



# Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations

*Dorothy E. Smith*

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## Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations Dorothy E. Smith

This collection of essays, written by Dorothy Smith over the past eight years, is a long-awaited treasure by one of the world's foremost social thinkers. In it, Smith turns her wit and common sense on the prevailing discourses of sociology, political economy, philosophy, and popular culture, at the same time developing her own sociological and feminist practice in unexpected and remarkable directions.

Shedding the idiom of the sociologist, Smith inquires directly into the actualities of peoples' lives. Her critical investigations of postmodernism, political correctness, university politics, and SNAF (the Standard North American Family) draw on metaphors and examples from a stimulating range of autobiographical, theoretical, historical, political, and humorous resources. Out of an abstract encounter with Bakhtin, for example, comes an analysis of a child learning to name a bird, and a new way of seeing the story of Helen Keller. In introducing a radically innovative approach to the sociology of discourse, even the most difficult points are addressed through ordinary scenes of mothers, cats, and birds, as well as scientists, pulsars, and cell microscopes.

Smith's engaged, rebel sociology throws light on a remarkable range of issues and authors, forever changing the way the reader experiences the world. This, her signature work, will delight a wide and varied audience, and enliven university courses for years to come.

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