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Standpoint Theory

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Standpoint theory is an epistemology, an account of the evolution of knowledge and strategies of action by particular collectivities in specific social relations in given periods. The concept derives from Karl Marx's exegesis of class relations in capitalism. The historical development of capitalism as a mode of production involved the disintegration of feudal hierarchies and their gradual replacement by a new class system. In the last few pages of Volume Three of *Capital* Marx writes, 'We have seen that the continual tendency and law of development of the capitalist mode of production is more and more to divorce the means of production from labour, and more and more to concentrate the scattered means of production into large groups, thereby transforming labour into wage-labour and the means of production into capital' (Marx 1959:885, first published in 1985).¹ Thus, though land-owners remained in existence in the new era as a third class, it was the proletariat and the bourgeoisie – dynamic, mutually dependent, locked in antagonism - that were definitive of capitalism.

In his historical materialist analysis of capitalism, Marx stressed that the realities of life in the new mode of production shaped the consciousness of the individuals experiencing it. In *The German Ideology* he and Engels wrote, 'Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life'. Their distinctive understanding was that 'definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into... definite social and political relations'. They continue in this vein,

The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really are; i.e. as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will.

So too do awareness, understanding and theory evolve. Individuals 'developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking' (Marx and Engels 1970:46-7).²

This theme in Marx's work was later developed by Georg Lukács. In *History and Class Consciousness* Lukács addresses Marx's account of, as he puts it, 'the special position of the proletariat in society and in history, and the standpoint from which it can function as the identical subject-object of the social and historical process of evolution' (Lukács 1968:149).³ He continues with a quotation from Marx' and Engel's *The Holy Family*,⁴ in which they represent the class relation as follows.

The property-owning class and the class of the proletariat represent the same human self-alienation. But the former feels at home in this self-alienation and feels itself confirmed by it; it recognises alienation as its own instrument and in it possesses the semblance of a human existence. The latter feels itself destroyed by this alienation and sees in it its own impotence and the reality of an inhuman existence (cited in Lukács 1968:149).

As a consequence, Lukács himself continues, while class interests 'keep the bourgeoisie imprisoned within this immediacy', they force the proletariat to go beyond it, to become 'conscious of the social character of Labour'. It is 'only in the proletariat that the process by which a man's achievement is split off from his total personality and becomes a commodity leads to a revolutionary consciousness'. For the working class, therefore, recognizing the dialectical nature of its existence is, Lukács says, 'a matter of life and death' (ibid: 164,171). It necessarily pitches the class into struggle with its rulers. In this, the Marxian understanding of class standpoint can be heard to echo Hegel's account of the development of self-consciousness, where he employs the allegory of the 'master' and the 'servant', necessarily precipitated into existential conflict in which the stake is annihilation of self or other (Hegel 1977).⁵

One effect of class domination therefore is the emergence of a distinctive proletarian 'standpoint', or as we might say today, a proletarian 'take' on life. What is more, because the view from below is capable of revealing 'the immanent contradictions' in the capitalist mode of production, the practical class consciousness of the proletariat has the revolutionary potential to disrupt the given structure, the unique 'ability to transform things' (Lukács 1968:197, 205). Antonio Gramsci, also writing in the early 20th century tradition of 'Western Marxism', shared this understanding of class consciousness. Observing the capability of Western European capitalist classes to sustain their rule over a potentially insurgent working class by hegemony, that is to say by culturally-generated consent rather than coercion, he saw the potential for proletarian revolutionary thought to grow, find adherents among other

elements in civil society, and eventually achieve counter-hegemonic capability, challenging the sway of ruling class ideology (Gramsci 1971).⁶

[A] The gendering of standpoint theory

Women do not feature in Marx's account of the creation of surplus value, the heart of his economic theory. Lukács and Gramsci for their part also seem to have conceived of the proletariat as male. They use masculine nouns and pronouns in referring to it, and rarely allude to female workers or female family members of male workers. In fact the unthinking assertion of masculinity is sometimes so emphatic as to be laughable. Thus Lukács celebrating the proletarian achievement: 'From this standpoint alone does history really become a history of mankind. For it contains nothing that does not lead back ultimately to men and to the relations between men' (Lukács 1968:186). Nonetheless, in the 1970s some feminist socialist thinkers began to see the uses of Marxist standpoint theory for understanding forms of thought emerging from women's exploitation and oppression in a patriarchal sex-gender order.

Dorothy Smith and Nancy Hartsock both began work on this theme in the 1970s, and published more substantial analyses in the following decade. In her major work *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, Smith reprised the theme of earlier essays (Smith 1974, 1981), describing the 'brutal history of women's silencing' by authoritative male discourse. This marginalization of women's experience and thought she represented as part of 'the relations of ruling', a concept that, as she defined it, 'grasps power, organization, direction, and regulation as more pervasively structured than can be expressed in traditional concepts provided by the discourses of power'. It reflects, she says, 'the dynamic advance of the distinctive forms of organizing and ruling contemporary capitalist society, and the patriarchal forms of our contemporary experience' (Smith 1987:3). Where was the sociology in which women would 'talk back' to power from the perspective of their everyday experience? Smith set out to make good the lack by creating 'a way of seeing, from where we actually live, into the powers, processes, and relations that organize and determine the everyday context of that seeing' (ibid:9). Referring explicitly to Marx's use of Hegel's parable of master and servant, Smith saw parallels between 'the claims Marx makes for a knowledge based in the class whose labor produces the conditions of existence, indeed the very existence, of a ruling class, and the claims that can be made for a knowledge of society from the standpoint of women' (ibid:79).

Similarly Nancy Hartsock, in an article on which she began work in 1978, brought a historical materialist approach to the understanding of ‘the phallographic institutions and ideology that constitute the capitalist form of patriarchy’ (Hartsock 1985:231).⁷ She spelled out significant differences between men’s and women’s life activity. Where men have the singular role of producing goods, women as a sex produce both goods and human beings. Unlike those of men, women’s lives are institutionally defined by the production of use values in the home. She observed, therefore, that,

if life itself consists of sensuous activity, the vantage point available to women on the basis of their contribution to subsistence represents an intensification and deepening of the materialist world view available to the producers of commodities in capitalism, an intensification of class consciousness (ibid:235).

Women’s life activity, then, might be considered the source of a specific feminist standpoint. In proposing this, Hartsock spelled out some of the essential features of a ‘standpoint’ in Marxist theory. Material life, whether experienced by a given class or a given sex, both structures and sets limits on the understanding of social relations. In systems characterized by the domination by one group of another, the vision of each will be an inversion of that of the other. The view from above is likely to be both partial and perverse. Later, Hartsock would explain ‘By perverse I meant specifically both strange and harmful’.⁸ On this reading, she concluded that women’s lives surely ‘make available a particular and privileged vantage point on male supremacy, a vantage point that can ground a powerful critique of the phallographic institutions and ideology that constitute the capitalist form of patriarchy’ (ibid:231). Most importantly, in Marxist theory, as Hartsock stresses, the standpoint of the oppressed group is an engaged vision, an achievement. It becomes available only through struggle. Finally, women’s resistance to patriarchy, exposing the inhumanity of human relations, ‘embodies a distress that requires a solution...a social synthesis that does not depend on any of the forms taken by abstract masculinity’ (ibid:246). Like the proletarian standpoint, it ‘points beyond the present, and carries a historically liberatory role’ (ibid:232).

[A] Situated and plural knowledge

Recognizing ‘standpoint’ is to acknowledge that a plausible account of the world can be given from more than one positionality. In this spirit, a number of feminist theorists in the 1980s questioned the basis of knowledge claims (Rose 1983, Jaggar 1983, Harding 1986). Donna Haraway, addressing the multiplicity and diversity of feminist subjects and life experiences, developed the plural concept of ‘situated knowledges’ (Haraway 1988). She

insisted on the embodied nature of all trustworthy seeing and knowing, dismissing 'unlocatable' knowledge claims as irresponsible. In particular, she stressed, one cannot expect to generate an understanding useful to subjugated groups from the universalizing standpoint of the master, 'the Man, the One God, whose Eye produces, appropriates, and orders all difference' (ibid:193). Diverse views from below, clearly rooted in life experiences, were a better bet for more reliable accounts of the world.

The subjugated have a decent chance to be on to the god-trick and all its dazzling – and, therefore, blinding - illuminations. 'Subjugated' standpoints are preferred because they seem to promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world (ibid:191).

'Reliable', however, seemed to claim 'objectivity'. On what basis could partial and competing knowledges be considered objective? Haraway, and a little later Sandra Harding, reclaimed objectivity for situated knowledges. Harding had already contributed, in 1986, a major addition to feminist standpoint theory in her *The Science Question in Feminism*, in which she had savaged the androcentrism of the sciences and called for a feminist 'successor science' project (Harding 1986). Now she argued in defence of 'situated knowledges' that giving up 'the goal of telling one true story about reality' need not mean that 'one must also give up trying to tell less false stories' (Harding 1991:187). Science had never been value-free, as scientists liked to claim. A stronger version of objectivity could be achieved by combining the standpoint from below with enquiry that was reflexive, by actors who named and clearly situated themselves, coming clean about power, interests and values, as informative about the subject and source of knowledge as about the objects of which they spoke.

[A] Labour as Marxist feminist problematic

Even within its own frame of reference, Marxist thought had clearly overlooked an important phenomenon. A distinctive feature of the division of labour is the *sexual division of labour*. This had been precisely Hartsock's project - to render an 'account of the sexual division of labour and its consequences for epistemology' (Hartsock 1985:232). Capitalists reckon on, and profit from, both women's gendered disadvantage in the workplace and their unpaid labour in the home. This oversight has often enough been pointed out by women active in labour movements. It is possible however to represent the oversight as a shortcoming of socialist analysis, without positing a system of male supremacy in which men also benefit from women's labour. Lindsey German, for instance, dismissive of feminism as 'a

limited political programme' (German 2007:166), offers a thorough description of the position of women in capitalist labour relations while firmly rejecting the analysis of those feminist writers - she cites Heidi Hartmann (1981) in particular - who frame women's labour processes within *patriarchal* as well as capitalist relations. This, she writes, is 'an extremely partial reading' of women's history and a retreat from class analysis' (German 2007:154).

Other feminists challenging the gender-blindness of Marxist thought have often tended, like Hartsock, to restrict their corrective analysis to labour processes and relations. Thus Heidi Hartmann, who, as Lindsey German noted, makes a cogent case for understanding patriarchy as a system of power relations distinct from, though deeply implicated in, the capitalist system of class relations, memorably defined patriarchy as 'a set of social relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men and solidarity among them which enable them in turn to dominate women'. Yet she continued immediately, 'The material base of patriarchy is men's control over *women's labor power*' (Hartmann 1981:18, my emphasis). Elaborating on a point she had made two years earlier, that 'job segregation by sex is *the primary mechanism* in capitalist societies that maintains the superiority of men over women' (Hartmann 1979:208, my emphasis) she writes,

Job segregation by sex, by insuring that women have the lower paid jobs, both assures women's economic dependence on men and reinforces notions of appropriate spheres for women and men. For most men, then, the development of family wages secured the material base of male domination in two ways. First, men have the better jobs in the labor market and earn higher wages than women.... Secondly...women do housework, childcare, and perform other services at home which benefit men directly. Women's home responsibilities in turn reinforce their inferior labor market position (Hartmann 1981:22)

That many versions of feminist standpoint limit themselves to issues surrounding women's labour is in some sense a natural response to the fact that Marxist standpoint theory sees proletarian consciousness as resulting uniquely from the worker's experience of being forced to sell his labour power, something 'inseparable from his physical existence' as Lukács puts it, as a mere commodity (Lukács 1968: 166). Kathi Weeks' substantial recovery of feminist standpoint theory two decades after its founding moment is another case in which the analysis dwells on 'women's laboring practices' (Weeks 1998:15). However, interestingly, she explicitly states that she does not propose 'labor as the fundamental source of women's oppression and the only site of feminist agitation'. Rather, the framing of this and earlier work (Weeks 1996) suggests a tactical choice, in the conflictual 1990s, to ground her argument in

labour as a device for transcending the antagonism between modernism and postmodernism. Thus she writes,

[I]f we take laboring practices, rather than signifying practices, as our point of entry into these configurations of gendered subjectivity, we can better account for the coercion under which gender is embodied; few would mistake labor for a practice that can be freely taken up or easily refused. Thus by privileging labor we are better able to keep sight of the constitutive links between systematic socioeconomic relations on the one hand and collective modes of practice and forms of subjectivity on the other' (ibid:96).

[A] Standpoint derived from other phases of life activity

Interestingly, Nancy Hartsock, at the start of the essay analysed above, seems to acknowledge a limitation implicit in her choice of focus. She writes, 'I argue that on the basis of...the sexual division of labour, *one could begin, though not complete*, the construction of a feminist standpoint...' (Hartsock 1985:231, my emphasis). And indeed, some feminist thinkers did subsequently depart from the trope of 'work', the reiteration of the feminist standpoint's grounding in the exploitation of women's labour power and the struggle that evokes. They turned to other phases of women's lived experience to look for the emergence of feminist consciousness.

A highly innovative account came from Mary O'Brien, who, after many years as a practising midwife, turned academic and levelled her gaze on women's experience of conception, pregnancy and birthing. In *The Politics of Reproduction*, published in 1981, she suggested that an important impulse in patriarchy is control of offspring. Men's seed is alienated from them in copulation and conception. Women know their child as part of their own body, but if the man is to be sure of paternity, if he is to 'know' and appropriate the child, he must control the woman. In societal terms this requires co-operation between men. The biological process of reproduction, O'Brien argues, is a 'material substructure of history' necessarily giving rise to distinct forms of consciousness in men and women and accounting for systemic male supremacy as a historical phenomenon. Starting from this insight, she suggests, 'feminism must develop theory, method and strategy, and we must pursue this development from a fresh perspective, namely "the standpoint of women", women working from within women's reality' (O'Brien 1981:188).

O'Brien is not the only feminist thinker to have noted that, while the subjection of the worker to the capitalist may hinge on labour and the working day, the subjection of women to men involves their whole being – physical, sexual, emotional, reproductive, aesthetic, relational – day and night. Others have looked to different aspects of oppression as potential sources of oppositional consciousness, feminist standpoints and movements. Towards the end of *The Science Question in Feminism*, published in 1986, Sandra Harding had already begun to question the singularity of 'the' feminist standpoint. It was the beginning of a period of postmodernist and poststructuralist emphasis on 'difference', on 'fractured identities' and 'hyphenized feminisms'. Socialist-Feminism, Radical-Feminism, Lesbian-Feminism, Black-Marxist-Feminism, Black-Lesbian-Socialist-Feminism, Radical-Women-of-Color – these hyphenizations, Harding couldn't help feeling, bespoke 'an exhilaration felt in the differences in women's perceptions of who we are and of the appropriate politics for navigating through our daily social relations.' Standpoint epistemology, she feared, if it stressed a singular feminist standpoint, might be taken to devalue that exhilaration (Harding 1986:163).

Two decades later she would edit a reader that responded to this doubt, drawing together multiple accounts of feminist standpoints. The volume included an important essay by Patricia Hill Collins arguing that the thinking of Black feminists, the 'outsiders within' US society, must be seen as constituting 'a special standpoint on self, family, and society' (Collins 2004).⁹ And Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva contributed a chapter arguing that women of different racial, ethnic, cultural and class backgrounds, notably in the 'global south', have evolved a distinctive shared analysis in confronting the threat posed by capitalist exploitation to the natural environment and ultimately to human and other life on earth. They represented this consciousness in terms of a rejection both of the Enlightenment notion that Man's freedom and happiness depends on 'his' eventual emancipation from Nature by the forces of reason and rationality, and the Marxist concept of humankind's historic march from the 'realm of necessity' (i.e. the realm of nature) to the 'realm of freedom'. The feminist standpoint here takes the form of what the authors call the 'subsistence perspective' (Mies and Shiva 2004).¹⁰

Besides, by now it was no longer only diverse positionalities, in recognition of intersectionality, that were being proposed as sources of standpoints - it was also different phases of women's life activity. Another chapter in Harding's collection showed Sara Ruddick, for instance, arguing for maternal thinking, featuring 'preservative love', as generative of a feminist standpoint (Ruddick 2004).¹¹ In this vein, convinced by many years of empirical research in organizations of the women's peace movement, I entered this debate, proposing that the profoundly gendered phenomena of violence and war are significant

features of women's 'life activity' and that resistance to them tends to generate a distinctive analysis. The social shaping of masculinity in patriarchy towards a readiness to prevail by use of force results in a marked predominance of men in violent criminality and in the ranks and commanding structures of armed forces. Women are a significant proportion of the victims of war and also experience gendered effects of militarization in everyday life in peacetime societies. I termed their critical analyses and mobilizations against violence and war a feminist antimilitarist standpoint (Cockburn 2007, 2010).

A further and somewhat startling Marxist feminist innovation was that of Anna Jónasdóttir who, in 1994, observed that we had been in error in so often reducing the 'material' in women's life experience to the economic. 'Work', she said, 'neither is nor ever can be life's only and total "prime want"' (Jónasdóttir 1994:97) We were forgetting emotion. Empathy, attachment. In short, love. The activities around which the sexual struggle revolves, she maintained, are neither work nor the products of work, 'but human love – caring, ecstasy' (ibid:24). In making this case, Jónasdóttir represented herself as rendering reality 'from a standpoint best described as a certain kind of radical feminist stance' (ibid:17).

Women and men, Jónasdóttir believes, needing, seeking and practising love, 'enter into specific productive relations with each other in which they 'quite literally produce new human beings'. To this point she was going no further than the 'conception and birthing' insight of Mary O'Brien, mentioned above. She went on to add however that women and men 'also produce (and reproduce) themselves and each other as active, emotional, and reasoning people' (ibid:63). It was in this process, she believed, that men became empowered. Adapting the Marxist theory of alienated labour, she suggested that

men can continually appropriate significantly more of women's life force and capacity than they give back to women. Men can build themselves up as powerful social beings and continue to dominate women through their constant accumulation of the existential forces taken and received from women. If capital is accumulated alienated labor, male authority is accumulated alienated love (ibid:26).

[A] Truth or power?

An informative exchange of ideas on standpoint took place in the feminist journal *Signs* in 1997. In an article titled 'Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited', Susan Hekman tackled several problems for standpoint theory raised by postmodernism. She remarked that 'among younger feminist theorists, feminist standpoint theory is frequently

regarded as a quaint relic of feminism's less sophisticated past'. Its inspiration, Marxism, had been discredited in both theory and practice. Standpoint theory seemed to 'be at odds with the issue that has dominated feminist debate in the past decade: difference' (Hekman 2004:225).¹²

Hekman's aim however was not to dismiss but to reinstate feminist standpoint theory, by stressing a plurality of standpoints. She proposed Thomas Kuhn's 'paradigm shift' as a conceptual device capable of giving feminist standpoint postmodernist credibility. The new rejection of the possibility of absolute truth, the substitution of a notion of multiple and relative truths, should be read as a paradigm shift in the sense Kuhn intended. For Hekman, the theory as proposed by Hartsock and Harding stalled on an illogicality she found troubling in Marxist thought more generally: social constructionist and absolutist conceptions of truth are in contradiction. She argued that the lifeworld, like every other human activity, is *discursively* constituted. A 'standpoint' therefore cannot claim to express the 'truth' about 'reality' – it must be understood as one representation among others, political and value-laden, 'a place from which feminists can articulate a counterhegemonic discourse and argue for a less repressive society' (ibid:239).

Hartsock, Collins, Harding and Smith fiercely countered Hekman's 'Truth and Method' article, arguing in the same issue of *Signs*¹³ that she was mistaken in prioritizing the matter of 'truth': what is at stake in 'standpoint' is *not truth but power*. It is specifically about challenging, from the position of the marginal, silenced and subjected, the conceptual practices of power, the 'view from above'. Furthermore, the subjects posited by standpoint theory are not a rag-bag collection of individuals. Rather they are groups sharing an experience of subjection to and by power – capitalist power, patriarchal power, white power. Trodden down, and looking upwards to the systemic level, they find themselves an oppositional consciousness¹⁴ that enables them to become a resistant, challenging collective subject (Hartsock 2004, Collins 2004, Harding 2004, Smith 2004).

Hekman's article was symptomatic of a body of feminist work on standpoint that was to follow in the first decade of the new millennium, much of it detached from its roots in Marxist thought. Indeed, already in 2005, Michael Ryan's entry on 'Standpoint Theory' in an *Encyclopedia of Social Theory* formulates it in its entirety as a product of feminist and 'multicultural' thought, without any reference Marx or Marxism (Ryan 2005:789). Prioritizing the issue of truth claims, many of these later authors found their primary inspiration less in Hartsock and Smith than in Donna Haraway's 'situated knowledges' mentioned above (Haraway 1988). Marcel Stoetzler and Nira Yuval-Davis, for example, proposed a strengthening of standpoint theory by the introduction of a concept of the 'situated

imagination', in parallel with that of situated knowledge, arguing that it is only through a process of imagining that 'the transitions from positionings to practices, practices to standpoints, knowledge, meaning, values and goals, actually take place' (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis 2002:320).

A 2009 issue of *Hypatia* devoted to standpoint theory contained several articles in which the perspective of the social scientist, together with his or her problem in deciding how to evaluate competing truth claims, was largely substituted for the perspective of the feminist subject and her struggle to survive and thrive in capitalist patriarchy. Thus Janet Kourany tests standpoint theory against alternative methodological approaches in feminist studies, cautiously endorsing it as a usable academic resource, despite the many questions she believes it leaves unresolved (Kourany 2009). Kristina Rolin problematizes the notion that the perspective of the disadvantaged is liable to be less partial and distorted than that of the powerful (the concept of 'epistemic advantage'). She proposes a lesser claim: standpoint theory may be understood as a resource for feminist epistemology and philosophy of science on the more modest ground that it simply 'urges feminist scholars to pay attention to relations of power as a distinctive kind of obstacle to the production of scientific knowledge' (Rolin 2009:222). Joseph Rouse, in the same volume of *Hypatia*, traces the history of feminist standpoint theorization with the aim of moving 'beyond the constitutive tropes of standpoint theory' (Rouse 2009:207). In doing so, he represents standpoints as competing knowledge claims generated by people 'as part of practical and perceptual interaction with one another in shared surroundings', without reference to power relations, subjugation or struggle. In historicizing standpoint theory he notes that it dates back to the work of Smith, Hartsock and Collins, adding '*arguably...even to Marx and Hegel*' (2009: 202, my emphasis). By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, it seems, Marx had become, to the generation of social scientists educated in 1990s postmodernism, an obscure figure, no longer one but two centuries back in time.

The flaccidity of these recent accounts signals an amnesia, a forgetting that, in Kathi Weeks' words, a standpoint is 'a project, not an inheritance'. It is 'an ongoing achievement rather than a spontaneous attribute or consciousness...'. It is 'both a product and an instrument of feminist struggle' (Weeks 1998:8). In other words it is in, and of, movements of resistance and revolution. And in the meantime new political insurgencies have been occurring in the second decade of the 21st century, sparked by life experiences very different from those of the industrial working class as known to Lukács in the early 20th century and of the women of Second Wave Feminism among whom Dorothy Smith and Nancy Hartsock lived and worked half a century later. The World Social Forum events have mobilized

activists from a wide range of global movements. Billion Women Rise has precipitated women into street protests against male violence from New Delhi to Kinshasa and London. Occupy has brought young people of many countries into city encampments and squatted banks to protest against financial crime and austerity policies. They call themselves the 'ninety-nine percent'. We have to probe deeper into the collective subjectivities emerging. Who are they? Who are we? We need to pay careful attention to the specificity of the power relations against which we are rising in rebellion, as one conjuncture gives way to the next. How do these systems intersect with and amplify each other? It is not in the analyses of academics, but in the voices, leaflets, placards and Tweets of new historic subjects, sparked to consciousness by new scandals of subjugation and exploitation, that contemporary standpoints are being expressed. And it is in these movements that a deeper understanding of the value of standpoint theory for future transformative change is likely to be forged.

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NOTES:

¹ This quotation is from the 1959 edition of Volume III of *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, the original version of which, prepared for publication by Frederick Engels, appeared in 1985, after Marx's death. As is well known, Chapter 50, the final chapter of the volume, titled 'Classes', is a fragment, no more than a couple of pages in length, destined to remain unfinished.

² The quotations are from Part 1 of *The German Ideology* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, in an edition of 1970. Written in 1845-6, the full work remained unpublished during the lifetimes of its authors.

³ *History and Class Consciousness* was originally published in 1923. In this passage Lukacs is referring to Marx's *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, published in 1843.

⁴ A critique of the Young Hegelians, first published in 1845.

⁵ Originally published 1807.

⁶ The *Prison Notebooks* were written by Antonio Gramsci in prison in Italy between 1929 and 1935 and first published in the late 1940s, following the defeat of Fascism and the end of the Second World War.

⁷ Nancy C.M.Hartsock's article, 'The feminist standpoint: Developing the ground for a specifically feminist historical materialism' was first published in 1983, in Hintikka, Merrill B. and Sandra Harding (eds) *Discovering Reality Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Methodology, Metaphysics and Philosophy of Science* (D.Reidel, Boston and Dordrecht). It was reprinted as Chapter 10 in her *Money, Sex and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism* in 1985.

⁸ Hartsock in interview with Thonette Myking (see Myking 2007).

⁹ Originally published in as an article of the same title in *Social Problems* (1986), Collins' argument was spelled out at greater length in Collins 1991.

¹⁰ An excerpt from the introduction to their book *Ecofeminism* published in 1993.

¹¹ This was an excerpt from her book *Maternal Thinking*, published in 1989.

¹² Hekman's article, which originally appeared in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol.22, No.21 in 1997, was later republished, along with those of its discussants, in a collection edited by Sandra Harding (2004). The page numbers cited here refer to the latter publication.

¹³ The references given here are to their articles as republished in a volume edited by Harding (1987).

¹⁴ The phrase 'oppositional consciousness' is that of Chela Sandoval who, in a seminal article in the Harding (2004) collection elaborated 'a topography of consciousness that identifies nothing more and nothing less than the modes the subordinated of the United States (of any gender, race, or class) claim as politicized and oppositional stances in resistance to domination' (Sandoval 2004:200). Her stress on subjection, power and the multiplicity of resistant standpoints was an important contribution to transcending the antagonisms into which postmodernism had cast standpoint theory.