THE ACTIVIST AS AN IDEOLOGICAL CODE

Naomi Nichols

York University

INTRODUCTION

This paper is the product of on an Institutional Ethnographic (I.E.) (Smith 2002) inquiry into the social relations of civil society. Civil society (or the civil sector) is understood to comprise the "broad array of organizations, institutions, agencies, and collectives, including charities, cooperatives, religious groups, health, education, and social service providers, self-help and mutual aid groups, social justice groups, environmental, cultural, arts, recreation, sports, and professional associations such as chambers of commerce" (http://www.envision.ca retrieved April 11, 2005). Social relations coordinate what people are doing and experiencing at the local level with the over-arching social-structural organization of their society (Smith 2002). The research standpoint from which this project begins, is that of the activist. My conception of the term, activist, is based, in part, on my own work to promote positive change in my community. It draws loosely on the (2001) Canadian Oxford Dictionary definition of activism as "vigorous action to further a cause," but my experiences prompt me to link activism to any work which promotes positive change. It is important to note that I did not begin this project with a scholarly conception of activism. Although I am aware of current scholarly discourse about activism, particularly in the context of post-modernism (Taylor, 2002), globalization, feminist activism, and activist scholarship (Naples, 2002, 1998a, 1998b) and social movement theory (Diani 1992; Diani and Eyerman, 1992; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (ed.), 1996; Della Porta, 1999), I began this project from the standpoint of the activist. My definition of activism arose in the context of a popular education session that I facilitated last year with a Highlander Center educator and a group of local activists. Based on the diversity of our experiences, my conception of activism includes people who work in community gardens, hold peace rallies, paint community murals, advocate for universal access to daycare, initiate community-based programs

to provide employment opportunities for youth, organize unions to ensure worker safety and workplace ethics, organize block parties and volunteer to work at street festivals and charity runs. What I explore in this project is how my own understanding of activism contrasts the universalized image of activists presented to us in the media, in policy, and in the general structuring of civil sector processes.

In her essay on postmodern activism, Astra Taylor (2002) explores the implications of the *The New York Times'* use of the term, "diffuse" to describe the anti-globalization movement's lack of organization centre. She argues that in the author's use of the term, diffuseness and weakness are synonyms. Taylor (2002) goes on to describe a movement structured in direct opposition to the hierarchical or pyramidal organization of the corporate world. *The New York Time's* author had begun with the same concept as Taylor, but organized her observations to illustrate the weakness of the anti-globalization movement's *diffuse* structure. The information presented in the *Times* article was widely disseminated, and not presented as scholarly debate, but rather as journalistic fact. Although a standardized knowledge (such as that expressed in the *Times* article) about activists and activist movements does not necessarily reflect the actualities of those engaged in social movement organizing, I will argue that this knowledge mediates an individual's identification work, her work to procure funds and present or *frame* (Goffman 1974) her initiatives, as well as the work she does to coordinate the structure of her organization, and maintain civil sector alliances. Once a standardized knowledge about activists becomes part of the textually mediated ruling relations, it structures civil sector relations via policy, funding processes, legislature, and media. The dominance of corporate discourse working concurrently with *The Activist* means that all activist organizing occurs in the context of these ideological

systems of control. Efforts to resist corporatism as well as efforts to embrace it are indicative of the ways in which corporate ideologies shape the everyday experiences of activists.

It is my task to identify a standardized knowledge about activists and trace it outwards as it works to coordinate the social-structural relations of individuals undertaking "vigorous action to further a cause." The chasm between my own understanding of activism and the general notion of activism that permeates social consciousness makes this a challenging task. For example, in a Canadian glossary of terms on a virtual resource centre (http://www.envision.ca retrieved August 26, 2005) for the voluntary sector, the terms activist, activism, and social movements do not appear. According to this web document, the voluntary sector (or civil sector) is comprised of a broad spectrum of public institutions (charities, collectives, public health, environmental justice cooperatives, etc.). That these institutions are operated by people: lobbyists, educators, volunteers, outreach workers, etc. disappears in the context of a glossary of terms which fails to account for the human elements of the civil sector. Similarly, although the definition of the civil sector includes grassroots collectives, cooperatives, social justice groups, etc., only regulated institutions organized around a doctrine of accountability – (charities, non-profits, incorporated bodies, voluntary sector initiatives (VSI's), etc) are referenced in the glossary. In this paper, I argue that the civil sector is increasingly organized to reflect the hierarchical and standardized organization of the corporate world. This corporatizing of the regulated civil sector impacts the social relations of the regulated charities, non-profits, non-governmental organizations, etc. *and* the grassroots collectives, affinity groups, and "diffuse" coalition of activists and organizers. Other scholars examine the impacts of corporate governance and corporate democracy on activism (Engelen 2002) and citizenship (Skjeie & Siim 2000), and the relationship between *corporateness,* statism and social movement membership

(Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001). My work is different because my ethnographic point of entry (Griffith 1995) is that of the activist.

I say I am exploring civil sector relations from the *standpoint* of the activist because the experiences of activists were the starting points for my investigation (DeVault & McCoy 2002). Data collection began with a series of interviews and moved outward to encompass textual analysis and further interviews, which built on my earlier research. My analysis of the data indicates that civil sector relations are organized by a conception of *The Activist,* which operates as a standardizing schema through which work in the civil sector is understood. *The Activist* allows people (like the *New York Times* writer referenced by Taylor) to assemble information about activism in such a way as to justify the ideological argument for activist accountability and state/funder/public surveillance. Thus, *The Activist* is a concept that operates as an ideological code. Smith (1999) refers to ideological codes as interpretive schemas or means of assembling information in response to universalized images/ideals. For the purposes of this paper, then, *The Activist* is examined for the work it does to assemble, justify, and interpret theory, practice, and knowledge about the civil sector. It is also seen to have social origins and to organize social relations.

In scholarly discourse about activism, 'frame-building' references the same line of thinking as Smith's work on the social character of knowledge; however, other researchers do not explicitly point to the social embeddedness of knowledge. Scholars (Kolker 2004; and Martin 2003) have drawn on Goffman's (1974) conceptualization of 'frame-building' to explore how an interpretive frame or schema dictates, to a large degree, the social and economic relations of an activist movement. In her research on funding and the breast cancer movement in the US, Emily Kolker (2004) argues breast cancer activists altered the interpretive schema through which

breast cancer was traditionally viewed, thereby generating millions of dollars in government funds. Similarly, the fundraiser and the director I spoke with discuss how they 'frame' a project to fit the mandate of the foundation or organization from which they wish to secure funding. The work of frame-building is very much the work of the activist; what is not fully explored in current research however, is how the activists themselves are also constantly navigating the interpretive frame placed upon their own lived experiences, and how the frames they use to present their issues are increasingly reflective of corporate ideology. Similarly, none of the research about activism which I encountered examines the ways in which the social production of knowledge is linked to its textual production or how knowledge and interpretive frames are connected to power. Smith's ideological circle seems to best represent the embedded circular relations between interpretive frames, texts, and power. She suggests that " … an interpretive schema is used to assemble and provide coherence for an array of particulars as an account of what actually happened; the particulars, thus selected and assembled, will be interpretable by, the schema used to assemble them" (1990a: 139). The effects of this circular schema are read in the totalizing accounts of experiences and events as read through texts. Although individual elements of the account may be challenged, the schema itself, Smith argues, is not called into question. It is this relationship between texts, knowledge, and power that I have investigated in this paper.

METHODOLOGY

The empirical framework employed to gather and analyze data for this project is based on institutional ethnography (I.E.). Because institutional ethnography is a sociology which aims to explicate a situation from the standpoint in the everyday activities of people's lives, it is the

essential methodology for exploring the relations of civil society from the standpoint of the activist engaged in the work of making change.

This project contains no omniscient 3rd person narrative. I have also attempted to present interview data in the context of its collection. Smith (1990b) argues that lifting experiences from the temporal-historical conditions of their unfolding undermines the ongoing realities of the subjects of the study for whom the experiences are embedded in the ongoing living of their lives. She further contends that in much scholarly writing, the "order of the spoken text is 'objective'; the deictic procedures position the subject outside 'the action' … constituting the topic of the occasion as object suspends the presence and time of members of the occasion" (Smith 1990b:77). In the analysis of the data presented in this paper, I attempt to explore the data from a standpoint within the 'presence and time of the members of the occasion.'

I began the data collection for this project with a series of interviews with three activists representing work in educational activism. The interview process was reflexive and largely unstructured. I began the interview by asking the individual to begin (orally) walking me through her day. As she spoke, I asked her to elaborate on her work – what did it look like? Who else did she interact with in the course of her day -- via memos, email, oral communication, instructions, curriculum, etc? Were there texts she used in her work? What did she do with these texts? Where did these texts come from, and where were they going? Because of my own personal investment in this project, as someone who has engaged in activist work, what ended up unfolding between myself and the interviewees was a kind of shared inquiry into the institution of activism. The reflexive nature of the interviews provide for the dialogic framework of this inquiry. As we engaged in their narratives I would frequently speak back what I had heard the participant say, in order to assess whether we were finding meaning in the same way, and in an

attempt to promote critical thought on the part of the interviewee and myself. In the collection of data in the form of language, I honour the dialogic nature of narrative. The participants wield, criticize, and reject the language of the corporate world; however, the corporate rhetoric provides the structure for the market ideology within which they work.

The data explored in this paper is based on nine months of research. My project to explicate the work done by the ideological code of *The Activist* builds on that research. The first three interviews I conducted at the onset of this project became the starting place for subsequent my research. I began my data collection interviewing three activists representing work in educational reform and daycare advocacy (Bart), outdoor/environmental education (Becky), and social justice/popular education (Carl) in Ontario. I began these interviews with the intention of illuminating the kinds of social relations that make activist work possible. Listening to their narratives, it began to be apparent to me was that these activists were more concerned with the social relations that make their work difficult, rather than the ones that allow them to pursue this path. In this paper, I focus on how the activist engages in the rhetoric of the ruling corporate ideologies. A textual analyses of foundation funding documents, a textual analysis of Revenue Canada policy and procedure with regard to Charitable Status, and the six interviews that followed, are an extension of my initial inquiry. The interviews and various forms of textual analysis from my earlier work constitute the background knowledge which informed the interviews I conducted in the later stages of data collection. In one of the first interviews, a participant had discussed the importance of charitable status for fund generation. Based on his comments, I explored how the federal tax act in Canada organizes the work of the activist conducting herself in the regulated spheres of civil society. Then I sought out interviews with individuals working within an organization with a charitable status designation. Based on the

information posted on their website, I requested interviews with employees at an urban botanical garden. I conducted three interviews with individuals who I will refer to as Marilyn (the director of the garden), Alexandra (a fundraiser), and Christine (an educator who runs the children's programs). I also interviewed three urban spacing activists who were members of a grassroots public spacing committee. Based on word of mouth, I learned of this group's efforts to fund their work without external aid. I contacted the director of the committee (Dorian) and the student intern (Anna) via contact information found on their website, and I was able to connect with another member of the committee (Mark) because he happened by the coffee shop during my interview with Dorian. Dorian works full time with the Public Spacing Committee, Mark is a graphic designer who also publishes a local magazine dealing with spacing issues, as well as working on the Spacing Committee, and Anna is a student, a government employee, a media activist, and works on the Spacing Committee.

Because of the discursive nature of the dialogues, my inquiry was guided largely by threads illuminated during the interview process. The activists I interviewed spoke consistently of the importance of funds and funding processes for their work. The data analysis presented in the paper also includes a textual analysis of the Ontario Trillium Foundation granting process. I.E. recognizes that the coordination of action at multiple sites is dependent on and maintained by texts. A textual analysis of funding proposals and funding applications reveals the strength of *The Activist* as the interpretive schema through which funding documents operate. The principles of accountability, which constitute the foundations of the funding process, are upheld by the ideological code of *The Activist*. Across numerous local sites, *The Activist* is reiterated in funding application documents and the funding process is subject to the corporate ideology of accountability and engagement.

In the course of this stage of my research, I examined and compared two completed funding proposals (for the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation) that I obtained from the social justice and popular education centre where I went to speak with Carl and the other members of his collective. I also examined the application processes of the McConnell Foundation and the Toronto Community Foundation. Trillium, as an agency of the Ministry of Culture, is an arm's length public foundation. Throughout the course of this textual analysis, I paid particular attention to the work each text does (in terms of codifying the reader's experience, entering her into a discourse, organizing her thoughts, and implicating her in other relations) as it is activated by the individual who is reading it. Later, I examined the texts in terms of how they are structured by universalized frames of reference, or ideological codes (Smith 1999). Such an examination requires a critical analysis of the social relations within which the texts arose and the social relations within which they are active.

ACTIVIST IDENTIFICATION: The Fear Factor

My own image of activism was based on reflective experiences as someone engaged in community action and on the friends and family who are also engaged in activist work. What I initially failed to register is that none of us identified as activists. From within the framework laid out by *The Activist* none of us conceded to identifying as such. For me, it was just a vague sense that the social order of my middle class life precluded me from activism. I felt that I lacked the passion to devote my life to a cause. That said, I wouldn't have defined activism using conditions of class or measurements of passion. The chasm between my definition of activism and my personal reaction to the word were left uninvestigated by me until partway through my project. In order to illustrate the power of *The Activist* as an ideological

code, I present the series of experiences which illuminated the organizing strength of *The Activist* to me.

In the third stage of my data collection I encountered a hurdle: all my requests to schedule interviews with individuals working in a registered charity were denied. A friend of mine worked as an educator at a botanical garden. I had sent a number of emails to the employees at the garden requesting interviews with them. As part of this process, I explained that I was doing research on the social relations of the civil sector from the standpoint of the activist and that their work at the botanical garden was of interest to me. The responses to the email expressed confusion, disinterest, and a unanimously negative reaction to my request for an interview. The following are two such examples: "I don't know where you got my name, but I am not an activist" and "I do fundraising for the garden; I am not sure how my work relates to research on activism." I was taken aback by the strength of their reluctance to participate in a study on activism. Around this time, I was reading Dorothy Smith's work on the Standard North American Family as an ideological code (Smith 1999). Smith (1999) proposes that ideological codes become the interpretive schema through which we understand public discourse. It occurred to me that there was something similar happening with the word, *Activist*. The people I contacted at the garden refused to be identified as activists. It became essential that I think about the word, activist, and the work that it does to organize the social relations of civil society. Looking back through my data, I began to see how *The Activist* had been coded as radical, militant, and unprofessional, and that the strength of the accountability discourse depends on the universalization of this code. The funding application processes and Revenue Canada charitable status legislature which prohibit advocacy and/or original initiatives (i.e. those without a documented success rate) prevent change-making initiatives; in each textual reiteration that

organizations undertaking initiatives for social, cultural, political, and/or environmental change are exempted from funds or charitable status, and individuals who work for an organization associated with actions that may be considered political or radical are constituted as a threat to the status quo. Similarly, the necessitation of external management (via a board of directors, incorporating bodies, charitable status, non-profit status, etc.) for funding eligibility constructs grassroots organizations without external management as unaccountable, and in a corporate framework, unprofessional. Coding activists as radical and unprofessional rationalizes the relation which positions activist organizations as needing management by funders, the government and society at large. It is this code that validates the accountability discourse that underpins both the funding process and the federal Tax Act with regard to charitable status.

Smith (1990a, 1999) argues that discourse, ideology, and ideological codes gain their strength in their ability to be read as a text. Images, print, radio and television media, legal practices, policy, standardized forms and protocol, etc, make for a universalization and standardization of knowledge vested in text (Smith 1999). It is in this way that *The Activist* is born into being in the minds of numerous seemingly unconnected individuals. In its alignment with the ruling apparatus and its presentation as detached objectivity, the text suggests facticity (Smith 1999). Thus the lived experiences of the subjects of this objectification (in this case, the lived experiences of individual activists) are read in relation to a textualized account of activism presented in the funding documents, charitable status legislature, and the media depiction of activist work. Smith (1999) suggests that once an ideological code is authorized by the ruling relations, it becomes universally objectified. As this objectified knowledge enters the discursive order of social relations laid out in texts, *The Activist* activates an interpretive schema which dictates that her work necessitates external management and surveillance and hence compliance

with the market discourses that advocate accountability. The actualities of the individual engaged in activist work at a particular local site are reordered by the coded version of *The Activist* found in the media, legislation, and the civil sector at large. It is in relation to the coded version of *The Activist* as radical and unprofessional that the regulated sector of civil society has organized itself around a business model where accounting procedures become the focus of the organization. It is also in relation to *The Activist* that we see people who work in the regulated sectors of civil society define their work as non-profit work, charity work, or fundraising work, rather than activism. Identifying as an activist means identifying as radical, as militant, and as unprofessional; instead, these individuals take up the defensive language of the accountability discourse to describe their work in terms of target numbers, bottom lines, and balanced budgets.

When I replied to the individuals at the garden, I offered my own definition of activism as any work that improves the social, cultural or environmental health of a community. By upending the universalized image of activism, I was able to schedule interviews with three of the employees. It is my aim to explicate how *The Activist* is constructed and how it works to organize the relations of the civil sector *because* people are so reluctant to associate with this word. Once I began asking people whether they considered themselves activists, only one participant felt completely at ease identifying as such. Dorian is also the only individual who undertakes to do his activist work fulltime without any standard rate of pay (and often without any pay at all). It is apparent that activism has distinctive boundaries: *The Activist* works to organize much of the civil sector, but the material implications associated with the identification prevent most people from identifying as activists. In the words of Alexandra,

> we are not involved in [advocacy or lobbying], which is why I was sort of taken aback [when you mentioned activist]. Activism…I'm not sure if I can help you out here. Now

> that we've talked about a broader definition of it, I think that I could say, I guess that I am an activist, although I don't feel 100% comfortable with it because it's one of those words, like feminism. (2005 11:44)

In comparing activism to feminism, Alexandra points to the inherent connection between ideological codes and discourse: discourses of femininity are read through *The Feminist* as an ideological code – a way of ordering the discourse so that the experiences of individual feminists are subsumed under a totalizing (and socially deviant) category. Similarly, discourses pertaining to the civil sector (discourses of accountability, engagement, and management) are read via *The Activist.* There is a specific image associated with both those words that discounts the diversity of individual feminists and activists for a universalized image of both in an *us and them* kind of power relation. One is reluctant to identify as an activist or a feminist because to identify as such is to identify as someone on the periphery of society, someone different than the *us* of the status quo. Smith (1999) takes this analysis further when she suggests that the standardization of images (like those of *The Activist* and *The Feminist*) as constituted in texts (such as the CBC documentary on Political Correctness that reinforces images of the militant brow-beating feminist (Smith 1999); the media depiction of the anti-globalization activists and the religious martyrs in Israel and Palestine, or the Ontario Tax Act that frames the individual activist as incapable of self monitoring) organize multiple sites of action in coherence with a universal objectified knowledge: "The standardization of images, the ideality of the image that is constituted by the text, enters into and organizes local sites of action and experience. Images distributed through the media are constant for every local site in which they 'occur' in printed form" (Smith 1990: 176-177). Thus, *The Activist*, like *The Feminist*, is imbued with a universalized meaning. And in that the meaning or knowledge is authorized by the ruling

relations, it represents a subjective account which objectifies the subject in a sort of 'hyper reality' (Smith 1999) constituted in texts.

I hear the reverberations of the 'activist as terrorist' or 'activist as threat' discourses when Anna says about the social response to activism "I wish that activist was simply equated with citizen. I wish it was just diluted a little more…I wish they weren't so afraid of it…"(2005 15:75). In her suggestion that people are afraid of activism, it is clear to me that *The Activist* has been coded in such a way as to restrict its membership to people who deviate from the status quo. Her use of a simple 'us and them' conception of activists and the rest of the society illustrate the boundaries of her social identification. For Anna, it is the militancy associated with *The Activist* that is restrictive for all sorts of people, including those doing the work of making change. When Anna suggests that "a lot of the fear of activism comes from a fear of someone grilling you and you not being able to articulate how you really feel" (2005 15:72), we talk at length about the work one must do to defend her cause, her position, her lifestyle or her movement, if it differs from the norm. Coded as militant, social relations require *The Activist* to maintain a defensive stance with respect to her position outside the *us* of the status quo. "Well, I think the word, not for me particularly, but for most people, they think of someone holding a banner or someone screaming or something. And that's unfortunate because it scares people away. It has almost a militant [connotation]…" (Anna 2005: 15:74). That Anna does not identify with *The Activist,* the ideological code, does not lesson the organizing strength of this code. In fact, to reject the coded version of *The Activist*, she effectively doubles her defensive work. Identifying as an activist, but not with *The Activist*, Anna must work to present herself as professional, as moderate, as rational and as flexible. Additionally, she must still engage in the work of defending her alternative stance, without appearing as radical or militant.

To identify as an activist, one must acquiesce to the conditions of social relations dictated by *The Activist*. In this analysis I explore how *The Activist* works to structure the relations of civil society even for those individuals who do not identify as activists. Activist is a word that does work. A standardized version of what it is to be an activist enters into the consciousness of people in their various sites of living and working, thus *The Activist* as an ideological code gains its distinct form in the social consciousness of the masses. In Zucker's (2004) work on social identifications and feminism, she refers to the way that the news media of the 1970's presented feminists as "deviant, man-hating, unrepresentative radicals who were a threat to society" (425). Zucker links the strength of this social stereotype to the disavowal of feminist social identities. Similarly, the media has had a hand in the widespread dissemination of *The Activist* as radical, unpredictable, unprofessional and often as dangerous.

Popular media discourse (which posits activists as militant and radical) works through *The Activist* as an ideological code that allows the media and reader to assemble the particulars of an event in such as way as to reinforce corporate discourse *and* reinforce *The Activist* as the universalized image of all those who engage in activist work. For example, the (August 26, 2005) *Globe and Mail* article titled, "Animal-rights activists target Oxford as next major battlefront," presents a version of activist organizing which likens activist activity to terrorism: "violence by environmental and animal-rights extremists against U.S. drug makers has increased so much in recent years that it's currently the FBI's top domestic terrorism issue." What is subsumed by this portrayal of violent and unpredictable activists are the details leading up to the conflict, and the experiences of individual activists and drug-makers (as well as the experiences of the animals used during drug testing procedures). Instead, we are offered universalized characters: the *activists* and the *drug-makers* engaged in battle. Aspects of animal rights and

environmental justice work which occur in boardrooms, print media, lobbying, and public outreach are left out of the *Globe's* version of activism. Furthermore, the activist work to shut down institutions with unethical policies is presented as a threat to the economy and therefore as a threat to social progress in general. In this way, the article works to uphold a corporate discourse, while the particulars of the conflict are reassembled by the media via *The Activist.*

Linking discourse to social organization, Smith (1990a) suggests that discourse, organized and existing extra-locally, coordinates the experiences of men and women at various local sites. Because discourse becomes the 'ideological currency of society,' it provides a single schema for 'transposing' individual lives and experiences into standardized categorical forms (Smith 1990a). The 'activist as terrorist' and corporate discourses presented in *The Globe and Mail* article are further standardized when assembled by the reader through *The Activist* as the universalizing schema. At the same time, *The Activist* becomes a category represented by definitive characteristics, which organize the way an individual encoded as such relates in society. The 'textual character' (the way that the code can be read for the same meaning in media, legal, political, and consumer discourses) of this universalizing schema reproduce *The Activist* across multiple local sites. Regardless of whether the individual activist is represented by the ideological code, her experiences are judged against this universalizing backdrop. Discourse, working in conjunction with ideological codes, act as a social organizer – its textual replication allows an individual reader to pick up and activate its knowledge wherever she is reading (Smith 1990a). What is essential in this process is that the subjectivity of the reader is replaced by the authorized objectivity of the text. Even if the individual's experience contradicts the position outlined in the text, she is entered into dialogue with it from a position of subjectivity outside the objective, universalizing language of the text itself (Smith 1990a).

Similarly, the interpretive schema (or ideological code) through which the knowledge is to be taken up is further laid out in the text itself. The 'textual character' of authorized discourse allow individuals at varying local sites to partake in a sort of shared reality constituted by the texts themselves. The ideological code of *The Activist* working with capitalist discourses, corporate ideologies and discourses which posit the activist as threat constitute social relations whereby activist work comes to be known. The ubiquitous nature of knowledge production and authorization means that knowledge is not always investigated as a ruling relation.

Despite the contrary experiences of activists in Canada, the activist as threat is still a vivid image in the social consciousness. Dorian points out that although Canada contains a spectrum of individuals engaged in activist work, the militant activist in Canada "means being a shit disturber. No-one is blowing up buses or anything. [Militant] is OCAP [Ontario Coalition Against Poverty]" (2005 12:194). The textual reality, as experienced through media representation, does not account for the grassroots activist engaged in the quiet work of research, of fundraising and of lobbying. In its stead, the banner-waving activist described by Anna or the "activist as terrorist" is reproduced. It is precisely this relation between the media and *The Activist* that mediates the perpetuation of the code: only those activists engaging in the type of work coded as activism end up in the media headlines and spotlights. Images like the activist-battlefield depicted in *The Globe and Mail* end up constituting the social conception of activism and the social-structural relations of the civil sector. Additionally, because activists recognize that media coverage accelerates a movement, they may seek out the media attention by adhering to *The Activist* code. Thus the activists, themselves, become constituents of their ideological representation. Smith's (1990b) ideological circle allows us to see how the particularities of activism are reassembled via *The Activist* to allow for a standardized sense-making experience.

Individual activists are caught up in Smith's ideological circle, activating *The Activist* as they talk, write and think about their work.

Activists also recognize links between media attention and political interest: "[the city councilors] know that the media is listening. And that the media is going to take a sound bite out of my speech. So they pay attention" (Dorian 2005 12:78). Dorian goes on to further describe the work *The Activist* does in terms of organizing his relations with the media and the city council when he refers to himself as one of 'the usual suspects' who comes weekly to make deputations to council. His understanding of the experience is that being associated as one of 'the usual suspects' differentiates him from regular citizens: the identification activates *The Activist* as the interpretive schema through which Dorian's deputation is experienced by the city councilors. Again we see how *The Activist* relegates activists to the periphery of society; as one of 'the usual suspects,' an activist exempts herself from the category of citizen.

Identification, under various circumstances, plays a big role in one's activist work. Whether or not one identifies as an activist, she must enter into dialogue with *The Activist* as she navigates its connotations. Only one of the participants in this study easily identified as an activist. The others were reluctant to identify as such, even if they were engaged in the work of improving community health, of political lobbying and advocacy, and/or of public outreach and education. People felt more comfortable comparing themselves to friends who were activists and thus claiming the label inadvertently or by in referring to their work as activist work, thereby suggesting that they were activists through association. Each individual except for Dorian seemed somewhat surprised that I considered them activists. Bart exemplifies the type of response which this question tended to generate: "I don't think of myself as an activist. But when I look back, especially in the area of child welfare, I've been very involved. Sitting on

provincial boards, chairing local committees on child welfare, speaking at conferences, so... (2004: 9:6). It seems that to identify as an activist is to commit to certain relations dictated by *The Activist*. It is like Anna, who expressed the work she had to do to defend her position as an activist to others who appropriate this identification as well as those for whom this identification is a sign of social deviance. On a more concrete level, to identify as an activist is, for the people I interviewed, to identify as an advocate, and to engage in advocacy is to preclude oneself from receiving charitable status, legal incorporation, and many grants. Referring to herself and her association with the botanical garden, Alexandra says:

> I would not have defined or termed myself as an activist. Because I've always thought of it like political - I thought you were maybe thinking we were an organization that advocated for environmental changes or something. And we are not … We encompass a lot of things, but when it comes to advocating there is a fine line. There are a lot of organizations that do advocate, but they can only do so much or they won't be a charity anymore. And then they've lost quite a contingent. (2005 11:261)

Clearly there is an association between activism and advocacy that restricts people's membership in either category. The link between the two words means that whether an individual is advocating for daycare accessibility or extra bike lanes, she is coded as a disturber, a nuisance, and a radical *because* she is engaging in change-making work and because she is already coded by *The Activist*. Legally and politically, the link between activism and advocacy means that individuals doing advocating work justifiably require external surveillance to be considered reputable. Validation of one's activist work becomes a necessary component of her ability to garner public trust and financial support. However, the defensive elements of her work can be at odds with a media enamored by *The Activist* and her own political or philosophical agenda.

Smith (1990a) refers to text-mediated knowledge as 'public technical discourse' or the social relations otherwise deemed 'public opinion' or 'mass communication. Navigating Smith's (1990) 'public technical discourse' of activism becomes an essential component of an activist's work.

PACKAGING & PRODUCTION: Working with *The Activist* as an Interpretive Frame

How the individual activist packages or presents her work becomes integral to the movement itself. Based on the ways in which images are read according to very specific social scripts, I suggest that the social relations of civil society are mediated (to some degree) by image, by packaging, and by the face that is put forward. Referring to traditional wedding photographs, McCoy (1995) notes that the pictures are often reconstructions of events that did not actually occur in the real time of the wedding, itself. Never-the-less, the photographs are part of the social script of the wedding; that the cake the bride and groom are seen to be cutting in a photograph is cardboard is irrelevant to the social script of the wedding day caught and communicated through the photographs. Thus, the wedding is read – through its textual capture in the photograph – according to a standardized version of matrimonial events. In the same way, activists have learned to fit their work into acceptable social scripts. By presenting their work in coherence with the dominant corporate ideological systems, they navigate *The Activist* by appropriating market discourse, by producing glossy or 'slick' campaigns, by gearing their work to a target audience, and by conducting their organizations like businesses. Referring to the production of his magazine, Mark says, "I'm using the tactics of regular corporations and right wing institutions against them … [How Lawson describes it as] karate: if someone is coming at you, you need to use this momentum to throw them" (2005 14:291). Mark accomplishes this symbolic martial artistry by producing a 'pretty slick magazine.' He goes on to tell me that the

reason he entered into the field of graphic design was because he was concerned by the image non-profit groups were putting forward via their publications. A lack of resources often meant that publications lacked a professional quality thus allowing the work, itself, to be read as unprofessional. Like the funder who is reluctant to fund a project without an indication that the charity or non-profit has other funding, an activist initiative needs to demonstrate that it has the economic competency which is an indication of its credibility. The quirky basement-produced 'zines that represent most grassroots publications corroborate the image of *The Activist* as unprofessional. The use of corporate packaging allows Mark to alter the 'activist as radical' script. By producing glossy 'slick' publications, the spacing magazine challenges *The Activist* and reaches a more diversified audience: "[had we produced a more stereotypical activist publication], we would have gotten a very isolated audience, as opposed to expanding and reaching out to people who own condos and people who live in the suburbs" (Mark 2004 14:301). The 'isolated audience' to which Mark refers are the 'usual suspects' of Dorian's descriptions. In differentiating between the isolated audience and the people who own condos and live in the suburbs, we see how *The Activist* dictates that those who identify within its membership are not representative of the status quo. *The Activist* precludes the professional homeowner (and as Mark suggests, the professional in general) from its membership. Limited funds for projects and low-paying (or unpaid) work, dictate that activists are excluded from the professional spheres, thus solidifying 'public technical discourse' which posits them as unprofessional.

By producing an image that the professional sector can relate to, Mark's spacing magazine acts as a media conduit for the activist ideas of the spacing movement. For the citizen who doesn't engage in city council meetings, or the downtown activist projects (like guerilla

gardening, and neighborhood walks), the magazine facilitates an entry-way into an otherwise radical activist movement: “For lots of people [the magazine is] talking about radical ideas, which we don’t think are all that radical. So it’s about keeping your one foot on the side of the mainstream and the other foot in the alternative or radical side. And it’s trying to make these radical ideas more culpable or palatable” (Mark 2004 14:289). Mark shifts the interpretive frame (Goffman 1974) around his work, so that it isn’t immediately identifiable as activist work. This is accomplished in part through the production of the glossy magazine – a direct contradiction to *The Activist* waving banners, throwing paint-bombs, and overtly challenging/criticizing the status quo.

In every reproduction of *The Activist*, the standardized image of the militant, radical ‘activist as threat’ gains clarity in the social consciousness. An activist’s ongoing work to defend against this image is an indication of the degree to which it is embedded in the Canadian social consciousness.

THE FUNDING GAME: How Official Funding Processes are Mediated by *The Activist*

Because I have argued that much of the activist’s work is spent engaging in official textual accountability processes, and because I have argued that it is partly through these standardized processes that a dominant ideology of accountability and engagement is enacted, I now enter into an examination of a textual chain of accountability and one of the official texts that organize the activist’s work under the doctrine of accountability. The official Ontario Trillium Foundation Application reveals how corporate rhetoric of management and accountability is used by the funder to standardize and oversee the work of the activist. What is apparent in the organization of the work done at the local level is that the individual is held accountable to the “engaged” bodies who organize her work through the allocation of funds. It is

also apparent that the chain of accountability only moves upward. Not only are ruling bodies arguably dictatorial in their management of funding allocation for social/environmental initiatives, in his discussion of accountability and power, Ralston Saul (1995) suggests that the demand for accountability comes from the top down; transparency, too, it seems is connected to economic power. Ralston Saul's observation is manifest in the chain of accountability observed in the hierarchy of accountability that organizes the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant application process.

An examination of the funding application process for acquiring funds through the Ontario Trillium Foundation reveals the 'micro-managing' referred to by Carl. In our conversations he identified the Trillium Foundation as producing one of the most challenging processes for an activist to work within: "....Trillium Foundation -- and again it's a public sector funder– Trillium is unbelievably difficult .... Trillium is an insanely bad grant process. It's incredibly micro-managed from the minute you get into the application" (2004 10:67). In Carl's understanding of the *funding game* a "bad grant process" is one that is highly restrictive, closely managed by the funders themselves. When he offhandedly says, "so that's the funding game" (2004 10:71) I hear an echo of the participants in Lois Bechely's (1999) dissertation on the social organization of parents' work for public school choice. The parents in Bechely's (1999) study are engaged in a "points game" in order to get their children into the public schools of 'choice.' All parents with children in the public school system are engaged (to a certain degree) in *the game*, whether or not they understand the game's rules or objective. The parents that understand the rules are shown to have an upper hand; the parents who understand *and* subvert the rules, win. The winning parents' kids get into the schools of their choice. In Carl's description of the

"funding game," I identify a similarly accepted structure operating in the organization of his work.

An examination of the Ontario Trillium Foundation funding application reveals how the rules of the "funding game" are created in response to *The Activist*, and dictate the parameters of individual's activist work. The Trillium Foundation funding application comes with a fourteen page rule book titled, *Program Guidelines*. In order to successfully navigate through the application process itself, one must first grapple to identify the rules of the game. Part of this work is to identify how in the outset of the game, she is coded as, *The Activist*. It becomes necessary to document one's work in compliance with the accountability measures outlined by the Trillium Foundation and to standardize one's work in order to prevent it being read as radical. At the outset of the application, 'Registered charities' and 'incorporated not-for-profit organizations' must identify how their work helps Trillium reach its three overarching goals: "to build healthy communities and strengthen volunteerism, to increase accessibility and celebrate Ontario's diversity, and to stimulate economic growth and innovation." In compliance with the definitive language of the first page of the rule book, a successful applicant begins to define her work in terms laid out by the Trillium application. The other message in this first section is that only those individuals whose work is governed by an incorporating body (such as the provincial or federal government) or Revenue Canada (through the acquisition of charitable status) are eligible to continue with the application. In exempting any work which is conducted outside the direct surveillance and management of the state, the text constructs these activists as unaccountable, and therefore unprofessional. *The Activist*, as an ideological code, is replicated and universalized within the text of the official funding application process.

In order to be eligible for funds through Trillium, an organization must be one of the following:

- A charitable organization or foundation registered as a charity with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency
- An organization incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation without share capital in Canadian jurisdiction
- An unincorporated branch or chapter of charitable organization or incorporated not-for-profit organization (Note: The incorporated or registered organization must authorize the application and accept responsibility for the grant)
- A First Nation
- A Métis or other Aboriginal community
- A collaborative of two or more organizations that contains at least one eligible member

(The Ontario Trillium Foundation Program Guidelines 2004: 6)

Each of these six parameters, define an organization in relation to other institutional bodies – whether it's status as a First Nation citizen or as a charitable organization, each designation hooks the applicant into another series of social relations to which it is now accountable. For example, in the acquisition of charitable status, an activist's work is hooked into another set of ruling relations as dictated by Revenue Canada. Thus, one's work is now accountable to both the Trillium Foundation and to Revenue Canada.

The rule book further specifics that eligibility precludes "organizations whose purpose is related to political activity, as defined by the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency." This stipulation further implicates the applicant in a set relations outlined by Revenue Canada. Prohibiting activists from taking up the political, excludes any social justice worker who engages in what might be considered advocacy work. Carl explains that advocacy is seen as "an anathema to charitable status; you are not allowed to do advocacy" (2004 10:90). In that advocacy means that one's work will involve proposing change in public policy, it is seen to reflect a political agenda. The overlapping agendas of the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the

Revenue Canada Tax Act are organized by the same ideological code which posits the activist as radical and unaccountable/unprofessional. In this way, the funding application process, in its connection to Revenue Canada, prevents activists from demanding change at the institutional level.

It is particularly in the realm of finance, where the activist is constructed as irresponsible. The neo-liberal logic of balanced budgets, as heard in the market discourse of the Trillium Foundation rule book, denotes who is eligible to play the funding game and how an organization is assessed for funding allocation. One must be savvy in the economic discourse of accountability, as well as the official 'speech genre' (Bakhtin 1986) of the funding process in order to successfully play the funding game. The texts of the funding process officially define the organizations in terms of eligibility for funds. Activist work is reconceptualized in terms of balanced budgets, bottom lines, and target numbers. From this stage forward, the organization is viewed in terms of its funding eligibility, rather than its charitable initiatives.

The Trillium Foundation rule book further stipulates the format of the application: 1. Completed application form with all questions answered and 2. All attachments listed in the *Grant Application* booklet, including: Results and Activities Workplan, Request Budget Form, and Evaluation Plan for requests over $100,000 (the attachments are standardized forms that the activist completes and submits). Essentially, the outlined application format is a business plan. In addition to the standardizing effects of the outcomes oriented "Results and Activities Workplan," the texts that the activist produces to officially propose his project link him into a chain of accountability to the Trillium Foundation. Trillium is further accountable to Revenue Canada (as well as the assembly of First Nations and other institutions) and therefore maintains a heightened level of 'engagement' in the work of the organization which has procured funds for

its project. Organized by the doctrines of standardization and accountability, the application is the first stages of a business contract between an activist and her funder. Once the application is received, eligible applications are assessed based on the following criteria:

An organization's ability to carry out the proposed activity and to achieve the desired results is demonstrated by:

- A relevant mandate, proven track record and good operating systems
- An elected, volunteer Board of Directors that is representative of the community and accountable to it through public general meetings, newsletters, etc
- An ability to manage and sustain growth that may result from the grant
- An appropriate organizational structure and set of skills, including responsiveness to changing community needs and opportunities
- A history of partnering with others (where appropriate)
- A demonstrated understanding of how the goals of the proposed project meet community needs and opportunities

An organization's ability to manage both the requested funds and the resources needed to carry out the project are demonstrated by:

- A realistic relationship between the requested amount and the organization's current annual budget
- Appropriate financial management policies and practices
- No significant accumulated deficit
- No large, unrestricted reserve funds or accumulated surplus

Applications are assessed according to the following:

- Clear measurable benefits to the community
- Community support in the form of volunteer time and participation by its members, and financial and in-kind contributions from other funders, corporate sponsors, individual donors and the applicant
- Involvement of multiple partners in planning, doing or evaluating the work (where appropriate)
- Support from people who are knowledgeable about the sector, the community and/or the initiative
- Significant need for Ontario Trillium Foundation funding and evidence that the Foundation is the appropriate funder
- Sustainability or lasting impact (for grants over $25, 000, where applicable)

(The Ontario Trillium Foundation Program Guidelines 2004: 10)

The official assessment criteria is steeped in the language of economic accountability. In the assessment criteria (particularly the second set of bullets, which refer to the organization's ability

to manage funds) we see material evidence of how *The Activist* assembles the particulars of activist work in relation to the practices of corporate micro-managing. Similarly, in each textual reiteration of the accountability (and economic micro-managing) discourse in the Trillium and other foundation funding applications, organizations that do not adhere to these corporate principles are constructed as deficient. Individual activists filling out the application will find their work indexed by the principles of corporate management regardless of their own (or their organization's) management practices. Based on the above criteria, an organization's merit is a function of the activist's demonstrated skills in economic management (an organization must not have existing deficit *or* surplus of funds), a history of accountability and project success, and evidence of community scaffolding. The language of assessment is directly in line with an agenda of accountability. The corporate rhetoric ("relevant mandate;" "proven track record;" "an ability to manage growth;" "appropriate financial management policies and practices;" "clear measurable benefits") organizes how the individual coordinates and speaks about her work, implicating her in the maintenance of the accountability discourse and the ideological code which posits those who do not adhere to a corporate ideology as radical and unprofessional..

Once an organization has received grant money from the Trillium Foundation, there is an official (legally binding) accountability process that an organization must follow. Carl described the current funding process as having "become increasingly hands-on, micro-management." Evidence of this micro-management, "under the rubric of accountability," is seen in the section of the Program Guidelines, titled, *Next steps for grant recipients*. In this final section, Trillium dictates how the activist work will be carried out. A Letter of Agreement legally binds the grant recipient and the Ontario Trillium Foundation; the Letter of Agreement states the conditions of the grant and the expected results. In this contractual agreement, we hear a similar discourse that

ran through the curricular changes at the level of college education – in legally denoting "expected results," one sees the fashion of Outcomes Based Learning reflected in a legal discourse. The Letter of Agreement, then, textually and legally subjects the activist to the corporate ideology of accountability. In the name of accountability, the grant recipients are further required to publicly recognize the grant and the activities it supports as well as engage in official reporting and evaluation procedures through Trillium. This work is coordinated, in part, by a Trillium Foundation Program Manager or Grants Associate, who maintains regular contact (in the name of engagement) with the grant recipient.

From the stance of the individual activist, Trillium is a frustrating and stalemating experience. In its adherence to the dominant ideology of accountability and engagement, I suggest that the Trillium Foundation funding application procedure is exemplary. In laying out explicit rules for their "funding game," Trillium indeed manages the work of activists from the moment they enter into the textually mediated funding process. I am arguing two things in this paper: that *The Activist* allows us to read individual activists and their work as radical, militant and unprofessional, and that this ideological code serves the agenda of a ruling apparatus challenged and/or criticized by activist ideas.

SUBJECTIVITIES, IDEOLOGICAL CODES, AND INTERPRETIVE FRAMES

The sociological ideas explored in this paper stem largely from the work of Dorothy Smith and other institutional ethnographers in the field. In the course of researching this project, I also read extensively about activism and social movements in Canada and the United States. Specifically, Cochrane's (2005) and Conway's (2004) work on diversity in social movements, Heinz's (2005) work on social movements and identity construction, Holizki's (2005) and

Khatri's (2005) work on woman and globalization, Kolker's (2004) and Martin's (2003) work on framing and social movements, and Zucker's (2004) work on social identifications inform this paper. I also read extensively about funding (Berman & Davidson 2003) and activist alliances (McCarthey 2004; Schaefer Caniglia 2000), the effect of privatization and government control on activist work (Jurik 2004; Lyon-Callo & Brin Hyatt 2003), activist ethnographies (Simon & Dippo 1986; Lyon-Callo & Brin Hyatt 2003), the role of ideology and framing for activist movements (Diani 2000; Zaid 2000) and public perceptions of activism (Berman & Davidson 2003; Fenton, Passey, & Hems 1999). What is missing from this body of research is the stance of the activist, in relation to the greater web of social relations she must navigate. Researchers (Kolker 2004, Marino 2002; and Zald 2002) identify that there are social implications associated with discourse, knowledge, and ideology for the civil sector. Their analysis explores how framing and ideological positioning impacts a movement's success, but the relations between the local practices which coordinate the civil sector and knowledge about the civil sector remain uninvestigated in current literature. Similarly, other academic work fails to make visible the social-structural conditions which have become the materiality of a corporatizing civic sector.

Institutional ethnography calls for the unpacking of knowledge in order to illuminate the social fibres of its construction and its social organizing properties. By altering the standpoint, or analytical lens through which we examine how this knowledge is generated, a whole other reality is illuminated: a reality based on social actions themselves, rather than merely an ideological version of social behaviour. Smith's discussion of standpoint and her exploration of subjectivities (1990a) have been useful in my own work to explore the constituent social relations of *The Activist,* as an ideological code. What her work emphasizes is the relation between subjectivity, texts, and authority. Texts "can iterate the particular configuration of their

organization in different places and at different times, thereby conceptually coordinating and temporally concerting a general form of social action" (Smith 1995: 24); thus texts do the social work of standardizing knowledge and experience across numerous social sites. The policy documents, funding applications, media representations, and police accounts which comprise popular discourse about activism, become the authorized means of reading activist work. It is in the "'factual' representations accomplished in texts" (Montigny 1995:219) where knowledge is orchestrated to serve the role of a ruling relation. In this paper, I explore *The Activist* as much more than a mirror of the individuals who identify in this social category. It is understood to be a social construct that does the work of organizing social relations. Thus we begin to see an ideological code as it arises and informs social consciousness. Smith (1990a) argues that 'public technical discourse' "constitute[s] a discrete order of social relations characterized by the detachment of discourse from the locally situated speaker …. the substitution of categorical forms for actual members and of accounts for actual events" (125). Though *The Activist* may not reflect the "immediacies of our experienced reality" (Smith 1990a: 125), it has become the means whereby we index our experiences and observations of activist work.

The aim of this project is move beyond the traditional ethnographic descriptions of activist movements by explicating the social organization of the civil sector from the standpoint of the activist. This shift in subjective stance as well as a focus on knowledge as a social entity embedded in relations of power differentiates the following work from the body of research referenced in this section

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Civil society is embedded in a greater matrix of social relations. If I envision the matrix like a complex web of string connecting individuals, I know that when someone pulls the string

in the outer layer of the web, the tug is felt by others in the inner layer. Similarly, social relations which occur outside the civil sector are felt by the seemingly disconnected members of this sector. *The Activist* as it has been coded in our social consciousness is thus constituted by an interpretation of activism via the particular objectifying schema of the ruling relations. What became apparent to me over the course of this study is that the interpretive schema (constituting and constituted by ruling relations) is based on both a universalized image of activist *and* the organizational principles of the business sector. It is the logic of accountability, of balanced budgets, and of bottom lines through which we judge the work of the civil sector. It is against this corporate backdrop that *The Activist* is constituted as radical and as unprofessional. The interpretive lens through which her work is evaluated frames her in relation to the accountability discourses and the economic ideologies of the corporate sector. That this knowledge is only capable of capturing certain aspects of the work of activists is never addressed. Activism is judged (and coded) via these particular interpretive schemas.

In her work to explore the use of standardized models in teaching nursing students, Marie Campbell (1995) notes that standardized models and forms take the place of personal observations and individual courses of action. Using the methods prescribed by the standardized models means taking up the language of the model in one's description. Therefore the experiences of individual nurses working with particular patients are subsumed by the technical discourse of the standardized paper-trail they create. What is most powerful about these models and forms is that they are ubiquitous in nature (they are the invisible string drawing together multiple individuals in the matrix of social relations). The accountability discourse becomes the necessary means of doing nursing. Similarly, people argue of its organizing presence in the field

of education (Jackson 1995) and I argue in the civil sector. The ubiquity of the discourse and its authorization by the ruling apparatus allow it to function as universal knowledge.

It is through the texts of the funding application procedures and the charitable status documents where we see the materiality of the accountability discourses as they organize civil sector relations. The documentary processes associated with funded projects have become the method through which many projects are conducted and the means for evaluating the merit of the work itself. This process strips away the particulars of individual experiences and occurrences as they are fit into the documentary realities of the standardized accounting procedures. Montigny argues that the inscriptive work of documentation is "ideological, and it is located inside relations of management and control. It is work which manages and administers a lived world such that it becomes visible, reportable, and actionable professionally" (Latour and Woolgar 1979; Smith 1984 in Montigny 1995:217). Thus we see the work of discourse in the management, in the standardization and in the control of the civil sector.

In that I contend with Smith's (1996) suggestion that ideology takes on material significance in its manifestation in the activities of work and life, the analysis presented here acts as the material proof or the concrete connection between activist work and the dominant corporate ideology activated by *The Activist* as its interpretive frame. The civil sector is illuminated as matrix of social relations mediated by theory and knowledge which originates in the corporate world via the language and practices of management and accountability. Beyond the immediate scope of this paper, in its aim to illuminate the ways in which an activist's work is organized within and by a corporate ideology of accountability and engagement, it is further necessary to articulate my overarching position that power relations are mediated via 'speech genres' authorized by ruling relations: the official 'speech genre' of the funding process

positions the activist as subordinate to her funder and to her community at large. Not only is it essential that we explicate the power relations embedded in the language we use, but I argue that in the name of democracy, it is also necessary that we challenge and subvert the dominant discourses in an attempt to advocate a more just use of language based on humanitarianism rather than corporatism.

Corporate rhetoric has arguably become an authoritarian discourse. Backed by corporate ideology and corporate funds, the language of the marketplace, the language of accountability and engagement is heard in our classrooms, in our social justice system, in our work with youth, in our not-for-profit work, and in other local settings not discussed in this paper. Paulo Freire (2004) suggests that "[c]hanging language is part of the process of changing the world." The corporatization of the public and civil sectors, and the adoption of a business model as the dominant ideological frame indicate that the social-structural implications of our appropriation of the 'speech genre' of the market place are widespread. This project is not an attempt at theorizing the problematic of a corporatizing civil sector. Rather, it is intended to work as a map or blueprint of the ways in which the civil sector is organized by corporate ideologies to create a constrained and heavily managed system of relations. The ideas put forth in this paper are an attempt to honour the "things that people do and the contexts in which they do them" (Walker 1995:69). My project is to provide some insight into the production of 'expert' knowledge and the work that it does to perpetuate a network of social relations within which activist work is subjugated and controlled. Placing this project in the hands of those doing the work of "vigorous action to further a cause" (The Canadian Oxford Dictionary 2001 definition of activism), it is my hope that the civil sector will begin to re-imagine itself apart from the theoretical knowledge which currently constrains its actors.

REFERENCES

Alliance de recherche universités-communautés en économie sociale à l'Université du Québec à Montréal; Canadian Centre for Philanthropy; Canadian Council on Social Development; Canada West Foundation; Capacity Development Network, University of Victoria; Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador; Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba; Public Policy and the Third Sector, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University; School of Public Administration, University of Victoria; Statistics Canada. 2004. *Cornerstones of Community: Highlights of the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations.* Minister of Industry: Catalogue no. 61-533-XIE. ISBN 0-662-38050-9

Apple, Michael. 2000. *Official Knowledge*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. 1986. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, translated by Vern W. McGee. Austin, TS: University of Texas Press.

Bannerji, Himani. 1995. "Beyond the Ruling Category to What Actually Happens: Notes on James Mill's Historiography in *The History of British India"*. Pp 49-64 in *Knowledge, Experience and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge*, edited by Marie Campbell and Anne Manicom. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Bechely, Lois N. André. 1999. "To Know Otherwise: A Study of the Social Organization of Parent's Work for Public School Choice." Ph. D. Dissertation, Department of Education, University of California, Los Angeles, CA.

Berman, Gabrielle & Sinclair Davidson. 2003. “Do Donors Care? Some Australian Evidence.” *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Non-Profit Organizations* 14(4): 421-28.

Bruttle, Robert J. 2000. *Agency, Democracy, and Nature: The U.S. Environmental Movement from a Critical Theory Perspective*. Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Campbell, Marie & Frances Gregor. 2002. *Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography*. Aurora, ON: Garamond Press.

------. (1995). “Teaching Accountability: What Counts as Nursing Education.” Pp 221-233 in *Knowledge, Experience and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge,* edited by Marie Campbell and Anne Manicom. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary, edited by Katherine Barber. 2001. Toronto, ON: The Canadian Oxford Press.

Canada’s National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations. N.d. “A Profile of Environmental Nonprofit & Voluntary Organizations in Canada: CGEN Research Brief.” Retrieved April 11, 2005, from http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/../eng/knowledge/nsnvo.cfm

Checker, Melissa & Maggie Fishman. 2004. *Local Actions: Cultural Activism, Power, and Public Life in America*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Cochrane, Regina. 2005. “Another World Via “Diversity?”” *Women and Environments International Magazine,* 64/65, 15-19.

Conway, Janice. 2004. *Identity, Place, Knowledge: Social Movements Contesting Globalization.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Dagnino, Evelina. 1998. "Culture, citizenship, and democracy. Changing discourses and practices of the Latin American left." Pp. 33-63 in *Cultures of Politics - Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements*, edited by Sonia E. Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino and Arturo Escobar. Boulder, Col.: Westview.

Della Porta, Donatella (ed.). 1999. *Social Movements in a Globalizing World*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

DeVault, Marjorie L. & McCoy, Liza. 2002. "Institutional Ethnography: Using Interviews to Investigate the Ruling Relations." Pp 751-776 in *Handbook of Interview Research*. Thousand Oaks,CA: Sage.

Diani, Mario. 1992. "The concept of social Movement". *Sociological Review* 40: 1-25.

------ and Ron Eyerman. 1992. "The study of collective action: Introductory remarks." Pp 1-21 in *Studying Collective Action*, edited by Mario Diani and Ron Eyerman. London: Sage.

------. 2000. "The relational Deficit of Ideologically Structured Action". *Mobilization: International Journal of Research and Theory about Social Movements, Protests, and Collective Behavior* 5(1): 17-24.

Doron, D'Arcy. 2005. "Animal-rights activists target Oxford as next major battlefront". *The Globe and Mail*, August 26. Retrieved August 29, 2005 (www.globeandmail.com).

Drucker, Peter F. 1990. *Management the Non-Profit Organization: Principles and Practices*. New York: Harper Collins.

Engelen, Ewald. 2002. Corporate governance, property and democracy: a conceptual critique of shareholder ideology. *Economy and Society*. 31(3), Pp 391-413.

Envision Virtual Resources. N.d. Glossary of Terms for the Voluntary Sector. Retrieved April 11, 2005 (http://www.envision.ca/templates/blank.asp?ID=56).

Fenton, Natalie, Andrew Passey & Les Hems. 1999. "Trust, the Voluntary Sector and Civil Society." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy,* 19(7/8): Pp******.

Foucault, Michel. 2000. Truth and Power in *Power: Essential Works of Foucault,1954-1984*. Vol. 3, series edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: The New Press.

Friere, Paulo. 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York: Herder and Herder.

----. 1992. *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Giroux, Henry A. 2002. "The War on the Young: Corporate Culture, Schooling, and the Politics of "Zero Tolerance."" Pp. 35-46 in *Growing Up Postmodern*, edited by R. Strickland. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1988. "Hegemony, Relations of Force, Historical Bloc." Pp. 189-221 in *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935*. New York: New York University Press.

Griffith, Alison I. 1992. "Educational Policy as Text and Action." *Educational Policy,* 6(4): 415-428.

------. 1995. "Mothering, Schooling, and Children's Development." Pp. 108-122 in *Knowledge, Experience and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge*, edited by Marie Campbell and Anne Manicom. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Goffman, E. 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

Heinz, Teresa L. 2005. "From Civil Rights to Environmental Rights: Constructions of Race, Community, and Identity in Three African American Newspapers' Coverage of the Environmental Justice Movement". *Journal of Communication Inquiry,* 29(1): 47-65.

Holizki, Alexis. 2005. "Vancouver's Grassroots Women Link the Local and the Global." *Women and Environments International Magazine,* 64/65: 15-19.

Jackson, Nancy. 1995. "'These Things Just Happen': Talk, Text, and Curriculum Reform." Pp. 164-180 in *Knowledge, Experience and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge*, edited by Marie Campbell and Anne Manicom. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Jurik, Nancy C. 2004. "Imagining Justice: Challenging the Privatization of Public Life." *Social Problems*, 51(1): 1-15.

Khatri, Farhana. 2005. "Is Anti-Capitalism Enough?" *Women and Environments International Magazine,* 64/65: 36-38.

Kinsman, Gary. 1995. "The Textual Practices of Sexual Rule: Sexual Policing and Gay Men." Pp. 80-95 in *Knowledge, Experience and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge*, edited by Marie Campbell and Anne Manicom. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Kolker, Emily. 2004. "Framing as a cultural resource in health social movements: funding activism and the breast cancer movement in the US 1990-1993." *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 26(6): 820-844.

Krasny, K. 2002. "Dialogic Spaces: Bakhtin's Social Theory of Utterance in Theories of Reader Response." Master's Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MAN.

Lyon-Callo, Vincent & Susan Brin-Hyatt. 2003. "The Neoliberal State and the Depoliticization of Poverty: Activist Ethnography and "Ethnography from Below."" *Urban Anthropology,* 32(2): 175 – 201.

Manicom, Ann. 1995. "What's Health Got to Do with It? Class, Gender, and Teacher's Work." Pp. 135-148 in *Knowledge, Experience and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social*

Organization of Knowledge, edited by Marie Campbell and Anne Manicom. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Martin, Deborah. 2003. ""Place-Framing" as Place-Making: Constituting a Neighbourhood for Organizing and Activism." *Annals of the American Geographers,* 93(30): 730-750.

McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (ed.). 1996. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, Deborah. 2004. "Environmental Justice Grantmaking: Elites and Activists Collaborate to Transform Philanthropy." *Sociological Inquiry*, 74(2): 250-70.

McCoy, Liza. 1995. "Activating the Photographic Text." Pp. 181-192 in *Knowledge, Experience and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge*, edited by Marie Campbell and Anne Manicom. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

McMichael, P. 2000. *Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Montigny, Gerald A.J. 1995. "The Power of Being Professional." Pp. 209-221 in *Knowledge, Experience and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge,* edited by Marie Campbell and Anne Manicom. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Naples, Nancy A. 1998a. *Grassroots Warriors: Activist Mothering, Community Work, and the War on Poverty*. New York: Routledge.

------ (ed.). 1998b. *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class, and Gender.* New York: Routledge.

------ and Manisha Desai (eds.). 2002. *Women's Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics*. New York: Routledge.

Ng Roxana. 1995. “Multiculturalism as Ideology: A Textual Analysis.” Pp. 35-48 in *Knowledge, Experience and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge*, edited by Marie Campbell and Anne Manicom. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press

O’Neil, John. 2004. *Civic Capitalism: The State of Childhood*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Ralston Saul, John. 1995. *The Unconscious Civilization*. Toronto, ON: Anansi Press.

Revenue Canada, Employee Speech. May 11, 1998. *The Future of Charities in Canada*. Reference Number: CES-04. Retrieved January 7, 2005 (http://www.rc.gr.ca/charities)

Revenue Canada, Employee Speech. April 14, 1999. *1999 and the Future – Voluntary Sector Initiative*. Reference Number: CES -006. Retrieved January 7, 2005 (http://www.rc.gr.ca/charities)

Revenue Canada, Employee Speech. September 23, 1999. *The Charities Division and Corporate Community Investment.* Reference Number: CES-007. Retrieved January 7, 2002 (http://www.rc.gr.ca/charities)

Revenue Canada Mission & Vision Statements. October 25, 2002. Reference Number: CSP-A02. Retrieved January 7, 2002 (http://www.rc.gr.ca/charities)

Revenue Canada, *Gifts and Income Tax,* P113

-----, *Registered Charities and the Income Tax Act*, RC4108

-----, *Tax Advantages of Donating to a Charity*, RC4142

-----, *Auditing Charities*, T4118

-----, *Registered Charity Information Return* form, T3010

-----, *Completing the Registered Charity Information Return* guide, T4033

-----, *Application to Register a Charity Under the Income Tax Act* form, T2050

-----, *Registering a Charity for Income Tax Purposes* guide, T4063

Schaefer Caniglia, Becky. 2000. "Informal Alliances vs. Institutional Ties: the Effects of Elite Alliances on Environmental TSMO Networks." *Mobilization: The International Journal of Research and Theory about Social Movements, Protests and Collective Behaviors*, 5(Spring): 37-51.

Schlüter, Achim, Peter Phillimore, and Suzanne Moffatt. 2004. "Enough is Enough: Emerging 'Self-Help' Environmentalism in a Petrochemical Town." *Environmental Politics,* 13(4): 715-733.

Schofer, Evan and Marion Fourcade-Gourinchas. 2001. The structural contexts of civic engagement: voluntary association membership in comparative perspective. *American Sociological Review*. 66 (6), Pp 806-828.

Simon, Roger and Don Dippo. 1986. "On Critical Ethnographic Work." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly,* 17: 195-202.

Simon, Roger. 1991. "Gramsci's Concept of Hegemoney: an outline." Pp. 21-28 in *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction*. London, England: Lawrence and Wishart.

Skjeie, Hege and Birte Simm. 2000. Scandinavian feminist debates on citizenship. International Political Science Review. 21 (4), Pp 345-360.

Smith, Dorothy. 1990a. *Texts, Facts, and Femininity: Exploring the relations ruling*. New York: Routledge.

------. 1990b. *The conceptual practices of power: A feminist sociology of knowledge.* Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

------. 1996. “The Relations of Ruling: A Feminist Inquiry.” *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies*, 2: 171-190.

-----. 1999. *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations*. Toronto,ON: University of Toronto Press.

-----. 2002. “Institutional Ethnography.” Pp. 1-36 forthcoming in *Qualitative Research: An International Guide to Issues in Practice*, edited by Tim May. London,England: Sage.

Smith, George W. & Dorothy Smith. 1998. “The ideology of “fag”: the school experience of gay students.” *The Sociological Quarterly,* 39(2): 309-27.

------. 1995. “Accessing Treatments: Managing the AIDS Epidemic in Ontario.” Pp. 18-34 in *Knowledge, Experience and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge,* edited by Marie Campbell and Anne Manicom. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Taylor, Astra. 2002. “Post – ’68: Theory is in the Streets.” Pp. 205-220 in *Growing Up Postmodern: Neoliberalism and the War on the Young,* edited by R. Strickland. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Turner, Susan M. 1995. “Rendering the Site Developable: Texts and Local Government Decision Making in Land Use Planning.” Pp. 234-248 in *Knowledge, Experience and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge,* edited by Marie Campbell and Anne Manicom. Toronto,ON: University of Toronto Press.

------. 2002. “Texts and the Institutions of Municipal Government: The Power of Texts in the Public Process of Land Development.” *Studies in Cultures, Organizations, and Societies*, 00: 1-29.

Walker, Gillian. 1995. “Violence and the Relations of Ruling: Lessons from the Battered Women’s Movement.” Pp. 65-79 in *Knowledge, Experience and Ruling Relations:*

Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge, edited by Marie Campbell and Anne Manicom. Toronto,ON: University of Toronto Press.

Welton, Neva & Linda Wolf. 2001. *Global Uprising: Confronting the Tyrannies of the 21st Century, Stories from a New Generation of Activists*. Gabriola Island: BC: New Society Publishers.

Zald, Mayer, M. 2000. "Ideologically Structured Action: An enlarged agenda for social movement research." *Mobilization: International Journal of Research and Theory about Social Movements, Protests, and Collective Behavior,* 5(1):1-16.

Zucker, Alyssa N. 2004. "Disavowing Social Identities: What it Means when Women Say, "I'm Not a Feminist, But…"" *Psychology of Women Quarterly,* 28: 423-235.