on the context and historicization of her abortion in order to avoid speaking for her experience, but to speak instead to the complex and intersecting dynamics that played a role in her abortion, in her writing regarding her abortion in *The Eleventh Virgin,* and regarding her silences regarding her abortion in *The Long Loneliness*. I actively sought to provide an interpretation that would enable a sense of agency regarding her abortion in order to avoid victimizing language. Thus, I interpreted that Day reveals a sense of agency in maintaining silence regarding her abortion as this omission enables her to frame a 'self' who is not defined, subjected, empowered, nor demarcated by having had an abortion. In *The Long Loneliness*, Day acknowledges the varying life aspects which would have impacted her ability/inability to write, and also reveals an active awareness of silences she participates in within her discourse.

Through this analysis, I was enabled to answer my questions, which firstly asked how Day positions her identity/subjectivity through discourse in her autobiography *The Long Loneliness*. I found that, overall, Day attempts to construct a 'self' which fits in with normative notions of femininity within the context of the Cold War and McCarthyism, as this was the context in which she wrote *The Long Loneliness*. This interpretation was established through an analysis of the way in which Day frames her 'self' through her relational 'others', as well as through an analysis of the contradictions in the text which revealed various 'selves' Day contrasted her 'authentic feminine' self with. Through an understanding of Day's autobiographical subjectivity, I was then enabled to answer my question regarding how the autobiographical subject presented by Day, subjected through the hegemonic discourse of her time, depicts moments of 'agency', resistance, and potentialities for change. In order to answer this question, I sought to provide historical context regarding expectations and discourse in relation to femininity within the context of

the Cold War as a whole, and context regarding the discourse surrounding Day herself in order to gain insight into the discourse in which Day was speaking to, with, and against. I found that during McCarthyism, anything related to socialism was under threat due to the associations the American public made between Soviet style communism and socialism. Due to public anxieties regarding policies and actions that challenged American capitalism, any behavior which was perceived as outside of hegemonic gender norms was viewed as a threat.

As Day herself was framed as 'Moscow Mary' and as a threat to the dominant order as a single woman defined by her public life and political action, Day utilized the power of discourse in order to separate herself from socialism by any means, including framing herself as a traditional woman and as a mother as hegemonic conceptions of femininity within the context of the Cold War meant women were expected to center home, marriage, and family, and were expected to have fulfilling sexual lives only within the confines of marriage. By asserting a 'self' that is in compliance to the norms, particularly in an era of McCarthyism and in a time when her dedication to Catholicism was being questioned, Day's autobiography reveals a sense of agency as the autobiographical subject presented in *The Long Loneliness* challenged discourse portraying her as a threat. Thus, Day produces an alternative discourse which frames her political, radical, and public life and actions as fitting within the frame of 'acceptable femininity'. Overall, a feminist interpretation of *The Long Loneliness* firstly reveals the constructedness of 'essentialist' views regarding gender, secondly, challenges the notions of an 'autonomous self' and destabilizes the notion of a self which is coherent and 'knowable', and thirdly, portrays the way in which one is neither absolutely constrained nor wholly autonomous, rather the 'self' and the presentations of one's self is interactional, historical, contextual, relational, complex, and dynamic, and through these complex dynamics, cracks, and ruptures, space for social change is revealed.

As this analysis is by no means conclusive nor comprehensive, I hope that this analysis can lend space to further discussions into subjectivity, agency, discourse, identity, and much more. Through the interpretation in this analysis, I do not seek to claim any facts or truth, but to provide an interpretation which engages with feminist concepts regarding subjectivity and agency. I actively seek an interpretation which enables spaces of agency and change in Day's autobiographical self in order to participate in discussions regarding

the complex dynamics of subjectivity, agency, and change. This analysis also lends to openings into gaining further insight into whether or not Day's approach in framing her 'self' as a motherly figure was productive in achieving her goals, questions regarding Day's embodiment as a white women and her participation/lack of participation in anti-racism, inquiries into the way in which Day's discourse impacts the Catholic Worker today, and much more.

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