MISTY WATER COLOURED MISOGYNY: THE POLITICS
OF "FALSE MEMORY SYNDROME"

by

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ABSTRACT

Over the past 20 years feminism has clearly altered popular consciousness about sexual abuse and record numbers of women have come forward to expose the men who sexually assaulted them. It is in this context that the notion of false memory syndrome (FMS) has arisen signifying a debate about the scientific validity of repression and memory of sexual abuse. In order to challenge the notion of FMS, which I argue is part of a right wing attack against feminism, and particularly in the psychotherapeutic realm, I critically analyze 4 volumes of False Memory Syndrome Foundation Newsletters. I argue that the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, a Pennsylvania based lobby group, masterminded the notion of FMS as part of a political and legal strategy to deny women's allegations of sexual abuse against powerful white men. I argue further that this movement employs rhetoric and organizing tactics that are consistent with neo-conservative movements more generally.
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For Lynette Singer who inspired my transformation from a feminist apologist to a radical feminist bitch.
INTRODUCTION

In the following pages, I introduce the notion of False Memory Syndrome (FMS) as part of a right wing attack against feminism. This thesis is a political project. It is a feminist critique that aims to provide feminist activists with some of the analytical tools necessary not only to anticipate the moves of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, the lobby group responsible for FMS, but to counter FMS politically. My goal is to construct a complex and radical analysis of FMS, that is to understand the various and overlapping relations of power that have informed its development at this particular historical moment, in the hope that these arguments will contribute to the development of a particularly radical political response. This project was inspired, in part by the anti-feminist attacks I and other feminists have had to endure in the Department of Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia as a result of our attempts to bring feminism to psychology, but mostly my realization of the inherent contradiction in making radical feminist arguments from an academic/professional location which I argue is a very limited political intervention in its potential for
cooptation and its reinforcement of an elitist system of knowledge production. Throughout the text the reader will feel the tension between my sense of accountability to a grassroots feminist political movement and the demands of writing this critique as part of the requirements of a Master's degree in counselling psychology, a department in which critical theory, and feminism in particular, is thoroughly marginalized.

In the following chapter I introduce FMS, situate its development in the context of feminist advances over the past 20 years, and frame it as a problem for research.

False Memory Syndrome

In September, 1993, HomeMaker's Magazine, a publication that targets women and is distributed by home delivery to over a million homes in Canada, ran a story titled "Falsely Accused." Accompanied by a picture of a woman clutching her head in despair, the subheading of this feature read: "False Memory Syndrome is wrecking families and destroying the credibility of genuine sexual-abuse victims. Many experts are pointing to incompetent therapists as the villains of the piece" (Bayin, 1993, p. 44). The article goes on
to tell the story of a 38 year old woman who, during the course of psychotherapy remembered having been sexually abused as a child. Following a sympathetic portrayal of her elderly parent, who was "torn apart" (p. 46) by the accusation, the article recounts this woman's fruitless efforts in therapy. Four years of self-help books, including The Courage to Heal (Bass & Davis, 1988), and support groups for survivors of sexual abuse proved unsuccessful in ending her relentless depression. The story concludes with her recantation of the allegations and ensuing membership in a support group for "recanters" (Bayin, 1993, p. 48) and the False Memory Syndrome Foundation. The remainder of the piece is devoted to a technical discussion about the psychology of memory, the suggestive power of psychotherapists, and False Memory Syndrome (FMS).

In tones of dismay, the author offers this portrayal of FMS:

...the worst crisis to hit the family in decades: innocent people being falsely accused, adult children having their problems compounded by bad therapy, and genuine victims of abuse in danger of being disbelieved by society or dismissed because
of the mounting hysteria and the sheer numbers of reported abuse victims. (Bayin, p. 48)

The past four years has seen a proliferation of such stories with the term FMS surfacing all over the mainstream electronic and print media, including major newspapers from coast to coast of the United States and Canada, and academic literature from psychology to law and medicine. The term FMS signifies, depending which side of the controversy one supports: (a) a dangerous psychological phenomenon that deeply threatens the institution of the family, or (b) a right wing attack on feminist advancements in the psychotherapeutic realm. The emergence of FMS as a significant issue in both academic and popular spheres is largely due to the False Memory Syndrome Foundation (FMSF) which has spent a great deal of time and money promoting it. With a multi-phase plan of attack, a grassroots organizing strategy, and plenty of resources including academic and mainstream media support, the FMSF has successfully popularized the notion of FMS, and challenged feminists in both the psychotherapeutic and legal domains by calling into question not only the therapeutic process by which women remember past sexual abuse, but also,
the probative value of such memories in legal proceedings.

For its promoters the term FMS describes:
[A] condition in which a person's identity and interpersonal relationships are centered around a memory of traumatic experience which is objectively false but in which the person strongly believes. Note that the syndrome is not characterized by false memories as such. We all have memories that are inaccurate. Rather, the syndrome may be diagnosed when the memory is so deeply ingrained that it orients the individual's entire personality and lifestyle, in turn disrupting all sorts of other adaptive behaviors.

The analogy to personality disorder is intentional (Kihlstrom, FMSF Pamphlet).

FMS appears to be a decidedly middle class affliction:
Unlike a tornado, this wild fury [FMS] does not seem random in its prey. Both have underlying order. FMS has concentrated on highly educated women who are generally successful by popular standards. Most of the victims are entering middle-age and come from families with above average incomes and education background who
provided well for their children with such things as dancing lessons, tennis lessons, junior years abroad, parental participation in school activities and family vacations. (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, Nov, p. 1)

Recovered memories of sexual abuse are viewed by FMS proponents as the product of a "disastrous therapeutic program" (FMS Foundation Mission and Purpose) in which overzealous (women) therapists use techniques such as hypnosis, age-regression, guided imagery, dream interpretation, bibliotherapy (i.e., The Courage to Heal, Bass & Davis, 1988), rape counselling, and group therapy to influence and/or induce women's memories of sexual abuse. Extensive focus on abuse during therapy and willingness to explain depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem as the manifestations of past sexual abuse, even when a woman has not disclosed experiences of abuse, are also ways in which therapists allegedly encourage women to falsely remember. One of the supposed hallmark symptoms of FMS, is women's confrontation of sexually abusive men (step/father, brother, uncle, grandfather, etc.) and subsequent refusal to have contact with them.
Proponents of FMS blame feminism for the perpetuation of false allegations and consequent destruction of the nuclear family because feminist therapists view traditional family therapy as inappropriate in cases where men have raped their daughters (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, June). Executive Director of the FMSF, Pamela Freyd (1994) summarizes FMS in the following way:

We have a run-away phenomenon. Good intentions, a lack of knowledge about memory, a panic about child-abuse, an over-generalization of recovery techniques in therapy, women’s issues, media sensationalism, the death-throes of Freudianism, economic issues and all the problems and anxieties come from being human or living in a family have somehow mixed together to take on a new form with a life of its own. The result has been a disaster. (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Sept, p. 1)

Misty Water Coloured Misogyny

From the outset I argue that FMS is the product of a well orchestrated conservative campaign to rid psychotherapy related to child sexual abuse of feminism, and dispute the notion that white middle class men perpetrate incest. The emergence of the
FMSF, with its explicit agenda to legitimize FMS as a psychological construct capable of shaping popular understanding and influencing legal processes, is not only a particularly blatant example of how science, in this case psychology, operates on behalf of particular political and social interests and, indeed, the maintenance of an unjust/unequal social order, but is also a reaction to the advancements of the feminist movement.

1990 marks 20 years of anti-violence against women activism by grassroots feminists. Battered women's shelters, rape crisis centers, and women's centers were part of a feminist vision that allowed women the safety required to expose male violence and thus accurately define the social and political realities of women lives (Lakeman, 1993). With every women's center came hundreds of women ready to expose and take action against the men who had abused them (Lakeman, 1993). As women came to understand and theorize violence against women through feminist consciousness raising, a process that was defined as conceptually antithetical to psychotherapy in that it demystified and depathologized women's reactions and resistance to rape, psychology responded, as it has done at every other
historically significant feminist moment, by attempting to discredit women with pathological psychological labels (Armstrong, 1994; Faludi, 1991; Herman, 1992). Women have been blamed for male violence and labeled with masochistic and/or self-defeating personality disorder, and their coping strategies and resistance has been pathologized with equally unflattering diagnoses such as borderline or multiple personality disorder (Armstrong, 1994; Caplan, 1987; Chesler, 1972; Penfold & Walker, 1983). In spite of the fundamentally misogynist history and assumptions (see Chesler, 1972) of psychology, some feminists have attempted to reform psychology and more specifically psychotherapy.

The "survivor movement" shrouded in the therapeutic ideology of personal pathology, healing, and recovery, rather than feminist political analysis and social action, I argue, is the outgrowth of a psychological cooptation of feminist thought (Armstrong, 1994; Cox, personal communication, 1996). The survivor movement’s adherence to certain feminist ideas has nonetheless inspired many women to hold men legally accountable for incestuous abuse in both the civil and criminal courts, and in this way has posed a
threat to male power by challenging the patriarchal myth of the protective father.

It is in this context that the FMSF emerged as advocates for men accused of sexual abuse, and developed the concept of FMS as a way to discredit women's allegations. The survivor movement's popularization of therapeutic discourses on sexual abuse had already shifted the focus of the debate about violence against women from a political to a psychological one and thus set the stage for the development of FMS. Whatever trace of feminist thinking could be found in the rhetoric of the survivor movement, would be challenged by FMS advocates and replaced by a more arcane, and indeed conservative psychology of sexual abuse. The advantage of framing their denial of sexual abuse in the language of cognitive psychology, I argue, was that FMS advocates were able to construct themselves as motivated by science rather than politics and thus credible by virtue of their allegedly disinterested scholarly stance.

One of the more interesting features of FMS discourse is the collateral nature of its attack that discredits women who allege sexual assault via a third
party: the (pro)feminist therapist. Herman (1992) argues "clinicians who listen too long and too carefully to traumatized patients often become suspect among their colleagues, as though contaminated by contact" (p. 9). Not only have FMS arguments been used to discredit feminist therapists and the women they support but it has also been used in the legal arena as a buttress for feminist legal reforms of evidentiary requirements and limitation periods pertaining to sexual assault laws. Susan Vella (1992), coordinator of the Canadian National Steering Committee of the National Association of Women and the Law, argues moreover, that "the [False Memory Syndrome] Foundation is aimed at giving credibility to yet one more defence to be used by accused perpetrators of childhood sexual abuse claims in the criminal and civil courts" (p. 1). She goes on to suggest:

A worrisome aspect of the FMS theory is that it makes the victim's therapist the scapegoat in childhood sexual assault claims. The FMS gives the trial judge an "out" by making it possible for the judge to find an accused not guilty without labelling the victim a liar...not only does the FMS have the potential of posing another
evidentiary hurdle for the victim to clear, it also has the potential of scaring off therapists from treating adult survivors for fear of being discredited in the courts, and of the potential of facing lawsuits by accused who are successful in their defences (for slander, intentional interference with family relations, negligence, etc.). (p. 1)

In the following pages I frame FMS as part of a neo-conservative reaction to feminist gains in both the psychological and legal domains. Before moving on to the substance of my argument, I begin in chapter 1, by outlining the theoretical underpinnings of my feminist analysis and locating this project within a tradition of critical psychology. Chapters 2, 3, & 4 build on one another. In chapter 2, I present the FMSF as a right wing think tank and examine its strategic development and dissemination of FMS. I look at how institutions like the academy and mainstream media have supported this movement, and how the FMSF has organized an extensive network of FMS lobbyists across the United States and internationally. In chapter 3, I focus on how FMS discourse is informed by right wing ideology, and employs neo-conservative rhetorical strategies.
More specifically I critique FMS by illuminating its reliance on a number of sexist, anti-feminist, white middle class myths about sexual abuse. I then move on in chapter 4, to talk about the material consequences of FMS in the legal domain and some of the ways in which this movement claims to have influenced the courts.
CHAPTER ONE

A FEMINIST THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the following chapter I outline my theoretical framework for analyzing FMS. I locate my analysis in a tradition of critical psychology, briefly discuss the debates between feminism and postmodernism as part of the theoretical development of my analysis, and then delineate a radical framework for my critique.

Critical Psychology

Psychological critiques typically address the empirical validity of psychological constructs on the basis of their theoretical consistency and methodological stringency within a dominant tradition of psychology. By dominant psychology I mean that which relies on the methods and philosophical tenets of Modernism: objectivism, rationalism, and universalism. Like all hegemonic discourses, however, psychology is not entirely unified and has thus inspired critiques that, amongst other things, challenge its supposed impartiality. In this section I outline some of these critiques as applied to the present analysis.

French psychologist and social historian Michel Foucault (1965) examined the social construction of madness and the role of psychiatry as a mechanism of
social control. Foucault was concerned with the production of social discourse and its relation to social and political power (Fraser, 1989). According to Foucault, psychiatric and psychotherapeutic discourses are modes of power and social control and hence must be examined in their political, cultural, and historical contexts in order to fully understand their significance in a particular social order (Walby, 1990).

Similar to Foucault' s work a number of booklength feminist critiques of psychiatry and psychology (see Caplan, 1987; Chesler, 1972; Penfold & Walker, 1983) have illuminated the white capitalist patriarchal interests that inform psychological constructions of women, and, more specifically, men's violence against women as well as women's varied responses and resistance to it. Feminists have criticized science and its reliance on positivist research methods arguing that such research tends to produce generalized, abstracted theories that are completely disconnected from the historical, socio-cultural, and political contexts that inform them (Harding, 1986; Haraway, 1991). Like other sciences, psychology claims objectivity by artificially separating the political
and social interests of researchers from the science they produce. Of particular relevance to my discussion of FMS is the degree to which psychology insidiously erases women's collective, though different, resistance to patriarchal oppression and redefines it as individual pathology all the while claiming scientific neutrality (Baker-Miller, 1986; Butler, 1992).

Freudian Seduction Theory, which posits the notion that women fantasize incestuous sexual abuse, is not only a particularly transparent example of the connections between white middle class male power and knowledge in psychology, but also the historical backdrop to the current psychological attack on women's memories of sexual abuse. Freud's decision to retract his original theory which identified father perpetrated rape as the cause of women's "hysteria", and replace it with Seduction Theory, was unquestionably due to sexist prejudice and a desire to conform to the patriarchal ideology of his time (Masson, 1992; Walby, 1990). Herman (1992) argues that "no matter how cogent his arguments or how valid his observations, Freud's discovery could not gain acceptance in the absence of a political and social context that would support the investigation of hysteria, wherever it might lead" (p.
In order to regain acceptance by his colleagues and the scientific community "[Freud] went on to develop a theory of human development in which the inferiority and mendacity of women are fundamental points of doctrine. In an anti-feminist climate, this theory prospered and thrived" (Herman, 1992, p. 28).

Like critical theorists in psychology, I critique FMS in a way that illuminates the historical and political specificity of this discourse. Rather than focussing on the empirical validity or scientific legitimacy of FMS, I locate FMS rhetoric within the context of current right wing politics and how they have helped to shape current psychological discourses on sexual abuse. My approach draws on the insights of critical social theory, feminism, literary criticism, and postmodernism. Treating FMS as a category of social discourse, I critically examine the ways in which FMS is represented in four volumes of FMSF Newsletters and how various strategies of power—sexism, racism, heterosexism, classism—inform the FMSF's rhetoric about sexual abuse.

Before moving on to outline the specifics of my analytical framework, I want to take a moment to discuss the theoretical debates between feminism and
postmodernism because they have informed the development of my theoretical position.

**Feminism vs. Postmodernism**

Recognizing the debate within critical traditions regarding the political utility of poststructuralist critiques (Brodribb, 1992; Christian, 1990; Nicholson, 1990), which often problematize important political precepts, I propose a feminist analysis that is praxis-oriented and, at the same time, critically appropriates certain tenets of poststructural thought.

Both feminists and postmodernists have sought to articulate a brand of social criticism that is liberated from the epistemological shackles of Modern philosophy. Motivated by the exigencies of an emancipatory political agenda, feminists have focussed principally on formulating social criticism and only secondarily on examining the conditions of philosophy. For postmodernists, on the other hand, social criticism is merely the corollary of a lengthy confrontation with philosophy (Fraser & Nicholson, 1990). Some argue that these two intellectual/cultural currents are somewhat complementary in their respective strengths and weaknesses: "a postmodernist reflection of feminist theory reveals disabling vestiges of essentialism while
a feminist reflection on postmodernism reveals androcentrism and political naivete'" (Fraser & Nicholson, 1990, p. 20).

Postmodernists describe reality as constituted in and by discourse. In other words the way we think, talk and write about our experience in the world, whether that be in the language of science, feminism, or some other philosophy, does not simply reflect, but actively shapes our reality (Dant, 1991). Language is one of the central sites of analysis for postmodernists because language is a key component of discourse production. Like knowledge, language both reflects and reproduces its social and political contexts (Fraser, 1989). Similarly, subjectivity, or the way in which a person experiences a sense of being in the world, is seen as historically specific and socially produced via discursive practises (Weedon, 1987), and therefore does not reflect the conscious will of a person but instead, is a language position in which the subject is merely the site of signification, or, as Benhabib (1992) puts it, the "ventriloquist for discourses" (p. 216).

Postmodern critiques scrutinize the connections between language, social institutions, individual consciousness, and power (Weedon, 1987), and
interrogate "...the ways in which social subjectivity is formed, internalized, contested, and re-formed through the struggles of competing discourses" (Valverde, 1991, p. 176). This type of social criticism is specific in its focus and tends to concentrate on particular discourses and discursive contexts rather than producing more general theories.

According to Fraser and Nicholson (1990), feminist critiques of modern philosophy arise precisely from the exigencies of transformative political practice that postmodern theorists neglect. Feminists have rejected the notion of objectivity, interrogated the supposed universality of Modern philosophy, and produced theories that challenge sexist conceptions of women's oppression. Black feminists, moreover, have pushed feminism toward a more radical and sophisticated understanding of how male supremacy is complicated by and translated through relations of race, class, and sexual orientation (see for example Davis, 1983; Hooks, 1984; Lorde, 1984). Some feminists, particularly in academic settings, have embraced postmodernism and attempted to apply its critique to an understanding of women's oppression. From this perspective discourse is the site of struggle and transformation, thus, the
project of this "discursive" (p. 5) feminist politics is to alter cultural representations concerning gender, race, and sexual orientation (Ebert, 1993).

As I outline my critical framework in the following section, I distinguish between a truly radical critique of inequality and feminist poststructuralism, which I argue undermines feminism as a political movement.

A Radical Critique

Many feminists reject a postmodern conception of feminism because it tends to relegate feminist interventions to a struggle over rhetoric rather than a political movement: "[a] strong postmodernist position is incompatible with and in fact renders incoherent feminism as a theoretical articulation of a struggling social movement" (Benhabib, 1992, p. 210-211). Ebert (1993) contends that certain postmodern articulations of feminism:

...problematized the notion of politics and rearticulated it as solely a cultural politics: that is, as a language-effect, a mode of rhetoric aimed at changing cultural representations, rather than as a collective practice through which existing social institutions are changed so that
(economic) resources and cultural power can be distributed without regard to gender, race, class, sexuality (p. 6).

Notions such as patriarchy or emancipation are problematized by postmodern feminists and are dismissed as 'totalizing' concepts that should be replaced with more local, specific, and concrete representations. The wholesale expulsion of certain feminist concepts including materialism within postmodern feminist discourses has led theorists such as Ebert (1993) to question the emancipatory utility of a feminism in which "...any attempt to 'conceptualize' experience or pleasure is seen...as a violent erasure of the unique, local, specific and concrete individual: to conceptualize is to totalize and to totalize is seen, at all levels, as totalitarian" (p. 8). Drawing on my understanding of feminism in both academic and grassroots contexts I have worked through the academic debates between postmodernists and feminists and examined the potential for a postmodern feminism, an exercise that has led me to distinguish between engaged radical social criticism and postmodern cooptation of critical social theory, the latter often reinforcing many of the power structures it ostensibly critiques by
building arguments that are not only disconnected from specific political action but also exclusionary in their elitist language. For this reason I was particularly drawn to Theresa Ebert's (1993) work which pulls together the most useful aspects of postmodernism, namely its interrogation of cultural/knowledge production, and radical feminism for the purpose of developing a more radical and politically relevant feminist critique. In this context I define a radical critique as one that is the most complex in its understanding of the institutions and social structures that constitute women's lived experience of oppression and is thus maximally informative as a guide for transformative political action.

For Ebert (1993) feminist theory must be a politically transformative practise:

...one that not only disrupts the specific conditions and features of a racist, patriarchal, and capitalist oppression but also transforms the systematic relations of exploitation and moves toward producing nonexploitative social arrangements. At the same time, feminist theory needs to be especially self-reflexive and adept at
critiquing its own historical situation and limits; at resisting the patriarchal appropriation and usurpation of its oppositional logic; and at insuring that its alternative practices and modes of knowing circulate and are used on behalf of an emancipatory agenda. (p. 12)

Ebert (1993) argues for a feminism that foregrounds material politics and functions as "an explanatory critique of the ways in which meanings are materially formed and social reality is constructed in relation to various strategies of power" (p. 9). Ebert’s feminist vision, which adopts certain tenets of poststructuralist thought, aims to develop an historical critique of knowledge production. She argues for a feminist theory that uses "a materialist frame to engage both levels of [feminist] politics: cultural politics (intervening in and changing cultural representations, specifically those concerning gender, sexuality, and race) as well as transformative politics (radical social intervention in the historical economic, political, and labor relations underlying cultural representations)" (p. 6).

In the following analysis of FMS I apply a feminist critique similar to the one Ebert (1991, 1993) asserts; my exploration of FMS identifies and critiques
structures of inequality and injustice. I conceptualize FMS to the extent that it is constructed through relations of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. I analyze the cultural politics of FMS, which is how FMS is represented as discourse, and locate these representations within historically and culturally specific relations of power. In this analysis I treat the production of knowledge as part of the social and political apparatus of power. In no way do I presume to be objective; my research, on the contrary, foregrounds my political intentions and makes bias central to my argument instead of treating it as the bogey man of an otherwise objective science (Lather, 1991). From a feminist standpoint I critique the ways in which the FMSF has used science and academic authority to produce a fundamentally misogynist and anti-feminist construct for the purpose of displacing feminist conceptions of sexual abuse in the psychotherapeutic realm. I argue that FMS is unlikely to be significantly challenged without an analysis of the power relations that have given rise to it at this particular historical moment. I regard this kind of analysis as part of the project of a radical transformation of psychology.
The purpose of my critique of FMS is to illuminate what is politically transformable. Rather than arguing the scientific validity of FMS, I critique the FMSF's political use of science, in this case cognitive psychology, to deny sexual abuse and by extension feminist knowledge. Similar to Foucault's (1984) genealogy, my method of critical analysis is "concerned with the processes, procedures, and apparatuses whereby truth, knowledge, belief are produced" (Fraser, 1989, p. 19). This sort of critique moreover, ...separates itself within the 'will to truth' by trying to unmask discourses' associations with power and materialities; also, it is not reductive, that is, it alone allows for a full description of the complexly determined discursive practices it studies; and finally, it describes and criticizes these practices with an eye to revealing their 'subjugating' effects in the present--it means always to resist disciplining and speaking for others in their own struggles (Bove, 1990).

In general I look at how truth is constructed by FMS discourse and illustrate the social and political foundations of this rhetoric. My purpose is not to
define FMS as much as it is to critique its various discursive representations and illuminate the ways in which material conditions, like access to money, education and social status, inform the social struggle over cultural representations of sexual abuse. This method of critique is sometimes referred to as discourse analysis.

**Discourse Analysis**

Some critical social theorists view discourse, the way in which we think, talk, or write about things, as a concrete form in which knowledge is manifested as a social phenomena (Dant, 1991), which, moreover, embodies a (material) political struggle over who has access to socially legitimized knowledge production (Fraser, 1989, p. 20). Analysis of discourse should thus illuminate patterns of meaning, contradictions, and inconsistencies that are symptomatically linked to social in/justice (Gavey, 1989). For instance, discourses that are hegemonic, or serve to maintain the ideological machinery of an oppressive system of rule, will doubtlessly reflect the values, gender, class, race, and sexual orientation of those with power (Weedon, 1987). The relationship between certain discourses and their socially transformative potential
is largely dependent on who articulates them and in what context (Philp, 1985), as Alcoff (1991) points out: "who is speaking to whom turns out to be as important for meaning and truth as what is said: in fact what is said turns out to change according to who is speaking and who is listening" (p. 12). Situating knowledge historically and politically, as well as identifying the social position of those who articulate particular discourses, is thus fundamental to a critical analysis and is essential to the process of unmasking "the working of power on behalf of special interest [within discourse] and...the opportunities for resistance to it" (Gavey, 1989, p. 466).

In order to illuminate the ways in which FMS discourse operates on behalf of white middle class men, and indeed reinforces a situation in which women's knowledge and allegations of sexual abuse are derided and denied, I trace the relationship between the organizing strategies of the FMSF and the consequent growth of FMS. The sorts of questions I ask in my analysis of FMS are as follows: (a) To what extent do the material conditions of the FMSF in terms of their financial status and social power influence the social impact of FMS discourse? (b) What strategies were used
by the FMSF to legitimize FMS as a scientific construct? (c) What do FMS advocates assume to be "normal", natural", or "commonsensical" in their arguments and what do they disregard as outrageous or implausible? (d) How does the FMSF justify its denial of sexual abuse allegations in a social context where it has become increasingly unacceptable to do so? (e) How does the FMSF use both hegemonic and liberatory discourse to authorize and legitimize their position while at the same time constructing feminist conceptions of sexual abuse as illegitimate? (f) How does the FMSF present its views as objective truth while simultaneously constructing dissenting views as political dogma? (g) How are certain FMS ideas historically significant and how do they relate to systems of power and knowledge? (i) What are the material social consequences of FMS arguments?

FMSF Newsletters Volumes 1-4

I have selected the first four volumes of FMSF bimonthly newsletters for analysis because these newsletters are the most concise and thorough articulation of FMS discourse I have seen to date. This material traces the movement of the FMS lobby from its inception in 1992, right up to the end of 1995.
Each issue is loaded with FMS rhetoric and FMSF organizing strategies. They are replete with editorials, excerpts from academic materials, legal decisions, popular press segments, book reviews, legal analyses, countless personal anecdotes, meeting and conference announcements, advisory board listings, and so on.

In my reading of FMS I have chosen to focus on material that is most relevant to a feminist political intervention and/or is so common in the text that it seems worthy of exploration. I focus on the specific organizing strategies of the FMSF in order to provide grassroots feminists the opportunity to respond to this organization and anticipate further FMSF activity. I argue furthermore, that we can learn from the successful organizing strategies of our political opponents and thus should pay attention to the specific strategies the FMSF has used to create its movement. My focus on the neo-conservative character of FMS is in part a response to the feminist critiques of FMS I have read to date, few of which locate FMS in a wider conservative movement. In no way is this text meant to be an exhaustive analysis, it is instead one woman's reading of FMS. In order to fully appreciate the
significance of FMS, we must first understand the organization that is responsible for instigating it as a moral panic. It is to this question that I turn my attention in chapter 2.
CHAPTER TWO

THE FALSE MEMORY SYNDROME FOUNDATION

The FMSF is a 501 (c) (3) organization and does not lobby...The FMS Foundation has no legislative agenda. (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Jan, p. 3)

Single-issue organizing, in particular movements that have focussed on the protection of white suburban family life, has been a very successful strategy of the Right (Davis, 1986). These movements are often supported by 'think-tanks' which have been pivotal in popularizing right wing discourses in the United States (Bruce, 1990). Groups of neo-conservative academics, who posses the scientific authority to produce "expertise" on subjects related to the interests of a right wing political agenda, form these think tanks in order to establish an ideological infrastructure for conservative political action (Ehrenreich, 1990). Think-tanks rarely lack resources and often receive hefty right wing foundation grants and substantial institutional support such as academic sponsorship (Bruce, 1990). Beyond marketing expertise, think-tanks act as clearing houses for conservative propaganda.

In the following chapter I argue that the FMSF, with its focus on establishing FMS expertise, is a
conservative think tank and is largely responsible for the spread of FMS. While I reserve my exploration of the neo-conservative ideological foundations of FMS for chapter 3, in this chapter I provide the foundations for that argument by constructing FMS as the product of a political movement as opposed to a scientific discovery. I start with a brief history of the FMSF, delineate its stated mandate, and then move on to look the kinds of resources and organizing strategies it has used to rocket FMS into the popular, academic, and legal domains.

A brief History

The rapid spread of FMS was not a spontaneous event, but instead was the product of the efforts of the FMSF, a Pennsylvania based non-profit organization that was founded March 14, 1992. Pamela Freyd, the current executive director, started the organization when her husband, Peter Freyd, was accused by their daughter of incestuous rape and sexual assault (Doe, 1991). In an article titled "How could this happen? Coping with a false accusation of incest and rape" (Doe, 1991), Pamela Freyd, writing under the pseudonym Jane Doe, proclaimed her husband's innocence and accused an incompetent, unethical, arrogant and cruel
feminist therapist for allegedly coaxing her daughter into making such allegations (Doe, 1991). After all, she explained, Peter Freyd had passed a lie detector test so how could he possibly be guilty (Doe, 1991)?

The piece was published in Issues in Child Abuse Accusations, a journal edited by sexual abuse advocate and rabid anti-feminist, Ralph Underwager, member of the Institute for Psychological Therapies (see "FMS Founders Champion Paedophilia," 1993). He and his wife, Hollida Wakefield, also a member of the Institute for Psychological Therapies, were instrumental in the development of the FMSF providing resources in its early days, such as a 1-800 number, and "loving professional support" (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, May, p. 1).

In April of 1992 Pamela and a group of accused parents and professionals supporters, the newly formed FMSF, secured a site for their headquarters at the University City Science Center in Philadelphia, a non-profit organization funded by 28 educational institutions to support research organization and companies that are developing new technologies (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, April). In no time the FMSF was fully equipped with phones, faxes, a 1-800 number,
status as a tax exempt public charity, professionally bound collections of reprinted articles, pamphlets, monthly newsletters, and a volunteer staff and were well prepared to respond to the now hundreds of telephone inquiries from doctors, lawyers, university administrators and professors, television producers, psychological associations, and 'families' (accused men and the women who support them) (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, April, June, July, Nov).

Mandate

In 1992 the FMSF announced their mission to warn the public, media, legal and mental health communities, about an allegedly growing and dangerous social problem/health crisis, FMS, and its destruction of science and the family. With a handful of academics at the helm, they developed a multifaceted mandate: (a) to provide a scientific rationale for the spread of FMS, (b) to prevent further cases of FMS, (c) to assist accused men (and their women supporters) through counselling, (d) to publicize FMS and its alleged causes, (e) to promote and sponsor scientific research into FMS and disseminate findings to relevant professional communities, (f) to devise scientific methods for distinguishing true and false allegations,
(g) to explain the reasons for false allegations (i.e., inducement by therapists) and, (h) to provide legal advice to accused men (FMSF Pamphlet).

They made it clear, however, that their goal was not to determine the truth of women's allegations, a task that apparently would require clairvoyance or supernatural powers, but instead, with the objectivity of a transcendent and all knowing science as their guide, they would earnestly and dispassionately "record this phenomenon as accurately and completely as possible" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Jan., p. 1). In one statement of purpose the FMSF claimed that sexual abuse per se was not their central concern, but, instead, to defend the good name of science and promote family reconciliation (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, March).

Far from being the product of a passive and objective scientific endeavor, the growth of FMS was, in fact, an entirely manufactured event.

A Multiphase Project

FMSF leaders are shrewd political organizers, strategic in their use of resources, and adept at mobilizing community action. The advancement of FMS involved a well organized multiphase strategy of attack, a million dollar annual operating budget,
institutional support from the academy and mainstream media, and a grassroots-style organizing scheme. In order to fully appreciate the degree to which the notion of FMS arose as part of a well orchestrated plan, it is interesting to look at the multiphase organizing strategy that the FMSF employed.

Phase I was the development and deployment of a scientific construct that would disrupt and replace popular feminist ideas about sexual abuse and at the same time, discredit feminists who challenge science, psychology, and law. In its early days the FMSF spent much of its time collecting data—conducting surveys, and soliciting stories from accused men, non-accused family members, and women who retracted allegations. They needed to document a recognizable and consistent cluster of "symptoms" that would legitimize FMS as an observable psychomedical phenomena. When enough men accused of incestuous rape (and often their women supporters) came forward to tell miraculously similar stories of their innocence, the FMSF claimed to be witnessing a scientific phenomena.

Phase II targeted/created "experts" in major institutions such as academia, psychiatry, medicine, and law in order to further legitimize FMS as a
scientific construct and firmly insinuate it into a body of academic literature. The development of the FMSF Scientific and Professional Advisory which consists of over 45 legal experts, authors, psychiatrists, and social, developmental, and forensic psychologists (see Appendix A) was crucial in establishing their credibility (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Dec). With the "most prestigious memory researchers and clinicians in the world" publishing research papers, organizing and speaking at conferences, and acting as expert witnesses, the expertise of FMS advocates was firmly established. And the academic community was more than ready to embrace the notion of FMS:

This month, we see the biggest and most significant change: a great increase in the number of scholarly papers about FMS. Because of the tone of the papers and because of the depth in which the issues are addressed, we conclude that the academic community is concerned about the consequences of recovered memory therapy and is now willing to speak out in a voice about the scientific foundation of memory. (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Sept, p. 1)
Phase III was geared toward convincing powerful professional organizations that FMS was a problem in need of their attention. With the support of the scientific/academic community the FMSF began to pressure national regulatory bodies such as the American Psychiatric Association, American Medical Association, and American Psychological Association, into reevaluating psychotherapeutic techniques associated with sexual abuse. In no time regulatory bodies began to make public statements about the potential hazards of "recovered memory therapy" (cited in FMSF Newsletter, 1994, July; 1995, July/Aug).

Phase IV, which I discuss at length in chapter 4, was the move into the criminal and civil courts. The FMSF were able to argue, with the backing of the biggest most powerful professional regulatory bodies in North America, that the liberal legal "rights" of men were being violated on the basis of unscientific psychological theories.

The execution of this multi-phase strategy was dependent upon a significant resource base. In the next section I explore how the FMSF used money, the mainstream media, and the academy to cultivate FMS.
Resources

The FMSF relies on membership dues ($100.00/year), individual donations, employer matched donations, gifts of stock, bequeathed monies, United Way donations, and grants from charitable foundations, and corporations to fund their activities (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, Aug/Sept; FMS Foundation Mission and Purpose). In its first 3 years of operation the FMSF more than doubled its operating budget from $365,485 (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, July) to $1 million (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, March). Most of this budget is spent on political lobbying and public education, with the remainder going to administration costs such as staff salaries, phone lines, and rent (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Sept). What is clearly unaccounted for in the financial statements of the FMSF, however, is the contributions of establishments such as television networks and universities who have provide an institutional infrastructure for FMSF activities.

Marketing of FMS has been taken on with enthusiasm by the mainstream media. Nearly every American television network has contributed to the spread of FMS. The types of programs that have carried FMS related stories include: influential television news
magazines (ABC's "20/20", NBC's "Dateline", PBS's "Nova" and "Frontline", CBS's "60 Minutes", "Eye to Eye with Connie Chung" and "News-with-Dan-Rather", CBC's "The Nature of Things" and "Pamela Wallen Live"); syndicated daytime talkshows ("Maury Povich", "Shirley", "Donahue"); syndicated tabloid news programs ("Inside Edition", "Current Affair"); morning television (CBS's "This Morning" and "Morning Show", NBC's "Today"); late night television (CBS's "Late Late Show"); and even sit-coms and dramatic television (NBC's "Sisters", PBS's "Mystery Theater") (FMSF e-mail list). Some of these programs, such as ABC's "20/20" and NBC's "Dateline", have broadcast multiple FMS related programs. Radio broadcasts include a whole host of National Public Radio (NPR) programs, from "The Friday Science Show", "Fresh Air", "All Things Considered" to "Talk of the Nation". FMS is a popular Christian Radio topic and has featured on "Focus on the Family" and "The Bible Answer Man Radio Show" (syndicated to over 100 Christian radio stations worldwide).

The FMSF were confident from the beginning that the media would be sympathetic and encouraged members,
especially non-accused and professional supporters, to speak publicly:

The most effective public representatives are those who are not accused...If therapists and lawyers who have thanked us for starting this organization will speak out about what they have seen, then surely we can stop the unscientific practices more quickly" (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, May, p. 4).

And indeed, the willingness of FMS advocate to speak publicly appears to have been effective in garnering public support and interest in the FMSF: "It is your courage in appearing on television that is spreading the word of the FMS phenomenon. Whenever you appear, the phones ring and callers thank you for letting them know about the Foundation" (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, Nov, p. 5). With every highly publicized print or television story, the public response soared: 900 calls to the FMSF following a "Sally Jesse Raphael" program, 900 calls following an Anne Landers column (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Jan), 40-50 first time calls a day following an article in GoodHousekeeping (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Sept) (notice that the target market is obviously women). The FMSF
adamantly denies any affiliation with the media, however, and is indignant at such a "silly" suggestion (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, July p. 2). The question is not so much whether certain members of the media are linked to the FMSF, but the degree to which the popular press has embraced their rhetoric. FMS is definitely a hot topic and without a doubt promoted by the mainstream press (Cockburn, 1996).

Universities have played a central role in cultivating FMS by providing intellectual capital and infrastructural support. Most of the FMSF scientific and professional advisory board members are located in universities and are thus paid to produce FMS related research. Access to publishing in academic journals, and university sponsorship of conferences has been key in legitimizing FMS as a scientific construct.

The very prestigious John Hopkins Medical Institution, for example, works closely with FMSF. They have cosponsored a number of continuing education events, including an international conference in 1994 which offered 16 continuing medical education credit hours for participation, and generated hundreds of dollars worth of video and audio tapes to later be marketed by the FMSF (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Jan).
John Hopkins is also sponsoring a series of one-day professional conferences to be held in San Diego, Atlanta, Chicago, and Boston in the spring of 1996, and planning a national conference for the spring of 1997. The fact that FMSF advisory board member Paul McHugh so happens to be the chief of psychiatry at John Hopkins Hospital explains, at least in part, the apparent enthusiasm of that institution.

Organizing Strategies

Plentiful resources account for only a part of the success of the FMSF. They are very effective political organizers. In its early days, the FMSF relied on volunteers, paid staff and a multi-level organizing strategy that involved an intricate network of volunteers across the United States who were called on at times to respond to the scores of telephone inquiries following high profile media segments (FMSF Newsletter, Aug/Sept, 1992). The FMSF codified their telephone procedures and developed training manuals for volunteers enabling them to monitor thousands of calls from across the country and ensure consistency in their reporting of information (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, Aug/Sept, p. 3). As a consequence the FMSF membership which started at 243 'families' has grown almost
exponentially over the past 4 years and currently exceeds 10,000 (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, October).

FMSF members currently meet in 28 American states, 4 Canadian provinces, Australia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Nov/Dec). The FMSF encourages members to start their own organizing groups state by state, to hold regular meetings in their local communities, and to submit names of liaison persons to the Foundation so that new members can be introduced to others in their area. Liaisons are also responsible for developing and distributing lists of local media contacts (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, Nov). Rather than forming official state branches, however, the FMSF prefers to retain maximum control of its public image and therefore instructs members to organize under the vague title of "Professionals and Parents in Support of the FMS Foundation" (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, Oct, p. 5). State organizers are instructed to consult the FMSF before taking public action and are forbidden to speak publicly on behalf of the Foundation (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, May).

Part of the success of FMSF's political strategy is that they have capitalized on the comfort and
resources of their professional middle and upper class membership who are quite confident and familiar with the lobbying tactics that the FMSF promotes. Whereas they turn their middle class noses up at what they denigrate as political activism (organizing that does not rely on money and/or institutional power) and lobbying (blatant and therefore sleazy politics), the FMSF carries out its "dignified" (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, April, p. 4) program of public education (propaganda). They organize conferences and seminars to which they invite other local professionals and politicians. They pressure book stores and libraries to carry and display pro-FMS materials, and circulate their literature through hospital waiting rooms, community centers, banks, and churches. They initiate letter writing campaigns and "write, write, write" to professional organizations, public officials, lawyers, doctors, newspapers, television producers. The FMSF encourages lobbying at the national, state, local, and personal levels:

You can make it happen. At the national level write to the Congressional Select Committee on Children Youth and Families (address below); write to the media--newspapers and television--to inform
them about what is going on. At the state level, learn about the licensing laws and other legislative issues that affect you. Make your voice heard. At the local level reach out. Work with the FMS Foundation liaison in education efforts. At the personal level, document carefully the details of the actors and actions that have devastated your life. (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, Nov, p. 1)

Newsletters play a key role in keeping the momentum of the movement going and are an excellent organizing tool in that they provide a forum to acknowledge and encourage members' participation. They also provide concise, up-to-date, and accessible information about the growth of FMS, including summaries of media coverage, legal decisions, psychological debates, and critiques of FMS. For members who are inexperienced lobbyists, FMSF Newsletters often contain examples of letters to public officials and media representatives (see for example FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Feb), and provide other potential lobbying tactics.

"Make a Difference", a regular newsletter column, was introduced in October of 1994:
This is a new column that will let you know what people are doing to challenge FMS madness. Remember three years ago FMSF didn’t exist. A group of 50 or so people found each other and today we are over 13,000. Together we have made a difference. How did this happen? Each month we will report on activities of members. (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Oct, p. 8)

"Make a Difference" is an excellent tool to keep members current about lobbying that is going on across the country and internationally. The intent is presumably to promote a sense of national and international unity, and inspire members to take action in their own communities.

**FMS Clearing House**

The FMSF acts as a clearing house for FMS related materials. They currently lay claim to a database of more than 6,000 academic and popular articles, videos, and books on FMS related topics (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Nov/Dec). Most of their material is collected by FMSF members. It is not due to lack of funds that the FMSF chooses to have members perform this function rather than a clipping service, but instead because it gives them access to a broader base of information including
flyers, brochures, and advertisements, and thus a more complete representation of popular opinion about sexual abuse (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, April; 1995, Oct).

They have a centralized database of FMS "stories" which they use to support their scientific arguments:

Perhaps the most important thing that you can do is to keep a written record of your feelings and of the events in your family as they unfold. FMS Foundation will keep an archive of these records so that scholars in the future will have a source of information about this phenomenon. (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, June, p. 5)

Not only does the FMSF collect information, but they are largely responsible for its distribution. The FMSF disseminates information via e-mail, fax, telephone, mail, conferences, and meetings. They recently developed a speakers bureau consisting of pro-FMS psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, lawyers, law enforcement officials, and writers. They offer programs suitable for professional conferences, professional development/staff training seminars, mental health programs/panels, and Continuing Education conferences and workshops. Speakers are prepared to talk about FMS, forensic issues,
dissociative disorders, hypnosis, therapy, interviewing techniques, cults, satanic ritual abuse, retrakters, mediation, reconciliation, civil and criminal law, professional malpractice, and more (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, July/Aug).

In this chapter I have explained how the FMSF operates as a think tank using academia, the media, and a variety of other resources and strategies to popularize FMS and legitimize it as a scientific construct. I have also alluded briefly to my argument that FMS is part of a conservative political project. In chapter 3, I explore this notion a little more closely by examining how a number of right wing discourses inform the construction of FMS.
CHAPTER THREE

NEO-CONSERVATIVE POLITICS

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the current phenomenon, is the misuse of science to promote a political end. Pamela Freyd, (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Jan, p. 1)

In the following chapter I argue that FMS is not the objective scientific phenomenon that its promoters claim, but instead is a right wing and decidedly anti-feminist construct. I first contextualize the rise of FMS in period that is characterized by the Right’s focus on cultural politics. I go on to define New Right ideology and explain how its adherence to certain liberal values has attracted the professional middle class. Finally, I look at a number of conservative discourses and rhetorical strategies, such as power inversion and appropriation, that the FMS lobby has used to justify its attack on feminism.

Cultural Politics: New Right Ideology

The Right’s move toward cultural politics was largely inspired by the success of the 60s and 70s Left to effect both popular understandings of social inequality and, more importantly, public policy. It was gruesomely apparent to the Right, in the wake of a
number of progressive social and legal reforms, that cultural production, that is, the generation of ideas and concepts capable of shaping popular consciousness, was an effective site of political struggle on which to focus attention (Davis, 1986). In this era of liberal hegemony, more hardline rhetoric, immediately recognizable as conservative ideology, was unlikely to win the favour of the masses and thus a new brand of conservatism was born with a kinder and gentler, more appropriated rhetoric; the sort that masquerades in the language of social justice and asserts a nonetheless reactionary agenda.

"New Right" ideology is characterized by a blend of liberal discourse, conservative economics, right wing populism, and a strong foundation in the middle class (Ehrenreich, 1989; Levitas, 1986). Its adherence to liberal principles, especially rights discourses that stress individual liberty, allows the New Right to appear interested in the plight of the "common folk" while employing conservative economic and social policies that unquestionably exacerbate the disparity between the most and least powerful in society. Liberals are drawn to New Right ideology because it offers a liberal discourse with which to oppose
substantive equality (structural changes) without appearing conservative (McIntyre, 1993). For middle class professionals, moreover, with their university educations and claims to intellectual and cultural enlightenment, New Right discourse is particularly attractive because it allows them to see their views as liberal and thus clearly distinct from the supposedly vulgar conservatism of the working class (Ehrenreich, 1989).

Anti-feminism is a fundamental component of New Right ideology because feminism threatens so many of the core values of modern conservatism: white middle class family privacy, male supremacy, compulsory heterosexuality, and indeed, the notion of the biological family as the fundamental unit of social life. Of particular import to the New Right task is the reprivatization of what the feminist movement made public, that is the domestic abuse of women and children by men. New Right hatred of feminism and other liberatory movements does not, however prevent this ideology from appropriating liberation discourses for the purpose of making itself appear more liberal.

In the following sections I outline a number of New Right discourses that have informed the
construction of FMS. I begin by paralleling FMS discourse with a similar attack on liberal professionals in the 70s and 80s. I go on to introduce anti-political correctness discourse and examine how its rhetorical inversion of power allows the FMS lobby to justify anti-feminism, prove men's innocence, and position themselves as the moral authority on sexual abuse.

New Class Discourse

In order to demonstrate the ideological origins of FMS in the New Right I explore, a parallel example of the conservative attack on the professional (liberal) middle class during the late 70s and 80s, which I argue employed much of the same populist rhetoric and political strategies that the FMS lobby is currently using against therapists.

In her cogent critique of the American middle class and its move to the Right over the past two decades, Barbara Ehrenreich (1990) looked at how the New Right gained popular support for an increasingly conservative political agenda during the 70s and 80s. In order to consolidate conservative middle and working class interests with those of the corporate elite, the
New Right created an enemy that everyone would love to hate.

Right wing political pundits invented a monster that, while closely resembling themselves, was distinguished by its vile parasitic nature and moral bankruptcy (Ehrenreich, 1990). It was the New Class, liberal elites, journalists, academics, political commentators, lawyers, etc., who, during the 60s and 70s, politically aligned themselves with marginalized peoples, but according to the New Right ideologues, only for the purposes of building their own careers. They were traitorous on all fronts, ruthlessly exploiting the powerlessness of the marginalized and violating the middle class shibboleth of occupational autonomy that requires work to be directed by inner principles and values as opposed to external material rewards such as profit (Ehrenreich, 1990).

New Class discourse according to Ehrenreich (1990), tapped into "a widespread uneasiness with the professional middle class--a growing awareness that this class was indeed an elite, estranged from the concerns of the 'ordinary' working class Americans" (Ehrenreich, 1990, p. 146). As the whistle-blowers, the slightly schizophrenic overseers of social justice
and middle class loyalty, the New Right had won a monopoly on moral authority:

Their fictive battle with the New Class infused them [New Right] no doubt, with moral righteousness. Whatever they did, they were on the side of the 'plain folks,' the Middle Americans, the working class. They could make their careers advancing policies that hurt the hard-working and the needy--all in the name of combatting a wicked, and fortunately quite invisible and powerless, 'liberal elite.' (Ehrenreich, 1990, p. 195).

Just as conservatives positioned themselves as the watch-dogs pointing an accusatory finger at the liberal elite in the 70s, I argue that the FMS lobby employs a similar rhetoric to discredit professionals who advocate for women. The FMS lobby construct these therapists as a greedy bunch who are not only unqualified, but morally deplete, profiteering from the pain and suffering of women. FMSF literature is littered with New Class discourse. Therapy related to sexual abuse is variously cited as: "a marvelous money spinner" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, June, p. 12), "a psychological industry" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, March,
"a new cottage industry" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, May, p. 12), "a grossly unregulated business" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Nov., p. 5), and so on. Feminist therapy is constructed as the cash cow of the 90s, with literally hundreds of thousands of dollars in insurance money and criminal compensation to be bilked by mental health professionals (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, April, Aug/Sept)). Pamela Freyd (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, March) speculates that it is greed rather than ethics that perpetuates FMS:

We don't know why so many professionals continue to defend Recovered Memory Therapy given the risks and costs involved with its practice. In part, we suspect, it is related to the overall extravagant climate of the 1980s in which "entrepreneurs glutted the market with new psychiatric hospitals" and "patients could stay in talk therapy for years". (p. 1)

Others suggest that therapists who suffered in the recession are financially motivated to come up with extended treatment programs (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, June). They are not just greedy but mercenary, using up allegedly limited health-care resources without regard for whether there is enough left over to "ensure
that [children] have enough to eat or good medical care" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, April, p. 6). The motivations of feminist therapists are in stark contrast to the virtuous and dispassionate FMSF who are constructed as "professionals with no special interest and receive no material reward" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Oct, p. 2).

While the FMSF bristles at the "moral arrogance" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, April, p. 5) of the survivor movement they position themselves as the moral authority on sexual abuse. They are not in the sordid business of profit, "no insurance company has offered us any money" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Jan, p. 2), or politics but, instead, the "dignified" endeavor of restoring families (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, April, p. 5). They "care about people" (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, Nov, p. 6) and put the needs of "our children" first (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, April, p. 5). Like the Red Cross (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Nov), they save lives: "How do we thank you for saving our lives? We had planned to no longer be on Earth for another Christmas. Because of the Foundation we are alive--and ready to take on whatever comes" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Jan, p. 1).
New Class discourse is complicated by sexism in the rhetoric of FMS and thus feminist therapists are not just greedy but unqualified, unscientific, positively unmasculine (whether they are men or women), money-grubbing man-haters who have no business delegitimizing the counselling profession or tapping into a market that rightfully belong to white men. The FMSF goes further, arguing that women have lowered the standards of academic psychology:

How they got Ph.d.'s. is a disgrace. The whole field of clinical psychology and applied psychology, social work and the related disciplines has gone downhill in the last 10-20 years. Social work was never there. These people have no business being in that endeavor...You get all these weak people gathering together, talking to each other, promoting folklore and mythology, never having understood science. They are the people, unfortunately, who are doing this. (cited in FMSF Newsletter, 1992)

In this excerpt certain phrases and words reveal a fundamentally sexist and anti-feminist discourse while the author never actually uses the words feminism or women. "Weak people" who "never understood science"
(women) have caused a slide in academic standards ("how they got Ph.D.'s is a disgrace") over the last "10-20 years" (post-70s feminism). "Social Work" is a code for women's work in this context and so, of course, was "never there" (up to white male standards).

Clinical experience is another code word for illegitimate credentials. Knowledge based on clinical observation--feminized knowledge--rather like intuition, is derogated as facile. According to the FMS lobby, clinical experience can be obtained by anyone, even "witch-doctors," "labotomists," and "astrologers", and thus is certainly not worthy of scientific legitimacy nor insurance funding (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Jan, P. 2). The reference to labotomists here is worthy of a quick diversion because it is an example of how the FMS lobby appropriates radical discourses on psychiatry in order to garner sympathy and support for conservative arguments. In this case an eerie image an historically abusive psychiatry with its grizzly procedures such as lobotomies and electric convulsive therapy is grouped with "recovered memory therapy" allowing the FMS lobby to not only position themselves as morally superior but argue for extremely conservative therapy techniques and
appear quite moderate. They do not critique contemporary psychiatry as an institution nor do they call for more liberatory psychotherapeutic practice, instead they advocate a retrenchment to more conservative modes of therapy (see FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Oct).

*FMS* professional/scientific standards discourse is as much a sexist reaction to the feminization of the mental health field, which occurred with the influx of women into graduate programs in psychology and social work and the introduction of feminist critiques in these disciplines, as it is a desire to reinstate the conservative white professional male monopoly on the therapy industry (Schuman & Galvez, 1996). Interestingly the FMSF constructs its anti-feminist arguments in the language of mental health consumer rights.

In the name of consumer's rights the FMSF monitors education standards and therapeutic practices. This consumer rights discourse draws on lay persons' justifiable resentment of professional/elitist arrogance. Therapists, the FMSF argues "...historically have resisted the notion that they must prove the value of what they do" (FMSF Newsletter,
1993, June, p. 3). The real concern of the FMSF is not that professionals should have to prove their expertise, but instead that professionalism should not include feminism. According to the FMSF therapists who practice political (i.e., feminist) therapy, which incidentally is constructed as analogous to space alien abduction and age regression, are threat to consumers and insurance companies who fund therapy:

Should therapy be political and if so what are the boundaries? If some therapists use age regression hypnosis in space alien abduction therapy and in past life therapy then it is a fair and honest question for consumers to ask for the evidence of benefits of this therapy, especially since their insurance is paying for it. (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, July, p. 2)

In order to illustrate the insidiousness of this kind of rhetorical appropriation on behalf of right wing interests it is interesting to look at a parallel example. The Nurses for Patients Rights Informed Consent Ethics (PRICE), a Vancouver based anti-choice group, argue against abortion with the following rights discourse:
Though it may be difficult to stand up to your doctor and protect your rights, remember it's his job [emphasis in original] as a physician to inform you of your risks before you approve any surgery. Don't be intimidated. It's your [emphasis in original] body that will be operated on and it's you who will suffer the effects if anything goes wrong. (Making an Informed Decision About Your Pregnancy, pamphlet of PRICE)

Like FMS New Class discourse, the professional, in this case a doctor, is accurately constructed as powerful. The discourse furthermore presents itself as feminist, that is interested in women's right to control their bodies. Like FMS discourses, however, these arguments are used to further an anti-woman agenda, in this case the restriction of women's reproductive choice. This kind of appropriation of social justice arguments for the purpose of furthering conservative aims, is very common in FMS discourse and, moreover, characteristic of anti-political correctness rhetoric to which I now turn my attention.

Anti-Political Correctness Discourse

In the early 1990s right wing academics, Republican politicians, and the mainstream media,
rocketed the notion of 'political correctness' into the consciousness of the American public (Martinez, 1991; Selfa & Mass, 1992). On the heels of his exceptionally racist Willie Horton campaign strategy, George Bush pointed an accusatory finger at political correctness (PC) suggesting that, even worse than racism or sexism, PC was a threat to liberty and freedom in America (Martinez, 1991; Selfa & Maass, 1992).

Anti-political correctness (anti-PC) discourse, the face of conservative populism in the 90s, is one of the more absurd, but effective, cultural projects of the New Right. In anti-PC rhetoric the term "political correctness" refers to social justice arguments and social justice advocates are variously characterized as thought police, feminazis, McCarthyists, and witch hunters. In Anti-PC mythology, a merciless, totalitarian, but nonetheless arrogantly moralistic army of marginalized people--women, people of colour, gays and lesbians--(witch) hunt and persecute rich white men. Rich white men on the other hand are the anti-PC heros, fighting back against the marginalized in the name of the family, science, and tradition.

Power inversion, backward logic and historical inaccuracy is the name of the anti-PC game: everything
is topsy turvy in its double speak. For example, in FMS discourse, which I argue is part of an anti-PC attack on feminism, men accused of incestuous rape are the victims of sexual abuse, feminist critiques of science are a "backlash against science" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, May, p. 1), feminist therapists are "a new kind of sexual predator" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Sept, p. 10), and conservative science is critical thinking.

Science and Anti-PC

The Right has focussed much of its anti-PC attack on the academy because universities are viewed by the Right as a last bastion of 60s radicalism (McIntyre, 1993). Though Anti-PC discourse arose in the Humanities (Martinez, 1991), the advent of postmodern and feminist critiques of science (see for example Harding, 1986; Haraway, 1991) has inspired more recent anti-PC reactions in the sciences (Ross, 1995). In anti-PC discourse, science that upholds the interests of rich white men is aligned with democracy while science that promotes the interests of women, people of colour, or gays and lesbians is constructed as purely ideological and hence undemocratic.
The rise of FMS discourse, I argue, is a reaction to feminist critiques of the social sciences and, more specifically, feminist theories of sexual abuse in psychology. The FMSF's emphasis on cognitive psychology, laden as it is with unintelligible terminology and arcane scientific discussion, is in part an attempt to intimidate their critics, but mostly an anti-PC reaction to theories of sexual abuse that do not rely on white male academic authority. Feminist sexual abuse discourses are thus derided and dismissed by FMS advocates as "pop psychology" (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, May, p. 3), "junk science" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Oct, p. 7), and "pseudo-science" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Sept, p. 1).

The anti-PC "myth of scientists as a beleaguered and isolated minority of truth-seekers" is alive and well in FMS discourse (Ross, 1993, p. 348). Just as anti-PC white male academics have defended their hegemony in the Humanities by pointing to the timeless allegedly neutral values of the Great Western Works (McIntyre, 1993), the FMSF argues its neutrality on the basis of a purportedly transcendent and objective tradition of scientific investigation. The FMSF is adamant that they are guided by science rather than
politics and endlessly pontificate about the
distinction between science and ideology (FMSF
Newsletter, 1994, July). Science that promotes a
(feminist) political agenda is in their view a "misuse
of science" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Jan, p. 1).

Although the FMSF claims to be interested in
science, "open debate, discussion argument, presenting
data" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, July, p. 3), critical
thought (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, March), and free
inquiry, feminists are apparently driven by ideological
arrogance and dogmatism. Feminist theories of sexual
abuse are constructed as a "closed confused logic
system" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, May, p. 11),
"undisguised gender-based hatred," "venomous ranting"
(FMSF Newsletter, 1993, June, p. 7), and a "non-
negotiable, totalistic, black and white view" (FMSF
Newsletter, 1993, Oct, p. 2). Feminism is a cult:

There is the blind faith--the hypnotic acceptance
of the teaching of the gurus--the unquestioning
and uncritical incorporation of the far-out tenets
into the personal lives of the adherents--no
matter how outlandish the teachings--no matter who
gets hurt, or how much. There is the missionary
zeal and closed-minded, narrowly focused, head in
the sand determination to vindicate a social agenda (a product of fuzzy emotional, convoluted thinking at any cost). (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, June, p. 6)

Just as the FMSF attempt to discredit women's knowledge by constructing it as cultish and unscientific, the witch hunts of the 16th and 17th century were an attempt to secure a white male monopoly on psychomedical expertise by demonizing centuries of women's knowledge in the name of science:

The story of the rise of the psychomedical experts—the doctors, the psychologists, and sundry related professionals—might be told as an allegory of science versus superstition: on the one side, the clear headed, masculine spirit of science; on the other side a dark morass of female superstition, old wives tales, rumours preserved as fact. In this allegorical vision, the triumph of science was as inevitable as human progress or natural evolution: the experts triumphed because they were right. (Ehrenreich & English, 1978, p. 33)

FMS advocates claim, in a discursive maneuver that only an ideological acrobat could pull off, that they
are the victims of a witch hunt, not just as academics, but as men accused of incestuous rape. In the following section I look at how FMS discourse inverts relations of power in order to justify its attack on women.

The Counter-Victim Flip

Power inversion, or the "counter-victim flip" as Ehrenreich (1995, p. 11) calls it, is part of the ideological gymnastics of anti-PC rhetoric. The purpose of such inversion is to justify reprehensible social acts by positioning those who commit them as morally righteous. Ehrenreich (1995) wryly explains:

Think of all the times you have accidentally elbowed some elderly or pregnant person to the ground in the course of boarding the bus or train. Think of the nasty aftermath, the clumsy apologies, the possible fines. How much nicer it would sound, when recounted to friends and family, if that elderly or pregnant person turned out to have been trampled while inexplicably assaulting you! (p. 11)

In the counter-victim flip of FMS discourse, witch hunts no longer signify the murder of women in the service of men's desire to monopolize and
professionalize medicine (Ehrenreich & English, 1978). Instead it is the middle class professional men who are witch hunted for wanting to maintain their medical and psychotherapeutic monopoly over women. They warn of "an explosion of witch hunting" and that FMS "really is a witch hunt" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Aug/Sept, p. 7). Therapists are the "secular high priests" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, July, p. 9) in this anti-PC fiction, using methods to identify incestuous fathers that parallel those for detecting witches: "In times past treatise were published on the signs and symptoms of witches. Now we have books on the signs and symptoms of 'abusers' (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Aug/Sept, p. 8).

Richard Gardner (cited in FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Nov), hunted witch, FMS expert, and advocate for men accused of rape, claims that the number who suffered as a result of the Salem witch trials or McCarthyism pales in comparison to men suffering due to sexual abuse "hysteria" (p. 1). Gardner's invocations of McCarthyism is ironic indeed. Just as classic McCarthyism waged war on radical academics and drove them out of universities in the name of academic freedom and freedom of expression, FMS advocates attempt to rid psychology of feminists by the same
argument (Phelps, 1991). The logic of FMS is virtually identical to McCarthyism in that it claims civil libertarian aims, while crushing dissenting voices by discrediting them as political dogma rather than scientific investigation (Phelps, 1991).

What makes FMS a witch hunt according to the FMSF is therapists' denial of men's access to due process in the therapy office:

To accuse families and then refuse to investigate is, of course, a witch hunt (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Dec, p. 1); To accuse people and then deny them reasonable means of defending themselves is a witch hunt (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, June, p. 1).

The FMSF focuses primarily on the evidentiary process of witch hunts because the substance of that history would without a doubt reveal unflattering parallels between the objectives of the FMSF and the original witch hunters.

In the anti-PC paranoia of FMS, therapists are attributed an authority they clearly do not possess. Beware the feminist therapist, FMS discourse warns, she has the power to be judge and jury, and there is no greater insult to patriarchy than a situation in which women are omnipotent. The notion that men are being
persecuted and are "not allowed to defend themselves" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Nov, p. 4), is a patent falsehood and is actually contradicted by the FMSF's legal statistics (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Sept). Men are not only defending themselves, but going on to successfully sue therapists (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Sept).

Witch hunt arguments are typically used to justify extremely conservative therapeutic and legal standards, namely the requirement of corroboration. If therapists believe women without seeking corroboration of the abuse, then they are accused of engaging in "witch trial logic" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Jan, p. 3) and using repressed memories as "the modern secular equivalent of spectral evidence" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, July/Aug, p. 5).

The Chief of psychiatry at John Hopkins Hospital, Paul McHugh (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Oct) argues that, in order to avoid a witch hunt, therapists must launch full scale investigations into women's allegations of sexual abuse. Just as defense attorneys are now seeking disclosure of women's school, medical, psychiatric and counselling records in sexual assault cases, so too should therapists, the FMSF argues.
According to Ralph Underwager and Hollida Wakefield (cited in FMSF Newsletter, 1992, Nov), therapists should obtain the following information regarding their women clients in order to "assess" abuse allegations: all medical, psychiatric and school records; information on past sexual history including rapes and abortions; a work history and especially any allegations of sexual harassment; criminal records; and possible ways in which the woman may benefit by making a false allegation. These calls for corroboration are an attempt to establish a standard of truth for therapy that is more difficult to meet than that required to prove rape in the criminal courts.

FDS of FMS: Appropriation of Feminist Discourse

Just as the counter victim flip of witch hunt discourse positions the FMSF as social critic so too does their appropriation of feminist critiques. In typical anti-PC style FMS discourse anticipates accusations of misogyny and employs a two-pronged strategy of appropriation and ironic self-reflexivity to further its agenda of anti-feminism.

Just as FDS (feminine deodorant spray) is more feminine than any woman could ever be, the FMS lobby is more feminist than feminism itself. FMS "feminism", 

which I refer to as Feminist Deodorant Spray (FDS), is a bizarre but sweet smelling, 1950s, REAL Woman (see Erwin, 1984) construction that involves "women's brigades" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, April, p. 9) and a stand-by-your-man kind of logic. This discourse constructs modern day feminism as a malodorous, manhating, and murderous political movement, which, rather than liberating women, oppresses women further by transforming them into whiners and victims (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, June; 1993, Oct; 1994, April):

We reflect on a comment of an older woman who was active in the early years of the Women's Movement. "How does it help women to portray them as victims who are lacking the strength to take hold of their own lives and actions." (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, June, p. 5).

FDS discourse positions FMS advocates as the older, wiser, and more liberated pioneers of the women's movement while characterizing modern day feminists as a hot-headed and ungrateful generation of renegades:

Do the feminists realize what they are doing to the very women who fought for women's rights back in the 50s & 60s, and who have made it possible
for the young ones now to go out and receive equal pay or be able to achieve anything they aspire to? (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, May, p. 5).

Feminism, which in FDS discourse is the antithesis of women's liberation, insults women:

...why it is that this generation of feminists assume that there are hundreds of women—grandmothers, mothers, and sisters—who are too weak, lazy or stupid to have noticed that their daughters or sisters were subjected to horrific sexual abuse for years in their own homes? The argument here appears to be feminist in its critique of mother blaming; a response to the misogynist notion that psychological disturbance is usually the result of bad mothering and, more specifically, in cases of sexual abuse, that mothers are responsible for abuse perpetrated by their husbands because they "allow" it to happen by virtue of their stupidity, neglect, or indifference. What is interesting in this example is that mother blame arguments are coopted in the service of justifying the denial of sexual abuse allegations. Also of interest in this example is the rhetorical invocation of tradition that parallels FMS arguments about science
and the family: FDS is traditional "feminism" and therefore more legitimate in its time-honoured principles.

One of the more interesting facets of FDS rhetoric is that it manages to both claim and insult feminism all in one breath. The FMSF call feminists stupid and dogmatic and then, ironically, argue that women's intelligence should be respected:

We ask...if it might be harmful to feminism to portray women as having minds closed to scientific information and as being satisfied with sloppy, inaccurate statistics? Could it be viewed as a profound insult to women to give them slogans rather than accurate information about how memory works? Are women really not being cheated if they are not expected to use critical thinking skills? (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Jan, p. 2)

Another way of insulting feminism while appearing to be feminist is the "I believe women are sexually abused but..." FDS maneuver which appears progressive in it's self-reflexive disclaimer. In the following FDS example the FMSF's stated concerns about child abuse are followed by a construction of feminist therapists as overzealous, ignorant, and greedy:
Child abuse is an outrage, it is unconscionable, and victims deserve our compassion and should be helped in what ever ways are appropriate. At the same time, we must assure that we don’t create new victims through ignorance or overzealousness or, as one survivor who never forgot wrote "media hucksterism and the sure-fire appearance of lots of folks looking to cash in and get rich quick."

(FMSF Newsletter, 1993, June, p. 1)

In FDS rhetoric acknowledgements of child sexual abuse are usually followed by questions of it’s prevalence: "Incest does happen and it’s horrible [I believe women but...], and that’s why it is so important not to cook the numbers and make it seem more common than it is " (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Feb, p. 6).

The FMSF claims to be protecting women’s credibility by weeding out charlatans who falsely accuse their rich and powerful fathers of rape. They argue that feminists exaggerate statistics on child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and "date rape" and therefore trivialize women’s allegations of rape (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, July; October).

Interestingly, FMS advocates foresee that they will be viewed as anti-feminist for their challenges to
sexual abuse statistics. By rhetorically anticipating a feminist rejoinder to their arguments, however, FMS advocates, manage to appear socially conscious, interested in women's rights, and committed to critical inquiry:

There is a tremendous fear that by raising the question of whether a memory could be false, FMSF will set back the clocks to a time when women and children who tried to say that they had been abused were ignored or often made to feel that they were to blame for the abuse. We are very concerned about that possibility. No one that we know wants a return to a situation that was wrong and was not good for woman and children. The question we have asked is, "Can an accusation of abuse be wrong?" [emphasis in original] (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, July, p. 2)

This all sounds very reasonable except that the question is posed in an historical context which has for hundreds of years denied women's allegations of rape. If there is any doubt about the authors intent to discredit the feminist notion that rape is common, it is made clear in the remainder of the segment which blames feminists for trivializing violence against
women, and then concludes by comparing feminism to thought reform and totalitarianism (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, July).

A number of feminist discourses, including radical feminist critiques of therapy which construct therapy as fundamentally exploitive of women (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Oct; 1994, June), are used by the FMSF to argue against feminist therapy. And how does a radical feminist critique of therapy fit with the FMSF agenda to further professionalize therapy? The FMSF do not actually critique the psychologizing and professionalizing of violence against women (see Armstrong, 1994) because they do not consider it a problem for mental health professionals to profit off violence against women. On the contrary, they see therapy as an "essential service" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, May, p. 1) equivalent to the "water supply" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, July/Aug, p. 1). By invoking a radical critique of therapy, FMS discourse plays on women's rightful resentment of malestream psychiatry/psychology and its pathologizing, dehumanizing, and deleterious consequences to women, and then twists those arguments to assert a more conservative and white male dominated psychotherapy.
The FMSF's attempts to reassert a white male monopoly on the therapy industry and knowledge about sexual abuse is, to a certain extent, guided by their desire to corner the therapy market, but more fundamentally a reaction against the feminist challenge to the cornerstone of white middle class patriarchal ideology: the myth of the innocent father. In the next section I look at how FMS discourse constructs the innocence of white middle class men by employing the anti-PC counter victim flip, and invoking a series of classist, agist, and racist patriarchal discourses.

Construction of Innocence

In the counter victim flip of FMS women are the abusers and men are the victims. For the most part men in the FMSF literature are painted as the jilted dads of a generation of ungrateful, sick, foolish, attention seeking daughters. The point of this chapter is to illuminate the ways in which the FMSF constructs men as innocent by framing them in opposition to a silent but nonetheless ever present other: the mythical Black rapist, the working class incestuous bigot, the homosexual pedophile, and so on. Men's innocence is argued by FMS advocates, furthermore, on the basis of a deeply misogynist conception of women. Before moving
on to look at innocent fathers, I briefly examine the FMS construction of cruel daughters, and in particular how this discourse is informed by relations of race and class.

Women who accuse their fathers of rape are portrayed as cruel and spiteful spoiled brats who have deeply betrayed the values of their race and class. They are debutantes running amok traitorously violating the middle class code of family privacy by inflicting the state, whether it be the police or the judiciary, upon their fathers. It is a middle class nightmare that involves public humiliation, property damage, and financial burden:

Imagine waking up one morning to find your yard filled with digging equipment and the police informing you that you are being investigated for sexual torture and murder reported by your daughter who had recovered memories. Imagine the legal fees. Imagine the situation when friends of the family have their yards dug up too... (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Feb, p. 3)

Since they have gone to therapy the viciousness of these daughters in immeasurable, they stop at nothing, even making death bed accusations. They are inhuman
and assaultive, staging "hit and run" attacks on unsuspecting elderly fathers (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, July, p. 2). They drive their mothers to suicide, "I confronted my mother. She told me she had nothing more to live for, and she drove her car off a bridge" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, July, p. 9), and worse, they murder fathers, "Our hearts broke this week as we listened to a woman weeping that she had killed her father with her accusations" (FMSF Newsletter, 1992, July, p. 2).

Innocent father discourses are varied sometimes presenting dads as victimized and mortally wounded elderly gents, and other times, successful and powerful patriarchal fathers who heroically combat the "familicide" of feminism (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, March, p. 9). Each of these constructions is designed to further the fundamentally conservative objectives of FMS discourse, namely the reunification of the family, the reinstatement of the innocent patriarchal father, and the silencing of women who dissent.

The victim/hero construction of fathers in FMS discourse is classically anti-PC in that it allows men to attack feminism while appearing gallant and courageous for doing so. Irish social critic Fintan
O'Toole (cited in Cockburn, 1995) humorously explains this rhetorical strategy:

"We have now reached the point where every goon with a grievance, every bitter bigot, merely has to place the prefix 'I know its not politically correct but...' in front of the usual string of insults in order to be not just safe from criticism but actually a card, a lad, even a hero. Conversely, to talk about poverty and inequality, to draw attention to the reality that discrimination and injustice are still facts of life, is to commit the new sin of political correctness...Anti-PC has become the latest cover for creeps. It is a godsend for every sort of curmudgeon and crank, from the fascistic to the merely smug. (p. 299)

"Big Daddy", the patriarchal hero of conservative ideology, is a central figure in FMS discourse. Big Daddy is the all powerful man: the great provider, arbiter of truth, and protector of the family. His bravery is astounding, he stands up for tradition in every institution--science, medicine and law--in the face of a vicious and rabid witch hunt called FMS (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Oct). His rhetoric is unabashedly
elitist, and he makes no bones about telling us he is qualified to speak the truth. His bragging varies in emphasis depending upon whether he speaks as an accused father or elite professional. Though he clearly occupies both locations, he often identifies himself as one or the other, obscuring his combined power as both father and professional (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, May).

When he is looking for pity, Big Daddy sometimes conceals his professional qualifications and becomes "A father", even though he speaks in an academic voice:

The orderly process of dispassionate investigation has been disrupted by the involvement of a body of theorists and practitioners who are guided not by the scientific method, but by a political agenda which relies upon assumptions for which there is no evidence...A father. (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Oct, p. 6).

Presenting himself as Father, rather than the more colloquial Dad, grants him greater speech authority. In any event he can assert ideas without identifying the source of his knowledge (i.e., academia) and he will be believed because his wisdom is assumed by virtue of his social location.
Sometimes, perhaps when he is feeling a little defensive or when he anticipates a challenge to his authority, he becomes "A Professional and A Dad" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, March, p. 9). He undergoes this transformation when rape accusations have undermined his credibility as Dad. On these occasions he is referenced in terms of his status as a corporate and/or professional elite. He is one of the Old Boys, he wears a suit, and he is educated, or has achieved sufficient economic wealth to win him authority. His credentials are impressive and certainly contrary to the attributes of real sexual abusers. Such an esteemed professional—psychiatrist, business executive, academic, publisher, law enforcement official, lawyer, teacher, oil executive, mental health professional, high school principal, scientist—surely, would never rape a child.

The authority and innocence of Big Daddy is established, not simply by trotting out his professional credentials, but also by discursively situating him in opposition to a racist, classist, and homophobic construction of the kind of "men who rape children": the mythical Black rapist, the bigoted and
incestuous working class father, or the "homosexual" pedophile.

Big Daddy the paternalistic protector, man about the house, would never rape his daughter. After all, he must defend the good name of his family: "I'm sure you understand why I have to clear my name. The consequences of not resolving this accusation before I die is that the whole family and ancestors will suffer...A Dad (83 years)" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Nov/Dec, p. 9). How could anyone accuse him of sexual abuse when he stands on guard for the children and protects "poor women" from the real criminals, shifty therapists and lawyers:

These are criminal matters. Science can go on debating about repressed memories. The lives of the poor women who fall into the hands of therapists and friendly lawyers are not part of the scientific game. These lives are unique. These are our children...A Dad. (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, March, p. 4)

"In my Father's House" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Sept, p. 15), a poem written by a (good) daughter, one who retracted her allegation, is a wistful reflection of patriarchal imagery. Father's house is a place of
truth and Christian values, "a space for peace and nowhere to put judgement" (p. 15). More than that, Father's house is divine: "In my Father's house, God creates a new family. My father's house is inside a God of forgiveness" (p. 15). If there was any doubt about the race of this hallowed Father--Our Father who art on earth--the discourse is racialized metaphorically by its references to "blue eyes", a powerful symbol of whiteness: "In my Father's house, I see my childhood in his sharp blue eyes" (p. 15).

Our Father is a God fearing man so how could he possibly have raped a child? He reads the bible every morning and prays for his wayward daughter: "Dad still reflects his sweet simple faith in Christ and I still have him by my side...Every morning when I go to work I kiss Dad goodbye. He has had his breakfast and is reading his Bible and praying for you" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, July/Aug, p. 15).

The Dear Old Dad construction is rife with patriarchal imagery and presumably intended to stir up feelings of sympathy. It relies, moreover, on a construction of elderly men that sits in stark contrast to the stereotype of a rapist. Dear Old Dad would never have raped his daughter. He is: "A 90-year-old-
man" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Dec, p. 4), "pop" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Nov/Dec, p. 15), "A Father (72 years old)" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Feb, p. 10), "87 years old" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Oct, p. 10), "90 in a few days" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, July/Aug, p. 15). He is in his golden years, Grandpop, the elderly gent who likes to spoil the grandkids. A grade 8 boy writes about his grandpa, the man his mother once accused of rape: "My grandfather is a good chef", "Grandpa poured us some chocolate milk", "My grandpa taught us how to fish and my brother and I both caught our first fish with him". (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, April, p. 11).

The Death Bed Dad is also popular in FMS discourse. Not only does this construction portray him as a victim but the image of this sick elderly grandfather makes it virtually impossible to imagine him as a rapist. Unlike his hard-hearted daughter, he is a sensitive man. He is so sensitive in fact that he develops a terminal illness following his daughter's abuse allegations: "The father suffered several strokes after the accusations were made" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Nov/Dec, p. 10); "My husband died about 3 months after our daughter's confrontation which was of course, absolutely devastating (FMSF Newsletter,
1993, Oct, p. 9); "The obituary said that Trent Joe Parker had died of complications due to pneumonia. Those of us who recall the hell Trent suffered for nearly 3 years—and the effect that suffering had on his ulcer—know better" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Jan, p. 5); "he died of a broken heart" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, June, p. 6).

Death Bed Dads are a tortured lot, desperate to win back their hateful daughter's love and approval. If only she would relent in her accusation, he could, god willing, go to his grave in peace: "Of course, the saddest part in all of this is the fact that my husband died trying to make her see that she made a terrible mistake. He did not die in peace" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Feb, p. 3). Death Bed Dads are not afraid to die, however, because they are confident that the almighty Father will see their innocence:

"Your father died today taking your accusations to his grave...He was not in the least afraid of death as he believed that he will live again in Glory with the Lord, and that He knows the truth.

(FMSF Newsletter, 1994, May, p. 11)

Devastated Dads suffer a variety of physical ailments but are mostly psychically wounded: "He hardly
talks anymore [after being accused]. The doctors say it might have been a small stroke" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, April, p. 12); "I get so depressed. I have lost over 30 pounds, my hair has turned quite gray, I have developed high blood pressure for the first time in my life, I can't sleep, I am up pacing much of every night. I have no appetite. I have almost become a hermit because I find it hard to be with people recently" (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Dec., p. 6). The devastation for one "septuagenarian" was worse than witnessing a fatal accident: "being accused by his daughter was more difficult to deal with than seeing another daughter killed in a bicycle/automobile accident 11 years ago" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, May, p. 16).

Sensitive New Age Dad may have some flaws but he would never rape his daughter. On the contrary, he knows how it feels to be raped because he feels "violated" by his daughter's accusations (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Oct, p. 17). Some of his "dear traits" are that he is sensitive and affectionate to a fault: "I was always so glad my husband was so open, sharing and so demonstrative to all of us." (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, March, p. 8). He is not ashamed to
cry, "I sit here and write this with tears in my eyes" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Sept, p. 15) He sends "tear-stained" hand written copies of his story to state and federal legislators (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, May, p. 16). He walks on the beach (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Sept) and reunites with his daughter in the sunset: "We held hands and shared good memories and wept and hugged as the sun set witnessed our reunion" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Sept, p. 15). He hangs a poem under his daughter's picture in the family home (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, May).

Dad is more than a victim, he is a Martyr. He does not hesitate to sacrifice himself for the good of his daughter, "my own feeling of relief that she no longer sees me as a perpetrator is minor compared to my joy that she is emerging from a black hole and will have a chance now for a fuller family life instead of a bitter future based on false memories. A Dad" (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, Jul/Aug, p. 6). Even at 88 years old he puts himself second: "I am 88 years old and feel that it is unlikely that my injury and pain will be assuaged. I look for a future in this regard not for me personally but rather for an untold number of people
who are or will be subjected to this treatment." (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, May, p. 1).

Whether he is Big Daddy the rich and powerful defender of his family, or Our Father the god-fearing Christian, or Dear Old Dad the philanthropic cardigan-sporting grandfather, or Death Bed Dad the spiritless and emotionally tortured dying father, or Sensitive New Age Dad the enlightened and vulnerable altruist, there is one thing he is not: a rapist. The image of FMS supporters as professional white middle class elderly Christian men is so incongruous with the stereotypical image of a rapist, that it makes it difficult to imagine these men as such.

In this chapter I have outlined a number of ways in which FMS discourse appropriates the language of social justice in order to situate itself as a moral authority on sexual abuse. Were it not for the serious material repercussions of FMS, it might be viewed as rather humorous irony. In the final chapter I look at the consequences of FMS in the legal domain. In particular I discuss FMS as part of the Right’s focus on the courts in the past 20 years and then move on to talk about the specific areas of law that the FMSF has targeted.
CHAPTER FOUR

FMS AND THE POLITICS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT LAW

FMSF does not encourage or discourage lawsuits. It does not provide legal advice per se. As part of the educational goals, it does make resources available to accused persons and their counsel. (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, July, P. 3)

The courts have been a key site of political struggle for the Right in the United States, especially following a number of Reagan appointments to the Supreme Court in the 1980s (Bruce, 1990). The dismantling of the so-called Rape Shield provisions (R. v. Seaboyer, 1991) in Canada, and more recently, the challenges to laws of disclosure (R. v. O'Connor, 1995) are but 2 examples of how the courts are being used to attack feminist legal gains in both the criminal and civil courts in Canada (Smith, 1992).

The section of the FMSF newsletter that reports recent FMS related legal decisions has grown considerably over the past four years and occupies a growing portion of each issue. This is, of course, reflective of the upsurge of civil and criminal litigation in the U.S. and Canada that has employed FMS arguments in support of accused men. According to the
FMSF Newsletter challenges have been mounted in a number of areas of law: (a) evidentiary requirements, such as the admissibility of scientific evidence and uncorroborated testimony (b) limitation periods that accommodate the needs of women (c) scope of liability. Although the FMSF consistently claim that they are not a political lobby group they have submitted Amicus Curiae Brief in Texas, Alabama, and Rhode Island Supreme Courts.

Evidentiary Requirements

The admissibility of novel scientific evidence in the American courts depends on its general acceptance within the relevant scientific community (Frye test, cited in FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Oct). If there is substantial disagreement amongst scientists about any particular scientific evidence then it cannot be admitted into court. It is no accident that the FMSF moved so quickly to create disagreement in the scientific community. Indeed, it was perfectly strategic in that it was designed to prevent any evidence based on so called repressed memory from being used in the courts.

The FMSF cite the decision of Justice Groff, New Hampshire Hillsbourgh County Superior Court, in two
cases of aggravated sexual assault, as one of the most important FMS legal events to date (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, June). In both cases the women are alleged to have recovered memories during therapy. Justice Groff ordered that before either woman would be allowed to testify, the state must prove, in a pre-trial hearing that repressed memories exist and that remembering through therapy is generally accepted in psychology. FMSF advisory board members Elizabeth Loftus and Paul McHugh testified on behalf of the male defendant in a pre-trial hearing to determine the admissibility of the women's testimony. The defense was successful in arguing for the inadmissibility of the women's testimony on the following grounds:

The Court finds that the testimony of the victims as to their memory of the assaults shall not be admitted at trial because the phenomenon of memory repression, and the process of therapy used in these cases to recover the memories, have not gained general acceptance in the field of psychology; and are not scientifically reliable.

(cited in FMSF Newsletter, 1995, June, p. 9)

Justice Groff's 35 page Decree (cited in FMSF Newsletter, 1995, June), with its references to the
necessity of therapists obtaining corroboration, the dangers of suggestive techniques, the rise in women who are retracting allegations, the parallels with alien abduction memories, and so on, is little more than a parroting of FMS discourse (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, June.) Is it any wonder that the FMSF claim it as a significant victory. The FMSF is careful, however, not to frame this as a political moment but instead describe it as one of the first legal decisions to deal with repressed memory "squarely on its merits" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, July/Aug, p. 8):

Justice Groff makes it clear that he did not intend to arbitrate the ongoing debate within the psychiatric community on the issue of repressed memories. His holding is based on the existing scientific evidence that the concept of repressed memory is not generally accepted in the field of psychology nor is there any way, absent independent corroboration, to determine the truth or falsity of a repressed memory. (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Jul/Aug, p. 8).

In the same month a Baltimore Circuit Court dismissed a civil suit against a priest who was alleged to have sexually assaulted two of his former female
students. The case was dismissed after the judge deemed the plaintiffs' testimony inadmissible based on a lack of acceptance of repression in the scientific community. The judge explained:

The court in no way is judging [the plaintiff's'] credibility, but their recollection. That did not meet the test of scientific reliability... No empirical studies verify the existence of repressed memory. There is no way to test the validity of these memories. (cited in FMSF Newsletter, 1995, June, p. 9)

The Michigan Supreme Court overturned a similar non-corroboration provision in July, 1995. The Court held that:

There is no agreement on the viability and reliability of repressed memory syndrome within the American Medical Association or the American Psychiatric Association. In the absence of a consensus on this still-evolving theory from the appropriate medical experts, it would be unwise and premature to recognize the repressed memory syndrome as a basis for applying the discovery rule. ((FMSF Newsletter, 1995, July/Aug, p. 9)
Here we see the fruits of the FMSF's targeting of professional regulatory bodies.

A Canadian judgement, while not referring specifically to FMS, nonetheless discursively invokes it. In a half page excerpt of the reasons for judgment, the Crown Counsel was strongly advised to drop the case (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, Nov). The judge pointed to the complainants' recollections of sexual abuse, compared their testimony to evidence generated by "astral travelling" and warned that the real evidentiary limit was "that each of the complaints at one point, and indeed for a long time, had no memory of the alleged [sexual] interference" (p. 9). He concluded his tirade with a series of insults directed at the women complainants:

I am so unimpressed by the quality of testimony in this case that I am almost overwhelmed by my desire to stop the prosecution. The so-called victims in this case are unreliable. G's evidence is outlandish from the start and the product of near or complete insanity. C's is a product of unrelenting suggestion, in my view. L's evidence is among the least reliable I have seen in a child
and in my view is nothing but an effort to please her mother. (p. 9)

In another Canadian decision, a B.C. judge patronizingly stated that while he believed the female complainant in a sexual abuse case was convinced of her memories, he was also concerned that her therapist may have unwittingly promoted these memories (FMSF Newsletter, 1993, June). The judge indicated, furthermore, that he could not judge the validity of the complainants testimony without corroboration, even though the requirement of corroboration in sexual assault cases was abandoned in Canada in the 1980s because it was deemed discriminatory against women (Sheppard, 1988).

Bonnie Agnew, 20 year member of the Vancouver Rape Relief collective, has suggested that psychological arguments about the reliability of memory are sure to arise in cases even where women have full memory and always did (personal communication, March 23, 1996). And indeed, the notion of FMS was argued in support of disclosure of counselling records in R. v. O'Connor (1995), a Canadian case in which a priest was charged with a number of sexual offences against Native women which were alleged to have occurred at a residential
school 25 years earlier. While the women fully remembered the abuse and always had, Lamer C.J.C., speaking for the majority of the Supreme Court of Canada, accepted the relevance of therapeutic records in sexual assault cases because:

...they may reveal the use of a therapy which influence the complainants memory of the alleged offence; or, they may contain information that bears on the complainants credibility including testimonial factors such as the quality of the complainants perception of events at the time of the offence and their memory since. (R. v. O’Connor, 1995, p. 241).

The appearance of FMS discourse in cases where women have full memory of sexual abuse is testimony to its wide ranging and pernicious anti-feminist potential in the legal domain.

Limitation Periods and Third Party Liability

Feminists have fought hard to extend statute of limitation periods in cases of child sexual assault so that those who were abused as children would have fair access to civil legal redress as adults. This is an area where the FMS lobby is attempting to eliminate feminist legal reforms. On the basis of their
examination of a number of cases in which limitation periods have been extended in order to accommodate women’s memories of sexual abuse, the FMSF question whether the discovery exception to the statute of limitations can be properly applied where there is "no assurance that objective evidence is available with which the court may reliably verify the facts of the original wrongful act and the resulting physical injury" (FMSF Newsletter, July/August, p. 7). In this manner FMS advocates raise evidentiary problems with repressed memories in order to dismiss civil proceedings before they even begin.

A variation of this argument was applied by defense lawyers in Connecticut who challenged the constitutionality of extended limitation periods in a sexual assault case involving repressed memories. They argued that the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment was violated by Connecticut’s statute of repose (extension of the limitation period) because it "unjustifiably allows plaintiffs who claim they were sexually assaulted as children longer to sue than is afforded other plaintiffs" (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, Oct, p. 8). Fortunately, the court unanimously upheld the constitutionality of this law, arguing in
favour of laws that allow for the possibility of repression of sexual abuse.

Another pivotal moment in the FMSF's program of legal retrenchment is the Ramona case in California, in which Gary Ramona sued his daughter's therapists for $8 million in damages including the loss of his $400,000/year executive job, his marriage, and contact with his daughters, was claimed as a triumph the FMS lobby (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, April). The major significance of this case was that it allowed a father accused of incestuous rape to bring suit against his daughter's therapists for their support of her allegations (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, May):

The jury found that the Defendants in the case...were negligent in providing health care to Holly Ramona by implanting or reinforcing false memories that her father had molested her as a child. The jury also found that all Defendants had responsibility in causing Gary Ramona to be confronted with the accusation. (FMSF Newsletter, 1994, July/Aug., p. 8).

The case therefore established that therapists owe a duty of care to incestuous fathers, and thus can no
longer unreservedly support women who allege incest without fearing legal retaliation.

It is interesting to note the parallels between this type of offensive FMS litigation and what became known in the 1980s as SLAPPs (strategic lawsuits against public participation). SLAPPs have served to crush citizen dissent against the corporate elite. The FMS lobby has used law suits in a similar manner to intimidate therapists.

The term SLAPP was coined to describe the proliferation of corporate lawsuits in the U.S. since the early 70s that have served to thwart citizen activism against the corporate elite (Herman, 1996). SLAPP suits, the majority of which are in fact lost by the corporations, nonetheless drain the financial resources of the Defendants and serve to deter others who may have ideas about speaking out against the corporate power structure. "SLAPP and libel suits are another case where money gives great advantage in staying power and expertise. That is why the market has turned to them as a further instrument for keeping dissent and protest at bay" (Herman, 1996, p. 55).

The FMSF reports that more than 200 lawsuits have been filed against therapists on the basis of FMS
arguments with damages sought ranging from $80,000 to $5 million. The suits target alleged professional negligence/malpractice in a number of areas. Therapists are being sued for failing to obtain a "proper history" (corroboration of sexual abuse) prior to treatment, using memory enhancement techniques without seeking independent corroboration, and failing to obtain informed consent by not warning women about the potential for false memories (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, July/August, p. 3).

For a mere $20 one can obtain an FMSF summary of the issues and dispositions in 180 higher court decisions (civil and criminal) related to repressed memory. Because I have not obtained this document I cannot comment on the number of cases found in favour of accused men or against women therapists. It is clear however, looking over the contents of the FMSF newsletter column "Legal Corner" for the year of 1995, that many cases against accused men have been dropped, dismissed or overturned on appeal. Over 200 cases have been filed against (women) professionals by former clients who have recanted their allegations of incest, with settlements ranging from $80,000 to $5 million (FMSF Newsletter, 1995, July/Aug).
In the criminal courts FMS is being used to challenge women’s allegations of sexual assault regardless of repression. On the grounds of insufficient evidence, that is evidence based on women’s memory, cases are being dismissed according to the FMSF. FMS is also the basis for a legal offensive against feminist professionals in the civil courts. While the FMSF undoubtedly embellish their successes in the courts, feminists should nonetheless be concerned by what appears to be a trend of legal retrenchment in both the civil and criminal courts in cases of sexual assault. With this in mind I now turn to my conclusions.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. Audre Lorde (1984, p. 110).

In this thesis I have traced the ways in which the FMSF manufactured the notion of FMS, legitimized it as a scientific construct, and then used it to discredit women in the courts. I have argued that the development of FMS was not an objective scientific endeavor as the FMSF would have us believe, but was instead a calculated political project that involved thousands of political lobbyists, substantial institutional support, and a sophisticated multi-phase plan of action.

Its organizing strategies and its rhetoric reveal that the FMSF is firmly ensconced within a broader neo-conservative movement. By presenting their arguments in the language of cognitive psychology, and employing an anti-PC rhetorical strategy of appropriation and power inversion, the FMSF has managed to make their denial of sexual abuse appear not only scientifically justifiable but morally righteous. They appear concerned about the rights of women and mental health consumers while they advocate a return to more
conservative and oppressive psychotherapeutic and legal regimes.

Despite the FMSF's apparent embrace of feminism and other liberatory discourses, the development of FMS was clearly part of an anti-feminist attack on psychotherapy. As Schuman and Galvez (1996), critics of FMS point out, the aim of FMS is not to disrupt science or psychology in toto, it is, instead, to distinguish good therapists from bad and reinstate a more traditional psychology. The FMSF's calls for increased regulation of therapy seem reasonable, except when we realize that the FMS lobby is calling for women, especially feminists, to be regulated right out of the profession. They want to limit therapeutic practice to extremely conservative psychiatric, behavioural, and cognitive approaches, and reinstate white male academia as the sole source of legitimate knowledge and training for therapists.

The development of FMS was also a reaction by rich white fathers, some of whom are academics, to their daughter's accusations of incestuous rape. There are a number of things at stake in this fight, not the least of which is the patriarchal nuclear family and the myth of the innocent white middle class professional father.
The FMSF is not concerned with disputing allegations against working class or Black men, however, because its construction of sexual abuse relies on classism and white supremacy in order to re-emphasize the presumptive innocence of white middle class men.

In critiquing the FMSF's arguments, and particularly their emphasis on science, I am more convinced than ever that feminist critiques must not only address the contents of neo-conservative arguments, but also the systems of knowledge production the rely upon. We must examine how knowledge is produced and legitimized in relation to power, in order to fully appreciate the political implications of any idea or concept.

The implications of my analysis of FMS for feminist therapists are numerous. I want to focus, however, on the more fundamental question of whether it is useful for feminists to engage with therapy at all. Looking at the rise of FMS discourse as a reaction to feminist gains in the psychotherapeutic realm, and understanding feminist therapy as part of a psychological cooptation (i.e., professionalization) of feminist political responses to violence against women, I believe it was a mistake for feminists, however well-
intentioned, to attempt to reform psychotherapy. Not only is the structure of therapy problematic in its individualist and depoliticized assumptions but its history is horrendously oppressive (Caplan, 1987; Chesler, 1972; Foucault, 1965; Penfold & Walker, 1983). Therapy, whether approached as client or therapist, has only served to increase the divisions between women, particularly along lines of class and race. If we are serious about women’s liberation and putting an end to men’s violence against women then we must stop professionalizing feminism whether it be in academic psychology or professional psychotherapy. The only useful feminist engagement with psychology is a critique of its oppressive foundations.

In the face of men’s increasingly aggressive legal strategies, especially calls for disclosure of counselling records in sexual assault cases, and in order to prevent further limitations on women’s access to legal redress, feminists must stand in solidarity. This will not be achieved from the individual professional offices of therapists as the FMSF has very clearly demonstrated. Therapy is not, and should never have been, a replacement for grassroots political organizing. I conclude by inviting feminist therapists
and their women clients to put an end to the middle class professionalism that has divided us and instead to join the grassroots movement.
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APPENDIX A

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