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**2015**

**https://doi.org/10.25595/2657**

**Veröffentlichungsversion / published version**
**Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article**

**Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:**

Pivec, Nataša: *Feminist thought(s) as dirty intellectuality: the case of Andrea Dworkin*, in: Gender : Zeitschrift für Geschlecht, Kultur und Gesellschaft, Jg. 7 (2015) Nr: 3, 31–43. DOI: https://doi.org/10.25595/2657.

**Erstmalig hier erschienen / Initial publication here: https://doi.org/10.3224/gender.v7i3.20841**

GenderOpen – Repositorium für die Geschlechterforschung: www.genderopen.de

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# Feminist thought(s) as dirty intellectuality: the case of Andrea Dworkin

Zusammenfassung

Feministische Gedanken als schmutzige Intellektualität: der Fall Andrea Dworkin

Das breite Spektrum feministischer Gedanken von der Kunst bis zur Erkenntnistheorie, die sich um Geschlecht und seine vielfältigen Arrangements in der Gesellschaft drehen, werden als „anders" oder „schmutzig" dargestellt, wenn diese sich nicht in vorherrschende erkenntnistheoretische Prämissen oder künstlerische Standards der hegemonialen Männlichkeit einordnen lassen. Das Konzept der Andersheit wird der Wissenden/Produzentin aufgrund ihres Geschlechtes und ihres epistemischen Fokus zugeschrieben, der dichotome Rahmungen eines Körper-Geist-Dualismus, erkenntnistheoretische Traditionen, geschlechtsspezifische Berufseinteilungen, Geschlechtsbinarismus und Körpernormen konventioneller Weiblichkeit durchbricht. Das Leben und Werk der radikalen Feministin Andrea Dworkin wird in der Analyse herangezogen, um die folgende theoretische Prämisse des Artikels zu bestätigen: Eine Frau, die sich als Wissende positioniert, Wissen produziert und als Feministin (selbst)kategorisiert (wird), wird als eine Bedrohung für das System der Geschlechterordnung, seine Strukturen, Diskurse und Praktiken wahrgenommen.

*Schlüsselwörter*
Wissen, Feminismus, Anderes, Verkörperung, Embodiment, Andrea Dworkin

Summary

The wide spectrum of feminist thoughts, from art to epistemology, which are centred around gender and its multi-leveled arrangements in society is, when not aligned with predominant epistemic premises or artistic standards of hegemonic masculinity, rendered as Other or dirty. The concept of Otherness is ascribed to the knower/producer on behalf of her sex and her epistemic focus, which transgresses several dichotomous frameworks of the body–mind dualism, epistemological traditions, gendered categorization of professions, gender binarism and body norms of conventional femininity. The life and work of radical feminist Andrea Dworkin was analyzed in order to confirm the theoretical premise of the article, namely that when a woman positions herself as a knower and produces knowledge, (self)categorized as a feminist, she is perceived as a threat to the system of structures, discourses and practices of the gender order.

*Keywords*
knowledge, feminism, Other, embodiment, Andrea Dworkin

## 1 Introduction

The term "feminist thought" is a broad one which embraces any discourse which employs feminism as an epistemic principle and is delivered in various types of knowledge transfer: unwritten oral tradition, written literary word and academic epistemology. Epistemologies, or highly elaborated thoughts, are hence regarded as "Other" or "dirty",

assuming that the epistemic position of feminist knowledge rivals the dominant systems of knowledge/power, which renders them as epistemic dirt.

In order to be able to assign epistemic "Otherness" to knowledge production, three conditions must be fulfilled: (a) a discourse itself is construed as Other; (b) epistemic producers are the embodiment of Other; a diverse and mostly overlapping category of individuals which are being Othered on the grounds of their gender, ethnicity, skin colour, citizenship, class, age, sexuality, ableness and other intersecting social positions; and (c) the dominant epistemic perspective for constructing the category of Other is a privileged one.

When discussing feminist thoughts as dirty intellectuality, key signifiers of the Othering process are the knower's gender and the epistemic focus of and inquiry into social reality, its arrangements and relations, embedded within the (characterized or self-characterized) feminist perspective. The process of Othering also includes (where a feminist knower is concerned) the process of gendering the knower and her knowledge. However, the focal point of epistemic devaluation is the inevitable adjunction of the (woman's) body to the knower, an element which is categorically erased from the tradition of knowledge production and its legitimization/institutionalization.

The reason why Andrea Dworkin was chosen as a proponent of "dirty intellectuality" rather than of Gloria Steinem or Catharine MacKinnon (the faces of second-wave feminism) as the basis for this article is that she (unintentionally) personifies the media stereotype of a radical feminist. The stereotypical second-wave radical feminist was more or less a vengeful mass media caricature of feminism in which feminists were portrayed as hairy, fat and angry lesbians. Ironically (or not), Dworkin embodied of all those traits and, as I will be elaborating, her refusal to be a docile body and complaisant thinker renders her a corporeal and epistemological threat.

## 2 (Non-)objectivity of universal knowledge

Theories are world views or perspectives which provide an understanding of social reality, although their main epistemic premise is the belief in an objective, autonomous and bodiless knower whose perspective derives from "nowhere" or a "god's eye" position (Code 2014: 10). This position reified Western, white and male ways of knowing as the only reliable epistemic source. Although it was merely one perspective, value-laden with hegemonic masculinity, it was encoded as universal, transhistorical and transnational. Hegemonic masculinity as the epistemic norm is an intersection of sex (male), gender (masculinity), sexuality (heterosexuality), skin colour (white), ethnicity (Caucasian), religious tradition (Christian), class (middle and upper class), education (higher education), language (English), ableness (mental and physical), citizenship, age (middle age) and bodiless objectivity. It was concealed as a standard of humanity, generality and objectivity in order to reinforce the fantasm of human homogeneity. However, mostly it was a guarantee and a warning to Others not to undermine it with their rival ways of knowing, however unelaborated they may seem.

Epistemic objectivity as a part of the Cartesian tradition, which was influential in terms of modern and contemporary production of knowledge, established several coa-

ligned arguments which were all embedded in a dichotomous pairing of the world view: body–mind, impure–pure, female–male, practice–theory, private–public, emotion–reason, particularity–universality, subjectivity–objectivity and experience–knowledge. As is evident from this nomenclature, body, impure, female, practice, private, emotion, particularity, subjectivity and experience are on the same side, a side which is excluded from parameters, standards and norms of pure knowledge. Pure knowledge, a Cartesian epistemic ideal, is an abstract thought, unpolluted by other senses (i.e. body, emotion) or to be more precise, unpolluted by Others.

The idea of the Other is a social mechanism which evaluates and cements other people, cultures or even ideas from a privileged position or as Michael Pickering (2001: 48) puts it, "is a strategy of symbolic expulsion, a mundane exorcistic ritual, used to control ambivalence and create boundaries". The creation of boundaries is dependent on the perception that the coherence or stability of the system is under threat, or as Mary Douglas identified this disorder, dirt. Dirt, as she defined it, is "matter out of place, the by-product of systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements" (Douglas 1992: 35). As I will demonstrate, feminist thoughts are understood as knowledgeably improper or dirty and treated as a pollutant in to the epistemic establishment or creative artistry. Ludmila Jordanova (1989: 109) defined the process of Othering as "the distancing of what is peripheral, marginal and incidental from a cultural norm, of illicit danger from safe legitimacy". The universal objectivity of knowledge is a part of a Western cultural imperative of normality, because the Other is always mutually complemented with the concept of normality. Normality implies order, or at least a set of prescribed standards and conventions which, in an epistemic context, advise us on how and what to think.

## 3 Intellectuality as social marginality

In their book *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1991), Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann underlined the potential Otherness of the male (!) intellectual as a marginal or unoffical expert whose expertise is not congruent with the existing epistemic and social order. The intellectual (i.e. knower, epistemic agent), as Berger and Luckmann (1991: 143) claim,

> "implies a redefinition of knowledge vis-à-vis the 'official' lore [and] his social marginality expresses his lack of theoretical integration within the universe of his society. He appears as the counter-expert in the business of defining reality. Like the "official" expert, he has a design for society at large. But while the former's design is in tune with the institutional programmes, serving as their theoretical legitimation, the intellectual's exists in an institutional vacuum, socially objectivated at best in a sub-society of fellow-intellectuals."

Up until the 1960s, knowledge was presumptively defined as male to the extent that the usage of male pronouns was considered as neutral, so it was palpable that the marginal intellectual was male. It was not until second-wave feminism that male objectivity was revealed as gendered. Berger and Luckmann (1991) demonstrated two options for

the marginal intellectual's survival in wider society. The first is to withdraw into an intellectual sub-society, which serves as an emotional haven and the social base for the objectivation of the intellectual's definitions of reality, which is filled with significant fellow-members of the sub-society. The other option is revolution or replacing the current social structure with the intellectual's one (Berger/Luckmann 1991: 145). Yet, the revolutionary or counter-definitions of reality were, from a historical perspective, feasible only to the revolutionists of mutable hegemonic masculinity with a social redesign, which was another variation of unchanged gender order at its core.

The conception of marginal intellectual developed from a gender-privileged epistemic position. Marginality, by Lorraine Code's definition (2014: 15),

> "includes being left out as known or knowable, side-lined as a putative knower; being diminished or damaged by/in bodies of knowledge, being denied credibility in testimonial and other epistemic processes and practices; being discredited within a certain hegemonic formula or set of directives for what counts as *bona fide* knowledge."

Being placed in Other positions rather than in hegemonic masculinity translates into being on the margins of the social order in terms of norms, practices, discourses, structures and institutions. However, these different dimensions of marginality are not isolated, they overlap and lead to the silencing, ignoring or discrediting of certain voices and points of view – a woman producer of feminist knowledge in this case.

## 4 Feminism as Other(ed) knowledge

Dominant knowledge was until the 1960s constructed as gender neutral and second-wave feminism's research, theory and politics has peeled away its objective surface. Mary O'Brien (1980 found in Miller/Brewer 2003: 113) dubbed the mainstream epistemology "malestream knowledge" where the supremacy of objectivity labels any Other methods of cognitive acquisition inadequate. Second-wave feminists started to repudiate the objectivity and universality of male experiences, masked as knowledge and focused on women's lives, experiences, oppression, devaluation and the erasure of the feminine knowledges as well as the notion that women are not capable of being knowledge producers. Firstly, they revealed that knowledge is partial, perspectival and situated in the knower's social positions and, mostly, that it is an institutionalized experience. According to the dominant epistemic conception, however, knowledge should transcend experience, which is deep-seated in social positionalities and personal embodiment and considered a second-class cognitive source with no or less authority. Experience is polluted because of its inclusiveness; everybody has access to experience, but only members of a select and privileged epistemic group have the exclusive power to produce, reproduce and distribute their experiences as universal knowledge.

Feminism, on the other hand, had certain agendas and placed its emphasis on women's experiences, lives and oppressions. However, historically speaking, feminism is a branched theory and practice which cannot be consensual about women's oppression or emancipation on the global level. A brief look at the history of feminism reveals, for example, that second-wave feminism was engrossed in the structural and material

factors for understanding women's oppression, whereas post-1980s feminism was more preoccupied with symbolic and representational issues. The dispositions of several feminist perspectives differed in their objectives and strategies for women's emancipation. Liberal feminism focused on equal rights and opportunities, based on the notion that women and men are the same, while radical feminism concentrated on women's rights and on dismantling the hetero-patriarchy. Materialist and socialist feminism were oriented to issues of gender and the class oppression of women within structural and capitalist aspects of social organization, while the objective of postmodern feminism is to deconstruct metanarratives as well as the category of gender and women. Post-colonial feminism, as well as black feminism, focuses on ethnic differences, racialization, colonialism and racism in feminist theory (Abbott/Wallace/Tyler 2005: 31–47).

Feminism can be regarded as epistemic dirt for at least two reasons: (a) the subject and epistemic agent are mostly women, and (b) experience is credited as a valuable cognitive source which leads to certain criteria of epistemic purity (i.e. objectivity, abstraction, man's reason) not being met. Feminist epistemology, which is considered as improper, is thus still being marginalized within mainstream epistemologies. The knowledge of Others is characterized as experiential or subjugated knowledge, as Michel Foucault (1980: 82) defines it, "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their tasks or insufficently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity". Subjugated knowledges are able to oppose and struggle against unitary, scientific and formal discourses. There are various experiences of the real, yet their credibility and legitimacy is dependent on the amount of symbolic power.

Women's experience, which is constructed as subjective, and men's, which is constructed as objective, that is an experience which is informed by theory (Code 1991: 245), lacks symbolic power in public participation; women's knowledge is prone to a more (sometimes even benevolent or unconsciously driven) epistemic suspicion.

## 4.1 Embodied knowledge

Before the ascension of second-wave feminist epistemologies, the traditional epistemic agent was not only an objective male, he was also a bodiless entity. Woman, on the other hand, was constructed as a subjective Other which lacked cognitive objectivity and an embodied Other. The correlation between woman and body is a continuation of the Cartesian mind–body dualism and its classification of dichotomous pairings. The opposition between mind and body rendered the latter an unstable object in need of being manipulated, handled and disciplined (Howson 2004: 7). Body, as the bearer of flesh, emotionality and sexuality, connotes boundlessness, a state of being with unstable or flexible boundaries. Grosz (1994: 203) defines the woman's body as leaky and lacking in bodily self-containment on account of her multiple bodily orifices, which is why bodily fluids and secretions operate as a symbolic indicator of uncontrolled seepage. Leakiness of the body could be translated into the assumption that the body controls the woman and diminishes her mind or *ratio*. Because the woman's body is not sealed-up and impermeable, it is described, evaluated and standardized as dirty, a conspicuous trait in which something or somebody is threatening the order.

The perceptibility of the knower's body is epistemologically significant, because it leads to the acknowledgement that the knower is no longer an illusion of a self-contained and autonomous agent, but is situated in a web of (de)privilege and (non)power in a physical-social reality, which relies on the intersection of the knower's social positions. Situatedness generally influences the production, evaluation, circulation and credibility of knowledge and the knower. Ways of withholding the epistemic acknowledgement of feminist knowers are systematically encouraged by means of the epistemic standard, the evaluative description of feminist knowledge as the rival or Other and the construction of women knowers as corporeal agents with an ever-threatening irrationality and cognitive incapacity. Epistemic oppression of Othered knowledges is manifested not just on account of the systematic withholding of such acknowledgement, but by means of more subtle strategies which are appropriate to postmodern Western societies, that is representational violence.

## 5 A mechanism for handling Otherness: representational violence

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1955 found in Bauman 2000: 101) introduced two strategies for coping with the Otherness of others, one anthropoemic and one anthropophagic. The first strategy was referred to as "vomiting". It manifests as prohibiting physical contact, dialogue, social intercourse, commercial trade etc., which in its extreme version means annihilation of the Others (incarceration, deportation, murder). The second strategy is called "ingesting". Here, the Other/they are no longer distinguishable from us (cannibalism, cultural assimilation), which means that their Otherness is annihilated.

A contemporary variation of ingesting in postmodern Western societies, as a means of handling Otherness, is representational violence. As is apparent from the term itself, this is a type of violence or aggression which employs representations of certain groups, individuals or ideas in their stereotypical, selective and reductionist manner. The dominant discourses used to represent what is considered as the Other can arbitrarily monopolize the understanding of particular realities, especially when their meaning is not complicit with the existing order of hegemonic masculinity.

When discussing representational violence, the prime role of the producer and distributer is to occupy the mass media, which perpetuate societal standards of what is normal(ized) and what is not. The power of the mass media to selectively portray Others mostly lies in the invisible opportunity to engage in these actions via discursive choices of topic, language, style, sources, genre and meanings pinned to certain images (e.g. feminism = angry writings, knowledge = male, women = fat body). By using this approach, only select cultural patterns are regarded as normal, natural and commonsensical, so new meanings of phenomena, individuals, social groups or ideas are shaped by this standard of normality. This is the central advantage of representational violence, namely homogenizing what is diverse, disregarding potential complexities of identities and ideas, normalizing it to standards of dominant social order and negatively portraying those who differ from the majority's perceptions and conceptions of normality. Representa-

tional violence is a narrower and more visible type of symbolic violence, a subtle and almost invisible violence which is produced and reproduced via symbolic channels of communication and cognition (a language, a lifestyle and distinctive property; Bourdieu 2001: 2), imposed by dominant groups and compliantly accepted by the oppressed ones. Their compliance renders the social order normal and even beneficial to them.

## 6 Andrea Dworkin – the Other: a writer, an angry feminist, a fat woman

Thus far, I have tried to show how Otherness is a multifaceted feature (descriptive, evaluative and normative) as the result of the intersecting identity locations, which cross-fertilize each other. I have chosen Andrea Dworkin as a case study in order to demonstrate those intersecting Otherings.

Andrea Dworkin (1946–2005) was an American writer, an angry feminist and a fat woman. Yet, the malestream understanding of her does not necessarily follow that order, nor are the adjectives (feminist, angry, fat) used to signify her employed as discursively deconstructive or empowering language. Applying Lévi-Strauss's strategies for handling the Other to Andrea Dworkin would mean the "vomiting" – the "malestream" disdain of her work.

At the beginning of her book *Heartbreak* (2002: viii) Dworkin placed a quote by the French poet Rimbaud – "*Je est un autre*" (I is Another) – which simply summarizes her position of being Other.

To explain Dworkin's Otherness, I will begin with her thoughts on being a woman writer, a profession which transgresses the gender–work binaries which are ideally comprised of man's incorporeal creation and woman's corporeal nurture. In her book *Intercourse* (2006: xxxi), Dworkin writes that

> "[m]en often react to women's words – speaking and writing – as if they were acts of violence; sometimes men react to women's words with violence. So we lower our voices. Women whisper. Women apologize. Women shut up. Women trivialize what we know. Women shrink. Women pull back."

In this short paragraph, Dworkin highlights the essence of a woman's subordination (muteness, silencing and voicelessness) which spreads across every level of society. Previously she had highlighted the position of the woman writer in *Heartbreak* (2002: xi): "A woman writer makes herself conspicuous by publishing, not by writing [because] the public domain in which the published work lives has been considered the male domain". The most unwelcoming in the realm of knowledge is therefore a woman's public voice or acknowledged knowledge which is even more troublesome if it deviates from the masculine norms of what women's writing should be about, a deviation from what in *Intercourse* (2006: xi) she calls "the quintessential feminine pose – to be liked above all".

The gendered prejudice about the mere existence of women writers is elaborated in the following paragraph taken from *Heartbreak* (2002: xi):

"A published woman's reputation, if she is alive, will depend on many small conformities – in her writing but especially in her life. Does she practice the expression of gendering a good way, which is to say, does she convince, in her person, that she is female down to the very marrow of her bones?"

When I refer to Dworkin as an epistemic agent, her main source is the subjugated knowledge or women's experiences and alternative readings of classic (mostly literary) works via her own appropriation of critical discursive analysis (CDA). By this she exposes subject matters (e.g. rape, pornography, prostitution, sexuality, subjugation of women, feminization of poverty) which are otherwise considered to be unfit, underdeveloped or improper for masculine conceptions about what an author should write about. Code (1991: 177) writes:

"The content of ordinary and institutionalized knowledge about 'women's nature' are media representations about women's activities, medical judgments about women's health, educational claims about women's intelligence, historical analysis of women's experiences, philosophical conceptions about female subjectivity, psychological prescriptions for normal womanhood … folklore, stereotypes, ideology and prejudice. Anyone can be expert about women except women themselves."

Dworkin, a radical feminist, was the self-proclaimed empathic voice of women and for women, not as an expert, but as a medium. In her *Letters from a War Zone* (1993: 5) she writes

"I believe that women must wage a war against silence: against socially coerced silence; against politically preordained silence; against economically choreographed silence; against the silence created by the pain and despair of sexual abuse and second-class status".

Her overt denial of the masculine ideal of objectivity is clearly represented in the following paragraph taken from her book *Woman Hating* (1974: 24):

"This book … is not cerebral wisdom, or academic horseshit, or ideas carved in granite or destined for immortality … Academics lock books in a tangled web of mindfuck and abstraction. The notion is that there are ideas, then art, then somewhere else, unrelated, life."

Her experience of reality as a woman is the key feature of Dworkin's work because she does not separate herself from her work or vice versa. In *Letters from a War Zone* (1993: 5), she writes: "I wrote to communicate and to survive: as a writer and as a woman; for me, the two are one. I wrote about them because I care about fairness and justice for women". She goes on (1993: 4):

"Being a writer isn't easy or even very civilized. It is not a bourgeois indulgence. It is not a natural outcome of good manners mixed with intelligence and filtered through language. It is primitive and it is passionate. Writers get underneath the agreed-on amenities, the lies a society depends onto maintain the status quo, by becoming ruthless, pursuing the truth in the face of intimidation, not by being compliant or solicitous. No society likes it and no society says thank you. The society will mobilize to destroy the writer who opposes or threatens its favorite cruelties: in this case, the dominance of men over women."

Dworkin also highlighted the gendered aspect of writing in one simple sentence in *Letters from a War Zone* (1993: 31), "She is not a male writer, which means that she cleans her own toilet and does her own laundry". A male writer is often constructed as a "detached genius", who needs someone to take care of mundane everyday errands. But a

woman writer cannot (or need not) escape mundane reality because she is already societally circumscribed by the domestic sphere and dirt. In her book *Right-Wing Women* (1983: 195), Dworkin also very directly explains why men hate feminism: "because women are hated … and [feminism] is the liberation movement of women". And this is one of the characteristics of Dworkin's writing as Ariel Levy emphasized in the foreword to *Intercourse* (2006: xx): she is ferocious, intellectually confident, her writing style is not solicitous and she refuses to be docile – literarily, politically, corporeally or epistemologically. Dworkin does not embellish or polish her views on feminism, she unapologetically advocates it.

But Dworkin also speaks semiotically. On the cover of *Letters from a War Zone* (1993), her body language (pose, outfit, appearance) glorifies radical feminism – her hair is natural, she is wearing overalls, she is fat, the photograph was taken outside, she is standing, her pose and body occupy the space around her and there is a half-smile, almost a smirk on her face. This visual representation is everything radical feminists could aspire to. Her refusal to exude any kind of docility is evident in her dismissal of bodily self-discipline. Dworkin never positions herself as a Body by occupying a corporeal standpoint (e.g. she never discusses her weight), so her fatness is her unconscious transgression of bodily norms and another means of occupying more (material) space.

The feminist discourse of fatness can be translated into the rejection of the dominant paradigm comprising biomedical and androcentric discourses, which pathologises and therefore strives to "repair" women's fat bodies. Being fat is a corporeal manifestation of occupying the physical space and trangressing the limits of the body – being undisciplined and unbound.

In contemporary Western societies women's bodies are disciplined into what Kim Chernin (1981 found in Bordo 2003: 141) has defined as and what is now widely known as "tyranny of slenderness" which can be interpreted as a material and symbolic reduction of women's space. The idea of female slenderness is not just a gendered issue, but is interconnected with skin colour, ethnicity, socio-economic class, sexual orientation and sexual identity. It is a white, heterosexual, middle-class and cisgendered standard, and Dworkin, by meeting all of these criteria, represents a transgression of these norms by being fat.

Fatness is associated with carelessness, overindulgence and pleasure, which is why the fat body is established as unbounded and hence corporeally transgressive and in need of being regulated and punished, because it is reminiscent of the culturally buried notion of embodiment as being fluid. A fat body is evidence that boundaries (although corporeal) are more flexible than we would like to imagine. This material instability attacks the Western binary logic – dichotomies of inside/outside, mind/body, male/female, self/Other, knowledge/experience, homosexual/heterosexual, black/white. Fat, gendered as female, is, as excessive corporeality, also excessively female (Braziel 2001: 239). Fat women are therefore "too much women", but fatness is also potentially queer because fat people do not fall into normative gender definitions of masculine strength or feminine grace (Sykes 2011: 95).

As already mentioned, fatness is also a socio-economic category. A fat body defies the fundamental core of capitalistic economies: efficiency, productivity, hard work and self-discipline. It is a signifier (and living proof) of laziness, lack of self-restraint

and self-containment. Fat is a capitulation to (consumerist) desire over (capitalist) self-denial (Bordo 2003: 201). But when woman's fatness is explored from the perspective of the division of domestic labour (woman = carer, man = breadwinner), where women are nourishers of others first and themselves later or not at all (i.e. preparing food, serving and cleaning after others), then being fat can be understood as woman's act of selfishness and right to exercise her pleasure. Being a fat woman means that the woman nourishes herself and that her desires and needs (for food) come first. The correlation between food and sensuality was established in the Victorian era, on account of the increasing absence of women eating in public or voraciously (Bordo 2003: 110). Voracious eating is constructed as a male pleasure so woman's fatness is a queer or transgressive result of otherwise male activity which enables pleasure. If insatiable eating in public is still a taboo for women, then fatness can serve as a public reminder that when eating happens, it is only performed in the private sphere, away from the male gaze. Prohibiting woman's indulgence of food also represents a ban on woman's enjoyment of life, given that food is a primary source for physical survival. Female hunger is a metaphor for unleashed female power and desire (Bordo 2003: 116), a striving for public recognition, independence and sexual agency, because a woman who is eating has to be taken seriously – she can devour anything or anyone, just as a man can. As a feminist thinker and a fat woman, Dworkin is a symbol of a man-eater, a devourer of her object, namely the patriarchy.

The way Dworkin dressed was another palpable rejection of the traditional femininity; her overalls became her sartorial and political trademark. In his book *Fashion as Communication* (2005), Malcolm Barnard investigated how fashion produces, reproduces and revolutionizes gender (among other identity indicators) by (de)classifying the body into the binarism of femininity and masculinity. Clothes are nonverbal communication which reaffirms or repudiates the culturally imposed and arbitrary relation between gender and fashion. The historical correlation between fashion and femininity arose in the late 19th century when global socio-economic changes were occurring (e.g. capitalism, industrialization, urbanization, the formation of the middle class, the public/private divide), accompanied with a new moral order of masculine values (functionality, rationality, civility) which prohibited men from wearing extravagant clothes (Tseëlon 1995: 23). Women's (or wives') clothing became a visual emblem of men's (or husbands') social status. Fashion and other ornamentation made the woman's body culturally visible and immediately categorized women as feminine or non-feminine womanhood.

Dworkin primarily wore overalls, clothing which signifies her overt rejection of emphasized sartorial femininity comprising feminine items (e.g. make-up, dresses, high heels, stockings, fur, feathers etc.) and the social meanings attached to them. Those meanings inherently constituted a woman as an object of beauty, who cares for and nurturs a family, a silent observer and sexual prey without agency. It is important to bear in mind the historical context in order to be able to understand Dworkin's (deliberate or not) "anti-fashion" decision. Second-wave radical feminism, of which Dworkin was a proponent, claimed that fashion reproduces falsified and limited femininity, from which it is necessary to escape; one of the methods of disengagement is to refuse feminine attire (Barnard 2005: 185). Fashion was, in radical feminism's opinion, a reproduction of

the ideology of women's domesticity and by "stepping out" of the fashion system it was possible to renounce gender. Such acts of "stepping out" mostly consisted of feminists' rejection of feminine clothes by replacing them with more androgynous or masculine attire. But it was not just a rejection of material clothing, it was also the refusal to be objectified by the male gaze, something which was immortalized by John Berger's observation that "men act and women appear" (1972 found in Barnard 2005: 183). Dworkin's overalls, as a political symbol and androgynous attire, therefore function as an attempt to act instead of just appear.

The last non-comforming trait which culminated in Dworkin's unwillingness to be docile is her blunt or angry writing. Anger is a gendered, racialized and classist emotion. I will here focus only on the aspect of gender. There are disparate notions of women's anger: The ideology of hegemonic masculinity defines women's anger as irrational and irrelevant; the feminist standpoint considers it a logical choice, an emotion which is manifest by the oppressed or less powerful groups because of the unequal distribution of power (Šadl 1999: 196). Women's anger has the potencial to disrupt the emotional order of obedience and authority, so any deviation from conventions and expectations of appropriate emotional behaviour represents disobedience or resistance. Through different ideological registers, such as Catholic morality, medical advice and social etiquette, women's anger has been sistematically regulated and disciplined (Šadl 1999: 115). And if anger is regulated in order to preserve the existing social order, then anger has a political connotation. An angry woman who breaks regulative norms of emotional etiquette can be labelled as an emotional transgressor or, if she fails to perform the heuristic rules of emotional conduct, as socially inept (Averill 1986: 110). Regardless of the motive for such maladjustment to the emotional order, the outcome is the same: women's anger is not socially welcome.

When anger is verbalized in critical thinking, unaligned with dominating paradigms about knowledge and gender order, it automatically positions itself as a political threat. As Levy wrote in the foreword to the new edition of Dworkin's book *Intercourse* (2006: xx): "She was the horror of women's lib personified, the angriest woman in America".

To conclude this analysis of Andrea Dworkin: She was the embodiment of Otherness in several intersecting categories, namely gender (woman), work (thinker/writer), content of writing (feminist), writing style (blunt/angry), appearance (undecorated/unfeminine) and body (fat).

## 7 Conclusion

The narrative of proper or normal ways of knowing have to be employed to define any knowledge (academic or creative) as dirty or Other. Facts, positioned as truths by powerful and privileged people or social groups, are assumed to be more credible, valid, trustworhty because they are the continous result of historically institutionalized normality or common sense. A feminist female knowledge claimant, as the source who challenges the established epistemic hegemony, is a political figure who is pushed into the underclass epistemic status because of prejudices against her sex which is bound

up with the prevalent understanding of women (i.e. cognitive incapacity, experience, irrationality) and is denied the epistemic credence of her male peers. But this underclass status and minor epistemic credence is not overtly displayed, it is enmeshed with the invisible web of symbolic violence, but more detectable as a representational violence – a selective media presentation of Others which has the tendency and capability to arrange itself to fit the belief systems of the powerful.

The case study of Andrea Dworkin, writer, radical feminist and fat woman, has revealed that Otherness is also the cumulative identity dimension which distributes itself across every cultural level which is inflicted with dichotomous binarism, denied any transgression and hence construed as dirt. The transgression of binaries was illustrated by means of her choice of profession (writer as a male occupation), political views (feminism), writing style (blunt/angry), but most of all by her refusal to engage in conventional femininity (i.e. make-up, feminine attire, dieting). The media's emphasis on Dworkin's unadorned and fat body is confirmation of cultural dispositions of congenital reciprocity between woman's body and her as the epistemic agent. Woman as a knower cannot escape the confinements of her body.

Although violence against feminist knowledge has been labelled as Othering and representational in this article, current attacks against feminist thinkers[1], mostly in the social media, are flooded with anonymously conveyed direct threats against the knower's dignity, intellectual capacities and physical integrity (e.g. death and rape threats). Rape and death threats are another reaffirmation of the aforementioned reduction of the female knower to the level of merely a generic body which can be violated. Social media guarantee users anonymity, and if the main feature of the web's namelessness is clearly expressed violence against outspoken and feminist women, then feminism still represents an intrusive force on or dirt in the gender order.

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1 The video blogger and feminist Anita Sarkeesian receives death and rape threats on a daily basis via social media on account of her outspoken criticism of sexism in video games.

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