

**HOW WOMEN TAKE UP POLITICAL SPACE:  
THROUGH THE EYES OF WOMEN IN THE PEACE MOVEMENT**

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my immediate family who started the thesis journey with me and who have not lived to see its completion. They remain with me constantly in spirit. To my Mother, Audrey Morgan, who taught that love and peace are one and that deep in their hearts all people desire peace. Her unconditional love rejuvenated my tired spirit many an evening, when gales of laughter would echo over the phone lines, reminding me that the wisdom of women may well be our glimmer of hope for bringing peace to this present world of madness. To my Father, Fred Morgan, whose patience, kindness and adherence to ethical values made a lasting impression on my life. To my brother, John, whose quiet wisdom displayed a strength that reminded me to search many paths for peace, and to my brother, Brian, whose cheerfulness and refusal to dwell on regrets in life has buoyed me up at times when reading about war could have led me down a path of despair.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **HOW WOMEN TAKE UP POLITICAL SPACE: THROUGH THE EYES OF WOMEN IN THE PEACE MOVEMENT**

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Using a transformative holistic feminist analysis, this thesis examines ideas, organizations and actions of women in the peace movement at a time when politicians still treat war as a priority, despite their avowals of peace. Feminist grounded theory methodology supported the development of the concept of women's space as a tool to explore how two peace groups, The Voice of Women and The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and their leaders, worked to create spaces of peace over time. Vigils, the persistent presence of women standing for peace in the public sphere, were identified as particularly significant transformative spaces as were women's organizations themselves. Connections formed within women's feminist spaces contrast with separations inherent in patriarchal culture. This research found that women-only feminist spaces of peace strengthen women's voices. Within these groups, peace is envisioned as more than the absence of war, and the implementation of ideas orientated towards change is strategized. These spaces can facilitate women's permanent presence within the public political sphere, an analysis mirrored in historical feminist peace literature, in particular that by Virginia Woolf. This thesis concludes with feminist theorists who have proposed concepts such as those in Ecofeminism and the Gift Economy that come out of a holistic analysis and display elements of a new paradigm.

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## Chapter 1:

### Introduction

This thesis focuses on women and peace. More specifically, it is about how women leaders perceive of and take up spaces of peace. Writing it arose from a desire to examine women's reactions to the culture of war and violence that appears throughout popular history. The concept of women's space is introduced to help understand how women peace leaders navigate the realms of politics and society in order to mitigate war and violence and to create an alternative paradigm containing women-centered values of peace.

As its framework, this thesis uses a feminist analysis to examine the ideas of women leaders, women's activities in the peace movement, and women's political spaces. The ideas expressed by the participants are examined through a holistic and transformative feminist lens. From the beginning, the work of DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era),<sup>1</sup> a group of feminists from the economic south, and the work of feminist theorist Angela Miles (1996) have been used to inform the thesis and provide it with a feminist theoretical base.

DAWN<sup>2</sup> is the name of a group of feminists that formed to put together a

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<sup>1</sup> DAWN is a network of activists, researchers, and policymakers, who through their analysis and activities, are committed to developing alternative frameworks and methods to attain the goals of economic and social justice, peace, and development; free of all forms of oppression by gender, class, race, and nation (Sen and Grown, 1987. <http://www.dawnet.org>).

<sup>2</sup> In Canada, DAWN also refers to DAWN Canada, or the DisAbled Women's Network Canada. It is a Canadian national network of women who self-identify as women with disabilities. See: <http://www.dawncanada.net/en>. In this thesis DAWN refers to Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era.

statement that was a collaborative analysis, developed from sharing diverse perspectives, all of which pointed to similar global economic and political crises and the need for a transformative approach in finding solutions. Their ideas were organized by Gita Sen and Caren Grown (1987) into what became the DAWN analysis as presented in *Development, Crises, and Alternative Vision: Third World Women's Perspectives*. One of its key features is its bottom-up approach that creates an analysis based on the perspectives of women living in poverty. This opens up space for the voices of women from the south to be heard, and as they experience the greatest need for transformative change, this can provide the clearest understanding of development problems and what strategies can support building a vision for a world free from all forms of oppression. This approach also ensures that transformation, specifically including women, forms the basis of its holistic analysis (Sen and Grown, 1987). This is different from top-down, deductive forms of doing research and coincides with the inductive research process used in feminist grounded methodology that is used to construct this thesis.

In summary, the theoretical platform that the DAWN analysis is based on is a feminist political economic analysis. It takes into account the dynamic and interlocking systemic causes of oppression that affect women over time, also identified as patriarchy, and it offers a vision for a transformative paradigm that takes into account the cultural, social and economic factors that affect women's lives (Sen and Grown, 1987).

The second primary source that I draw on in this thesis is Angela Miles (1996). A key component of Miles' (1996) major theoretical work is an integrated feminist analysis as presented in: *Integrative Feminisms: Building Global Visions, 1960s--1990s*. In this text Miles (1996) discusses the importance of women's specificity as well as women's

equality and how the diversity of each women's uniqueness is valued as an essential part of the collectively strong global women's movement. Miles (1996) also discusses both the multicenteredness of global women's movements and the emerging shared global transformative visions. She does not explicitly use the concept of women's space, but it is implicit in this as in many feminist analyses that will be discussed in this thesis. A number of Miles' (2013) ideas are more recently represented in her edited collection: *Women in a Globalizing World: Transforming Equality, Development, Diversity and Peace*. The transformative analysis of many of the writers included in this book reflects the transformative analysis used in this thesis. I will return to an in-depth discussion of Miles' (1996) work in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

Using the concept of women's space, I explore in this thesis the history of two peace organizations: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and The Voice of Women for Peace (VOW). I have conducted in-depth interviews with a small, albeit diverse, sample of women leaders from these two peace organizations, and I consider these women leaders to be helpful participants. I also reviewed feminist peace literature that reflects the primary themes that arose from the interviews. Peace in this thesis is viewed as encompassing more than the absence of war and more specifically, it is examined in the context of how women's space is implicated in the creation of a transformative paradigm.

Women's space is difficult to define because, up to now, it has primarily been used implicitly by feminists or defined by using male points of reference. As McFadden (2007) points out, male constructs and language describe space as geographically identifiable territory that has in western societies been defined, dominated, and controlled

by men. It also may not be in the best interests of women, specifically feminists, to define women's space, as it could become rigid and linear in form, mirroring the patriarchal paradigm it seeks to transcend. Moreover, Morgan (1989) argues that one of the most powerful qualities of women's space is its ability to be unpredictable, especially when responding to the predictable, linear form that patriarchal space takes. Indeed, one of the characteristics of women's space that distinguishes it from male space is its fluidity and ability to constantly change its form in order to respond and adapt to different contexts. Another characteristic is that of myriad conceptual forms or physical locations that women embody; women's space can be material, like a body, or take a variety of relational, cultural, social, political, and institutional forms.

The concept of women's space was initially not part of this thesis. It arose inductively as a way of describing and synthesizing data from the interviews. The thesis had been originally focused primarily around the theme of connections, both among women and between peace groups. The concept of connections remained a fundamental idea throughout the thesis, yet I realized that I needed to develop a more focused conceptual framework to engage the breadth and depth of themes that had evolved from the interviews. Throughout the research, the term "women's space" became an analytical tool and a methodological approach that I began to use as a lens or way of looking at the world. Consistent with the grounded theory approach, once the concept of space became useful analytically, I went back to the literature and noticed that the term "women's space" was used by such recent authors as Cynthia Cockburn (1998), Robin Morgan (1989), and Patricia McFadden (2007). I also saw the idea discussed even when it was not named as women's space and realized that the idea had also been used by authors

historically, the most well known being Virginia Woolf.<sup>3</sup> As discussed in greater detail later in this thesis, for example, Woolf (1929) writes, in *A Room of One's Own*, about women's lack of individual space in terms of physical location. In *Three Guineas*, Woolf (1938) extends her argument to include a discussion of the implications of the expansion of women's space in the international sphere, proposing that this would lead to an increase in peaceful solutions to international conflicts.

While it is important not to limit the concept of women's space by defining it too concretely, this brief introduction has begun to describe some of its characteristics and dimensions to the reader in order to focus the work conceptually. For the purpose of this thesis, and consistent with the above challenges, I define women's space as: "a conceptual and methodological device used to explore and understand the gendered political possibilities for women's actions in differing historical times and geographic locations within a changing and patriarchally structured unequal world" (Christiansen-Ruffman).<sup>4</sup> This definition is consistent with articulating the limiting powers of patriarchy on women's spaces. Indeed, the difficulty of defining women's space is partly due to the fact that the language with which we are familiar has emerged from the patriarchal culture we live in and carries implicitly patriarchal meaning within it.

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<sup>3</sup> I have chosen to use the World's Classics edition of Virginia Woolf's two books, *A Room of One's Own* (1929), and *Three Guineas* (1938), with an Introduction by Morag Shiach (1992). Shiac's editing included light punctuation and more modern spelling.

<sup>4</sup> Without a formal definition, the concept of women's space has been used for many years in social and cultural analyses by feminist scholars, authors, community members and women's movements. This formal definition by Christiansen-Ruffman was conceived about half way through an international research project headed by Immanuel Wallerstein on the history of the World System and polarization. Christiansen-Ruffman had responsibility for the women and gender domain. This definition, developed in the course of her macro level analysis for the team's book is adopted here and quoted from her 2012 version of her chapter of the forthcoming book.

Women's space can also be experiential, transcending words.

The concept of women's space is old, yet its articulation, specifically with relation to the present political space, is relatively new. The reason that I focus specifically on the term political space in this thesis is that this is the space in which many of the decisions are made that affect the majority of people in society.<sup>5</sup> Space in this context can be seen as a political resource. Therefore, one of the primary focuses of change may need to be in this area if it is to broaden the values of women and affect large scale societal changes (McFadden, 2007).

As this thesis evolves, the concept of women's space is used to analyze two women's peace organizations over time and the activities of women leaders in the context of their times. It will also enable us to explore feminist mechanisms and theories of peace. For example, we will use it to understand what a feminist writer such as Ursula Franklin (2006) could mean by defining war as "a complete lack of imagination." In the conclusion of this thesis, I will return to this idea with a discussion of how it supports the development of the concept of "women's space" and the creation of a culture of peace. As both Morgan (1989) and Franklin (2006) urge us to see peace as part of a new process of social relationships, the conceptualization of women's spaces of peace can support women consciously standing in the center of their "newly imagined space" (Morgan,

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<sup>5</sup> For the development of the concept of women's political culture, see Christiansen-Ruffman (1983). It combines two papers written and presented at international conferences for sociologists. According to Christiansen-Ruffman (personal communication, 2012), this paper was written at the request of Patricia Y. Martin for an edited book. Although the book was not published, reviews of this article were enthusiastic and requested and reproduced copies still circulate. The three papers were written in part as critiques of: (1) the narrow concept of politics that invisibilized women's political actions for change; (2) the public/private dichotomy with shifting, contradictory meanings that are reshaped by those in power; and (3) the either/or syndrome that has the consequence of narrowing analysis, reinforcing patriarchal assumptions and precluding holistic paradigms. These three critiques point to some of the social mechanisms that create and perpetuate inequalities and hierarchies and that undermine lasting peace.



1989, 346).

It is important for women, especially those who are peace activists, to collectively agree on the general parameters that we want to draw around women's space. A collectively agreed upon holistic analysis that contains an inherent respect for diversity is an essential element of this space. This can in turn facilitate the solidarity that supports the building of a new type of cultural space, one that includes a transformative vision of peace.

This thesis is organized into nine chapters. The introduction and methodology chapters discuss how and why I came to study women's political space, how and why it relates to women in the peace movement and the feminist methodological approach that I used to research this topic.

The third and fourth chapters are historical descriptions of WILPF and VOW, the two peace groups that were researched in depth, with relevance to the theme of women's political space. The intent of these chapters is not to provide a historical overview of the two peace organizations, but rather to focus specifically on certain events and strategies that influenced the expansion and contraction of their political space over time within the larger political sphere. This approach is useful in identifying the patterns of patriarchal forces that intersect to oppress women over time and to determine the best strategies with which to challenge them.

The fifth chapter offers a short history of each participant and their connection to the peace movement before discussing the recurring themes that arose from the women's narratives in the in-depth interviews that I conducted. The primary themes that I discuss here are: conceptions of pacifism, hierarchy, economics, spirituality, environment, and

alternative visions for peace. I also discuss the surprising agreement that arose among the participants regarding the majority of the important themes that emerged from the interviews. The chapter briefly introduces each of these themes.

Both chapters 6 and 7 build theoretically from what was shared by the participants and discussed in chapter 5. Chapter 6 looks at the interconnectedness of the major themes that came out of the thesis as manifested by vigils in the public space. Vigils embody the qualities of women's space in the public presence and demonstrate how feminist spaces of peace can facilitate women's permanent presence within the public sphere. The connections formed within women's feminist spaces are explored as contrasting with the separations inherent in patriarchal culture. Four women's groups and two events are discussed wherein peace is envisioned as more than the absence of war, and the implementation of ideas orientated towards change are strategized. Feminist ideas for a transformative paradigm are introduced such as those presented in ecofeminist theory and the Gift Economy. Chapter 7 focuses on the feminist debate around the value of women-only versus mixed-gender spaces for peace, the only area where there was not thematic consensus among the participants. The sixth and seventh chapters are both theoretical chapters that focus on the different elements that make up women's space and how this pertains to their work in the peace movement.

The eighth chapter discusses how women's spaces exist within the context of a patriarchal framework. It continues the discussion of women's groups and links them to a more macro analysis with a larger analytic and more holistic framing. The hierarchical structuring of patriarchal society is examined as one of the primary causes of war. I will be using such authors as: Genevieve Vaughan (1997, 2002, 2007), Linda Christiansen-

Ruffman (1983), Robin Morgan (1989), and Marilyn French (1985), to name only a few. All of the analytic chapters move towards building a holistic analysis by using a grounded theoretical approach.

The ninth chapter concludes by discussing five major thinkers and theorists whose ideas inform this thesis and situate the concept of women's space as an historically important feminist issue. The theorists that I have included here are: Virginia Woolf (1929, 1938), Angela Miles (1996), Vandana Shiva (1988, 1989, 2000), Ursula Franklin (2006), and Muriel Duckworth (2006). These authors and activists frame the ideas brought forward in the thesis with their wisdom and historical breadth. They tie together themes and ideas that have arisen from my analysis and suggest future strategies for expanding and maintaining women's political space. I hope that this thesis will contribute to the feminist body of literature on women and peace that presents a new vision with the power to transform the present political system into a space of peace.

## **Chapter 2:**

### **Methodology**

Writing this thesis has been a long journey, and I have therefore decided to include my original research design in this section in order to analyze how the grounded research process has evolved and changed over time. Much of the original research plan has remained the same, while true to qualitative research, significant changes have also occurred. Upon reviewing the original design, it was surprising to see that many of the final findings were directly related to the original research questions, while some themes changed or deepened in their scope as my understanding of women's political space and spaces of peace grew with additional research and data.

#### **Initial Summary of Research Project**

The original topic of my thesis was an examination of the connections among peace groups. From the standpoint of individual women, I planned to explore whether they think that a greater connection is possible, and what that connection would look like. Empowerment for the global feminist peace movement begins at the local level and in the hearts and minds of the individual women committed to the activism necessary to bring it about. This constitutes the instigating force behind social action. I planned to explore how this empowerment could best be transmitted to the women's peace movement.

In my research, I asked the following question: how do women understand their involvement within their particular groups, and how do they view a greater connection between groups and to the women's peace movement? In order to do this, I attended a

peace conference entitled: “Escalating Peace”, which was held on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002. This was billed as a joint peace conference with the three peace groups: the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW), the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and the Canadian Peace Alliance. Optimistically, I expected to select participants for in-depth interviews from the three groups. My initial research plan was to only conduct interviews, but when discussing my research with a conference organizer, it was suggested that I do a focus group with members of all three peace groups on the theme of connection the night before the conference was to begin. This would be seen as not only aiding my own research but as contributing to the conference by offering an opportunity for conference participants to begin thinking about the theme of connection. I had also learned that one of the planned sessions was entitled “Women and Peace Building.” I requested and was granted permission by the conference organizers to tape and take notes at this session, as I hoped that it would offer considerable insights into my research topic.

I did accomplish all components that the original research plan had designated at the conference except the in-depth interviews, and contacts were made to do future individual in-depth interviews. However, upon reviewing the data after returning from the peace conference on Salt Spring Island, I realized that I was just at the beginning of the research process. In searching for more methodological guidance, I started to use grounded theory which supported further exploratory research. While the data that I had collected at the conference was helpful in that it informed the questions that I would use in the thesis, it became clear that I had not reached a point of saturation with the research.

I realized that as grounded theory described, my work to this point laid the groundwork for a research process that had just begun.

While there has been a great deal of work demonstrating the effects of war on women, I felt that little had been done from the perspective of individual women regarding their involvement in the peace movement. While many studies examined the structure and functions of peace organizations, few recent studies approached their research from the standpoint of the women or looked at the relationship between the groups and the individuals. What I perceived to be unique to my research was that its primary objective would be to examine the ideas and beliefs of individual women in several peace groups in order to explore the larger themes relevant to my study. I planned to and did utilize global feminist theory in order to contextualize their voices and apply a feminist analysis, keeping the individual voices as the central focus. I also added insights from contemporary and historical feminist theorists and thinkers as their ideas pertained to my thesis topic.

The initial portion of my literature review examined the mandates of and writing about the three peace organizations I would be studying: VOW, WILPF, and the Canadian Peace Alliance. These mandates provided a background and starting point from which to discern what issues were of primary importance to the groups. My sources included primary documents from the groups themselves and secondary analyses of the three peace groups that were the subjects of my analysis. This information was drawn upon in order to formulate the questions to be used in the interviews. I also reviewed literature written about peace activism in general in order to create a frame of reference

from which to gain a wider sense of what issues were of greatest relevance within peace activist networks. My study also explored literature representing current global feminist theories with specific reference to the peace movement. I planned to and did use the works of Angela Miles (1996); Paola Melchiori (1998); Gita Sen and Caren Grown (1987); The United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2010); Maria Mies (1986); and Vandana Shiva (1988, 1989, 2000). The aforementioned represent a cross-section of the global feminist sources that I began using in order to interpret and link the information I gained through the interviews to a global feminist framework. The theorists mentioned all contribute to a greater understanding of the systemic causes of patriarchal oppression. I used this literature as a base from which to draw questions to ask the women in order to facilitate the sharing of their vision for peace with me as well as to find out what role they saw feminism as playing in the actualization of this vision. The material from the final section of my literature review helped me to illuminate the information gained from the interviews by contextualizing them within global feminist theory.

### **Research Approach or Method**

Through this study, I gained insights into the thoughts and perceptions of individual women in the peace movement. I believe that because of the breadth of their experiential knowledge and ability to synthesize this knowledge, these women have many of the answers within themselves, and their analysis helps us to understand a lot of the toughest political questions that we face today. Therefore, as originally planned, I used qualitative research methods to keep their standpoint as the central focus of my study. I

utilized background information about the particular peace groups in which they are involved; and following the interviews, focus group, and conference workshop, I reflected on whether global feminist theory mirrored the lived experiences of these women.

As originally planned, the methods I used for data collection throughout the “Escalating Peace” conference were: interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. The planned session entitled: “Women and Peace Building” was a particularly useful source of data in the context of this conference setting. I used qualitative research methods to conduct this research in a bottom-up style, using semi-structured, open-ended interviews, as described by Kirby and McKenna (1989) and Margot Ely et al. (1991). Later this method was enhanced by more formally adopting the grounded theory approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967), especially as discussed by Stern and Pyles (1986). The article “Using Grounded Theory Methodology to Study Women’s Culturally Based Decisions About Health”, by Stern and Pyles (1986), was extremely useful as it illuminated the use of grounded theory through illustrating how it was applied to a cultural case study in nursing, where, as in peace-making, process is the key focus. The questions that I used to initiate responses from the women are listed in Appendix A, although, true to a feminist grounded theory approach, I returned to the field many times to clarify and deepen my understanding of the women’s thoughts about emerging theoretical concepts and assumptions in the data. In order to record the interviews, I used a tape-recorder, the transcriptions from which allowed me to see patterns evolve revealing similarities and differences. I also used note taking as an additional aid, and as



a back-up in case of technological failure in order to ensure that I recalled themes or ideas discussed by the women that I wished to return to later. I then concentrated on commonalities that arose from the interviews during much of the remainder or grounded theoretical part of my research. In accordance with the grounded theory exploratory approach, I sought literature that would support the emerging themes from the interviews. I then applied a feminist framework of analysis to the material gained.

### **Changes Throughout the Research Process**

I had originally intended to interview nine women, three from each peace group. They were to be evenly chosen from VOW, WILPF, and the Canadian Peace Alliance. I would also do a focus group that would include members from each of these groups and tape the workshop entitled “Women and Peacebuilding.” As previously discussed, I initially intended to use the British Columbia “Escalating Peace” conference to complete the major portion of my data collection, with a small number of interviews to be conducted after my return to Halifax. These would include interviews with Muriel Duckworth, who was a longstanding member and founder of VOW, and Dr. Krishna Ahoojapatel, who was at that time a Saint Mary’s University professor of International Development Studies and the recently elected International President of The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

While in B.C., I expected to choose three women who had become members of each group during three time periods. The first or most recent time period was to be from 1999--2002, or from the Seattle anti-globalization demonstrations to the B.C. Escalating Peace Conference; the second was from 1990--1998, to include the time after and

including the first Gulf War (1990--1991); and the third time period was before the Gulf Wars began. The reasoning behind this sampling plan was to include women who joined peace groups at different times, in relation to war and peace, and for different reasons. While chronological age was not to be a determinant for selecting participants, my expectation was that an age gradient, from oldest to youngest, would coincide roughly with the time the participant became a member of their peace group. I intended to locate the women I would interview on site at the conference by asking for volunteers. Before the interviews and focus group began, a brief summary of my study and a consent form was to be given to each participant. I initially thought that this method of choosing a sample would provide the research with a rich cross-section of experiential background. By compiling these women's perspectives, I thought I would be able to note similarities or changes over time, compare these to those experienced by women in other groups and relate them to the broader political context contained in global feminist theory. Initially, women tend to join peace groups primarily for reasons based on the peace issues that they were particularly drawn to and on which they wished to engage with other women to work on.

While at the conference I met key informants and realized that what was important to my study was the wisdom and experience that particular women could help to articulate and through their experiences contribute to my research. I also recognized the importance of doing in-depth interviews. Therefore, for emerging theoretical and analytic reasons, to be explained later in this chapter, as well as the practical realities, the timing and the selection criteria of participants changed. My plans changed when I

realized that the agenda would be too packed to allow for interviews to be conducted on site. Moreover, since I had never been to a peace conference before, I had overestimated what I would be able to accomplish at the B.C. conference. I also began more explicitly using the grounded theory approach which was useful as it was consistent with an exploratory research design and used theoretical sampling based on what participants could contribute to my thesis. I interviewed participants in Nova Scotia and selected them for analytic reasons. As I reflected on my B.C. interviews, I appreciated the clarity and enthusiasm that the women, many of them young women, brought to the peace movement. I also recognized the importance of reflecting the voices of women whose breadth and depth of experience in the peace movement would supply a richness of data for the thesis, partly because of their long historical connection to peace. Whether young or old, I recognized that I wanted to interview those who had taken on leadership positions in the peace movement, had developed strong connections to the peace movement, and were making important contributions to peacework. Also, I chose women in Nova Scotia because, consistent with the grounded theory approach, I returned to the field many times to re-interview participants throughout the analysis and writing process of the thesis, and I needed easy access to participants that travelling long distances would have hindered. Fortunately, my initial plan had already included two Nova Scotians who fit these criteria.

The focus of my research changed direction as the second Gulf War was brewing and the U.S. moved into Iraq, denying the possibility of studying an “escalating peace.” I embarked on the major portion of my data collection during a rapidly building

political climate of war. More importantly, the three time periods in my original research design no longer worked. As my sampling criterion changed and the data gathering ensued, I abandoned the initial time periods and decided to interview women leaders rather than women who were simply attendees of the peace conference. As originally hoped, my sample of women leaders did have a large degree of age variance.

The theme of connections among women remained central throughout the thesis, yet it evolved to focus more and more on the concept of women's space as it became apparent that there was a lack of space in which to make these connections. The concept of women's space arose consistently in both the interviews and the literature on peace activism and became an analytic focus. The absence of women's political space was especially evident in the political sphere where male ideas dominate and the decisions around wars are made. Yet women in the peace movement have managed to expand their political space and have a considerable influence in this area at different times, as I discuss later in this thesis.

I found that connections do constitute the primary and one of the most effective ways in which women take up political space. These connections are quite different from those created by patriarchy, as I also discuss later in this thesis.

Part of the reason this thesis journey became such a large project is that when the core variable of women's space emerged and I began to use a feminist lens to research the literature with this topic in mind, it grew in expansiveness and in ways that I had not envisioned before embarking on the project. I began to see women's space as a distinct lens by which to view the problems women have in advancing the theme of peace in the

world. Sub-themes developed from this starting point such as definitive ways women have taken up and defined their space either within or outside of the mainstream political institutions. I also became aware of the strong historical significance of the issue of women's space as expressed by the works of authors such as Virginia Woolf (1929, 1938), and how women have sought to claim the space to develop and introduce peaceful values into mainstream political thinking and policies.

I explore in this thesis the tangible differences in the ways that women take up space to the ways men take up space, especially within the larger male-dominated public political spaces. For example, the informal or relational methods of networking that women use to connect, containing within them the subtle strength and power to influence high-level political decisions, are compared to the hierarchical ranks of male power structures. The works of feminist activists such as Vandana Shiva (1988, 1989, 2000) are included in the theoretical section to support the development of a holistic analysis that explains how many factors such as environmental sustainability and development are inextricably linked and reinforced in order to produce spaces of peace. For example, Shiva (1988, 1989, 2000) demonstrates in her writing how the contraction of women's space in agriculture has led to worldwide food shortages that are the cause of conflicts based on competition for scarce resources. On a hopeful note, women are also expanding their space, and Shiva (1988, 1989, 2000) also points to women's farming collectives in India that employ sound, peaceful agricultural practices. These types of examples demonstrate how the topic of women's space broadened. Moreover, I began to see the original concept of connections as one of the most important and fundamental ways in

which women take up space, and how women require the space to do this. These connections occurred on the micro to the macro level, between individual women and also involving the cooperation of VOW and WILPF at the UN in order to increase their influence there.

As the feminist focus grew in my thesis, my original plan to research the Canadian Peace Alliance was altered. I found that it was not practical to interview people within a group that was based in Ottawa, as my research approach often resulted in revisiting participants several times in order to clarify their perceptions of the emerging themes. I had at one point started researching the Halifax Peace Coalition (as the local equivalent of the Canadian Peace Alliance, but the need to do this diminished as the theoretical focus on women's space grew, and I realized that I had far too much data simply from interviews with women from two peace groups.

My research became solely focused on the two women's peace groups: The Voice of Women (VOW) and The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Their histories spanned almost to the entire last century and supplied more than adequate research material on the subject of women's space and peace. The participants from these peace groups were easily located within Halifax. The six women I interviewed were easily accessible and happy to participate in follow-up interviews, allowing for the study of the themes surrounding women's space and peace to be developed in greater depth than single interviews would have allowed. I changed the number of women leaders to six from nine because I had reached theoretical saturation at this time as I had by then become more familiar with qualitative and inductive methodological approaches

and with peace organizations. I had also gained experience of doing in-depth interviews at this time and became aware of the volume of rich data gained by doing these types of interviews. During the original Ethics Proposal, I had made allowances for the women to decide whether to have their names used or not. Partly because I interviewed women who were leaders in the peace movement, they were all happy for me to use their real names. Upon completion of the thesis, I sent them a copy of the text where they were included, and none of them suggested any changes. The focus group I conducted after the conference was not as helpful as I had anticipated, as again, practical issues arose--the participants were tired and needed to leave Salt Spring Island fairly quickly. Also, after much thought, observation, and reading of the scholarship about the topic of women and peace, I realized that my questions were not at the same depth as I could apply to the one-on-one interviews that were conducted later in Halifax. The conference did, however, serve as a catalyst out of which my subsequent research on how women take up political space in the peace movement evolved.

### **Summary of Research Project**

In summary I have used a qualitative, inductive, grounded theory methodological approach to write this thesis. I initially planned to use qualitative research as my research methodology and began specifically to use the grounded theory approach quite early on in my research. In fact, upon review, I realized that two of the original sources that I had listed: *Experience, Research and Social Change: Methods From The Margins (1989)*, and *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles Within Circles (1991)*, did reflect the qualitative research process that I used throughout my thesis. Using feminist grounded theory

methodology supported a return to feminist peace literature after data collection. As is common in grounded theory, once areas of importance are identified by inductive research, the researcher looks at these areas specifically to see where they are supported within the scholarly literature. Within this thesis, grounded theory allowed for the process of discovery that resulted in the concept of women's space to emerge as a central theme and to then be used as a conceptual tool to understand how the ways in which women create spaces of peace change over time. This was done by examining the history of two peace groups and interviewing contemporary women peace leaders with memberships in one of these groups. Using grounded theory allowed me to also go back after the initial interviews had been completed and to review the questions I was asking. Vigils evolved as theoretically central to the thesis as they contain the concepts of women's spaces that are controlled by women in the public sphere. I participated in a weblog that debated the merits of women-only vs. mixed-gender spaces. This weblog was monitored by feminist theorist Cynthia whose ideas formed an important part of the theoretical framework of this thesis. This process then allowed for a return to the historical peace literature including the works of feminist writers such as Virginia Woolf (1929, 1938), whose work was grounded in the analysis I was using. This review of historical scholarly feminist peace literature revealed a strong similarity between the barriers to women entering the public political space now and in the past. The grounded theory technique allowed for the focus of the thesis to be developed as I was doing the research. The inductive research



process which was based on the interviews and followed by a secondary analysis of peace literature supported building on grassroots knowledge creation from the important concluding statements arrived at by the end of the thesis.

## **Chapter 3:**

### **The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and Women’s Political Space**

#### **Historical Overview**

The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is the oldest and largest international organization working for women’s rights, peace, and social justice. It officially began in 1919 and developed into a thriving, transnational women’s peace organization and substantial NGO with an office in Geneva, consultative status at the United Nations, and branches in thirty-seven countries. Born out of pacifist and suffragist ideologies, the peace-activist women of WILPF had their forerunners in Quaker-led peace movements in Britain (Liddington, 1989, as cited in Cockburn, 2007) and in the United States (U.S.) (see Bacon, 1986). WILPF has had a long, rich history as an essential participant in the women’s peace movement. In this chapter I will concentrate on themes and actions present in the history of WILPF that have offered significant contributions to the conceptualization of and the shifts in women’s political space.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>For a detailed history of WILPF, see the following: *From Where We Stand: War, Women’s Activism and Feminist Analysis* by Cynthia Cockburn (2007); *Women For All Seasons: The Story of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom* by Catherine Foster (1989); *Peacework: Oral Histories of Women Peace Activists* by Judith Adams (1991); and “Nobel Peace Laureates, Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch: Two Women of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom” by Harriet Hyman Alonso (1995).

## **The Origins of WILPF in WWI**

The First World War began on August 4, 1914, when Britain and the other allied nations declared war on Germany. The early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century had given birth to a strongly focused suffragette movement in Western Europe and the U.S., although a similarly strong peace movement was yet to come into existence (Foster, 1989).

The outbreak of war did, however, “served to coalesce one, a significant part of which was composed of women who saw action for suffrage and action for peace as inseparable” (Foster, 1989, 10). “The international organization that united them was the International Women’s Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), headquartered in London. From this organization and movement, WILPF emerged during World War I” (Foster, 1989, 9).

The split in loyalties within the suffragette movement due to war was experienced in Britain, France and later in the United States. Many adhered to their nationalist loyalties and supported their governments in the pursuit of war. Early WILPF founders realized, however, that women’s equality and peace were inherently linked, and that their participation at the decision making tables could prove to be an essential element in negotiations to end the war (Foster, 1989). “Most WILPF founders actually believed that women’s participation in public life--which they equated with suffrage--would bring an end to wars” (Foster, 1989, 16). It was out of this group, which led to a more holistic analysis, that WILPF was formed.

## **The Formation of the Women’s Congress**

On February 1915, a small group of such women from the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Britain called for an international congress of women of all countries involved in the conflict to come together to protest the war and to find a peaceful way to

resolve the conflict. The Congress would take place in The Hague, within a neutral country (Cockburn, 2007). The organizers of the congress were prominent women in the International Suffrage Alliance who saw the connection between their struggle for equal rights and the struggle for peace. These women were strong feminists whose actions were infused with hard won political experience and expertise gained during the long abolition and suffrage campaigns. They recognized the importance of equality and freedom amongst all people and justice both nationally and internationally as the vital ingredients for a lasting peace (Foster, 1989).

An influential factor in the future of WILPF's initial adoption of an international focus was the inclusion of American women, who were recruited to leadership positions. At the time, American women did not have the vote in their own country, and they were also trying to procure universal suffrage in order to enable women to enter the public sphere. From there they could work to bring peace to the warring states and ameliorate the economic and social conditions that provoked war. As Cockburn (2007, 133) recounts: "The four-day International Congress of Women opened on the 28 of April, 1915 and was attended by 1,136 delegates from twelve countries, including Germany and Austria with more than 2,000 women present at the final session." As Cockburn (2007, 134) continues:

It was agreed that the congress would not address the question of relative responsibility for the war. Instead, the focus was on the democratic control of foreign policy, the practicalities of a negotiated peace and women's suffrage, still high on the women's agenda.

American Jane Addams, who presided over the meeting, would become the first President of WILPF. She was already an experienced activist and a leader in the

women's suffrage movement. She was also well known for her work in settlement, including the establishment of Hull House, which addressed the problems of the immigrant population. She saw the relationship between the causes of war and forces of social and economic oppression and discontent. Addams advocated for values such as selflessness, comradeship in peace, altruism, humanitarianism, and nurture to replace characteristics that were glorified by those in the pursuit of war (Adams, 1991). Despite the fact that she did not yet have the political power even to vote, Addams' work with Hull-House brought her into the public sphere as a strong political force (Alonso, 1993). Largely due to her work with poor people, Addams saw that social and economic relations provided the cornerstones of peace. This view was supported by other proponents of social reform within the founding members, and WILPF went on to adopt it as part of its original platform (Foster, 1989). Thus a holistic feminist analysis was integrated into the foundations of WILPF's original strategy and would form the basis for its future peace work.

The Congress in the Hague met with one purpose in mind, that of creating the groundwork for a permanent peace. It passed 20 resolutions, which were to form the basis for peaceful negotiations and "in general tenor were very similar to the fourteen points afterwards formulated by [U.S.] President [Woodrow] Wilson" (Pethick-Lawrence, 1938 as cited by Foster, 1989, 12). Included in them was the demand for an equal voice for women in deciding questions of war and peace, a demand totally left out of Wilson's peace proposal (Foster, 1989).<sup>7</sup> The creation of this alternative public space, where

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<sup>7</sup> Cockburn (2007), building on Bussey and Tims (1981), points out that, interestingly, one of the resolutions adopted at the Hague foreshadowed UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which calls for the inclusion of women's voices in the peace settlement.

women's voices were the focus, did not pass unnoticed. Resistance to its formation occurred when the British government prevented all but three British women, who were already out of the country, from going to the Congress. The boat sailing from New York with the U.S. representatives was detained for four days by Britain, although it did arrive in time for the Congress. Foster (1989, 13) cites Emily Greene Balch (1915), a U.S. delegate and another future WILPF leader, as she discusses in her memoirs how the meeting was also misrepresented by the press who reported it as a dismal failure, when in fact, the opposite was true:<sup>8</sup>

A very curious thing has been the attitude of the press. Most of them had apparently been sent to get an amusing story of an international peace gathering of women—'base and silly' enough to try to meet in wartime—breaking up in quarrel. Day by day they went away with faces long with disappointment. In many countries the meetings were reported to have been either practically unattended or to have closed in a row. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Greene Balch (quoted by Foster, 1989, 13) recalls the qualities imbued in this new space:

What stands out most strongly among all my impressions of those thrilling and strained days at The Hague is the sense of wonder at the beautiful spirit of the brave, self-controlled women who dared ridicule and every sort of difficulty to express a passionate human sympathy, not inconsistent with patriotism, but transcending it. There was not one clash or even danger of a clash over national differences; on every hand [there] was the same consciousness of the development of a new spirit which is growing in the midst of the war as the roots of the wheat grow under the drifts and tempests of winter. It must not be thought, however, that the congress was stagnantly placid. One's every faculty was on the stretch hour after hour.

Greene Balch describes how WILPF was created as a result of the Congress as "a channel through which to work for peace", and adds that finding it was a "poignant relief" (Foster, 1989, 13).

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<sup>8</sup> Foster is citing here having taken these quotes from *Women at the Hague* by Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch, and Alice Hamilton (1915, 1-19).

The Hague Congress is an interesting example of how diverse women created their own public space of peace where conflicts could be discussed and resolved constructively. At this time, women were prevented from participating fully in what was defined as the public sphere. Some powerful men attempted to both prevent the occurrence of the Women's Congress and to undermine its success. History shows, however, that this expanded space could not be diminished.

As a result of the Congress at The Hague, WILPF sent two delegations, one of which was headed by Jane Addams, to visit the heads of both neutral and warring nations to encourage peace negotiations. This was an extremely brave action, resulting in the expansion of women's political influence, and especially so, because as mentioned earlier, women had not yet procured the vote. Foster (1989, 15) quotes Jane Addams (1915), who acknowledges that this may have contributed to the openness with which the politicians listened to the women's views: "Perhaps the ministers talked freely to us because we were so absolutely unofficial." She was astutely aware of the power in informal networking, a strategy often employed by women working for peace. Addams had several meetings with U. S. president Woodrow Wilson, and while he privately admitted peaceful sympathies, he yielded to public pressure, and in April, 1917, the U. S. entered the First World War (Foster, 1989).

Jane Addams believed, as many women did, that because women are the primary nurturers within society, they have a stronger sense of moral obligation to uphold these values; therefore suffrage could be equated with an end to war (Foster, 1989). The importance--largely self-declared--of the moral authority of women and the public importance of women's position against war was in the concluding document of The

Hague Congress which demanded that women have access to the public domain of the political sphere:

The International Congress of Women is convinced that one of the strongest forces for the prevention of war will be the combined influence of the women of all countries.... But as women can only make their influence effective if they have equal political rights with men, this Congress declares that it is the duty of the women of all countries to work with all their might for their political enfranchisement (Alonso, 1995, 11).

WWI ended in 1919, and when the heads of states gathered in Versailles to write the final peace treaty, it is significant that the women simultaneously held a Congress in Zurich with women from both winning and losing sides. When knowledge of the post-war settlement came out, the women sharply criticized its harsh economic terms “which they correctly foresaw would lead to poverty and starvation in the defeated countries and give rise to more national hatred and a renewal of war” (Cockburn, 2007, 134). Their analysis proved correct and foreshadowed factors such as the predicted poverty and subsequent hopelessness of the German people. This provided ripe ground for Hitler to sow the seeds of fascism and thereby set the stage for the outbreak of the next world war: WWII.

### **The Inter-War Years and the Establishment of a Head Office in Geneva as a Permanent Space for Peace**

The need for the continued involvement of women in peace work was seen as essential, and WILPF took its name and established a head office in Geneva. Emily Balch first led the office, and she would open its doors to many world leaders who engaged in discussions around peace. As a result of this experience, she recognized the importance of the creation of a neutral space where the heads of countries could negotiate alternatives to war, and was among the first group of women to lobby world leaders to



create a much larger international meeting place to fulfill this purpose. In 1919, the League of Nations was formed. It was viewed by WILPF members as the single most positive outcome of the post WWI Treaty. WILPF's members would work closely with the newly-formed League of Nations, which was also to be located in Geneva (Foster, 1989). The League eventually became the humanitarian arm of the United Nations, and WILPF's connection and influence within it has grown. The "Preamble" of its founding document, for example, proclaimed that women had "a peculiar moral passion of revolt against both the cruelty and waste of war", and women were fed up with the "reckless destruction" caused by men in powerful positions. Women wanted "a share in deciding between war and peace", and that share included equality in all aspects of public and private life (Alonso, 1995, 11). Cynthia Cockburn (2007, 134) notes that: "By the mid-1920s the organization had 50,000 members in forty countries." WILPF has since provided the channel through which many women internationally have entered the public space of politics via their work in the peace movement.

During the inter-war years the internal workings of WILPF were rift with strife and controversy that threatened to disrupt or split its membership. The rise of fascism in Europe led some members to question the pacifist leanings of the organization, especially in the French and German sections, where Hitler's influence was already being felt. Ideological and tactical differences were experienced within WILPF throughout the 1930s, but WILPF managed to avoid a major split by allowing its national sections a large degree of autonomy (Foster, 1989). These growing pains ironically served to set the groundwork for WILPF's future respect for and appreciation of women's diversity. This factor would influence the values that the internal structure of the organization was built

around, ones that would foster its ability to nurture successful relationships among its international chapters. By following this path, WILPF opened up space for the future formation of transnational feminist networks which will be discussed in chapter 6.

WILPF's actions have often been of an implicitly feminist nature, and it has self-identified as a feminist organization at various points throughout its history, although not consistently. Mildred Scott Olmsted, a foremother and President of U.S. WILPF for many years, felt that: "While a lot of suffragists were not peace people, most peace people were feminists, a belief that she attributes to the leadership of Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, WILPF's first International Secretary" (Olmsted, 1972, as cited by Early, 1986, 143). But when women were given the right to vote shortly after the end of WWI, many women in WILPF became disillusioned with feminism as they realized that suffrage alone could not guarantee a peaceful world. As well, The "Red Scare",<sup>9</sup> which occurred during the twenties, may have also discouraged women from defining themselves as feminists, as anything that did not support mainstream political ideology was seen to be circumspect during this time. The link between women's rights and peace further weakened for the next few decades, but to its credit, WILPF did decide to maintain its status as a women's peace group and keep "Women's" in its title (Foster, 1989, 18). Later in WILPF's history, a feminist analysis, including the interconnected, systemic causes of war and the link to women's inequality, continued to be developed and formed an integral part of WILPF's platform (Cockburn, 2007).

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<sup>9</sup> The "Red Scare" was the name for one instance of labor phenomenon that has manifested periodically throughout history by governments in order to quell opposition to patriarchal capitalism, and more specifically, war, as this would mean the end of the lucrative economic system surrounding the production of the machinery of war. Feminist ideas and groups such as early WILPF, which had its origins in the suffragette movement, were among possible targets as one of the perceived threats.

## **Addams and Balch Win the Nobel Peace Prize**

Both Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch received the Nobel Peace Prize for their work with WILPF, in 1931 and 1946 respectively. Each arrived at this point via very different routes. Jane Addams built personal relationships with several U.S. presidents, including Woodrow Wilson, and often worked for peace through these channels. She received tremendous accolades for winning the Nobel Peace Prize, including flowers from the White House when Herbert Hoover was President, and hundreds of telegrams and letters. Emily Greene Bach openly challenged capitalist economic policies, declared herself a socialist, and delivered speeches condemning violence. Balch and Addams were the only U.S. women to receive the prize. This opened up critical space for women in a predominantly male domain, and it succeeded in focusing public attention onto their work within the peace movement.

Initially, both Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch had embarked on settlement work. Addams established Hull-House, and Balch established Denison House, a settlement house in Boston. Each wrote academic reports analyzing the experience of immigrants within the United States. In 1910, Balch, who had been hired by Wellesley College, declared herself a socialist and published *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens*, a comprehensive analysis of an immigrant community. In 1902, Addams wrote *Democracy and Social Ethics*, in which she stated that popular support for war would gradually disappear once the larger society developed the type of collective social morality that was already being practiced by the people living in the crowded immigrant tenement quarters surrounding Hull-House. Addams supported the building of similar strengths of connections among people in the larger society and saw this as more beneficial in the

creation of a peaceful society than the glorification of individual achievements (Alonso, 1995).

Addams and Balch were among a group of women who viewed themselves as sociologists, “but they were barred from the institutional affiliations that would legitimize their claims” (Deegan, 1978, as cited by Bernard 1998, 38). Jessie Bernard (1998) discusses in “The Feminist Enlightenment” “how the sociological establishment created “patterns of exclusion and participation” of women in the American Sociological Society (later Association) and edged women’s studies, in its then-conceptualized form, out of the University of Chicago at a time when it was the pacesetter of the profession” (Deegan, 1978, as cited by Bernard 1998, 37). While their work was recognized as excellent, and their courses, though not modern women’s studies, dealt with subjects legitimate for sociology departments, sociology also could not find a way to integrate the study of social problems. The women were shunted out of the Department of Sociology into Household Administration, which soon became part of the School of Social Service Administration (Deegan, 1978, 19, as cited in Bernard, 1998). “Until now most of the research by and about women had been under the guidance of male-created paradigms which led to questions, methods, findings, and interpretations as defined by men” (Bernard, 1998, 39). After years of struggle, “... it did, finally, learn how to ‘sociologize’ its applied, practical, reformist roots to render them academically respectable” (Bernard, 1998, 39).

In 1919, Emily Greene Balch, at the age of fifty-two, lost her job at Wellesley College as a direct result of her peace activism. She then moved to Geneva, partly also to avoid becoming a target of the “Red Scare” era and took a salaried position as secretary-

treasurer for the international WILPF offices in Geneva. At this point, Balch began her work in the public sphere. In support of WILPF's strategy of more internationalism, the organization would continue to grow and emphasize the implications of the first period of its history. Balch encouraged the active engagement of women in the areas of diplomacy and policy. She maintained the WILPF office in Geneva as a networking headquarters for peace activists. Mildred Scott Olmsted (Foster, 1989, 20)<sup>10</sup> remembers these days:

I realized what a center that had become because of her work. Miss Balch knew nearly everybody, and people like Gandhi, liberal leaders from all over the world, would come to our center, where afternoon tea was an institution. They would gather and talk peace and freedom. Miss Balch was such a rare spirit.

Olmsted remembers that one of the things that impressed her most about Balch was that “you could take people of absolutely diverse viewpoints, put them together, and under her guiding influence they would be reasonable and friendly to one another” (Foster, 1989, 20). This represents an example of a politically influential, women-organized space of peace, physically located in the form of tea and discussion. The creation of this space did much to support Balch's tireless efforts to connect both politicians and peace leaders from every part of the political spectrum. It was meant to facilitate their engagement in mutually beneficial discussions, out of which, the hope was, would evolve new understandings that would result in a shift in the larger political sphere to a more peaceful direction.

### **The Contraction of WILPF's Political Space Around WWII**

Some groups even went into exile, while others participated in the vital work for

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<sup>10</sup>This was taken by author Catherine Foster from an interview conducted by Mercedes Randall with Mildred Olmsted in February 1972, and recorded in the Mildred Scott Olmsted Papers, courtesy of the Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

peace only on a national basis. While some ideological problems did exist within WILPF during WWII, some WILPF chapters did play a very important role at the national level. For example, the Danish section of WILPF retained a strong resistance throughout the war. It managed to get through the war, with its membership of twenty-five thousand intact, and continued to carry out a number of education and relief projects (Adams 1991). Even after the German invasion of April 1940, this section continued to meet frequently. “They sold ‘peace flowers’ to German soldiers, who reportedly wore them inside their tunics” (Adams, 1991, 215). Rigmor Risbjerg Thomsen, in conversation with Catherine Foster (1989, 22-23), recounted the experiences of her section in those years:

We couldn’t work regularly because we had Gestapo in our office sometimes and the vice-chair was imprisoned at times and many of the members were in the resistance movement. But one month before the German troops arrived, we succeeded in getting three hundred Jewish children out of Vienna and had them brought to Denmark and placed in Danish homes. But a few months after the German soldiers came, we had to help most of them escape to Sweden. We also helped the Danish Jews to escape once the persecution really set in. On account of that, twenty-five years later, in 1965 the league of Denmark was listed in the Golden Book of Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup>

When WWII ended in 1945, WILPF held a congress just as it had done in 1919, this time coinciding with the Paris peace talks. Many of the 200 women who gathered in Luxembourg, Austria in 1946 were demoralized by the devastation that fascism had wrought and now the threat of atomic weapons. Many women who had been profoundly affected by the fascist war in Europe chose to never again engage in politics, severely compromising WILPF’s political strength as an organization for over 20 years. Many at

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<sup>11</sup> This was taken from an interview that the author, Catherine Foster, conducted with Rigmor Risbjerg Thomsen on August 21, 1985.

the congress wondered how they could hold on to their ideals and pursue their work for peace. The congress questioned whether WILPF should continue at all and then decided that it must. While its space had been constricted and in some areas almost eradicated by the war, the determined women who remained in WILPF demonstrated their tenacity by holding onto it and working for the next 20 years to regain the space and strength it had lost (Foster, 1989). The intensity with which these women worked for peace made up for any reduction in membership that WILPF experienced during this time.

### **Re-establishing Women's Spaces and Building New Ones**

Despite the success of WILPF's Geneva office as a women's space of peace, its membership had been badly splintered by the war, and contact between some groups had become minimal. A strong indication of the contraction of WILPF's space can be noted by the relative absence of historical material within scholarly literature written about WILPF during this time. A similar time of uncertainty was also reflected within the League of Nations, which had become ineffective. A significant shift in political spaces occurred when it dissolved in 1945 and was replaced by the emergent United Nations during the same year. While it inherited many of the League's institutions, the new UN moved its head office from Geneva to New York. This meant that WILPF was no longer as close to the epicenter of global political decision making, yet it did retain its head office in Geneva, in large part because the new humanitarian arm of the UN was established there. WILPF did go on to establish an office in New York, within the UN building, where it participated in many exciting feminist processes. These shifts in political space provided a glimmer of hope for WILPF's future, by once again expanding

its political space and foreshadowing its resurgence as a strong, international, women's peace organization.

In 1948 WILPF was granted consultative status as a non-governmental organization (NGO) to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). With this recognition as an official voice in the United Nations, WILPF was able to influence changes that would bring about greater human rights internationally. In 1949, as part of an NGO advisory panel, the league recommended that the UN institute a permanent agency for child welfare. This became the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in 1950. WILPF also pushed for creation of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees post and the passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Foster, 1989).

In the early 1950s, WILPF focused its work on the Korean War. This led to an acute awareness of the threat of atomic weapons. WILPF called for a "World Truce", a two-year pledge by nations not to produce or use armaments and to prepare for a disarmament conference during the pause. WILPF was one of the few groups to link nuclear weapons with non-nuclear ones, stressing the need for total and universal disarmament. In March 1954, the United States conducted a nuclear test on the island of Bikini and a large international movement sprang up to protest nuclear testing and weapons. As the effects of the radiation from the atomic tests became more apparent from studies such as the collection and analysis of children's teeth, an action that was initiated by The Voice of Women, a huge wave of protest developed. Members of WILPF contributed to a huge march on November 1, 1961, to call for an end to atomic tests. This, as well as other ongoing work of WILPF, culminated in enough public pressure for



the Partial Test Ban Treaty to be concluded in August 1963 (Foster, 1989).

WILPF's push for universal disarmament came close to being realized when in 1962 the United Nations declared "general and complete disarmament" as its ultimate goal. Its hopes were dashed, however, with the aggressive progression of the Vietnam War in 1965. WILPF strongly opposed the war. In March 1965, Alice Herz, an eighty-two-year-old member of WILPF and refugee of Hitler's Germany, became the first person outside Vietnam to set herself on fire in protest. This extreme action was a forerunner to a huge wave of youth rebellion and civil rights movements that would sweep the Western World (Foster, 1989). In the 1960s, WILPF also broadened its space of peace to encompass the fight to end racism as it joined with the civil rights movement.

Dorothy Hutchison (1967) became the international Chair of WILPF between 1965 and 1968 and influenced the organization's policy on Vietnam. WILPF was split as to the solutions they proposed to end the war. Some members wanted a complete and immediate withdrawal of all troops from Vietnam by the U.S. Hutchison, a Quaker from Philadelphia, co-authored a book in 1967 called *Peace in Vietnam* in which she stressed the importance of a negotiated peace to be accomplished under international supervision. This suggestion coincided with the position of the U.N. Secretary General, U Thant. "Hutchinson strongly believed in the necessity of creating the machinery for peacefully resolving international conflicts before disarmament could be made possible, and she did much in the peace and United Nations community to legitimize that idea, convinced that most scientific, political, and military analyses of disarmament prospects overlooked its importance (Foster, 1989, 37). WILPF's official international positions were a compromise of Hutchison's convictions and the more radical ones calling for an

immediate end to U.S. involvement. WILPF's position became more radical as the Vietnam War progressed, and it culminated in joining with other peace groups, totalling ten million Americans, in various antiwar activities on October 15, 1969. It was the largest protest in U.S. history. WILPF also engaged in street theatre and postcard campaigns to the White House to try to end the war (Foster, 1989).

One of WILPF's major projects during the Vietnam War was to help draft resisters. WILPF members like Lucy Whitaker Haessler, who lived in Detroit, helped young men cross the border to Canada. They supplied them with documentation, cash, and transportation via "safe" houses along the way. WILPF member Beth Robinson Coats recalled people in the San Francisco Bay area going to jail for sitting in front of induction centers. At one point, a big group of WILPF members were in jail. One of them was the branch president who decided to conduct a board meeting in jail since most of the board was in there. The group was in jail for ten days (Adams, 1991). This type of sacrifice was a common event for WILPF members, who were determined to do whatever they could to end the atrocities being committed in the Vietnam War. These women illustrated the flexibility of women's space and how it can be re-conceptualized to adapt to different circumstances or constraints. This work of WILPF aiding Vietnam War resisters parallels that done by members of The Voice of Women that will be discussed in the next chapter.

WILPF members joined an international delegation of women who traveled to Vietnam to connect with the women there. Again, this paralleled VOW's peace work as its members were also members of the delegation. Women in Vietnam who openly spoke out for peace were frequently tortured or jailed for their actions. Nevertheless, the women

continued, undaunted, to speak out, and dared to sign a peace agreement with the WILPF visitors, pledging to resist the war and calling for an immediate withdrawal of troops by U.S. President Nixon. After a tediously slow withdrawal, the new U.S. president, Gerald Ford, proclaimed May 7, 1975, “the last day of the Vietnam era” (Foster, 1989, 69).

### **International Efforts and UN Conferences**

In 1974 Kay Camp became the new international president of WILPF. She possessed a great zeal for international organizing work and visited sections in Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Mexico. This led her to propose that western feminism needed to encompass new dimensions in order to include women living in poverty in the third world. She encouraged the women’s movement to address the importance of disarmament and economic justice (Foster, 1989). This proved to be a forerunner for the United Nations International Women’s Year in 1975 with the themes of equality, development, and peace.

“To kick off International Women’s Year, WILPF hosted its own seminar in May 1975 at the UN in New York: ‘Women of the World United for Peace: Disarmament and Its Social Consequences.’ The Event, cosponsored by the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF), brought together 250 women from twenty-seven countries to discuss routes to disarmament” (Foster, 1989, 76). The following statement emerged from the conference: “It is significant that International Women’s Year coincides with the thirtieth anniversary of the end of World War II. In the intervening years, a new climate of international understanding and detente has developed which has helped make this seminar possible” (Foster, 1989, 76). Outside the UN, however, there was still little public activity for disarmament in North America and Western Europe

during the mid-1970s, even though WILPF and a few other groups like it kept the issue alive. An example was the UN conference to celebrate International Women's Year, held in Mexico City in July 1975. When WILPF members tried to put forward a call for disarmament in the "World Plan of Action" (the official conference document), several influential government delegations, headed by the United States, discouraged it, insisting that it would unnecessarily "politicize" the decade. There were few references to the need for peace in official conference proceedings. Therefore, WILPF saw it as essential that they try to rectify this, and: "Beginning in 1975, a focus of the league's work was to ensure that the theme of peace was adequately addressed in the decade's activities" (Foster, 1989, 75).

### **WILPF Supports the Women's Peace Tent in Nairobi**

WILPF supported the goal of having peace as a central theme at the 3<sup>rd</sup> UN Women's Conference on Women. It was designed as a "World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women, Equality, Development, and Peace", and was held in July 1985 in Nairobi, Kenya. The purpose of the conference was to evaluate women's progress in the previous decade, and to come together to work on strategies that would continue to improve the status of women through the year 2000. The NGO forum paralleled the official UN event, and Edith Ballantyne, who chaired the planning committee, designated that the forum deal with the theme of peace. Despite conference officials who threatened to boycott the event if it became too political, a blue and white tent became a peace center and was open for the duration of the UN Forum. On it was written a quote that was inspired by a famous quote from Virginia Woolf's (1938, 313) *Three Guineas*: "[A]s a woman, I have no country." The tent became a feminist

space of peace. The invitation to the tent declared: “The Peace Tent creates the space for women to demonstrate their skills and knowledge of human relationships for use in the public sphere, which has been denied them. In the Peace Tent, women can substitute women’s truth for patriarchal lies through dialogue, films and exhibits; women’s joy for patriarchal pessimism through song, dance and art” (*Archives*, 1986, 156-157). Here, women from “enemy” countries such as the Soviet Union and the U.S., and Palestine and Israel, came together to search for new ways to end conflict. The women’s spirits were kept high with the intermittent singing of peace songs. Women discussed issues of health, education, employment, development, and more, with the realization that peace is a political issue and above all, it is a women’s issue. By assisting in the coordination of the peace tent and other Forum activities, WILPF was able to take the organization’s message to a broader group of women than it had ever reached before. A new section was formed in Kenya and WILPF expanded its space to include a new focus on the Third World (Foster, 1989). “And for the women who attended, the Nairobi conference heightened their awareness of the world community of women in a most intimate way, prompting a deeper understanding of the interdependency of local and global problems, whether they be of a social, economic, political, or even personal nature” (Foster, 1989, 98). An important groundwork of ideas was laid in Nairobi that would set the stage for future international strategies.

The Nairobi Peace Tent was a feminist space of peace, as the power was not claimed by one person or group, but shared by all women and groups, who attended in different ways. While the above represents the knowledge made public at the time of the event, and while WILPF did play a role in organizing the Peace Tent, most of the

background networking and all of the funding were supplied by a silent funder, who has only recently allowed this to be known. Genevieve Vaughan (2007), under the name of the organization that she created the Foundation for a Compassionate Society, has recently been willing to identify herself as the primary funder, for political reasons. She now feels that if her name is known, it might be helpful to women who might wish to seek her assistance in order to escape dangerous situations, as some she became aware of in Kenya a few years after the Peace Tent had concluded.<sup>12</sup>

### **WILPF Assists with the Formulation of Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace Building at the UN**

In *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism and Feminist Analysis*, Cynthia Cockburn (2007) explores the developments leading up to Resolution 1325, the groundwork for which was laid by women attending the United Nations sequence of World Conferences on Women. Women and war was a strong feature of the 3rd UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985. Out of the Fourth World Conference in Beijing in 1995 came the Platform for Action that featured "Women and Armed Conflict" as one of twelve "critical areas of concern" (Cockburn, 2007, 139). As a result of this, The Commission on the Status of Women, a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council, reviewed the document, and a group of international NGOs: the Women and Armed Conflict Caucus, coordinated by WILPF, was formed (Cockburn, 2007). Cockburn (2007, 139-140) cites the acquisition of the Resolution as: "the most remarkable institutional achievement of women's anti-war movements to date." It required a wide, nameless, ad hoc transnational network of women to come

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<sup>12</sup> I received this information via personal email communication with Genevieve Vaughan, dated October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

together and co-operate, forming a highly productive alliance that remains in place today. They became adept at handling the mechanisms of an international institution—the UN Security Council—which could be considered the most influential one of all (Cockburn, 2007).

“United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 is brief and easily grasped. Its preamble acknowledges both the specific effect of armed conflict on women and women’s role in preventing and resolving conflict, setting these in the context of the Security Council’s responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security” (Cohn et al. 2004 as cited in Cockburn, 2007, 139). United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 contains three principal themes. One is protection, which relates to women’s rights and gender-specific needs in time of war. It puts an end to impunity for gender-based violence such as rape during war. A second is participation. Women must be included in decision-making at all levels in national and regional institutions, and in negotiations for peace. A third theme is the insertion of a gender perspective into UN peacekeeping operations and inclusion of women in all levels of post-conflict reconstruction. A two-day debate ensued that resulted in the adoption of the resolution (Cockburn 2007). “It was the first time since the foundation of the United Nations, that the Security Council, the peak of the UN structure, the body vested with responsibility for the world’s security, had devoted an entire session to debating women’s experiences in conflict and post-conflict situations” (Cohn et al., 2004, as cited in Cockburn, 2007, 139). An awareness of women’s plight in war had finally infiltrated the UN Security Council, a space previously constructed by and for men, thus marking a huge milestone for women and peace.

An open thematic session of the Security Council was not enough for the women, who by now had formulated themselves into the NGO Working Group. In order to have an influence on mainstream conflict negotiations, they would have to sit at the table with the decision-makers. “They wanted a resolution to come out of this, the strongest expression the Council can give, stronger even than a presidential statement” (Cockburn, 2007, 142). This required an incredible amount of diplomacy, lobbying, drafting and redrafting, making 1325 the only Security Council resolution which was almost entirely the work of civil society, and the first in which the actors were almost all women (Cockburn, 2007, 143). It was referred to as a transnational advocacy network, using a term popularized by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in 1998, and was a complex and shifting set of women and institutions. This is an excellent example of how women take up space differently from men, whose space is represented by hierarchically-organized offices with one leader on top such as the UN. WILPF was at the core, but did not profess to be the group’s leader. It was a truly cooperative venture as described by Felicity Hill (Hill as cited in Cockburn, 2007, 146, 147), head of the WILPF UN Office and coordinator of the NGOs: “... we were all links in a chain. We all fed each other’s enthusiasm. It was really moving and uplifting.” This strong group of women who lobbied for Resolution 1325 represented a significant parallel to the large number of women who suddenly and “en masse” joined The Voice of Women in 1960 to protest the Cold War. The strong but mainly invisible political culture from which such groups surface is described by Linda Christiansen-Ruffman (1983) in her article: “Women’s Political Culture and Feminism in Canada.” Christiansen-Ruffman (1983, 17) points out that: “It is silent and invisible but structurally based and hence able to make itself known



suddenly and forcefully.” She also points out that it is: “differentiated from male political culture that prioritizes issues based on principles of power and economic rationality rather than a concern for humanity and society” (Christiansen-Ruffman, 1983, 13). This statement succinctly describes the women’s relationship to the UN Security Council. As Cynthia Cockburn (Cockburn, 2007, 143), states: “Despite the adoption of ‘gender mainstreaming’ in the UN in 1997, the Security Council remained a highly masculine and masculinist entity.” Nevertheless, with incredible determination the women reached their goal and on October 31, 2000, UNSC Resolution 1325 was adopted. “The ‘last bastion of gender-free thinking in the UN (in Felicity Hill’s words) had fallen’ ” (Hill et al, 2003, as cited in Cockburn, 2007, 143).

While this was cause for great celebration, some members of WILPF were at the same time disappointed with aspects of the final resolution. Because WILPF was the most feminist of the five NGOs in the Working Group, it brought attention specifically to the absence of two major themes in the resolution. As Cockburn (2007, 147) points out: “It spoke only fleetingly of women’s role in preventing war, and made no mention of ending war itself, which, after all, was the main reason the United Nations was established and precisely the Security Council’s brief.”<sup>13</sup> Also absent from Resolution 1325 was a feminist analysis naming or describing the patriarchal culture of war that produces the systemic patterns of violence against women and excludes them from negotiations around the peace process itself (Cockburn, 2007).

Cockburn (2007, 147) explains: “As it was, lacking antimilitarist clauses, the resolution could be seen as co-optative. We’ve seen that two of its main themes were the

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<sup>13</sup> In March 2004, members of The Voice of Women attending the CSW Conference at the UN did address this issue by presenting a paper entitled: “Toward Delegitimizing War.”

protection of women, and their representation. You could say that ‘protection’ emphasizes women’s passivity, their victimhood.” It does this under the pretence of “making war safer” for women (Cockburn, 2007). States could also use this as one reason to legitimize military goals, as was done in Afghanistan and Iraq. Increased representation of women at all levels of decision-making could heighten women’s profile by enhancing their agency; or it could be that the UN could see “that women could be a useful resource in helping them do their job” (Cockburn, 2007, 147). It was, as Cockburn (2007, 148) posits: “essentially calling for alertness to women. It was hardly a call for revolution in the gender order.” Cockburn quotes Felicity Hill (Hill as cited in Cockburn 2007, 148) in an interview that she did with her where she thought the text dwelt on “the under-representation of men. It was very far from being a resolution dealing with men and masculinity as causes of women’s insecurity.” Carol Cohn (Cohn et al. 2004 as cited in Cockburn, 2007, 149) summarizes the problem in the following way: “In order to be effective you have to address ‘the pernicious, pervasive complexities of the gender regimes that undergird not only individual wars but the entire war system.’ ” This is poignantly evident when discussing rape and prostitution within the context of war, and Cohn (Cohn et al. 2004 as cited in Cockburn, 2007, 149) goes on to say that a Code of Conduct may be written for the troops “--but without addressing the nexus of militarized power/constructions of masculinities/gendered inequalities in access to paid work/and global economic inequality, how likely is it that that Code of Conduct will make a significant difference?”

This discussion illuminates a primary problem that still exists within the UN. “The fact is that just as the UN is unable to criticize the USA, capitalism, and

militarization, so is it quite unable to make any critique of masculinity” (Cockburn, 2007, 149). Therefore, it seldom makes any critique of the structures of patriarchy with its inherent systems of domination. In Sandra Whitworth’s (2004, 137, as cited in Cockburn, 2007, 149) words: “ ‘There is...no discussion within UN documents of militarism or militarized masculinities or, for that matter, of masculinities more generally’ ”. In June 2005, when Carol Cohn and Felicity Hill were invited to address the Sweden-sponsored Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction, the Blix Commission, they picked up this issue and requested that the commission “take note of masculinity”, in an effort to rectify its absence in Resolution 1325. Following the resolution, successes had occurred in the area of small arms and light weapons, partly due to the obvious connection between men and guns (Cockburn, 2007). “The attachment of men to their weapons, the link between masculine identities and men’s unwillingness to give up their weapons, is recognized in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process as one of the biggest obstacles to peace” (Hill, 2005 as cited in Cockburn, 2007, 152). But the link had not been made with nuclear weapons. Carol Cohn also clearly demonstrated in her writing “how masculine symbolism is central to professional and intellectual discourse about nuclear weapons” (Cohn, 1987, as cited in Cockburn, 2007, 153). Hill and Cohen showed how these weapons were simply farther along on the same continuum and discussed the disastrous implications of avoiding this connection (Cockburn, 2007). This serves as an example of how, despite its weaknesses, 1325 made substantial gains in opening up valuable space for women in the public political sphere, where vital decisions regarding conflict were being made. WILPF, and The Voice of Women, as is discussed in the next chapter, continue to play a major role in working towards the successful implementation

of the resolution.

WILPF is still one of the largest international women's peace groups in the world, but it is no longer alone, rather one of many who work together in alliances and on a wide diversity of topics. WILPF has taken its message of peace into the world of cyberspace, by hosting a widely-read web portal ([www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org)) which it initially set up one year after adoption of Resolution 1325. Resolution 1325 now also includes additional Security Council Resolutions on women and peace. The WILPF website collects a vast amount of information: news from women in war-zones, bibliographies, lists of contacts, a guide to the UN system, and tools and materials from campaigning organizations. This is an excellent resource for peace groups, offering the exchange of news and views and publishing a fortnightly e-newsletter enabling peace activists to stay connected on an international level. Two years later, UNIFEM launched a complementary web portal on Women, War and Peace ([www.womenwarpeace.org](http://www.womenwarpeace.org)). WILPF has internships at its international offices in New York and Geneva, opening the door for young women to enter the world of peace activism. It continues to work closely with the UN to promote peace internationally. WILPF has taken up a dynamic space of peace that has maintained its strength and purpose for a century, and continues to play a vital role in working towards a peaceful world for us all.

As we have seen in this chapter women expanded their space rapidly in the name of peace, especially at the Congress at The Hague, and were able to make significant contributions to the peace movement despite powerful opposition from a number of politicians who were all male at the time. The foundations of WILPF began to consolidate with its consistent work on peace issues. The international headquarters in

Geneva became well known by both men and women as a good place for discussions about contentious issues. As predicted by the women, the peace following WWI did not last, and the spaces of WILPF strengthened in some places and contracted in others because of the contradictions between patriarchal institutions including the family, the nation, the economy, The League of Nations, the UN, and the pacifist beliefs in women's spaces of peace. WILPF contracted in WWII and then expanded when, in conjunction with other women's peace groups, it participated in activities such as those discussed in this chapter (e.g., The Women's Peace Tent in Nairobi) and the general revival of the women's peace movement. Women's presence and spaces within the UN considerably expanded when again, WILPF worked with other women's peace groups and introduced Resolution 1325 at the Security Council of the UN.

## **Chapter 4:**

### **The History of The Voice of Women (VOW) and Women's Political Space**

The Voice of Women (VOW) has played a crucial role in opening up political space for Canadian women since its inception in 1960. In this chapter I will focus on the key events and strategies that most clearly illustrate how the women in VOW have expanded and shaped women's space in political culture. VOW created a forum where women could receive validation and provide solidarity and networking for one another, and thus emerged as a significant women's only public space which also related to the major public issues of the times. The women of VOW formed a strong core group that mobilized instantly and took their power and values into the broader public space. I will discuss how VOW's influence introduced an alternative perspective of peace into the dominant political space at both the local and international levels.

#### **The Founding of The Voice of Women: An Historical Overview**

In *Muriel Duckworth, A Very Active Pacifist*, Marion Kerans (1996, 88) discusses the important context of how VOW was formed:

The Voice of Women came into being in the spring of 1960, when an international crisis brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. Gary Powers, an American pilot of a high altitude U2 spy plane, was shot down over the Soviet Union. At that very moment Khrushchev was in Paris, participating in the Summit Conference of the four big powers. In a fury, Khrushchev immediately broke off negotiations, proclaiming publicly, "we won't stand for this." Newspapers headlined the threat of war.

In "A Grandly Subversive Time: the Halifax Branch of The Voice of Women in the 1960s", Frances Early (2004) explains how a newspaper article by *Toronto Star*

columnist Lotta Dempsey proved to be a pivotal catalyst, invoking an outpouring of thousands of Canadian women to articulate their concerns and rage in response to the looming threat of the possibility of a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. Dempsey directly challenged women to speak out about the eminent threat of nuclear war. In response, Canadian women responded immediately with thousands of letters as well as phone calls promising that they would do anything they could to help to prevent the onset of a nuclear war. Early (2004, 253) discusses the circumstances that surrounded the initial surge in VOW's membership: "Buoyed up on the rising tide of a worldwide 'ban the bomb' movement and a reviving peace movement in Canada and the United States, and aided initially by supportive media coverage, the fledgling organization grew rapidly; within a year, membership stood at 5,000 (10,000 received the newsletter) with over 100 local branches spread out across the country." These events precipitated the first meeting of The Voice of Women and membership grew at an incredible rate. Thus VOW was born--initiating what was to develop into over 50 years of women's voices in the peace movement, taking up women's political space in the public sphere, and impacting the Canadian political agenda.

### **VOW Opens Up New Political Space for Women**

In *The History of the Voice of Women*, Christine Ball (1994) explicitly explores how issues around women's political space were very relevant to the conception of VOW. She argues that the formation of VOW opened up new ideological space for women. These women recognized that their socially-constructed roles positioned them as outside of the political space of war. In making her argument, Ball (1994) highlighted the history of Canadian women's involvement in the Second World War, as exemplified

in this quote from Ruth Pierson (1986, 104 as cited in Ball, 1994, 234): “Above all, women’s exclusion/exemption from combat duty and official arms bearing ensured that the male sex retained exclusive access to positions of high command within the military as well as the symbolic power and authority of the ‘protector’ within society as a whole.” While it is not a goal of women working for peace to carry arms, this statement serves to point out the strict gender divisions that existed within society in order to entrench the institution of war. Yet where a nuclear war would be indiscriminately destructive to all people, women activists understood the importance of women demanding a voice in the decision making process. The early Voice of Women members “drew attention to the fact that the lines between combat and civilian arenas would be non-existent in the event of a nuclear war. Thus, they challenged a basic patriarchal norm of male protection and leadership” (Ball, 1994, 233). As Cynthia Enloe (cited in Ball, 1994, 233) asserts: “This pervasive identification of males as the combatants and protectors has been used to limit women’s participation in political and military decision-making.” Women in VOW supported the idea of challenging the artificial nature of boundaries between civilian and military spheres, as mentioned above, and claimed their political space by demanding more influence in the political arena.

Many of the original members of The Voice of Women had entered the workforce in the public sphere during WWII in order to support the war effort while the men were fighting overseas. After the war, many women lost their jobs in favour of the returning men and were forced into the unpaid domestic sphere where they were encouraged to focus exclusively on raising children. Similar cycles of labour force exclusion have been repeated historically and have represented a huge sacrifice for women; their contributions



were measured only in light of how they benefit men. Yet it was these same women, many of whom were in VOW, who challenged this patriarchal norm when they invested time and energy in protesting the build-up of nuclear arms when the threat of nuclear war arose.

“During its first decade, The Voice of Women served as a lightning rod for women’s discontent with Cold War politics, and the organization helped to bring into open debate women’s marginalized civil role within the nation” (Early, 2004, 253). According to Early, VOW was an incredibly empowered space, and its rapid expansion seemed to explode out of nowhere (Early, 2004). Linda Christiansen-Ruffman (1983, 17) discusses this phenomenon in “Women’s Political Culture and Feminism in Canada” as she explains that “a fully closeted women’s political culture is one which is characterized by latent potential. It is silent and invisible but structurally based and hence able to make itself known suddenly and forcefully.” She claims that “While it may not always be apparent in the public sphere, a strong women’s culture has consistently existed throughout history including values such as peace” (Christiansen-Ruffman, 1983, 17).

Women’s culture:

is differentiated from male political culture that prioritizes issues based on principles of power and economic rationality rather than a concern for humanity and society. Women’s political culture, on the other hand, is characterized by a positive orientation towards social welfare and human society (Christiansen-Ruffman, 1983, 13).

One of the primary goals of The Voice of Women is to build a culture of peace that emphasizes building a vision of peace for the future instead of simply developing strategies in reaction to the policies of war. This goal and the relational way in which VOW operates as a peace group are among the characteristics that place it distinctly

within the context of women's political culture.

### **VOW Defines Its New Political Space**

In the early years of its existence, VOW sought to affirm its political space and to define what form that space would take. Candace Loewen (1987, 25) describes this process in her article: "Mike Hears Voices: Voice of Women and Lester Pearson, 1960--1963." She discusses how "VOW developed out of a collective fear for the future of the world's children and the conviction that all women have a right to peace because of their common link to motherhood." Some historians have perceived VOW's early values as having formed out of maternal feminism, linking VOW historically to women's groups throughout the world. Francis Early (2004, 253-254) points out how early members sensed "that men, who dominated politics, were responsible for nuclear brinkmanship, and that it was women's duty to set things straight." Using this awareness, early VOW meetings demonstrated a strong ability to use agency in deciding the manner in which to construct its initial public image to most effectively convey its message. Loewen suggests that initially, VOW became a vehicle for women to unite in this type of political activity although, as discussed later in this chapter, VOW members also ran directly for political office, and as a group, they pushed the boundaries of women's space and increased women's political influence within society as a whole. According to Loewen (1987, 25), their initial involvement "in these groups was a way for women to express their fears, convictions and needs. It was an avenue for their political talent [and] a means of affecting changes in society."

Despite the initial public image that early VOW carefully crafted, the types of women that gravitated toward VOW were far from the traditional image of a housewife

that society may have held at the time or that was later constructed by proponents of conservative thought. They came from many points along the continuum of public and private life. With them, they brought a diverse set of skills and accomplishments that proved to be invaluable in furthering the goals of the organization.

In 1960, VOW aligned itself with Lester B. Pearson and the Liberal Party, believing that Pearson would retain his stance against nuclear weapons. In 1963, when he changed his government's position and allowed nuclear weapons on Canadian soil as part of a new defence policy, VOW members were shocked. They denounced this action publicly and withdrew their support for Pearson and the Liberal party. Following this decision, VOW's membership contracted slightly when some of its members, such as Pearson's wife Maryon, felt they could not openly oppose the government's position and resigned from VOW. This incident stimulated VOW to redefine the dimensions of its political space. As a group, VOW had initially been a loyal supporter of the Liberal Party and the values it represented, but after this incident, it became non-partisan in its political leanings. Yet, as VOW entered its fourth year, the Pearson episode served as a catalyst for VOW to expand its political space to include a larger focus on international issues in its concern for global peace (Ball, 1994).

### **VOW Connects with Women across Male-Defined Political Boundaries**

Very early on, VOW recognized the power inherent in forming strong connections with other women. "Organizing in the middle of the Cold War, the group courageously stood up to the anti-Soviet hysteria of the time, insisting that women from the Soviet Union and Canada could get together to talk about peace (Rebick, 2005, 3). Founding member Muriel Duckworth (Duckworth as quoted by Rebick, 2005 3-4) points

out why making these connections was an important strategy within VOW: “Almost as soon as we were founded, we began connecting with women all over the world. One of the chief underlying principles was that the women of the world were not our enemies, and we were not going to behave as if they were. We were going to make contact with them no matter where they lived.” Muriel realized the importance of global solidarity among women and was determined not to allow patriarchy to separate them. Several members of VOW, including Muriel Duckworth and Kay Macpherson, visited the former USSR to meet with Russian women and attend an international peace conference for women in defiance of the cold war. A group of Soviet women were also invited to come to Canada and talk about early childhood education (Rebick, 2005, 4). VOW’s space was threatened after this visit when allegations of communist alliances were aimed at the group, causing some women to withdraw their membership. However, VOW member Franklin (Franklin as quoted by Rebick, 2005, 5), assessed these political actions as having been worthwhile, as they increased women’s public space in the long-term:

Protesting the Pearson government on nuclear arms lost Voice members and we lost members by bringing in the Soviet women. We undertook these actions in the full knowledge that they were difficult and controversial and that we’d lose members. But it was an enormous contribution to the liberation of women to show women on the practical level that you could take these risks and survive.

### **VOW Broadens Its Base to Include a Wide Range of Social Issues**

In Halifax, VOW members defined peace broadly, and as early as 1962, they expressed the need to include social issues in their quest for a peaceful world. The causes of violence were linked on a continuum, from local to global, and all were equally important to address (Duckworth, 1992). VOW created an Education Group for the purpose of studying systemic causes of racism and how to challenge them. Francis Early

(2004, 265) makes reference to “tutoring systems that VOW established so that African-Canadian students could finish high school and go on to university studies.” Muriel Duckworth participated in a phone survey that exposed hiring practices of businesses that excluded African-Canadians from positions they were trained for, an action that resulted in hiring practices in Halifax being changed to become more inclusive. Fran Maclean (Maclean as cited in Early, 2004, 266), a CBC journalist and early VOW member, succinctly described the struggle against racism:

To some, concern with human relations may seem too far reaching past the present hour. Yet, it seems to us, that the very foundation of peace would crumble, for want of a solid base to build upon, if we do not take definite steps to eradicate fundamental injustices in our local communities. Injustice breeds resentment, ill-will, and generally, an uncooperative spirit, undesirable in a geographically one world.

### **The “We Voices” Project: The Collection of Children’s Teeth as Proof of Radiation**

Ursula Franklin, a founding member of VOW and a senior research scientist of the Ontario Research Foundation, started “We Voices”, a program that organized the collection of thousands of children’s baby teeth for testing Strontium 90 content in order to expose the deadly effects of nuclear bomb tests. She was a pioneer in doing research that involved women, in order to show how current issues affected them. Muriel Duckworth also realized and discussed how difficult it was for members of VOW to procure the information necessary to educate the public as to the environmental dangers inherent in nuclear testing. The testing of baby teeth allowed for measurements of trace elements of radiation and was proof that fallout from nuclear testing was a hazard to the public’s health. The organization allied itself with other groups, such as the Canadian Committee of Radiation Hazards, the Toronto Committee for Disarmament, Women’s

International Strike for Peace and Freedom, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women's Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards, and others (NFB, 1992). The increased pressure on governments was successful and on October 10, 1963, the nuclear powers of the world signed a Partial Test Ban Treaty that put an end to above-ground testing of nuclear bombs.

Throughout its history, VOW has continued to join forces with other philosophically similar activist groups. They are presently a member of the Halifax Peace Coalition and the Canadian Peace Alliance. Activism to prevent nuclear war and control the use of nuclear energy is still being carried out. Strong similarities exist between the early research done by VOW and The Halifax Peace Coalition's campaign, to clean up depleted uranium, a by-product of both Iraq Wars and a deadly source of environmental contamination.

### **Connections: VOW Meets With Vietnamese Women**

Connecting with women across enemy lines continued to be a predominant theme during the time that VOW strategized to protest the Vietnam War. The 1992 documentary entitled *The Voice of Women: The First Thirty Years* depicts VOW's efforts to influence the U.S. Government to withdraw its troops from Vietnam. In 1968, two members of VOW, one of whom was Kay Macpherson, the past President of VOW, visited Hanoi to witness the carnage firsthand. They were shocked to learn of the damage to the civilian population, as the media had omitted it from their coverage at home. They realized that if they could impart an awareness of this aspect of war to the domestic population in Canada and the U.S., then they could potentially exert greater pressure on the U.S. Government to stop the War. VOW challenged the official government position--one of

support for the U.S. involvement in Vietnam--by inviting several Vietnamese women to come to Canada and meet with other women to talk of their experiences of the effects of the war. These women could not enter the United States as they were considered to be “the enemy”, so VOW arranged meetings in Canada where American women could come and hear their message of how the war was devastating the Vietnamese people (Kerans, 1996). Voice of Women President Muriel Duckworth hosted the tour (Kerans, 1996). In a fundraising letter prior to the event, Duckworth (as quoted by Kerans, 1996, 125) spoke to the importance of the project to VOW members: “It is, I think the most meaningful effort imaginable for our movement, to give our fellow citizens and our American neighbors a chance to hear the story of this war and of the Vietnamese people from the lips of women who have lived and suffered and survived through it.” In an interview in the “Canadian Women’s Studies Journal”, Duckworth (as quoted by Tastsoglou and Welton, 2003, 117) reiterated her position on the importance of maintaining connections among women and challenging patriarchal attempts to separate groups of women from one another: “This action confirmed our feeling that we had to be related to the women in other parts of the world and that we couldn’t allow the government to make enemies of the women of the world.” Kay Macpherson (1987, 64) echoed a similar sentiment in “Persistent Voices: Twenty-Five Years with Voice of Women”, when she spoke of how meeting with other women around the world “began dissolving the national, social and economic barriers which, in the past, have come between us and prevented communications and cooperation.” Macpherson (1987, 64) went on to suggest that: “Perhaps this dissolution of barriers is what women will be aiming for in the wider political sphere in our quest for a peaceful and just society.” This form of activism

demonstrates how VOW created new public spaces that included the active participation of women defined as “the enemy” in order to link women and their shared concerns of war.

### **Knitting Project: Women’s Work Becomes a Political Statement**

VOW also participated in a knitting project for Vietnamese children, knitting dark clothes so the children would not be seen by American bombers. This activity is significant because it was taken from where it had traditionally been done, within the domestic sphere, into the public sphere. This was done in order to expand the awareness of its poignant political message: that war kills innocent children, a fact that women have long been faced with in the domestic sphere, when dealing with the affects of war. The women in VOW continued to realize their vision of working together with women globally for peace when they combined the clothes they had knitted with those knitted by American women. Ball (1994, 485) describes how “Myrtle Wells, the Manitoba co-ordinator of the project,...packed them and shipped them to Sheila Young of CAVC [the Children’s Committee of the Canadian Aid for Vietnamese Civilians],<sup>14</sup> a member of WILPF which was in touch with people in Vietnam who saw to the distribution of these needed items” (Ball, 1994, 485). “VOW members participated in many different types of fund-raisers for the project” (Ball, 1994, 485-486). The knitting project is important because it demonstrates how women in VOW intentionally created a political action from within the context of their own cultural experiences as women, in order to draw public attention to specific connections between war and the domestic sphere. They hoped that

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<sup>14</sup> “[T]he VOW Knitting Project for Vietnamese Children” ... “originated as a response to an appeal for knitted garments for Vietnamese children which had been made by the Children’s Committee of the Canadian Aid for Vietnamese Civilians (CAVC), an organization based in Vancouver” (Ball, 1994, 482).



this, in turn, would connect people with their own humanity and help to bring an end to the Vietnam War. Frances Early (2002) writes about how the strategies used during the Vietnam War represented historically significant activities:

[T]hese initiatives engendered innovative discursive spaces--that is, new activist styles, new modes of persuasion, and new images--that helped Voices critique the dominant discourse of militarism and war.... VOW women developed a discourse that both enacted and challenged culturally venerated social scripts--particularly those surrounding mothering and the "knowing" woman's body--to good effect in their campaign against the continuation of the Vietnam War, in particular, and the hegemony of warism and the war system, as such.

VOW succeeded in keeping anti-war sentiment alive in the Canadian public's eye. According to Toronto Voice Dorothy Smieciuch: "Voice of Women served as a bridge in keeping the issues relating to Vietnam in the public consciousness until the anti-Vietnam war movement coalesced and grew in other segments of Canadian society later in the decade" (Ball, 1994, 486). Darl Wood (2002, 58), a long time VOW member, quotes Williamson and Gorham, as they discuss how making connections expanded VOW's political space, in her thesis entitled *The Politics of Lesbian Invisibility: A Nova Scotia Study*:

Working for peace during war is a radical and courageous commitment; a fundamental strategy of VOW has become the practice of women's contact with other women on all sides of a conflict. To forge ties with women across male-made political boundaries has helped to "lay the basis for the flood of women into the peace movement [of the 1980s].... [T]heir efforts provide an example of today's feminist pacifists attempting to avoid the Final War.

### **VOW Opens up Space for Second Wave Feminism in Canada**

VOW played a significant role in opening up political space for the second wave of feminism to develop. Despite the fact that VOW did not label itself explicitly as feminist, the group ran on implicitly feminist principles, and therefore could be said to

have been the first group of the second wave feminist movement. Ursula Franklin, who Rebick (2005, 3) describes as “a pioneer feminist and scientist”, points out that The Voice of Women was “the seedbed for the second wave of feminism.” In its early years, The Voice of Women was described as a hybrid organization, firmly placed on the continuum of earlier Canadian women’s movements for feminism, pacifism, and social justice; [it has] conceptual, structural, and process-oriented features characteristic of the modern women’s movement (Ball, 1994, 4). “[By] virtue of grouping women together to change or eliminate male-dominant structures associated with militarism and war-making that they deemed to be oppressive to all women, Voices prefigured at the same time as they set into motion the development of theories and practices consistent with second-wave feminism(s)” (Early, 2002, 254-255). By placing women at the center of analysis and action, it gave a leading “Voice” to the emergent contemporary women’s movement through its articulation of members’ concerns, values, and concepts from a woman-centered perspective (Ball, 1994).

### **Halifax VOW Begins to Hold Vigils as Powerful Spaces for Peaceful Protest**

Holding silent vigils for peace has become a powerful statement of peace activism for VOW over the years. At these vigils the women stand in solidarity, silently holding placards denouncing war and supporting peaceful solutions to global conflicts, demonstrating the pacifism that runs throughout VOW and forms the cornerstone of its beliefs around peace work. The first VOW vigil, in downtown Halifax was held in 1961 on Remembrance Day on Citadel Hill, in Halifax. Muriel Duckworth remembered the courage and commitment it took for those early members of the Nova Scotia Voice to challenge authority by initiating their first silent vigil. According to Duckworth, (as

quoted by Kerans, 1996, 89): the women were “quaking in their boots; they timidly walked back and forth in front of the memorial during an hour of silent meditation, carrying a poster that said ‘Vigil for Peace.’ ” The press reported the vigil as one of the year’s most important events. The symbolic meaning in this action was momentous: the women had succeeded in breaking public perception of women’s proper place in society and in creating a women’s space of peace in the public sphere.

Vigils are an example of women taking up space in a different way, with women setting the agenda. These events may take different formats, such as having a song or a short speech included, but women always make the decisions about what elements to include. The first time I attended a vigil, I was amazed at how claiming a small physical space in front of the Public Library became an act of resistance, as a group of women stood together silently holding placards for peace. It is empowering to realize that there are spaces in the world where women embody a powerful sense of peace that can transcend violence.<sup>15</sup> Passers-by were not threatened by this peaceful, non-violent form of protest. Both women and men often smiled and gratefully took a pamphlet or offered to sign a petition at a table set up close to the vigil by VOW members. Some onlookers did express their reluctance to support the white poppy campaign, identifying concerns that this campaign competed with the red poppies, thereby robbing veterans of their only symbol of Remembrance. National VOW and Veterans groups are working to reconcile these differences while VOW members also point out the historic roots of the white

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<sup>15</sup> A good example of this type of women’s space is documented in the film: “Pray the Devil Back to Hell”, which is about the women in Liberia becoming a strong, peaceful presence in ending a long conflict and then participating in government.

poppy. VOW is putting the white poppy forward both as a symbol for remembering civilians killed in warfare and as hope for a peaceful future. Some women wear both poppies side by side. I have attended many vigils and have always experienced the same incredible energy that comes from women bonding together to work for peace.

### **VOW's Physical Space Contracts while its Message Remains Strong**

After the Vietnam War, VOW's membership declined as some women felt that their work was over. As Macpherson (1987, 85) explains: "There were now many single issue groups--Status of Women, human rights, environmental--which attracted many women." Remaining members of VOW continued to work not only on peace, but related feminist issues, as Kaye Macpherson had done earlier when she helped to form the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. They spoke out for justice and peace, and in 1985 they helped to form the Canadian Peace Alliance.

### **VOW Gains NGO Status at the UN**

In 1977, VOW gained Non-Governmental Organization observer status at the United Nations, which served as validation of its commitment to work for international peace. By 1978, support for the peace movement was renewed with the U.N. Special Session on Disarmament--and Trudeau's "suffocate the arms race" speech made it apparent that little progress had been made in the disarmament talks. As global concern grew, Nova Scotia VOW, as part of an international campaign, gathered 115,000 signatures from across the country on a Women's Peace Petition. The Petition was presented to politicians on Parliament Hill and then taken to the United Nations and presented to the Secretary-General and to the Canadian Ambassador at the United Nations Second Special Session on Disarmament (UNSSOD 11) on June 11, 1982. On

July 12, VOW joined one million people who participated in a huge peace march through New York City. MacPherson, who was detained at the U.S. border for questioning, went on to speak at the rally on behalf of Canadian citizens. She describes the event as a multidimensional experience, the formal political action being only a portion of it: “[T]here were press interviews, the Global Feminist Conference, the International Candlelight Worship, tour of the UN, and the Hiroshima display for artefacts beside the children’s Tree of Life Drawings, the presentation of the Women’s Peace Petition to Mr. Pelletier, Canada’s UN Ambassador, and the intense question period afterward, the Ploughshares coffee house, the presence of the Japanese giving out tiny colourful origami cranes, symbol of the Hiroshima/Nagasaki survivors” (Macpherson, 1987, 65).

Macpherson (1987, 65) described this multifaceted space of peace as transformative: “It’s been the most memorable event of my life I’ll never be the same!” This reflects her holistic perception of and approach to life, an element that is often cited as a strong feature of women’s spaces.

### **VOW and the Creation of Feminist Theory**

During the 1980s VOW began to adopt a strong feminist focus. Darl Wood (2002, 61) describes her experiences in VOW: “Actions during the 1980s were wide-ranging from the sixties style ‘sit-in’ to education, lobbying governments and presenting briefs. It was during this period that women gathered together creating feminist theory, trying to make sense of what was happening in the world.” In fact, feminist theory and praxis was being created by the women in VOW in a series of actions which took place over a long period of time as shown above such as the “We Voices” project from the 1960s.

Another well-known action from 1984 was made into a documentary by Liz

MacDougall and entitled: “Debert Bunker: By Invitation Only.” In 1984 VOW joined with five peace groups to participate in a day of action as vividly documented in the video: “Debert Bunker: By Invitation Only” by Liz MacDougall (1984). The women were protesting a “dry run” for nuclear war, where 329 people, only 11 of whom were women, would go underground for protection in a specially built bunker. By interspersing the actions of the day with clips by feminist theorists/activists such as Donna Smyth, the film shows the many layers of actions that occurred at once, and how the synthesis between activism and theory is realized. This supports the formation of feminist praxis or the ongoing development of lived feminist theory.

### **VOW Holds and Attends Peace Conferences**

In the 1980s, VOW continued to hold and attend peace conferences around the world. In 1985, VOW sponsored and organized a Women’s International Peace Conference in Halifax entitled *The Urgency for True Security: Women’s Alternatives for Negotiating Peace*. The famous Peace Statement evolving out of this conference was presented to the Peace Tent at the Third United Nations Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985. The statement, as recorded by Kay Macpherson (1987, 71), speaks to how all issues are interconnected under the umbrella of peace: “We reject a world based on domination, exploitation, patriarchy, racism and sexism. We demand a new order based on justice and the equitable distribution of the world’s resources .... Militarism is an addiction that distorts human development causing world-wide poverty, starvation, pollution, repression, torture, and death.”

### **The Raging Grannies’ Use of Satire and Street Theatre**

The Raging Grannies came into being in Victoria, British Columbia in the early

1990s. To the present day they use thinly veiled satire to disguise poignantly political protest songs. Dressing in old-fashioned clothes, they sing familiar songs rewritten to carry strong political messages that focus on peace and also social justice issues. They are an excellent example of taking up women's political space; they share lyrics within chapters and among groups, write songs that are relevant to local communities and challenge global issues such as climate change and nuclear war. In these ways they critique the present neo-liberal agenda, making the links between peace, the environment, and the economic system by using satire, ridicule, and humour to connect with local audiences and help to popularize their messages. Stereotypes associated with ageism are reversed by the Grannies, who show the wisdom of age, and use it to their advantage as a way of bringing a women's peace message to women-only and mixed-gender gatherings held by social justice groups where they are often invited to perform. Muriel Duckworth started the Nova Scotia Raging Grannies in 1995 as part of the public "P7" meeting in response to the G7 Meeting. The particular parameters of this political space have been borrowed by many protest groups around the world.

### **Public Education**

During both Gulf Wars, VOW continued to hold vigils and letter writing campaigns and to participate with other groups in the organization of protest marches. Not only did it focus on the specific conflict, but its members also worked to raise public consciousness of the critical link between militarism and environmental destruction and how crucial it is to bring an end to war while there is still time to save the planet. As VOW member Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg (2003, 25) writes in *Health, Peace and the Environment: Integrating Relationships in Women's Health Movement*:

In this century, it is most urgent that we focus on the interrelationships of militarism, sexism, health and the environment. We must do so, not only because of the social justice, peace, violence, feminist economic, refugees' etc. concerns that we in the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) have focused on, but now also because of cancer epidemics, other environmentally linked illnesses and the state of the planet. Never have these gendered links to militarism been made more visible in the media than in the four U.S. led missile bombing wars in the last decade--Iraq in 1992, Yugoslavia in 1999, Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq again in 2003. War is the ultimate and most deadly form of pollution. It claims as its victims men, women, children, soldiers and civilians alike, animals and plant life, the fruits of civilization and our precious natural systems and resources.

VOW forms coalitions with other activist groups and supports a multifaceted approach in working for peace. This approach broadens women's empowerment in the public sphere.

Christiansen-Ruffman (1983, 7), describes this process in the following quote:

“Women in both the women's movement and reform movement may begin to support one another and to work together for the long term goal of legitimizing a broadly based politics and expanding women's effective political space. This conjunction of women's concerns and broader political issues is evident in organizations such as The Voice of Women whose aim is promoting international peace.”

The Voice of Women has worked diligently for peace for almost half a century. The political space taken up by VOW has been dynamic and shifting over time. The ebb and flow of its membership reflects the cyclical nature of women's lives and the current political realities of the time. Consistently throughout VOW's lifespan, a core group of women have remained and sustained the work for a culture of peace. The presence or absence of war also affects participation. VOW's membership rose historically when there was the threat of war, but the focus has usually had less of a feminist orientation in these times. When a country is at war, historically there has been more energy focused on either supporting or ending the military endeavour, and less on the creation of a



culture of peace. When Canada was at war with Afghanistan, VOW hosted a series of public talks to call public awareness to the issues. The topics were chosen to endeavour to shift the discussion in the direction of peace with a feminist analysis of war. The first talk, given by Nancy Taber included a feminist analysis of women's experience in the Canadian military. Muriel Duckworth was often quoted as saying: "There is no way to peace; peace is the way", and perhaps the lesson to be learned from VOW's historical experience of women's time and space is to encourage people to focus their energies less on warfare, and more on working to create the spaces of peace that many so desire to live in within the world.

In *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution*, some of the transformative feminist perspective of VOW is noted. Judy Rebick quotes VOW founding member, Ursula Franklin (as quoted by Rebick 2005, 17) as she describes feminism as "an alternative way of ordering the social space, in which women are the prototype rather than men." Franklin (as quoted by Rebick, 2005, 17) continues, explaining how: "It is based on collaboration rather than competition. As a youngster, I still remember my feeling of joy that one could look at the earth differently. That's feminism: everything is differently oriented. Seeing the same world through different eyes." This difference that Franklin (2006) describes, using her feminism and "pacifism as a map", forms the basis of what VOW continues to strive for in its vision for a culture of peace.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Women Leaders**

In this chapter I explore themes evolving from interviews with women in the peace movement regarding their contributions to the conceptualizations of as well as shifts in women's space. A thematic analysis revealed many key similarities in the narratives of the women who participated in this study, despite a wide diversity in their backgrounds and life experiences. Understanding these common themes is crucial, as it reveals how they perceive women's space, and women's spaces of peace. This chapter will examine these similarities. They include conceptions of pacifism, hierarchy, economics, religion, environment, and alternative visions for peace. Many sub-themes also emerged, and I will touch on those briefly throughout the discussion.

#### **Situating the Interviews Contextually**

In order to situate this work within the context of the life experiences of the women I interviewed, I will initially present a short background of each participant's history both within and before their involvement in the peace movement. While women I interviewed were from diverse age groups, cultural backgrounds, and sexual orientations, the findings were strikingly similar. This may be because these participants shared group membership in similar peace groups and thus common values. Moreover, as a feminist researcher within the peace movement, I was drawn to seek out participants with an intention of interviewing women whom I saw as strong feminist leaders or role models within the peace movement and from whom I hoped to learn in this exploratory study.

Ruth Bishop, the youngest of the participants I interviewed, is in her mid-30s.

Born to an English mother and Zimbabwean father in Hamilton, Ontario, she then spent some of her formative years in England. In her early 20s, she joined the International Socialists of Ontario, but she found this to be a very unsatisfactory experience. After moving to Nova Scotia, she discovered The Voice of Women at the 2003 Peace March that was held to protest the Invasion of Iraq. Impressed at finding a women's peace group, she joined immediately, because as she says: "it felt intuitively right." Ruth shared that her participation in VOW can be characterized by "an ongoing search for a women's perspective." She added that women like Muriel Duckworth and Betty Peterson provided role models of the strong, unconventional women that she had been looking for throughout her life. When asked to discuss VOW as a peace group and her connection to it, Ruth quoted Muriel Duckworth: "we are not just anti-war but pro-peace." She stated that like Muriel, she believes that it is a challenge for peace groups to maintain a positive or constructive focus on peacemaking, rather than simply opposing war and militarism. She believes that VOW is unique because it is more aware of how individuals are affected by war and the whole military industrial complex. VOW is also unique in the ways in which it attempts to give voice to those affected by war. For a number of years, Ruth formed an integral part of the group's Steering Committee and in 2008 was offered a stipend in order to help coordinate the Halifax VOW.

Krishna Ahojapatel was elected as the International President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 2001 and became the first president to come from the Economic South. She was raised in India under colonialism and experienced Gandhi's peaceful leadership when he galvanized Indian political will into

reclaiming its freedom from British colonial rule. Her primary professional career was at the United Nations where her work frequently focused on women. She spent much of her time there fighting for women's rights within the institutional setting of the UN. For many years, Krishna shared her time between Geneva and Halifax, where she was a Visiting Professor in the International Development Department of Saint Mary's University. Krishna wrote a short, albeit comprehensive, book on women's rights for the United Nations in 1999 entitled *Gender Equity in the Third Millennium*, and more recently a book on the connections between development and women's economic and political empowerment entitled *Development has a Woman's Face: Insights from within the UN*. She served as the Deputy Director of the United Nations International Research and Training for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) for five years. She has worked within the United Nations system for over 25 years. She was a staff member of the UN's International Labour Organization (ILO) from 1968 to 1986, where her research focused on problems of development, employment, and migration. During the UN Decade for Women (1975--1986), she was the editor of the ILO journal, *Women at Work*. Krishna has attended all of the UN sponsored World Conferences of Women and has participated in several of them. She brings a crucial perspective to this thesis, challenging any unconscious ethnocentric biases that we as western feminists may bring to our work within the peace movement.

Carolyn Van Gorp comes from a background in foreign policy, specifically in volunteer work in the area of Latin American Solidarity. She is also interested in Canada's role in Central America, including their relationship with the U.S. in terms of

Latin American policy and intervention. Born in Halifax, she is the only native Haligonian that I interviewed for this thesis. Carolyn came to the peace movement in Halifax by becoming a leader in the Halifax Peace Coalition prior to the start of the second Iraq War. Since then she has helped to organize many peace marches and information sessions protesting the U.S. presence in Iraq and subsequently, Canada's presence in Afghanistan. She also became an active member of VOW. Carolyn's sister, Hetty, started "Peaceful Schools International" in response to a bullying incident in which her son was killed. As Carolyn's original vocation was that of a teacher, she traveled for several winters to Sierra Leone to represent Peaceful Schools International and to teach pedagogy and peace education to teachers. Among her latest endeavours is a twinning project that she is helping to organize between Queen's University and schools in Sierra Leone involving building a relationship of mutual support. Carolyn's activities in Sierra Leone can be followed on a blog that she maintains at [cvangurp2.blogspot.com](http://cvangurp2.blogspot.com).

Betty Peterson is a long-time member of VOW and WILPF, and in recent years, the Halifax Peace Coalition. In total, Betty is a signed up member of fifty organizations involved with social justice, and is an active participant in three and sometimes four. She was born in the United States and came to Canada after World War II when she and her husband entered the country as conscientious objectors. Betty fell in love with Cape Breton where they initially settled and says she used to "know everyone in the town and surrounding area." She still retains their original home, or "the farm" as she fondly refers to it, and returns to it each summer for at least three months. Shortly after losing her husband, Betty moved to Halifax to share a house with Muriel Duckworth and Elizabeth

May. In her own words, she “became instantly immersed in the peace movement.” Betty has done a great deal of activist work in the area of native rights in Canada, and she has earned a place as a respected member of their community. In 2008, when Betty turned ninety, a party was held for her by her friends and supporters, filling the North Street Church, and celebrating her continued presence as a pillar of the Halifax peace movement.

Muriel Duckworth is the co-founder, with Peggy Hope Simpson, of the Nova Scotia Voice of Women for Peace and provided its leadership for over fifty years. Born in the eastern townships of Quebec, she became an icon of the women’s peace movement. On November 5, 2008, a birthday party was held for her at the Rebecca Cohn Theatre in Halifax at which over 1,000 of her friends and admirers, largely peace activists, attended. She was the National President of The Voice of Women and has attended peace conferences around the world, including two in Russia. Founder of the Halifax Raging Grannies, she has proudly joined in singing songs of protest at many peace rallies. Muriel has received ten honorary doctorates from Canadian universities. She ran for the federal NDP twice in Halifax, and while she did not win the seat, she helped to open up the political forum to women and served on the first NDP national Women’s Committee. She was a founding member and President of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) nationally, and she founded the only autonomous CRIAOW chapter which was in Nova Scotia. Much of Muriel’s life’s work was well summarized by Linda Christiansen-Ruffman when she was presented with her honorary doctorate degree at Saint Mary’s University: “Muriel is a distinguished and innovative

feminist and pacifist who continues to work actively as a woman for a peaceful world.”

Alleson Kase spent her early life in Chicago and California, coming to Canada to work in a feminist bookstore in her 20s. She moved from B.C. to Halifax in 1998, met Muriel Duckworth at a Quaker Meeting and due to Muriel’s encouragement, very quickly became involved with The Voice of Women. Alleson took a degree in International Development at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax and tried to encourage other young women in her classes to join The Voice of Women. She also saw the lack of internet connection as comprising a serious disadvantage to VOW, so she set about getting it “wired” and connected to the larger network of global peace activists such as Women in Black. During the next five years, Alleson worked extensively within the peace movement in Nova Scotia. She became a leader in the Halifax Peace Coalition prior to and during the invasion of Iraq by the United States. Alleson and her partner Ellen now work with women at the grassroots level in Thailand. They spend their time and energy traveling to Thailand and buying fabrics from the women there and bringing them back to Canada to sell. Alleson finds this work very rewarding, as she can witness the economic empowerment experienced by the women with whom she works.

### **Emergent Themes from the Interviews**

#### **Pacifism**

All of the women I interviewed spoke passionately about pacifism as the key method for attaining peace. Muriel Duckworth explains how she sees pacifism and feminism as integrally linked in the following statement: “I really feel that all feminists should be pacifists and all women pacifists should be feminists.” She goes on to say that:

“You can’t use violent means to achieve non-violent ends and I think this is where I always quote [Gandhi]: ‘There is no way to peace; peace is the way.’ ” Muriel believes that peace is a spiritual journey, one that we are not meant to know the answer to. This illustrates a non-linear feminine concept of the process of obtaining peace as synonymous with the goal of attaining peace. A confirmed pacifist and Quaker, Betty Peterson is adamant that pacifism in the form of non-violent direct action is the best tool for public engagement with political causes and an essential strategy for the peace movement. She turned this theory into action by holding a vigil once a week in Halifax throughout the duration of the first Iraq war, regardless of inclement weather. She describes non-violent direct action in the following way: “The term was initiated in England and it implies passive resistance and also moving beyond that to civil disobedience and actively getting involved in changing society.” She vividly describes her commitment to non-violence: “You must do everything you can to avoid it. You will turn the other cheek. You will do everything you can do but you will not talk back even if that only means being there with open arms and I can do no other ....” Ruth Bishop echoed Muriel and Betty’s sentiments stating: “I think in the end the peace movement is really about freeing oneself and one’s society from violence which can start for many of us at the personal level .... I think women have an advantage over men because we have more ability to deal with our feelings whereas men are encouraged to repress their feelings.” She also cited the methods used by Gandhi as those of one of her early pacifist role models. Krishna Ahoojapatel discussed the peaceful means that she had witnessed Gandhi using to get the British to leave India when she was growing up under colonialism. She supported the



methods that he used to bring about the end of British rule in India, yet she did add that this process took a long time to accomplish its goal and that many lives were lost throughout it. Alleson Kase and Carolyn Van Gorp also stressed the importance of non-violent strategies within the peace movement. Pacifism as a primary method by which to attain peace was discussed by all of the six participants interviewed and can therefore be seen as a core value held by all of them. It influences the strategies they engage in and thus the political space they affect.

### **Hierarchy**

The topic of “hierarchy” was also a consistent theme among the women I interviewed, often initiated by the participants themselves and arising independently from the formal interview questions. Three women broached the topic: Muriel, Betty, and Ruth, and the idea of hierarchy also ran implicitly throughout the remaining three interviews. Muriel, Betty, and Ruth talked about hierarchy as an inherent quality embedded within the structure of our patriarchal society and specifically as it manifested itself in the mixed-gender peace groups of which they had initially been members. It constituted a major reason for Muriel and Ruth to join a women-only peace group, namely The Voice of Women. Ruth illustrated this when she described the mixed-gender activist group, The International Socialists, that she left before she joined VOW. “The group was run in a top-down academic style, operating on rational theory minus the feelings or knowledge on how to connect to society. Their attitude was that they needed to educate society, and I did not feel heard in that group.” stated Ruth. Betty Peterson also discussed hierarchy when discussing mixed-gender peace groups although did not

emphasize it as her primary reason for joining VOW. Krishna was extremely critical of the hierarchical power assumed by the U.S. government within the international realm when it invaded Iraq and engaged in an illegal war. In contrast, she spoke positively of the work WILPF is doing towards a democratization of the United Nations. She also warned western feminists to be cautious about creating a hierarchy of knowledge or expertise wherein they erroneously assume to know more than women in developing nations. Angela Miles (1996) has referred to this phenomenon in her writing as the mysticism of northern women, where we are not necessarily freer or more emancipated just because we have more access to resources. Carolyn, while also a member of VOW, is the only participant interviewed who works primarily in a mixed-gender peace group, The Halifax Peace Coalition (HPC). Carolyn, while referring to the present global political system as hierarchical, offered hopeful insights into an increasing equality between some men and women working together in the social justice movement: “The dynamics of men and women working together now is quite different than in the past when I was first involved and I think that is because there has been a change in our culture. I see more mutuality in terms of cultures between men and women ... in the past twenty years.” Alleson Kase pointed out that some women’s groups that she had been involved with had also contained elements of hierarchy in the way they operated.

Alleson’s comments bring to light the reality that while it may be impossible to live within a patriarchal state without absorbing some of its qualities, it is vital for us as women working for peace to try to remain aware of the misogyny and inequality inherent in its methods of operating so that we do not unconsciously reproduce it in our

relationships with one another, as this undermines our collective strength and our ability to co-create a culture of peace. It also underlines the importance of developing and maintaining a clearly-articulated feminist analysis within women's peace groups.

### **Economics**

Economics was a major theme that emerged in different forms in each of the six interviews in different forms. All of the women spoke of the connection of economics to war and militarism and the direct link between economics and the oppression of women. Muriel described the cyclical relationship between globalization, the arms trade, and war. Her ideas are summarized in the following quote: "I feel that war is related to globalization, and globalization is related to war because of the kinds of trade that are built up in arms and the conditions that are forced upon people, and because of globalization; and they're all related, ... the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer and this information is only available through the internet, not the mainstream." Krishna added that: "The world needs a new economic system, one that includes women." Betty's ideas supported this statement when she spoke of economic equality as being essential in order for women to feel empowered. Both she and Krishna spoke of the commodification of women's bodies as a gender specific form of economic oppression. In its different forms, such as rape and prostitution when specifically related to war, this is one of the primary reasons women suffer more from war than men in war.

Ruth described how economics are at the root of most armed conflicts: "I think war is justified by being based on conflict and fear. People are encouraged to be afraid and that armed conflict is necessary, that people need to protect their culture and values.

In reality, warfare in our world is to protect economic systems.” Alleson pointed out how neo-patriarchal forces co-opt women’s issues and use them for their own benefit: “We should have been helping the women in Afghanistan. Instead, our government uses their plight as an excuse to bomb their country.” Alleson and Carolyn agreed that the economic system is closely aligned with the pattern of cyclical warfare, and since the first interview, both women have shifted their spaces of activity from working within the peace movement to different forms of grassroots activism. Alleson now works with women in Thailand forging economic ties that empower both parties. Carolyn spends winters in Sierra Leone which as she says: “is the poorest country in the world.” She teaches pedagogy and peace education to the teachers and is working with the women’s committee. “Before the war the women had started incentives that were destroyed during the war so they are in the process of rebuilding that.” added Carolyn, revealing another example of how war affects women. When asked what we could do here to be most helpful, she answered: “Become aware of how the way we live here affects them in their country.” All of the women interviewed view the economic empowerment of women as a vital cornerstone in the creation of a culture of peace.

### **Environment**

A discussion surrounding the strong connection between peace and the environment was initiated by four participants. Their concerns regarding war and its ensuing environmental destruction were expressed with a sense of urgency. Muriel described war as “the biggest destroyer of the environment.” She noted the length of time that it has taken for that relationship to be adequately recognized and subsequently

for the work of the environmental movement to be fully appreciated and supported by the peace movement. Muriel pointed out that even an environmentalist of such high esteem as David Suzuki had recently overlooked mentioning the effects of war on the environment in a recent phone-in show until a caller brought it to his attention--for which he expressed his gratitude. This incident exemplifies how successfully patriarchy has invisibilized the environmentally destructive effects of war primarily because war forms a pillar of the global economic system. Therefore, it is rarely mentioned in mainstream discussions about climate change and environmental destruction. Yet, general discussions about climate change are now much more prevalent in the mainstream media, instead of shifting the responsibility to the individual as was previously done. The effect most individual people have on climate change is minuscule when compared to that of war and industry, including the high number of industries used in the production of weapons. Also, women worldwide bear the brunt of the effects of war on the environment, especially in the developing nations where it is felt most dramatically, and they are often the ones responsible for feeding the family. Muriel went on to state that: "If we don't learn to work together, we will destroy the planet."

Betty also senses the urgency with which the peace movement needs to address environmental issues. She shares the wisdom typical of older women by reflecting on the cyclical nature of events within society, saying: "Regardless of the dangerous nature of the present state of the planet, we will come out of it, as long as we can only learn to manage the environment. Not solve, but if we can somehow keep it under control and know where we are going with it and to get the feeling that we are going to survive,

because that will give us hope. And if we don't, as Muriel Duckworth stated earlier: "We are not going to survive."

Ruth Bishop talked of how she had been influenced by the ideas of the well-known ecofeminist writer Carolyn Merchant. Ruth supports Merchant's often noted view that the subjectification of women is inherently connected to the subjectification of nature. She went on to add: "Regardless of any other justification for conflict, I don't think that we as a species would engage in violent war if we respected our planet. I don't believe it is possible to respect the planet without respecting the human beings who live in it." She also added a spiritual dimension to her argument: "I am a Quaker and I decided to join the Quakers, in part, because they have a long-standing history of pacifism, which comes in part from the idea that the spirit of Christ is in everyone but I would extend that to say the spirit is in the planet and in all of life."

This belief that the spirit is connected to and present in all things is akin to the animism that is in Native North American spirituality. Betty Peterson has worked closely with Native Peoples and remains deeply connected to their culture. Ruth Bishop added: "If you really love the world around you like Muriel [Duckworth] did, then you will respond to the interconnectedness of life."

### **Spirituality**

The theme of spirituality was further discussed when five of the participants brought up the theme of religion and its relationship to peace and their own spirituality. Four of the women that I interviewed identified themselves as Quakers: Muriel, Betty, Ruth, and Alleson, while Krishna and Carolyn did not identify themselves as belonging

to any specific religion. While Christian religions support the respect for equality of all in their belief systems, this belief has often become convoluted when these religions were institutionalized into patriarchal political systems. The Quakers have historically attempted to include a non-hierarchical structure in their system of worship, known as “Meetings” held by the “Society of Friends.” Both Ruth and Krishna saw traditional, male-defined forms of religions as tools of patriarchal oppression. Ruth stated that: “I think it is important for people to have a spiritual connection with themselves--to the world--and to have a clear theology. Yet theology can try to articulate it and I think any attempt to do this will lead you to an abstract academic discussion in which people will debate to kingdom come. I see this as a more male type of phenomenon. My own experience studying theology was that I found that it was mostly men who engaged in the academic discipline of theology. I found that I didn’t have much use for it. I am far more interested in how people come into the world and how they are affected by the world.” This illustrates a more embodied, more feminine, and diversified spirituality, one that as Ruth says, is not “based on fear.” Ruth goes on to say that “Fear is one of the major ways war is justified.” Krishna, who was born and lived her early life in India, offered an interesting perspective to the discussion on religion. She stated: “it is my own opinion that women in the North are extremely religious and oppressed by religion. Many are Catholic, and that has had tremendous impact on women. For example, problems are created by the number of children women have. Religion comes in the way of women more so in the North than in the South. What is banned in Christianity is not necessarily

banned in other religions.” Krishna also reminded us that: “While the impression is often given, especially in the West, that the world is primarily Christian, this is not true.” This perception may have gained acceptance because much of the formal political power in the world has, at least up to this point, been held by countries that were primarily Christian, whereas the greatest number of people actually belong to religions other than Christianity. This perception of the dominance of Christianity is further supported by recognition of the Vatican as a “country” by the UN. Allesen referred to: “... the Quaker custom of sitting still and listening for continuing revelation of what one is called to do and feels called to at a particular intersection in time and space”, when discussing her life journey and the decision she made to work in the peace movement. Quakers are members of the Christian faith, and yet the majority of them worship in a style that is much less hierarchical than many other Christian denominations. While Carolyn did not discuss religion overtly, the thread of spirituality runs throughout the third interview that I did with her. In this context this means that she exemplifies and lives by the same values, such as truth, kindness and a commitment to social justice as those women that I interviewed who are connected to formally recognized religions. She talks of the importance of community in Sierra Leone, the consensus approach to resolving conflicts (akin to the Quaker and Native traditions), and seeing the fundamental worth in every individual regardless of what they have done.

### **Alternative Visions**

The final theme that I will discuss that was similar in all of the interviews is the



importance of working towards an alternative vision for peace and developing strategies to aid in both defining and attaining that vision. In terms of alternative visions, there were some distinctive expressions of priorities that might find consensus. For example, Muriel recommended pressuring our government to disband NATO and put more pressure on the UN to recognize and act on statements regarding women's rights. For Alleson, the priority was connecting VOW to the internet. The internet was talked of as an increasingly important space used by women for networking and the circulation of alternative ideas. While it has often been a male-defined and controlled space, it can also be used to open up women's spaces of peace. These recommendations were mentioned often by Muriel and Alleson in VOW meetings, where they were agreed to by everyone present, and thus could be said to accurately represent VOW policy. Five participants specifically emphasized the need for peace education, especially involving young people. Carolyn stressed the need for peace education in the schools and said that: "we need lots more peace activists becoming teachers." Betty felt that it is also important to educate women who can in turn pass on the information to their children. All of the women stressed the need for strong connections to be established between women and among peace groups. Krishna spoke of the importance of different groups with different genders working on specific issues at different times. She saw the importance of working independently at times and also coming together to cooperate when that was the most prudent way to achieve certain goals. She did not view it as necessary for women to create specifically women-only spaces within which to do peacework. Betty echoes these

thoughts as she reminds us that “while we often concentrate on one thing at a time, we have to realize, in spirit, that everything is connected: globalization, the economy, equality, women’s rights, justice, and so on, and we can’t be distracted from what we do.” “But”, she continues, “when something big comes along in any one of these areas, we have to realize that we are all working together.” This insight describes the connections felt in a feminist and Native spirituality where all of life is connected. Ruth demonstrated similar insight in her statements: “The spirit of Christ, or the light,” as Muriel says, “is in all living beings, therefore all beings deserve to be treated with respect and non-violence. If you really love the world around you like Muriel did, then you will respond to the interconnectedness of life.”

This perspective is similar to the DAWN analysis, which was introduced earlier in chapter 1. It is a holistic feminist analysis that illuminates the global web of connections and one with which I use to frame this thesis. In many ways, the transformative vision presented by DAWN is at the root of all feminist peacework. It sees patriarchy as continually reinforcing itself, and it points out that women working successfully in any one area for peace can begin to dismantle patriarchy to initiate the creation of a culture of peace. This process has the capacity to initiate the domino effect, as it can inspire the creation of other connected acts of peace. All of the women that I interviewed described the qualities of an alternative women’s space that I will discuss in greater detail in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 6:**

### **Women's Spaces of Peace in the Public Presence**

In the past three chapters I have focused on two organizations working for peace, WILPF and VOW, and feminist pacifist leaders working within these organizations. In these chapters I have drawn on their experiences of women's spaces. In this chapter I will explore the term women's space as a tool that allows us to illuminate how and why it needs to be created at both the micro and macro level. I will also examine how creating women's spaces is one way of creating peace. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to link ideas that emerged from the historical chapters on WILPF and VOW, and those of the participants, with the wider literature on women and peace.

A common goal shared by all of the women interviewed in this thesis was their unwavering commitment to continuing to work towards the creation of an alternative paradigm. Another common, yet often unspoken theme among the women was that barriers exist within the patriarchal culture that we live in that prevent women from taking up space. The corresponding lack of the presence of women's values that encourage the development of peace, equality, and cooperation in the public space has hindered the development of a culture of peace. Throughout the interviews, one of the most important notions of women's space that emerged was that women's space almost always represents the persistent presence of peace. Since most public spaces within patriarchy are not conducive to peace, more spaces for women are needed in order to

create greater spaces for peace. Yet, as peace is not exclusively a women's issue, in chapter 7, I will explore the topic of gender-inclusiveness within spaces of peace such as vigils and peace groups. This chapter will focus on how WILPF, VOW, and women leaders from within these groups build women's spaces and how these spaces interact with the larger society.

### **Examining Women's Space at the Local and Global Levels**

The UN is an example of a place where women take up space in the larger public sphere. This has been extensively researched, especially in regards to Resolution 1325, as was discussed in chapter 3 about WILPF. It is important for women to work from within as well as outside of specific patriarchal institutions in order to instigate change. Yet in this context women are confined to operating within the framework of a patriarchal institution. Because of patriarchal dominance within many of the mainstream political institutions, women's defining of the political space often originates at the local level.

Therefore, this chapter begins by primarily focusing on spaces that are created at the local level and then moves on to discuss how these spaces connect to the larger international sphere. The local spaces facilitate women's empowerment at the grassroots level and constitute the vital base for women's global peace activism. They form an integral part of a multicentered global women's movement, an idea that was articulated by Angela Miles (1996) and will be discussed later in this chapter and throughout this thesis.

#### **Vigils**

There were many important ways in which VOW and WILPF created spaces for

peace. For example, they organized vigils for peace, established a presence for women in the middle of larger demonstrations for peace, and brought women's voices into coalitions such as the Halifax Peace Coalition. I will first discuss the qualities of women's spaces of peace as they are clearly illuminated in women's peace vigils.

After extensive research engaging the historical literature about WILPF and VOW, reviewing literature that focused on feminist peace activism, analyzing the data from the interviews, and thinking through the many ways in which women take up spaces of peace, I became aware of the profound theoretical importance of peace vigils, both at the symbolic and physical levels. Using grounded theory methodology, I explored the theoretical dimension of vigils as representative of women's space, and this idea became central to the thesis. Vigils allowed me to illustrate the conceptual connections between women's spaces and peace. Vigils represent the clear, unrelenting, continual, and uncompromising presence of women taking up spaces for peace. The form they take shifts according to the specific political issues they are responding to, but their core values, involving the support of non-violent methods of conflict resolution, remain constant. In this way vigils constitute feminist spaces that are orientated to change. The concept around which they are organized may come from elsewhere but it is articulated locally. This gives local groups the power to define their own reality. Vigils embody a concentrated set of features that represent the essence of women's spaces of peace, as described below.

Holding vigils for peace is one of the most powerful ways in which women take their space in the public presence. They are autonomous women's spaces that

simultaneously retain a strong connection to the public space. Vigils serve an important function in the peace process; they bring the issues that need addressing into the public focus. Public education is often a major focus of the vigils held by the Nova Scotia Voice of Women. Members hand out literature to passers-by, ask them to sign petitions, and generally bring pertinent issues into the public awareness. The structure they take ranges from complete silence and the holding of placards, to speeches, and even song at times of celebration according to what method is deemed most effective for imparting a particular political message into the public space. Sometimes vigil participants encourage passers-by to express positive curiosity, thereby engaging members of the public in conversation. Expressing curiosity about the other people's positions, utilizing the positive curiosity of the "other side", and listening to one another are all methods commonly used for non-violent conflict resolution and fit well with the strategies and goals of the women's peace movement. Men are occasionally invited to stand with the women to show their support but, in such circumstances, the agenda remains controlled by the women.

Muriel Duckworth saw the importance of getting women's presence into the public sphere via vigils. She recognized the power inherent in this gentle method of promoting peace. Vigils physically embody the statement: "Peace is the way", which was often quoted by Duckworth when describing the peace process and, indeed, peace as process. She would often say at VOW meetings: "I think we need to hold a vigil", in response to a political crisis of any magnitude.

The qualities inherent in vigils illustrate how different small, women-only spaces are from the larger patriarchal structures within our society. They maintain the strength of

their grassroots origins while connecting to global issues. VOW and WILPF have both participated in vigils with Women in Black, as I discuss in the next section. This creates an international linking of spaces without losing the features of the local ones. It creates a symbolic link with women around the world seeking peace.

### **Women in Black Vigils**

Women in Black vigils began as a response to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. “One day in January 1988 ten Israeli Jewish women from the radical left made a decision to demonstrate together on the pavement of a Jerusalem square in solidarity with the Palestinian people. They wore black, and stood in silent vigil” (Cockburn, 1998, 126). This identification with each other and solidarity among women from all sides of the conflict arose as they realized that they were subject to the same atrocities of war by the men of the “other” side.<sup>16</sup> For example, as Cockburn (1998, 126) citing Deutsch (1994) adds:

As the popularity of Women in Black grew throughout Israel, these protest groups provided a model for women’s protest groups in other parts of the world. Within a short space of time women in the USA, Italy, the Netherlands, Australia, Germany and England had organized similar vigils in solidarity.

Women in Black groups subsequently became a model for other women’s spaces for peace throughout the world. They have spontaneously organized in many countries around the world without a formal organizing structure and also at international gatherings such as the World Social Forum. In 1988, Women in Black demonstrated the fluidity of its form when it expanded to include joining a National Women and Peace

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<sup>16</sup> A theme that is addressed by Robin Morgan in *The Demon Lover: On The Sexuality of Terrorism* is the way in which elements of patriarchy that violently oppress women transgress national boundaries, which will be discussed in further detail in chapter 8.

Coalition that had formed in Israel. It also began to participate in campaigns, conferences, and organized exchanges (Cockburn, 1998). This is an example of the organic way that women can organize themselves in contrast to the top-down hierarchical methods used by patriarchy to structure political parties and governments, putting people into hierarchies organized by those who seek power. The women's peace movement that began with these vigils accomplished two major goals: a feminist analysis was created that linked the continuum of violence from the domestic to the military, and this common bond linked women globally within the women's peace movement (Cockburn, 1998). In addition, a women-defined political goal of peace became more prominent as a result of these vigils. Another important element of the analysis is comprised of the links of connectivity and solidarity that Women in Black has and continues to foster among worldwide participants.

### **Local to Global Connection**

The persistent presence of the peace vigils and their solidarity with the women's peace movement set the groundwork for the future, opening up space for larger feminist networks to carry the message of the large-scale rapes being carried out by the military during the conflict in Bosnia into the larger public political sphere. Many interrelated individual and social processes played a key roles in carrying the message into the public space and maintaining it there: (1) the courage of the individual women who shared their stories; (2) the vigils that held the space to create public awareness of the issues; and (3) the already established global women's movement that transmitted this knowledge to the global media, with a feminist analysis so that it would not be sensationalized. Both the



local and global spaces were equally as important in their contributions to expanding the public's knowledge of the rapes being committed. The persistence of the vigils proved to be a key factor in retaining the seriousness of this issue in the public eye. The connection between spaces of women that brought an awareness of the atrocities into the international sphere greatly expanded women's space in international politics. This political support by local, nation, and transnational feminist organizations of the Bosnian rape victims validated their experiences as women and comprised a vital component in their healing. Cockburn (1998, 223) discusses how those who organized political and medical support contributed to the resources that enabled the women to find "a new, alternative, and self-respecting identity." Because of the actions of many brave women, historical silencing of rape victims during war by patriarchal cultures is being challenged as an awareness of these atrocities is brought into the public sphere. By doing this they greatly expanded women's political spaces, on the individual, local and international levels. Cockburn (1998, 223) introduces an important insight into the analysis of rape by citing a transformative feminist scholar:

Cynthia Enloe (1995, 220), who has long studied the gender implications of war, sees it as something new that in the Bosnian situation women's organizations then and there carried the issue into what quickly became an international political network of feminists 'using news of the Bosnian women's victimization not to institutionalize women as victims, not to incite men to more carnage, but to explain anew how war makers rely on particular ideas about masculinity.'

Subsequently, space was created for the development of new discourses and language that acknowledges women's reality. Cockburn builds on this argument with the writing of two feminists from Belgrade, Maladjjenovic and Litricin, who were actively involved in the international network. They explain why a feminist analysis is crucial to

developing an accurate understanding of rape during war. They realized that: “We know that if we are to say aloud who we are and what we want there will be no historically accepted political patterns for our experience or our language” (Maladjenovic, L. and Litricin, 1993, 119, as cited in Cockburn, 1998, 223). Viewing rape in war through a feminist lens offered the women a new language by which to speak of the atrocities they had experienced. It supported the women in developing a new way of perceiving and conceptualizing their experience through their own eyes. They were able to construct their new identities through the reality of their own subjective truths, leaving behind those ascribed to them by patriarchal culture. New types of international women’s spaces facilitated a feminist analysis of the specifically gendered nature of war to be brought into the public sphere and to create public awareness of these issues.

The international community of women created new international space for women by making and keeping public the news of the systemic rapes of women that were carried out by men on both sides of the conflict (Cockburn, 1998). While it has almost always been a tactic of war, this was the first time it was talked about to this extent in the public space.<sup>17</sup> “The Women in Black vigils have been classic non-violent direct action,

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<sup>17</sup> When feminist journalist and speaker Michele Landsberg gave her keynote lecture at a Conference in Halifax, entitled: “Feminism and Women’s Health in Canada”, on March 15, 2009, she brought an even broader analysis of rape to the discussion, by also including a critique of neo-liberalism. In her talk she related the deadly intersection of modern neo-liberal economics with the predominant military culture, resulting in the violent use of rape as a tool of war in the Congo, which was reported by her husband Stephen Lewis, past UN AIDS envoy to Africa. Mining companies send in men infected with HIV into villages to rape the women, causing entire villages to flee into the jungle and effectively depopulating the area, providing unlimited access for mining. Rape as a weapon of exploitative development attests to the need for continued vigilance by feminists in order to identify these new forms of patriarchy with an accurate analysis. But this story may also offer a glimmer of hope to women. It is encouraging to note the number of men, such as Stephen Lewis, who advocate for the rights of women and also to note the political leadership of men that is necessary to solve major problems of our time. Stephen Lewis stated in his Massey Lecture Series: *Race Against Time*, also published as a book of the same name, that an

women choosing to put their bodies politically into play, stepping out of line with ‘society’ by stepping into line with each other” (Cockburn, 1998, 169). Cockburn (1998, 169) quotes one vigil participant, Zajović (1995) as she asserts: “We refuse to be the hostages of the regime and a state that makes war. We transform our anger into non-violent actions.” Cockburn (1998, 169) continues: “The vigils were the only anti-war actions in the whole of Yugoslavia that were visible, regular and permanent. They were also unique in being unequivocally feminist. The persistent presence of vigils was important as it kept the issue of the rapes in the public presence long after the international media had determined that they were no longer a novel sensation.”

### **Vigils as Flexible in Form**

Vigils vary in style in different locations and in response to the different circumstances to which they are responding. Women in Black vigils in Israel and Bosnia were constant in response to the immediate and constant issues of war. The features of vigils held by VOW in Nova Scotia have varied in response to different circumstances, often focusing on public education yet also showing the same persistent strength as Women in Black Vigils. Betty Peterson, of Halifax VOW, turned theory into action by holding a vigil every Friday throughout the duration of the first Iraq war. This ability of vigils to assume different forms gives power to local groups to define their own reality in response to different circumstances. The fluidity of form represented by VOW vigils is in contrast to the constancy illustrated in Women in Black vigils in Israel and Bosnia.

### **Theoretical Implications of Vigils**

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increase in women’s rights in Africa coupled with increased funding in aid were the areas that would greatly help to bring a halt to the spread of the pandemic of AIDS.

Sandra J. Berkowitz (2003) summarizes many of the deep theoretical meanings contained in vigils, many of which I refer to in this chapter, and their subsequent value as women's spaces of peace. Berkowitz (2003) explores the multiple meanings in the symbolic nature of vigils held by Women in Black in *Can We Stand With You? Lessons From Women in Black for Global Feminist Activism*. In this article, she discusses why it is important to develop an understanding of vigils as representative of women's spaces of peace: "Vigils constitute a model that we can learn from as they contain the key elements of international feminist activism" (Berkowitz, 2003, 94).

Women in Black are careful not to essentialize the experiences of women and the concepts of ethnicity and religion, as the women are from different political convictions and are united by their "need to actively and strongly oppose the occupation" (Helman and Rapoport, 1997, 686, as quoted in Berkowitz, 2003, 96). Respect for diversity is an integral part of Women in Black and the coalition of women's peace networks that stand in solidarity with them.

Women in Black vigils contain the symbolism of a pacifist feminist message of protest.<sup>18</sup> Berkowitz discusses out how vigils draw attention to many of the primary concerns addressed within this thesis by describing how they encapsulate new ways of conflict resolution. These new ways involve cooperation and solidarity, and they move society away from violent forms of conflict resolution practiced by patriarchy, and toward a culture of peace. This supports a primary theme within this thesis that there is a need for the expansion of women's space.

Berkowitz (2003) brings to our attention that the strength of the informal vigil

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<sup>18</sup> See Berkowitz (2003) who was my inspiration for the formulation of this idea.

structure, utilized by Women in Black, lies in its ability to respect diversity while creating an atmosphere of safety. “Unlike a demonstration with a common, single purpose, a woman who stands in a vigil recognizes that she does not come to join a demonstration, she is the demonstration” (Roubleu, 1993, 155, as quoted by Berkowitz, 2003, 96). This describes how women embody spaces of peace. Svirsky, (2000, 240), is quoted by Berkowitz, (2003, 97) as she explains how Women in Black found “support and sustenance” and how “[t]he impact of our activity in Israel was amplified by the dozens of Women in Black vigils that formed all over the world, some in solidarity with our cause and others taking a stand about their local issues.”<sup>19</sup> VOW and WILPF have both participated in international vigils that Women in Black has co-ordinated. Berkowitz (2003, 98, quotes Gurevitch, 1997, 209) in addressing this point: “The voice out of place”, in this case serves as a powerful metaphor for the activities of the coalition of peace networks affiliated with Women in Black.” As Berkowitz (2003, 98) points out: “The voices of these women are out of place in each location in patriarchal societies. If we listen, the voices remind us that locations and standpoints are central to identity and to politics. But, at the same time, the voices tell us that one need not be from a place to speak about a place. Feminist scholars and activists need not be afraid of speaking for others and with others in non-essentializing ways.” Berkowitz (2003, 98) builds on her argument by quoting Darling-Wolf (1998, 417), who describes the importance of solidarity among the feminist movement: “Ultimately the possibility of speaking for others determines feminism’s political effectiveness.” Berkowitz continues, adding that:

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<sup>19</sup> This type of learning shared among women from the local to the global exemplifies that done within a multicentered global women’s movement, a concept that has been theorized by Angela Miles, and will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 9.

“The power of this action is enhanced by the awareness of our own unique standpoint,-- particularly when we do it in a manner that recognizes that we speak from our own historical and cultural contexts” (Berkowitz, 2003, 98). “The point is not to come to a single understanding of solidarity, but to understand ways in which we can stand in solidarity with others” (McKerrow, 1989, as cited in Berkowitz, 2003, 98). McKerrow (1989), as quoted by Berkowitz (2003, 98), describes the new type of space that Women in Black creates: “... revisiting the question of whether Women in Black is a model for global feminist peace action, I would say that it is, in the sense that it provides not a single model of a social movement, but a critique of freedom.” Berkowitz (2003, 98) adds that Women in Black is “a model for discourses of women’s empowerment on both local and international scales.” Berkowitz (2003, 98) also points out that it is its respect for different standpoints and flexibility that “positions Women in Black to become a positive and effective model for international feminist action, so long as we remember to measure that success on many levels.”

Vigils are one way practiced a lot by VOW and WILPF, but they are not the only way women’s organizations occupy and create political spaces within the public sphere. The beginning of this chapter highlights women in the public space and the importance of vigils as one of the key practices of peace groups. In the next section of this chapter, I extend the argument in support of the expansion of women’s spaces beyond the peace movement and include other feminist spaces of peace and empowerment that women have opened up in the larger political sphere. These groups are included in order to illustrate how peace is an integral part of feminism that has been extended beyond the

perimeters of formalized peace groups by women working in groups that focus on various different issues. They include examples of women's groups that occupy women's space with a holistic feminist analysis. While they were not created with peace as a primary focus, they actualize many of the qualities of women's spaces of peace such as non-hierarchical relationships and non-violent ways of solving problems in a different way to that done by male political institutions. As groups containing the features of peacemaking and peace practices of women, they are expanding women's spaces of peace in the public sphere.

### **World Courts of Women**

Since 1993, public hearings on violence against women during war have been organized by the Asian Women's Human Rights Council (AWHRC), a major actor within which was Corinne Kumar. In this section I will describe the World Courts of Women as organized by Corinne Kumar (1995) and described by Paola Melchiori (1998) in her discussion of the concept of women's space. These Courts expand women's space in the public political sphere by creating a bridge between the private and the public political spheres, in a similar way to the Bosnian vigils, as is discussed above. Both actions have brought knowledge of war crimes committed against women, once relegated to the domestic sphere, into the public space. "Madhu Bhushan of the AWHRC explained to me [Cockburn] that the purpose of these courts is to 'critique the dominant human rights discourse and its ideological underpinning in Enlightenment values, such as possessive individualism, rationality and objectivity' " (Cockburn, 2007, 168). Therefore, there is no prosecution or defence, and as there is no question about whether to believe

the women or not, judges or jury members, who are chosen for their wisdom and experience, simply listen and understand (Cockburn, 2007). Melchiori (1998) describes this expansion of women's space as an important part of the work that the World Courts of Women engage in. Since 1993, public hearings on violence have been organized by Asian women's groups. In her writings, Corinne Kumar (1995) demonstrates the importance of those meetings. "The phrase 'public hearing' implies a space where voices traditionally hidden in the private sphere (in particular with respect to sexual crimes) can be listened to in public" (Melchiori, 1998, 98). This analysis of violence in some of the Courts tries to understand the reasons for growing sexual abuse in the contexts of new economic policies and quick processes of modernization and globalization. "Through the voices of victims, students, 'women of law', artists, inventors of ways of survival and resistance, both individual and collective, violence against women enters the public space" (Kumar, 1995 as cited in Melchiori, 1998, 98). "That violence against women in every culture has always been considered to be part of the private world and, as such, outside law and even outside the possibility of being named" (Melchiori, 1998, 98). "These voices, heard collectively in a public arena, cast a different light on civilization and give women a new way of considering themselves" (Melchiori, 1998, 99). "New concepts come from juxtaposing (1) the personal and the political spheres, (2) the public and the private spheres and (3) the history of single individuals and macro-history" (Melchiori, 1998, 100). "It is important for people that come to these hearings not to simply be horrified by the 'horrid and repetitive aspects of violence against women, but to come to these gatherings to listen to those who dared dream in a different way' "



(Kumar, 1996, 6 as cited in Melchiori, 1998, 100).

The World Courts of Women that deal specifically with violence against women during war are important not only because they empower the women who speak there, but also because women worldwide previously suffered the grievous effects of war in the silence of the domestic sphere. “Like a chain effect, it has opened people’s eyes; it has got other women to talk; it has focused attention on similar atrocities at other sites, such as the Gulf war; it has reopened the search for links between prostitution and war, and between the structure of civil society and military institutions” (Melchiori, 1998, 99). The Courts have helped to expose the continuum of violence that operates within patriarchy, during both peace and wartimes. “The cultural importance consists of talking publicly about these matters and listening to acts of both individual and collective resistance” (Melchiori, 1998, 100).

### **Women’s Spaces at the World Social Forum**

The World Courts of Women have since expanded to challenge a large spectrum of global social issues that incur violence against women. Since 2003, they have become part of the World Social Forums and are defined by Corinne Kumar, who became the International Coordinator of the Courts and Regional Coordinator of the AWHRC..., as “a gathering of voices and visions of the global south that locates itself in a discourse of dissent, challenging the new world order of globalization and wars” (Kumar, 2006, 4). The Courts are an excellent example of women’s voices entering the larger public space.

At the Polycentric World Social Forum held in Bamako, Mali, women “focused on the Wars of Globalization which addressed the systematic violence of neo-liberal

globalization in all its institutional forms and the resulting systems of violence, dispossession, destitution, impoverishment and exclusion.” Vandana Shiva (2006), one of the judges at this World Court, “gave expert analyses of globalization, bio-diversity, indigenous knowledge and intellectual property rights of communities and cultures in the south. She spoke of interconnections between development, environment, and security and emphasized the need to create a new generation of peace movements based on the visions of women” (Shiva, 2006, 8).

The summary of the Court of Women at the World Social Forum at Bamako, Mali in January 2006, entitled “Outcomes” (WSF, 2006, 10), illustrates the magnitude of themes dealt with in the Courts. “The Court of Women deepened the understanding of the systems of impoverishment: wars, colonialism, privatization, debt, unfair trade policies, corruption, bad governance amongst other issues. The importance of the complementary roles of men and women in communities, the focus on women as victims but also as people making their contributions for social change and sustaining livelihoods was clearly visibilized. The Court enabled the testifiers as well as the audience to understand the challenges of the globalization, sources of conflict, its effect on gender roles and the resultant violence and impoverishment which has a *women’s face*” (World Social Forum, 2006, 10, W.F. Representative). New spaces for a collective dialogue for peace were formed by these Courts, spaces that can form the basis for the creation of an alternative culture of peace. It is no accident that after the Court of Women in Bamako, Mali, a planned Women In Black peace circle was established with women asked to bring messages of solidarity from their home regions. And also, to the WSF in Nairobi, Kenya,

Linda Christiansen-Ruffman brought messages of solidarity from the Nova Scotia Voice of Women for Peace that was composed by the author and a participant in this thesis, Ruth Bishop.

The women who spoke at The World Courts of Women talked not only of the crimes committed but of new hopes for the future. The themes that were expressed by these women were summarized in a report written by Corinne Kumar (2006) about the World Courts of Women. In her summary of the Courts that were held in Karachi, Pakistan, in 2006, from March 24-29, Kumar (2006) quotes Ita Nadia and Wahu Kaara. Kumar (2006, 5) summarizes the words of Ita Nadia from Indonesia who spoke on Militarism and Fundamentalism and described the Courts as:

... as a powerful new space to redefine history from the perspective of women. For the stories of the women interspersed with the poetic visuals, she felt, not only help to communicate the pain of one woman to the other but also stay on as a collective memory. We cannot, she felt, postpone our movement and the time therefore is now for us to strengthen spaces like those the Courts offer.

Kumar (2006, 4-5) also summarizes the words of Wahu Kaara from Kenya who spoke on the wars of globalization:

Wahu Kaara also spoke of the Courts of women as carrying within them the seeds of the vision of the world we are all yearning for: we are, she said, the women of life, women who are oppressed and dispossessed; but we are also part of a world that recreates, that cares, loves and sustains. From this space then we must ensure that the market economy must be replaced by the life economy: an economy that is sustained by the women of the world.

Kumar (2006, 8) also discusses in her Report how ecofeminist, writer, and activist, Vandana Shiva also urges us to return to the center of women's knowledge, leaving the masculine mind-set that has oppressed both women and nature with the same hand. Shiva makes the links between this dual oppression and war, which is also the largest cause of environmental destruction. Women's knowledge such as that of

principles of biodiversity and subsistence agriculture that for so long has been displaced by modernization is now desperately needed in order to save the planet (Shiva, as cited by Kumar, 2006, 8). Vandana Shiva (1988, 1989, 2000) brings women's presence into the larger social movements, in this case the environmental movement. Her work represents a theoretical way of changing the paradigm and also a way of changing the paradigm as part of larger social movements that supports the creation of a new holistic paradigm of peace.

### **The Chipko Movement**

In this section I discuss a brief history of the Chipko movement and the reasons behind its inception. I include it here because it illustrates the historical roots of ecofeminism; it is a clear recording of a successful strategy that has been implemented by women historically to reclaim space and to push back patriarchal forces that are seeking to destroy the environment. It also offers a living example of how peaceful principles are integrated into, and practiced within, women's groups that are working on many different issues that are related to peace yet not specifically designated as peace groups. Some of these direct interconnections between peace and the environment are made visible by the Chipko movement. A brief outline of the origins of the Chipko movement is summarized by Vandana Shiva (1989, 67) in the following quote:

In the mountain regions of the Himalaya, the women of Garhwal started to protect their forests from commercial exploitation, even at the cost of their lives, embracing the living trees as their protectors. Beginning in the early 1970s in the Garhwal region of Uttar Pradesh, the methodology and philosophy of Chipko has now spread to Himachal Pradesh in the north, to Karnataka in the south, to Rajasthan in the west, to Orissa in the east, and to the Central Indian highlands.

As environmental problems may well be the basis for most future conflicts, this

movement serves as an important model from which we can learn, and the Indigenous knowledge that it is rooted in may contain the seeds of an alternative paradigm in which sound environmental practices play an essential role.

The Chipko movement became an example of how a local action developed global implications when activist Vandana Shiva (1989) brought an awareness of it into the public consciousness. It involves women in India successfully working with the environment, over time, to sustain the biodiversity of the region. As a model, it embodies important features that are found in both the multicentered global women's movement as described by Angela Miles (1996) and the DAWN (1987) analysis. In both theoretical platforms, knowledge of a local action is shared among women globally and helps other women to understand their own situations. This, in turn, helps to identify similar patterns of systemic oppression that affect women similarly in different parts of the world. In this way, the development of a holistic analysis supports the expansion of women's political space by supporting the creation of solidarity among women globally in order that they might work on these issues collectively.

Shiva (1989, 66) explains why it is important to trace environmental movements that were begun and led by women:

Environmental movements like Chipko have become historical landmarks because they have been fuelled by the ecological insights and political and moral strengths of women. I will dwell at some length on some of these exceptional women because I have personally been inspired by my interaction with them, and because I feel that it is unjust that the real pillars of the movement are still largely unknown. The experience of these powerful women also needs to be shared to remind us that we are not alone, and that we do not take the first steps: others have walked before us.

The primary goal of the Chipko movement was to stop the deforestation of trees

that was leading to ecological devastation and to maintain practices of healthy forestry. For example, an ancient practice of lopping trees, or only thinning them by taking part of the tree, can actually increase forest density (Shiva 1989, 66), and clearly describes the differences between the women's connection to the forest, or a living women's space, and the male forestry managers, or male space:

Groups of women, young and old go together to lop for fodder, and expertise develops by participation and through learning--by doing. These informal forestry colleges of the women are small and decentred creating and transferring knowledge about how to maintain the life of living resources. The visible forestry colleges by contrast are centralized and alienated: they specialize in a forestry of destruction, on how to transform a living resource into a commodity and subsequently, cash. Forestation of ecologically appropriate trees was also encouraged.

On December 14, 2009, Shiva spoke at the Copenhagen People's Summit and described environmental destruction. She linked the rise of conflicts as a direct result of the lack of resources in regions where there has been environmental devastation causing the destruction of whole ways of life for entire regions (Shiva, December 14, 2009, on-site interview).<sup>20</sup> By asserting this knowledge in the mainstream political sphere, writers and activists like Vandana Shiva (2009) are inviting decision-makers to use it in a preventative, non-crisis oriented, management style, in order to avert the major disasters that are now occurring with greater prevalence on the planet.

### **The World March of Women**

The World March of Women shows how values of peace are integral to feminism within the global women's movement. It is a transnational and global women's movement with a local component that demonstrates the way in which non-institutional

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<sup>20</sup> In this particular talk, Shiva was discussing the Himalayan region, although the linking of environmental destruction with potential conflicts can be applied to many parts of the globe.

feminist networks come together and take up political space. It originated on March 8, 2002 and is described by its website (Internet Source - <http://worldmarchofwomen.org>):

It is an international feminist action movement connecting grass-roots groups and organizations working to eliminate the causes at the root of poverty and violence against women. Its main fields of action are: The Common Good and Access to Resources, Peace and demilitarization and Women's Work and Violence against Women. It supports actions at the global, national and local levels. Among its many goals are the underpinning of political actions by a feminist analysis and connecting feminists globally to bring about changes that include peace through dialogue and collective actions.

The Women's Global Charter for Humanity was adopted on December 10, 2004.

The Charter describes the vision of the world women want to build. This world is based on five values: equality, freedom, solidarity, justice, and peace. These values describe those promoted by and in women's spaces of peace. The 2011 Actions by the World March of Women include messages delivered on March 8, 2011 to the European Young Feminist Camp to connect young feminists with each other and "to promote exchanges in relation to our political visions and experiences at a local, national, continental and international scale, and thus to formulate new projects and prepare future struggles" (<http://worldmarchofwomen.org>).

### **Wise Women's Workshop**

The Wise Women's Workshop in Norway is described by Christiansen-Ruffman, Melchiori, and Ås (2006) in *Portraits of Women's Wisdom: Feminists Exploring New Paradigms in Life, Knowledge and Politics* and is included here because it illustrates the form that new, alternative feminist spaces for women can take. It includes elements of women's space that form elements of a positive peace in an analysis that is attempting to go beyond envisioning peace as simply the absence of war. It is an explicit example of a

space where women who were local leaders were brought together to discuss their experiences and to engage in transformative knowledge creation. It began to articulate possible elements of a feminist vision. Feminists for a Gift Economy, which became an international organization that promotes a transformative vision for a transformative paradigm, came out of the Wise Women's Workshop. Feminists for a Gift Economy went to the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, to try to get a feminist inspired alternative framework into the larger social movement alternative paradigm. This is another example of feminist thinking trying to get into a public space and a male dominated alternative space.

The original meeting of the Wise Women's Workshop was composed of thirty women, drawn together by the three dedicated coordinators mentioned above. It was described by one participant, Muriel Duckworth, also a participant in this thesis, as the best conference she had ever attended and one of the best, if not the best, experience of her life. In discussing the key features that made it different from other conferences, she talked of how it was structured so that one could live a normal life while attending workshops. She emphasized how one free period of time was scheduled into each day, facilitating the forming of connections among women and a level of sharing that might not have occurred had it been run at the usual fast pace of other conferences she had attended. She also spoke of the value of integrating art and music into the program, reflecting some of the multidimensional elements that have traditionally comprised women's spaces. One of Muriel's favorite memories of the conference was listening to the women singing and dancing to music as she went to sleep at night (Thesis Interview



with Muriel Duckworth). The expression of joy represents one of women's most profound strengths, and Melchiori discusses how "Corinne Kumar (1996, as cited by Melchiori, 1998, 100) often refers to the power that art can give to a "battered soul." Ngahua Te Aekotuku, a participant at the Wise Women's Workshop, echoed these sentiments in the following quote: "For Maori, particularly, the arts have always been a vehicle for resistance and transformation" (Ngahua Te Aekotuku, 2006, 10). Muriel spoke of how the availability of computers allowed the women to maintain their connections with the outside world via email, illustrating how relational networking is an essential element of women's universal space, and like vigils, this space was separate yet still connected to the larger public space. As the authors explain:

There were women working to change the oppression of women, to resist the so-called globalization of our economies and resources, to preserve our environmental diversity, and to create a culture of peace. A key feature of this space, and reason for the need to create transformative women's spaces, is that through listening to each other and reflecting on what we have heard, we can build on our shared wisdom and develop new insights about ourselves and the world around us; feminist knowledge creation was facilitated. The hope was that both individually and collectively, our knowledges would grow,...and they did (2006, 6).

The space described in *Portraits of Women's Wisdom: Feminists Exploring New Paradigms in Life, Knowledge and Politics* embodies a strong sense of empowerment representative of the new types of spaces that women aspire to and work to create in the realization of a culture of peace.

I have now focused on four women's groups and two events that are representative of women's space and how they expand elements of peace within the public sphere. In the following sections of this chapter and in chapters 7 and 8, I continue to point out features of these spaces that still need to be introduced, such as the different

qualities present in women-only and mixed-gender peace groups.

### **Features of Women's Feminist Political Space**

The normalized values of the pervasive patriarchal culture in which we live are so internalized by women that it is often only from within the safety of a women-only group, where we are less influenced by patriarchal thinking, that we can avoid being co-opted by these values and begin to identify the values that are specific to women's space. Angela Miles (1996, 5) supports this idea in *Integrative Feminisms: Building Global Visions, 1960s--1990s*, and also discusses the merits of consciousness-raising groups and why they are necessary:

This collective process of self-reflection and self-affirmation stands at the core of integrative feminist practice. Therefore, the development of positive female identity is necessarily a political process that can only proceed as women act collectively to give each other support and to confront the relations of domination that their new identities challenge.... [C]onsciousness raising at its best unites individual activity and change with collective theorizing and social action.

Dualistic thinking, common in the dominant patriarchal culture, is challenged by the development of a more holistic feminist analysis, with women as subjects of their own lives rather than objects of the male experience. "As a form, these groups embody the concrete integrative attempt in early feminist politics to overcome divisions between the personal and the political, means and ends, theory and practice, process and product, subject and object, reason and emotion" (Miles, 1996, 5).

Both Angela Miles (1996, 16) and Christiansen-Ruffman (1989), illustrate how "women-only" groups are important in their discussion of the negation of women's existence by men. For example Miles illustrate this by showing how women's space is invisibilized in mainstream culture:

To recognize themselves as women, women must see that 'man' has never included them: that the affirmation of 'brotherhood' and manhood (by white, Black, native, Chicano, Québécois, and other men) excludes them and is in most cases built on their negation; that, for men's purposes, they serve largely instrumental functions as nature does; and that they are defined in these terms.

The development of a holistic feminist analysis allows women in the peace movement to identify the systemic causes of war that lie deeply rooted in patriarchal culture and to build peaceful alternatives.

## **Chapter 7:**

### **Analysis of Women-Only Versus Mixed-Gender Spaces for Creating Peace**

#### **Women-Only Spaces**

The question of whether to include men in women's peace groups or to maintain them as women-only spaces arose consistently within the discussions about women's space in both the interviews and the literature on peace. Women's spaces are still not recognized as an accepted part of mainstream culture. The further contraction of those spaces in present times, a pattern or phenomenon that has occurred historically in times of war and economic crisis, adds a sense of urgency to the discussion regarding the necessity of creating and maintaining women's spaces.

New forms of patriarchy, or neo-patriarchy, are emerging in society in ways that are often unrecognizable. This underscores the importance of women-only spaces so that these new forms may be identified and challenged by a carefully articulated and constantly evolving holistic feminist analysis. As Paola Melchiori (1998) argues: "It is at that level that women's politics worked originally, showing and questioning the hidden passages from nature to civilization, from 'natural life' to political existence. Women re-focused the hidden aspects of the 'brothers' that is at the foundations of democracy--and citizenship--and made their implications more explicit" (Melchiori, 1998, 92). Women have often participated in patriarchal society, finding it easier to become better than men at men's work, in order to gain access to scarce resources (Melchiori, 1998).

In chapter 5 I discussed the themes evolving from the interviews with women peace leaders. Of the six major topics that emerged, four were critiques of patriarchy:

perceptions of hierarchy, economics, religion, and the environment; the other two were alternative feminist methods of action: pacifism and alternative visions for peace. Despite diverse backgrounds, methods, and activist styles, there was a surprisingly high degree of unanimity among the ideas expressed by the participants, especially in their critiques of patriarchy. Among the themes concerning alternative feminist actions, the only area where I discerned any significant difference within my sample, concerned whether or not to work exclusively in women-only spaces for peacework. This difference only became apparent in how they translated their ideas into action and where they chose to focus their time and energy at the beginning of the second Iraq War.<sup>21</sup> This chapter begins from my data with a discussion of women-only spaces.

### **Women-Only Spaces in Patriarchal Context**

At the onset of the Iraq War, three of the six women I interviewed chose to work with men in the Halifax Peace Coalition (HPC). The HPC was the second manifestation of a coalition of peace groups in Halifax, and it became extremely successful, in contrast to its earlier manifestation which was less focused on organizing events. It was initially formed in response to the U.S. threat to invade Iraq. This did occur, but without Canada's direct participation, something many attribute to the large-scale demonstrations which protested against this move. The HPC was instrumental in organizing these marches and speakers in order to garner public support against the invasion. One thesis participant pointed to its latter success as the result of a particularly effective and cohesive group of

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<sup>21</sup> In my original thesis design, I had considered including a study about the Canadian Peace Alliance, a national mixed-gender coalition of peace groups, but I decided not to pursue this area of the research because of logistical reasons and because it was leading me away from my focus.

members, with a higher degree of female leadership than the previous coalition. Alleson, Carolyn, and Betty made the decision to join the HPC, and in fact, they took leadership positions in it. They retained their affiliation with VOW and at each VOW Meeting, a member of VOW who had also joined HPC presented a summary of the HPC's actions and progress. Ruth and Muriel chose to stay and continue in their leadership positions within VOW. Muriel encouraged VOW members to represent VOW at HPC meetings so through them The Voice of Women would have a "presence at the table." She drew limits so that her time and energy would be well spent and not over-committed. While she supported VOW's membership in the coalition, Muriel was quoted as saying at one meeting: "I feel that I am meant to stay and work within The Voice of Women."

This strategy of Muriel's ensured that she was able to focus her energy successfully in one area and ensure the continued presence and strength of women-only spaces while also connecting with other spaces and extending the reach of VOW. This is one of the ways in which she emulated the qualities inherent in women's spaces of peace as I discuss later in the thesis. Her way of living peace contained within it teachings for others of how to create spaces of peace. Her approach and the way she carried it out embodied many of the themes that have evolved within this thesis.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> It is, nevertheless interesting, because women-identified women often chose at different times to work in women-only spaces, in coalitions with men on common projects, and in influential male orientated spaces advocating for women, as indeed is reflected in the activity paths of my sample. For example, Krishna worked for most of her professional life in the UN, a male dominated system, for years, yet she worked consistently for women's rights within that system, and later in a women-only organization, namely WILPF. This example illustrates the complex feminist holistic thinking that defies binary logic.

## **The Internet as Patriarchal Space and the Debates Around Women-Only Spaces: Weblog on Women-Only Spaces Conducted by Feminist Peace Activist and Scholar, Cynthia Cockburn**

In 2004 feminist writer and peace activist Cynthia Cockburn (2004) organized a weblog to discuss whether or not to include men in women's peace groups, specifically, in this case, in Women in Black Vigils. In this section I will review the results of the weblog, an important theme because it brought to light the seriousness of this issue in relation to women-only spaces for peace. Given the urgency of the need to develop peaceful alternatives within our society and the awareness that patriarchal systems have not produced a peaceful world, this weblog discussion illustrates why some women-only spaces are necessary until women's peaceful values can have a stronger influence within our society. The weblog took the form of a debate and was summarized by Cockburn (2007) in *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism and Feminist Analysis*. I include some of the major points of this complex discussion, starting with arguments for not including men.

Among those who put forth arguments for not including men were women who thought that men were "reproducing the patriarchal model, manifesting a way of addressing and using power very differently from that preferred by feminists" (Cockburn, 2007, 216). A feminist analysis that addressed the gender issues in militarism and war was never a part of the agenda in mixed-gender peace groups, where men focused on becoming leaders and recreating hierarchical relations instead of dealing with problems or critiquing masculinity (Cockburn, 2007). As previously discussed in the chapter 5,

this critique was echoed by the majority of the participants interviewed for this thesis, and they cited it as their primary reason for joining women-only peace groups. In the weblog, some women also stated that men sometimes incited violence as a means to an end which was never seen as justifiable and was therefore incompatible with women's peacework (Cockburn, 2007). An example of this was seen at the 2010 G-20 protest in Toronto where a small number of largely male protestors known as the Black Block turned to violence. This was used by police to justify a violent response to the marchers and served to distract media attention away from the true message of peace that was represented by the thousands of non-violent protestors.

Women-only spaces were seen by some as necessary within a patriarchal culture in order to provide a safe space for women to work for peace where the differences in their experiences could be safely shared within an environment where they felt that they would be accepted. Maria Eugenia Sanchez described the practice of La Ruta Pacifica, a women's group for survivors of rape in the following way: "It's a political choice to be a women's organization, it's not *exclusion*" (Cockburn, 2007, 216). Other opponents of including men suggested that men need to work together first around the issue of male dominance and the oppression of women in order to show their willingness. As they might argue, women's existence within a patricentric culture is defined by men and men's relationship to them. In order to develop and maintain control over their own agenda, many women felt that it was important to reclaim separate women-only spaces. These spaces are important because of the peaceful values they contain that are distinctly different from those found in patriarchal spaces, especially larger public spaces. A



consistent theme in both the interviews and peace literature is that this lack of the presence of women's values in the public space has hindered the development of a culture of peace. It is specifically because these spaces are so rare that women in the peace movement strive to create and maintain them.

One reason put forward by women who contributed to the weblog, which was in favour of including men, was to extend kindness to men who had been traumatized by war and patriarchal violence. Others felt that the absence of men from active peace work and childcare was unfair. Moreover, some women considered that allowing men to participate in peace activism with us would increase equality and reduce gender stereotyping. Still others, in Women in Black groups, added that they allow husbands to join activities, but to assume no organizational role. Men have also been allowed to join WILPF groups at different times but similarly cannot assume organizational roles.

One controversial topic that was discussed in the weblog was how to include people along the gender continuum. It was suggested that any people who identified as women would be welcome. Women in Black in Belgrade provides a "free zone" where women and men can express their sexual identities freely, creating a non-homophobic and non-nationalistic space that was gratefully acknowledged by one gay respondent in the weblog (Cockburn, 2007, 221). In order not to exclude people along the gender continuum or allow identity politics to divide the members, a non-dualistic solution emerged: one wherein groups that included people on the gender continuum could co-exist with but operate separately to women-only peace groups, and the inclusion of men could apply to specific actions such as vigils. This would include people who claimed

identities in the “in-between-spaces”, not identifying clearly on one side or the other of conventional binary distinctions, yet it would acknowledge the fact that women experience shared oppression as a group within a patriarchal culture. Therefore, such women-only spaces would provide some distance from the influence of male values, so that notwithstanding any internalized sexism, and collectively, women would be able to offer each other the validation and strength needed for successful peace actions.

Cockburn (2007, 222) summarizes the views of the majority of weblog contributors in the following statement: “Because most of the people in the world self-identify or are identified as either male or female, not excluding lesbians and gay men, and that as women have collectively experienced oppression by men, it makes sense to affirm that identity, and seek the solidarity of other women as ‘women.’ ” She further summarized the crucial elements of the argument that supported women-only spaces of peace in the following statement: “They’re in no doubt that gender is a social construction, they may well understand gender to be lived in a variety of different ways, they may be strongly anti-homophobic, but pragmatically they find women-only organizing to be politically effective and productive (as well as, frankly, more comfortable)” (Cockburn, 2007, 222). This conclusion that the weblog reached, one that was in favor of maintaining some women-only spaces for doing peace work, coincided with a primary theme that evolved from the views of the majority of the participants who were interviewed for this thesis: that strong women-only spaces are a primary key to the formation of a culture of peace.

## **The Internet as Masculine Space, Women's Political Culture and Feminist Alternatives**

Throughout the weblog, the internet itself became the framework or canvas on which the tensions around whether or not to include men in women's peace work were played out. This provided a virtual metaphor for the problems women encounter when doing peace work in the public sphere. The discussion itself became a living example of the perils involved in women taking up space within a patriarchal culture. The respondents, mostly women, spoke of how it is essential for women to have safe spaces of their own in order to develop the skills and support networks necessary to build a culture of peace. The internet illustrated the lack of safety that women experience in larger, mixed-gender public spaces. Several men posted comments that constituted harassment when they perceived themselves as being excluded from women's peace groups. Few saw it as simply "a political choice by and for women" (Cockburn, 2007, 202). The socially and culturally embedded patriarchal norm of assumed male dominance and male privilege led men to interpret the construction of women's spaces as out of their control and hence a conscious act of male exclusion.

The method of communication that the internet facilitates can be interpreted as primarily masculine in its style of relating with its binary logic and therefore provides a useful tool for understanding patriarchal space. In contrast, women-only spaces often offer an alternative to the fragmented world of male-dominated politics, spaces that support holistic analyses and experiences of connectedness that offer women opportunities to develop the strength and expertise necessary to enter into alliances within

the larger public political sphere. Moreover, the internet was designed and is controlled by patriarchal organizations of domination. The contemporary censorship engaged in by some governments is examined in detail in Susan Hawthorne's (2002) analysis of the internet in *Wild Politics*. As Hawthorne's (2002, 308) research points out: "The internet is a military invention. The internet can and has been used for beneficial purposes for activism ... and for creativity, but the logic of the internet draws it in the direction of the dominating culture. Like the infrastructure of the export processing zones, the infrastructure of the internet is intended for the owners of capital, not for those who labor to produce it." While in some parts of the world, the ease of networking that the internet provides has supported women's peace activism, many women, especially in developing nations, still cannot access technology due to economic or educational barriers. Without careful monitoring, this could further divide women along class lines rather than connecting them. Also, computers support the kind of individualism that patriarchy reveres. This can sometimes lead to isolation whereas in women's spaces, this focus shifts to one of community building. Computer entries are made one at a time from single computers, instead of interacting in the relational style of networking and communication that forms the basis of women's space and is prevalent in women's peace groups.

Paola Melchior (1998, 92) describes this particularly female way of connecting politically when she shares her reflections of a group that brought back memories of consciousness-raising groups of the 1970s:

It reminded me of political practices in the 1970s, of early years of consciousness-raising in the women's movement where we worked, met and debated with

intensity and passion. I recalled how hard it was to leave a place where different pleasures had been brought together, pleasures that otherwise would have remained separate: theory and action; intellectual work and the physical presence of people; individuality and collective thinking. We experienced there moments of reunification of our fractured activities and split selves.

Melchiori (1998) brings to light the power that manifests itself by using holistic strategies as the foundation for building a transformative paradigm.

### **Mixed-Gender Spaces Where Women Set the Agenda**

Establishing and maintaining women-only spaces for peacework is an important issue, and understanding the contexts within which we work with men to articulate peaceful strategies is also a key factor in bringing about the predominance of peaceful values within our society. I will give some examples of women's spaces that sometimes included mixed-gender components. The influential office of WILPF characterizes the elements of women's spaces of peace that Emily Balch created in the Geneva headquarters. This is evidenced in the insights offered by WILPF elder, Mildred Scott Olmsted (Olmsted as quoted by Alonso, 1995, 11), whose words were also quoted in chapter 3, and which are expressed in the following reflections:

What a center that [WILPF] had become because of her work: which was disafraid in terms of connectivity--of creating. The center's welcome mat was also made visible by the institution of afternoon tea where people would gather and talk peace and freedom. The energetic and facilitative work of Miss Balch as a feminist peace leader was also a feature of the center. Balch's monitoring of the methods of peaceful communication in the WILPF Office became a model for the process of making peace across diverse points of view.

While different in nature to the consistency evidenced in this long-lasting physical space created by WILPF, VOW has also included men in some of its spaces of peace, often via its efforts to engage in public education. Some examples include events that have been organized by NS VOW at the Halifax Public Library and at several

universities in Halifax. It has also joined with the planning and coordination of mixed-gender peace marches and actions as a member of the Halifax Peace Coalition.

Another less recent example related to VOW of men supporting women in a space defined by women is depicted by the 1984 documentary “Debert Bunker: By Invitation Only” which was produced by Liz MacDougall (1985) and discussed earlier in chapter 5. Five women’s peace groups rallied together in 1984, to protest a secret Emergency Measures Organization practice-run, when 329 men and 11 women would go underground to supposed safety in case of nuclear war. A small group of men took on a supportive role doing the cooking, child care, and transportation. This is an example of men supporting women in their women-defined space, an example of the type of cooperation that can build a new paradigm of peace.

In summary, both women-only and mixed-gender spaces are deemed important, but at this point in history, from a woman’s perspective, it is essential that we create and maintain specifically women-only spaces. This is because it is primarily from within this context that a feminist analysis can be clearly constructed and developed. It is difficult for men to grasp the true depth of patriarchal control within society from their position of privilege and in turn, to be able to discern the true causes of war or envision and implement peace as more than the absence of war. These are the types of issues that are dealt with within women’s organizations. The maintenance of strong women-only feminist spaces of peace, as spaces of peaceful values in society, are important reminders that an alternative exists to the still dominant, violent, and increasingly dysfunctional culture of war that has come to dominate the globalized world system.

## **Chapter 8: Women in the Context of Patriarchy and Alternatives Toward Peace**

In chapters 8 and 9, I continue with the discussion of women's groups with an added dimension of linking them to a more macro analysis. The themes that have evolved within the thesis to this point are connected here to a larger analytic and more holistic framing. I include other authors whose ideas put the thesis into the larger context. As pointed out in chapter 2, this is consistent with a feminist grounded methodological approach where theory builds throughout the research process.

In this chapter, I explore women's spaces within the context of patriarchy and women's attempts to build non-dominating communities throughout the world. Indeed, most of the larger public spaces within society are dominated by patriarchal ideals, values, norms, and structures that assume that men will dominate women. I discuss how patriarchal spaces contribute to the perpetuation of war and how they are different from women's holistic spaces. True to the grounded theory research method, in this chapter I include literature that supports alternative feminist themes that arose from the interviews related to hierarchies, spirituality, economics, and environment, as well as nonviolence. Because I am using a holistic analysis, all of these themes are interrelated. A discussion of hierarchies is included because they were identified as important both by the women and within the scholarly peace literature. They were viewed as constituting one of the primary elements of patriarchal societies that contributes to the perpetuation of war, and

therefore became an important idea that ran throughout the thesis. The chapter then explores some of the examples of alternative women's spaces in order to describe what the real alternative feminist culture would look like. It shows how some writers and activists link these spaces to larger social movements that are oriented to changing the structures of domination and moving toward a new paradigm with an egalitarian social order. Since pacifism, as the most important way to bring about peace, was a theme that ran consistently throughout the interviews, I include here a greater holistic discussion of nonviolence and peace. This chapter combines the emergent feminist themes with the analysis of Robin Morgan. Morgan contrasts patriarchal and feminist analyses and discusses why an understanding of these differences is essential in discerning the causes of war within patriarchy and the subsequent ability to develop a new paradigm based in peace. She specifically addresses how patriarchy combines violence and eroticism, especially in relation to war. This is the only feminist alternative that is discussed in this thesis that was not initially broached by the participants. I have included it here because it builds on the ideas that have been discussed to this point and extends the argument to an even deeper level of analysis.

### **Hierarchic Domination and Holistic Egalitarian Alternatives: Feminist Theories with Holistic Analyses**

As discussed earlier in chapter 1, the DAWN analysis, as presented in *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives* by Gita Sen and Caren Grown (1987), informs the theoretical approach used in this thesis



and grounds it in a holistic feminist analysis.<sup>23</sup> This theoretical approach supports an analysis of the patriarchal forces that intersect to oppress women and also the ways in which women work to create a transformative paradigm. According to feminist theory developed by DAWN, any theoretical analysis of militarism would be incomplete without an examination of how elements of the patriarchal system intersect and reinforce each other. This alternative feminist approach requires the corresponding actions by women to expand their spaces of peace in order to transform this paradigm into a culture of peace. Using holistic feminist analyses in this section, I turn to the literature to discuss the patriarchal influences of war and the corresponding spaces that women are opening in the form of responses that offer solutions and the strategies being used to arrive at them. As mentioned earlier, four of the themes relate specifically to patriarchy and the other two to the feminist peace alternatives. In the remainder of this chapter I engage with feminists who treat these themes with a holistic analysis. I engage primarily with literature on the following major themes: spirituality and religion, economic systems, and the environment. The themes involving hierarchy, pacifism, and alternative visions are interwoven throughout this discussion.

A consistent message that was woven throughout the interviews was the belief that the dominance of masculine values that are on the increase in society today have led to an increase in war and violence. Yet women in the peace movement are creatively opening up space for women in the public sphere. They are doing this by identifying the

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<sup>23</sup> DAWN is a network of feminist activists, researchers, and policymakers who have come together from different parts of the Economic South, to develop alternative approaches and methods to attain the goals of social and economic justice, peace, and development; free of all forms of oppression by gender, class, race, and nation (Sen and Grown, 1987).

environmental, economic, and religious influences that combine to form the socio-political causes of war and by bringing women's energy containing peaceful alternatives into the largely male-dominated and aggressive energy of the political sphere. These actions have the power to restore the lost balance within our society in order to bring about peace.

The separations used by patriarchy to perpetuate a culture of war are different from the connections that are so highly valued by women working for peace. Women's processes of communication in the peace movement are built on non-hierarchical connections formed among them. This theme arose consistently in both the interviews and the peace literature that I reviewed for this thesis. Moreover, it represents one of the primary differences between the way in which women and men relate to the world. As researched by Carol Gilligan (1982, as cited by Kheel, 2000, 207): "women's ethical conduct and thought tends to derive more from a sense of connection with others and of morality. Men's sense of morality, on the other hand, tends to derive more from an abstract sense of obligations and rights." In *The Birth of Pleasure*, Gilligan (2002) also points out that as long as hierarchical relationships exist within the most intimate of relationships, we will always have war.

The process of "othering", or labelling of one side or party as the perpetrator and the other the victim, has long been cited as one of the root causes, if not the primary cause, of war. In what Linda Christiansen-Ruffman (1989) calls the "either/or syndrome", she points out that "we" versus "they", (or in this case "one" side versus "the other" side) is more characteristic of a hierarchical and patriarchal-organized approach to the world

than one based on women's culture. "Dichotomous reasoning", says Christiansen-Ruffman (1989, 135-136 as cited in Wood, 2002, 150), "can also be conceived along a continuum of one level of reality through our instructions to form mutually-exclusive and exhaustive categories.... Perhaps a legitimate and corrective assumption would be to see how both 'ends' of such dualism might apply to an individual in different ways and over time and space." Wood (2002, 150) also points out that: "[A]t the same time, it can be hazardous to fall into the trap of one-dimensional, 'either/or' analytical thinking with your eyes shut. So we must be aware and keep in mind the nature of patriarchy when incorporating the notion of dualism into our theoretical framework." The multifaceted nature of the connections made by women in the peace movement imply an inclusive, holistic way of taking up space, where differences are negotiated and valued as an integral part of the whole, a set of interrelationships rich in diversity. This is quite different in essence from the linear, hierarchical structures inherent in patriarchal spaces.

The differences in male and female perspectives concerning space are evident in a review by Linda Christiansen-Ruffman (1986, 202) of a book about a peace camp in Puget Sound, Washington entitled: *We Are Ordinary Women*. The camp exemplified a feminist space of peace, and when it was physically disbanded, many of the connections of peace that were formed continued to exist. The following quote by Christiansen-Ruffman (1986, 202) clearly illustrates the nature of these connections:

A patriarchal chronicle would objectify the peace camp in space and time. This feminist chronicle recognizes the camp's circumstances, in multiple events which formed its context. Focus is on process, on actions, on multiplicity. And the end is not seen as finality. As one participant observed: 'Whatever action you take, know that there is a global women's nonviolent peace movement and that you can

contribute to its strength by saying NO to militarism, injustice and violence in whatever nonviolent way you can.’

### **Political Cultures of Patriarchy and of Peace**

Dualisms become problematic within patriarchy because of the way in which patriarchy relates them to each other and to the world--as mutually exclusive, ordered, out of context, and unrelated as a whole--as denotative of a higher status to one of two equally important parts that is then used as a basis for domination, control, and exploitation of, for example, women and nature as I discuss later in the section about ecofeminism. Therefore, women's spaces do not exist in isolation within patriarchy but in relation to it. The patriarchal framework provides the context within which women's spaces exist. The boundaries of women's space within that context are fluid, shifting, and often permeable. Even spaces defined by women are seldom entirely separate or objective. Once created, women's spaces need to be constantly protected and maintained, because patriarchy consistently tries to push back and eliminate the gains that women have made in expanding their space.

### **Violence and Aggression and Cultures of Peace**

Aggression is one way the hierarchical patriarchal system asserts its dominance over nature, women and other nations. It is a characteristic typically attributed, although not exclusively, to male behaviour, and therefore often a quality of patriarchal space. Kheel (2000, 206) argues that: “aggressive conduct is not prohibited under patriarchy, merely restrained and controlled. Violence is allowed in ritualistic form within specific ceremonial contexts. The institutionalization of violence in modern society serves a legitimating function similar to that of ritual violence.” Aggression is often condoned

under patriarchy in the name of an abstract ideal, typically the greater good, or in religious contexts, as the “will of God” (Kheel, 2000). In this way, a thinly camouflaged continuum of male violence is constantly operating within society. What mechanisms operate within society to produce such a high level of acceptance of global violence, and what can be done to change it?

According to Marilyn French (1985), the male quality of aggressiveness, often seen a root cause of war, is learned, and therefore resorting to violence is a choice that can be unlearned. As French (1985, 514) states: “Indeed, aggressive qualities are associated with ‘manliness’ in the West. To be a man in patriarchal society means to appear to be in control.” French (1985, 515) adds that:

We would not have such a violent culture if we did not want a violent culture. Whatever its biological root, aggressiveness is learned. One need not even exalt violence (as our movies and television films in fact do) to foster it: one need only create a culture that worships power, individuality, disconnection from others, and competition; and disparages the satisfactions of life devoted to affection, fellowship, and harmony. Since aggressiveness is learned, it is a moral rather than a biological quality. We can thus choose to esteem it or not. We should also realize that cultures that exalt aggression and the qualities that foster it are invariably militaristic, and in the past, have destroyed themselves through war.

The importance of French’s realization that war is not inevitable and her focus on aggression should not be underestimated. French's (1985) conceptual linking of the continuance of aggressive cycles of war that will lead to annihilation of present civilization unless checked clearly supports efforts discussed here to expand women's spaces of peace where the “feminine” qualities leading to harmonious relationships can be developed.

In the discussion of ecofeminism in “From Heroic to Holistic Ethics: The Ecofeminist Challenge”, Marti Kheel (2000) discusses the phenomenon of “truncated narratives”, as a clear example of one of the many strategies used by patriarchal forces to influence the making of ethical decisions. The world we live in, as designed by patriarchy, is set up for separation, and Kheel (2000, 207) goes on to describe how patriarchy has worked towards this goal:<sup>24</sup>

Wrenching an ethical problem out of its embedded context severs the problem from its roots. The problem is conventionally posed in a static, linear fashion, detached from the context in which it was formed. In a sense, we are given truncated stories and then asked what we think the ending should be. However, if we do not understand the world view that produced the dilemma that we are asked to consider, we have no way of evaluating the situation except on its own terms.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> When reading about Kheel's description of her term “truncated narratives”, I thought it was a profound idea because it clearly demonstrates the separations caused by hierarchical thinking within patriarchal society.

<sup>25</sup> Patriarchy is based on disconnection, and Marti Kheel's use of the term “truncated narratives” describes a method used to separate people from each other and the larger truths. The lines between separation and connection are often fluid and changing in our daily lived realities; yet this theory offers a clear way of illustrating the way in which patriarchy is largely based on individualism and the separations that it brings about. The different world view held by women in the peace movement is one that finds its basis and its joy in connections formed by relationships and one that models a new paradigm of peace. A UNESCO founded workshop called “The Art of Living in Peace” promotes developing an awareness of this interconnectedness as the basis for all life. Early VOW documents support the UNESCO vision for peace. The theme of connections is reflected in a workshop designed by UNESCO called “The Art of Living in Peace.” Several VOW members and I attended this UNESCO workshop, and we found it helpful in expanding our awareness of the interconnectedness of all beings. We engaged in exercises designed to bring about awareness in us of the interconnectedness of all beings in a peaceful, non-grasping way. The workshop is “based in a holistic vision of education that has as its intention to awaken both reason and intuition.” It teaches that harmony within oneself is important so that it can emanate outwards and enables one to form peaceful connections with all other beings. “The program follows the recommendations of UNESCO's Venice Declaration of March 1986, which says: “We recognize the urgency of a true Transdisciplinary research in the context of a dynamic exchange between exact science and human science, art and tradition. In this context, the Transdisciplinary approach is written in our brain through the dynamic interaction between the two sides of the brain. The joint study of nature and imagination, of the universe and men [including the on-going attempts of women at that time to ensure an end to patriarchal standpoints] would allow us to better face the different challenges of our time.” “The Art of Living in Peace”, an excellent example of peace education, was a workshop initiated by the

For example, the Canadian public has seldom been aware of the devastating effects of war, or the way mining companies practicing unethical mining operations destroy whole communities as well as the natural habitats in which they are located. In this way, the support of taxpayers and shareholders is garnered.<sup>26</sup> This is typical of the separations that are present in patriarchal thought. According to Kheel's argument, it is precisely this separation from the natural world that allows for decisions regarding aggression and warfare to be made (Kheel 2000).<sup>27</sup> When discussing the holistic, ecofeminist approach, Kheel (2000, 209) explains that: "It occurs in a holistic context in which we know the whole story within which our actions take place." This forms the basis of a holistic feminist analysis. According to Kheel (2000, 209): "It means rethinking the stories that we have come to believe under patriarchy...." She continues, adding that: "Since we live in a fragmented world, we will need to stretch our imaginations to put it back together again." Kheel (2000, 209) notes that this is because: "Reason is easily divided from emotion when our emotions are disconnected from

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International Holistic University of Brasilia and written by Professor Pierre Weil. "The International Holistic University of Brasilia understands peace as a holistic realization involving the individual, society, and nature. The University has been supporting the United Nations' effort of peace-building, peacemaking, and peacekeeping. It has become a catalyst for the process of promoting new strategies for global education for peace, which break illusionary barriers of separation of peoples and nations." The workshop was integral to a deep holistic understanding of peace through the interconnectedness of all beings. Liberation from conflict and achievement of peace is possible by transcending dualistic and fragmented thinking. Peace is inherent in everything that exists, we just have to awaken it. The method teaches us to identify and eliminate the obstacles that prevent us from being peaceful, cultivating qualities such as love, compassion, joyfulness, equanimity and developing a non-fragmented vision of the universe."

<sup>26</sup> Muriel Duckworth was involved in a highly publicized court case because she refused to pay taxes that would support war.

<sup>27</sup> War, especially with the incorporation of drones, is the ultimate space of separation (Tapestry, April 2009). This allows for the dehumanization of the enemy and the subsequent disconnection that contributes to the ability of soldiers to commit atrocities such as torture.

experience.” This has allowed much of the violence perpetuated against the natural world to be done without being readily apparent (Kheel, 2000). Western ethical theory is designed to remedy crises, not to prevent war or maintain peace. Kheel (2000, 210) uses the metaphor of “allopathic medicine and its treatment of disease at the crisis level, that uses a dramatic, technological fix, instead of focusing on its prevention” to illustrate how war is used to deal with issues that have developed into conflicts instead of working steadily to create a culture of peace using a holistic feminist analysis.

Feminists question the dominant patriarchal paradigm, and they develop new languages, ones that prioritize the quality of relationships and interactions of all life. This requires the knowledge of complete stories that can form the basis of a holistic world view. “If ecofeminists are sincere in their desire to live in a world of peace and nonviolence for all living beings, we must help each other through the painstaking process of piecing together the fragmented world view that we have inherited. But the pieces cannot simply be patched together” (Kheel 2000, 211). She recommends that: “What is needed is a reweaving of all of the old stories and narratives into a multifaceted tapestry” (Kheel, 2000, 211). While the reality is that our daily lives are most often lived with fluidity and reflexivity within the grey area that fluctuates between one end of the continuum and the other, this theory offers a clear example of the differences in the core values that form the basis of men's and women's spaces.

### **Spirituality**

A consistent theme among the majority of the women I interviewed was their criticism of many mainstream patriarchal religions and the oppressive effect that their



hierarchical structures had on the lives of women. Yet, the importance of the spiritual dimensions of peace was often discussed as bearing quite different qualities. Feminist spirituality transcends patriarchy and connects all of the other themes about peace that were discussed. It has sustained within the women the deep core belief that working persistently for peace was the right thing to do. Muriel Duckworth stated that: “Peace is a process, a spiritual one, and perhaps one we are not meant to know the answer to.” The teachings of Buddhist and environmentalist Johanna Macy influenced the early members of The Voice of Women. Gandhi's influence was cited often by members of both VOW and WILPF.<sup>28</sup> Despite the fact that the women were highly critical of many institutional patriarchal religions, they do participate in some contemporary religions, as I discuss in the following section.

In reviewing the demographics, it was surprising that of the six participants that I had chosen to interview, four of the women were Quakers. Yet as my awareness of Quaker history increased throughout the progression of my research, I saw that this was congruent with the values of the women I had sought out to interview. Many early Quaker women were also feminists whose primary concern was working for peace. All of the participants in this thesis held critical views about the hierarchical nature of other Christian religions. Historically, Quaker values have included a strong tenant of non-hierarchical egalitarianism which is incorporated into the structure of their weekly worship gatherings, which are called “Meetings.” This distinction is evidenced in the structure of the local Meeting of the Society of Friends in Halifax by the lack of either a

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<sup>28</sup> Vandana Shiva has often been quoted as saying that each day Gandhi prayed to become more like a woman. He had many “disciples” who were women and strong.

minister or a preacher. Ursula Franklin (2006) has drawn great strength from being affiliated with the Quaker faith, partly because it supported her belief that a key element in a peaceful society must be egalitarianism, in contrast to the hierarchies patriarchy has created. For example, Quaker writing in 1763 in Britain adamantly supported working to end all forms of oppression in the world (Quakers, edited collection, 1999, 23-24). In 1852, the effort to end oppression was written to specifically include women (Quakers, edited collection, 1852, 23, 39) and in the Epistle of the First International Theological Conference of Quaker Women, 1990, its feminist, egalitarian leanings are evidenced by the following statement: “We have been reminded vividly that women live under cultural, political, and economic oppression. All humanity is lessoned by it; we are unwilling to tolerate its perpetuation, and must continue to work for justice and peace in the world....” (Quakers, edited collection, 1994, 23-40). For a more complete discussion of the importance of spirituality and practices echoed by many of the respondents in this thesis see: M. H. Bacon (1986), *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America*, Quakers (1994), *Quaker Faith and Practice* (edited collection of Quaker writings), and Ursula Franklin (2006), *The Ursula Franklin Reader: Pacifism as a Map*.

A key element in the Quaker faith is its political engagement in which women have often played a strong part. Many early Quaker women were feminists (see Bacon, 1986) and have been recorded during the mid-1600s, with their early political work in the Boston States, setting up separate groups from the men. The Quaker faith sees what it terms as “the light of Christ” as existing in each and every human being, thereby placing divine worth in one's inner nature and leading to a belief in one's self. In this way,

Quakers see the internal self as essentially good in contrast with other dominant Christian religions. These values are consistent with the pacifist tradition, believing that a peaceful resolution to all conflict is possible through the process of consensus.

This pacifist thread is also evidenced in Native spirituality, to which one participant is closely linked, where, similarly to Quakers, communities place a high value on the consensus method of conflict resolution. They see a spiritual element in all of nature, including both animals and the earth. Patriarchy has falsely made this into a dichotomy of living and non-living entities. Many Native tribes were primarily matriarchal before European colonization destroyed their internal political structures and more holistic ways of living.<sup>29</sup>

According to feminist thinker and Iroquois theorist Barbara Mann (2009), dualisms are not necessarily negative. It is simply the way in which they are seen to relate to each other and to the world that needs to be re-examined. Dualisms in the context of Native tradition can be seen as forming part of a continuum that is a necessary part of a whole. This is illustrated by their belief in the “Four Directions”, that play an integral role in Aboriginal traditions. They are different, yet necessary to each other, and together, they form an integral part the whole.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Gift Economy: Cultures of Peace and Mothering as a Cultural Paradigm**

The present economic system was cited by the participants and within the peace literature as playing a large role in fuelling the global tensions that result in wars.

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<sup>29</sup> Heide Goettner-Abendroth's book on modern Matriarchal Studies, a focus on matriarchal societies that still endure, is entitled *Societies of Peace* (2009).

<sup>30</sup> This information was learned via personal communication with Linda Christiansen-Ruffman (November, 2012), who has also critiqued the either-or syndrome within patriarchy (Christiansen-Ruffman, 1989).

Genevieve Vaughan (see Vaughan, 1997) spent many years developing the theory of the gift economy. As a young mother she realized that her husband's, and other theories of social relationships, did not fit with those that had with her children and with others. Genevieve Vaughan (1997, 2002) offers gift-giving as a paradigmatic alternative to the current system of social and economic relations. The Gift Economy alternative economic theory has led to the formation of International Feminists for a Gift Economy. This network created and produced a "Position Statement for a Peaceful World" in the Alternative Economics Group in the Wise Women's Workshop at the Women's University, Norway, July 2001. This political statement on the Gift Economy includes spiritual, economic, and environmental elements for a new paradigm. The gift economy replaces patriarchal capitalism, based in the logic of domination with the gift-giving logic of mothering. This is based on the unilateral or "free" gifts that mothers give to children in order to ensure their survival. According to Vaughan, men are socialized away from this gift-giving towards a self-reflecting logic of competition and domination, resulting in a strong sense of individualism that is reinforced by society. Vaughan's theoretical framework includes the concept of the "masculation" of male children. She argues that in this process young boys are taught that they belong to a different gender from their gift-giving mother and in order to survive must emulate their fathers, a process that involves the assimilation of male characteristics involving hierarchy and domination. These ideas are transmitted to the child through language, a tool of patriarchal communication, that, as Vaughan (2002) cautions, we cannot afford to underestimate.

As planned, International Feminists for a Gift Economy issued their statement at the World Social Forum in January 2002.<sup>31</sup> In it they build on the theory of Genevieve Vaughan (2002) and her claim that embedded within patriarchal capitalism are the hierarchical methods of unequal exchange that lead to competition, accumulation, and perceived scarcity. The Gift Economy points to this actual mechanism of exchange as the essential problem within capitalist economies. The creation of scarcity, the globalization of spiritual and material poverty, and the destruction of cultures and species are essential expressions of a parasitical centralizing system that denies the gift-giving logic of mothering. Since gift-giving requires abundance, the parasite can only keep the gift-giving host from gaining power by creating artificial scarcity, through the monopolization of wealth and by exploiting the generosity of the gift giver (Vaughan, 2002).

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<sup>31</sup> The following ideas were taken from "Feminists for a Gift Economy. Position Statement for a Peaceful World" that originated in the Alternative Economics Group Wise Women's Workshop and was presented at the World Social Forum in 2002.

Vaughan argues that in order to return to a state of life-giving abundance within society, exchange itself, and not just unequal exchange, must give way to the gift (2002, 2007). The creation of gift-based economies and a culture where life is not commodified may seem like a radical change to the society we are presently living in, but in order to instigate real changes, there are very few alternatives to this seemingly utopian vision. Is it more “realistic” to continue in our attempts to survive and care for one another in the frighteningly destructive and increasingly toxic world we know today, or to attempt to change the trajectory that society is on by making deep and long-lasting changes? Women have worked to transform political spaces and have made important, though fragile and highly-contested gains in the last decades in: affirming women's legal, sexual, and reproductive rights; challenging fundamentalisms; opposing violence and war; and improving women's education, health, and economic conditions. While these struggles have broken new ground, they have been done within the exchange paradigm, and it is time for us as women to seek new terrain. Vaughan, in her discussion of *The Gift Economy*, offers us insights into how to reach this new terrain by opening up new types of economic spaces that sustain life, guide and create abundance, and contain within them the seeds of a transformative culture of peace (Vaughan, 1997, 2002, 2007).<sup>32</sup>

The philosophy behind the creation of the Gift Giving Paradigm is reflected in the following quote, taken from the initial position paper by Feminists for a Gift Economy

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<sup>32</sup> This quote is taken from the position paper entitled “Feminists for a Gift Economy, Position Statement for a Peaceful World”, given by “Feminists For a Gift Economy”, a group formed when: A network: “International Feminists for a Gift Economy” was initiated at the founding meeting of the International Feminist University in Norway in 2001. In 2002, a position statement from the network was presented at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and a first general meeting was held in San Marcos, Texas.

(2006, 163), which was written in 2001 and presented in 2002 at the World Social Forum in Brazil:

From the dawn of time, women's gifts have been creating and sustaining community, and we have struggled to make the world a better place. In recent years women have been articulating new forms of protest, refusing war and all forms of violence, protecting the environment and all life, creating new multi-centred and diverse political spaces and defining new politics of care, community, compassion and connectedness.

### **Ecofeminism**<sup>33</sup>

Ecofeminism is the corresponding theoretical framework that contains solutions within an alternative paradigm created by women that can help to change the course of the current global situation of environmental destruction and climate change. It is included in this thesis partly because war is the largest destroyer of the environment, and also because increased climate change is leading to food insecurity, famine, and mass migration of displaced people. This, in turn, is leading to increased global insecurity due to an increase in conflicts as a result of these issues. Pregnant women, children, and the elderly are the most vulnerable segment of the world's population, and they will be the people most affected by climate change.

The qualities of the women's spaces that ecofeminism describes, such as cooperation, locally-based solutions, and connection to networks of global activists, are similar to the qualities found in women's spaces of peace. They are also reflected in the philosophy of the Gift Giving Paradigm as cited above. As discussed in the previous chapter, Vandana Shiva (2012) recommends putting the ownership of land back into the

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<sup>33</sup> This section on ecofeminism includes many different elements, as the women I interviewed always connected the environment to many of the other issues they were discussing in relation to peace.

hands of local women as a solution to many of the agricultural problems occurring in India. These problems are largely a result of the monopolization of agriculture by large corporations such as Monsanto. Farmers have been forced to buy non-regenerating seeds from Monsanto, often entering into unending debt cycles that often end in suicides. In order to counteract the damage this would do, Vandana Shiva (2012) began saving seeds when she first heard of this practice starting. Because of such seed-saving projects, there are now many seed banks for local farmers to buy their seeds from, instead of from the large multinational corporations that destroy local agriculturally-based communities. Seed-saving practices are an age-old part of long-standing women's culture, and Shiva's (2012) recent activism that incorporates it is an excellent example of its continuation in modern times. Another example of women's culture is seen in many parts of India, where women are planting small organic gardens in their backyards. Using strategies such as these, the holistic analyses of ecofeminism can replace a life-destroying culture with a culture that supports life (Shiva, 2012).<sup>34</sup>

Ecofeminist theory looks at the dual oppression of nature and women by patriarchal forces, and it thereby offers a useful lens through which to examine the displacement of women's space from the public sphere. Marti Kheel (2000, 201), in her article: "From Heroic to Holistic Ethics: The Ecofeminist Challenge" describes why a detailed feminist analysis of patriarchy is important:

Change can only occur by creating an awareness of the world view that created the current problems and that will in turn facilitate a transformed consciousness towards all of life. Western patriarchal thought has denoted Nature, imaged as a

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<sup>34</sup> These ideas were presented by Vandana Shiva at a talk she gave at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) on November 12, 2012, after she was presented with an honorary doctorate from the University of Toronto.



female, as the 'other.' It represents the passions[,] the connotation being one of 'evil' or 'inert' matter. The masculine identity has been created in binary opposition to this 'other', thereby excluding nature and women.

Karen J. Warren (2000), in "The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism", describes the value-laden element that is inherent in Western patriarchal thought. According to Warren (2000, 215): "There is a 'logic of domination' that supports the denotation of a higher status to certain characteristics which the dominant (e.g., men) have and the subordinate (e.g., women) lack. It is the logic of domination, coupled with value-laden hierarchical thinking and value-dualisms, which 'justifies' subordination." This point illustrates the way in which patriarchy formulates and subsequently justifies the use of hierarchies. Hierarchies are the primary method used by patriarchal systems to oppress women and nature. It is the same system of hierarchical domination that is responsible for the instigation of war. It requires a continuous and conscious effort as feminists to see and live in the world differently and to engage in egalitarian principles such as an appreciation of difference where diversity is valued as equally contributing to the whole. These relationships of diversity and equality are described by the theoretical framework defined as "integrative feminisms" as put forward by Angela Miles (1996) and are discussed in greater detail in chapters 1 and 9.

Understanding how the male identity is formed in opposition to female characteristics, similarly to how it is formed in opposition to Nature, is crucial to an understanding of how the decentering of women's agenda from the primary political spaces is justified by patriarchy. Warren (2000, 216) tells us that it is not simply the fact that dualisms or value-hierarchies are used, but "the way in which each has been used in

oppressive conceptual frameworks to establish inferiority and to justify subordination.” Even the terms “better” or “worse” can be used as descriptors with value-laden negative connotations added to them that then can be used to create oppressive hierarchical practices.

### **Patriarchal and Women's Spaces: An Analysis of Patriarchy by Robin Morgan**

Robin Morgan (1989) draws together many of the ideas that are expressed earlier in this chapter about the qualities of patriarchal space, how it undermines women's ability to create peace, and specifically, how it differs from women's space. She goes on to discuss the corresponding characteristics of female space that can form the basis of a new paradigm. In her discussion of space, Morgan also describes other, less visible social relations that involve the body and sexuality. She predicts in 1989, in *The Demon Lover: On The Sexuality of Terrorism*, the violent direction that society would take if it continued on the same trajectory that it was on then. Her description of the violence inherent in patriarchal systems points with shocking accuracy to the groundwork that was being laid for future terrorist attacks that actually did occur, for example: the Oklahoma bombing, 911, and more recently, the Norwegian massacre.

A definitive quality of patriarchal space is separation. This is seen in its desire to compartmentalize and in its capacity for institutionalizing disconnection. This, in turn, leads to the severing of intellect from emotion, the separation of thought from action, and the split of science from art. It lays the ground for the creation of unequal hierarchies and the subsequent systems of domination that result in war, as discussed previously in

chapter 6 and above. According to Morgan (1989), this constitutes one of the primary reasons behind the desire to expand women's spaces within society.

In contrast to patriarchal space, the primary quality of women's space is connection. Morgan (1989, 53) describes it in the following way: "If I had to characterize one quality as the genius of feminist thought, culture, and action, it would be *connectivity*. In its rejection of the static, this capacity is witty and protean, like the dance of nature itself as reflected in the spectrum from microbiology to astrophysics." In this way a powerful bond of interdependence is born and women connect to provide collective strength to one another while also respecting each woman's individuality (Morgan, 1989). These social relations among women are also named by Miles (1996) as the basis for a multicentered women's movement that will be discussed in chapter 9.

The act of noticing is a powerful activist technique for being in the world as well as changing the world. This is the type of power that is inherent in the silent presence of peace vigils, as discussed in previous chapters. It includes the multiple, unpredictable powers that are fluid and shifting in form. This speaks to the free spirits of women and also to the difficulty patriarchal forces have in oppressing spaces with these types of qualities (Morgan, 1989). "Wisdom, truth, serenity, love are kinds of power, but power isn't necessarily inherent in any of them" (Morgan, 1989, 325). These qualities support a description of women's spaces. According to Morgan (1989), sexuality and violence are inextricably linked within the patriarchal system. Also, during war, each country points to the "other" as the initiator of or reason for conflicts, yet men and boys with guns are a commonality that can be seen within all patriarchal states, regardless of what side of the

border one is currently on. Hierarchy is intrinsic to the formation of the male identity in a patriarchal society. The male self is defined by its ability to dominate others, a conquest that never ends. Fear of death emanates from the perceived loss of control. According to Morgan (1989, 325), “The sole source of fear for such a people is the loss (or theft) of consciousness while still alive, a death-in-life that is the ‘fate worse than death’ ” (1989, 325). Morgan suggests that within the patriarchal culture of war, death is exalted and transposed onto sexuality, resulting in a form of eroticism in which violence plays an integral role, as is depicted by pornography. It is this thread of sexuality that is often represented in the media, taking precedence over more life-affirming forms of intimacy and eroticism that are based on equality and where both parties have mutual respect for one another. During war the symbolic melding of violence and sexuality is strengthened, resulting in an ideology wherein the killing of “the other” results in the ultimate sense of control. This is used to seduce and harness the loyalties of men, especially young men, into killing people who are completely unknown to them. An artificial construct is created within this context, wherein death is viewed as one of the highest forms of eroticism. The cyclical pattern of warfare is fuelled by this dynamic. It can also create the motivation to maintain a permanent state of war, as it is the primary space where the conditions exist to participate in this quest to fulfill this unquenchable desire that patriarchal ideology has created. In civilian life, this insatiable desire can be channelled into consumerism in a vain attempt to fill the empty void. The implications of Morgan's (1989) argument, the major tenants of which have been outlined above, are manifold, and

extend along the continuum of patriarchal violence that exists throughout peacetime and into war.

### **Patriarchal and Feminist Eroticism**

Morgan's (1989) analysis offers a corresponding description of the symbolism present in feminist eroticism which contrasts sharply with the patriarchal linking of power, sexuality, and death as discussed above. As Morgan (1989, 326) writes, "It implies a totally different politics--of celebration, of creative collaboration." Morgan (1989, 326) quotes Mary Daly's description of this type of politics as "biophilic: life-loving." Morgan (1989, 326-327) adds:

I would call it the politics of Eros because the energy of this desire, of erotic intelligence is inherently the expression of respect, of fierce tenderness, of caring in totality, of humor, friendship, amity, and trust. By expressing this longing for integrity in loving, this rejection of fetishized body parts and compartmentalized relationships, this refusal to isolate physical sensuality from emotional affection, women have shown themselves, in masculinist terms, notoriously remiss.

(Morgan, 1989, 326-327) continues, adding that: "Reclaiming the erotic in our own terms, redefining power(s) in our own terms, are inseparable acts for women." Given the historical strength of patriarchal oppression, it is difficult to shift the qualities of spaces to ones of mutual caring and respect. "But", as Morgan (1989, 327) says, "the energy of female erotic intelligence freed from the Demon Lover, combined with our numbers as a majority and our growing indigenous tactical sophistication, can get us there." Morgan (1989, 328) continues, adding that: "Women cannot be put into the empty spaces of patriarchal thought and systems--in moving to the center, they transform the system." Morgan (1989, 328) asserts that only "now she can glory in her own desire for living in a newly imagined space and a newly conceived manner, approachable by her tactics."

Morgan (1989) identifies a primary quality that women in women's groups have in common: the ability to recognize each other as existing in their own right as full, complex, and interconnected individuals, or as Miles might say, individuals who are autonomous and diverse. Women need to become familiar with the power of their own spaces before venturing into patriarchal institutions in order to affect changes within them as well as in the larger society (Morgan, 1989). Women's spaces of peace model an alternative paradigm to the patriarchal cycle of war, where revolutionaries often unwittingly emulate the oppressor and support the perpetuation of war. These ideas support the argument for the expansion of women-friendly alternative spaces within the public realm.

In my overview, Robin Morgan's ideas are important because the data and the themes, combined with the ideas of the theorists, have all generated a focus on a transformative society that is similar to hers. Morgan provides an analysis of patriarchy and war, which I did not find elsewhere. The linking of violence and eroticism, as a tool of war, by patriarchy, is explained by Robin Morgan. This is the only major idea explored within the thesis that was not discussed by the participants. I thought it was important to address this topic, as it extends the discussion on war and peace further by taking it to an even deeper level of analysis. Reviewing these ideas in a holistic way allowed for them to be studied in relationship to one another in order that they might contribute to building a transformative paradigm of peace.

### **Transformative Patriarchy: A Conclusion**

The values expressed within women-only peace groups would be difficult to create and strengthen if they remained submerged within mainstream patriarchal culture. This knowledge and the importance of women-only spaces was not specifically researched. In my research all the women interviewed were feminists, either implicitly or explicitly. Whether they supported women-only spaces within the peace movement correlated directly with the extent to which they articulated a holistic feminist analysis. The more clearly they articulated a feminist analysis, the more clearly they recognized the inherent misogyny within the predominant patriarchal culture. All the views of the women were in support of this view whether they explicitly drew the connections or not.

For the reasons mentioned above, women-only spaces are important for the development of women's values of peace. It is virtually impossible not to internalize some of the patriarchal values that surround us, therefore, separate spaces may allow women to gain some distance from their influence and to benefit from the validation and support of other women in order to further articulate values of peace. These groups help women to avoid being co-opted by patriarchal thought, or in Morgan's (1989) view, from being seduced by the Demon Lover. As well, the collective voice formed within these spaces provides the strength that is a vital part of successful political transformation. In order for peaceful processes to become the predominant narrative in society, women-only spaces are needed to generate and create new narratives that can be brought with expertise and confidence into mainstream society.

When Morgan (1989) asks us to imagine stepping out of empty patriarchal spaces that seek to control and destroy life, she invites us to step into the center of our

own spaces and into the company of our newly-experienced selves. From here we can experience true freedom, which Morgan (1989, 328) defines as: “The right not to lie.” To live in our own truth is a strong act of resistance to patriarchal control. The fluid, multiple powers that are employed by women are less easily controlled by patriarchy as is evident in the alternatives they use to respond to crises of development.<sup>35</sup> As discussed in chapter 7, these powers are also demonstrated through the resilience called on by victims of rape in war in order to heal from these horrendous war crimes. In relation to the Bosnian conflict, these women found that specifically women-defined spaces, such as the Medica Centre that was discussed by Cockburn in relation to the Bosnian conflict, supported this process. Men were only present at the center in supportive roles such as providing transportation. Rape has been termed as the ultimate annihilation of women’s space by patriarchy, and therefore it is important that the new spaces created by its survivors, which can be seen as part of their new identities, are of their own making and not built according to the dictates of patriarchy (Cockburn, 2007). A feminist analysis offers the women a new language by which to perceive of and redefine the reality of their experiences of rape during war and with which to formulate their new identities. These women are no longer under what Morgan (1989) refers to as the seduction of the Demon Lover, or its false promises of protection, and they heal with an undeniable strength, into new lives and spaces of their own creation (Cockburn, 2007). Morgan (1989, 328) argues in the following quote that only from these types of women-centered places, with women’s values as the catalyst for creating life-affirming values, can society be

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<sup>35</sup> This idea is developed further in the DAWN analysis (1987) by Sen and Grown as discussed in chapter 1.



transformed into a culture of peace: “Transformation requires that we enter history on our own terms and audaciously place ourselves at the center of it.” With this shift in the positioning of women’s space, as is reflected in peace vigils, women can empower both themselves and society to adopt the life-nurturing values of peace. They have done so in women’s groups such as VOW and WILPF, both autonomously and collectively. In time, according to Morgan (1989), this center will move to become the primary center of society, and men will eventually be drawn to these life-affirming values of love and peace.

Morgan (1989) describes women’s power as unpredictable, like freedom. It operates differently from oppression, which follows a highly predictable and monotonous pattern. She states that she is leaving no one behind, because it is not about the absence of men, but about the presence of women. It is different from the empty spaces of patriarchy. Morgan (1989, 334, 342) describes the qualities that define this difference, those inherent in women’s space:

So it is not merely the absence of war but the presence of peace, not merely the absence of tragedy but the presence of comedy, not merely the absence of hate but the presence of love, not merely the absence of ignorance but the presence of intelligence, not merely the absence of death but the presence of life. And it is not merely the absence of fear, but the presence of trust. To the centrality of these spaces, men will eventually be drawn, and society will experience the gradual transformation towards a peaceful state.

For years, as women, we have been silenced, enmeshed in patriarchal systems to the point of being numb. We have lost our voices: our spaces so violated that our minds have lost the ability to think as women. We must go to other ways of knowing, of remembering, of taking up space. We need to reinvent the language of feminine consciousness. Our souls, our bodies, and our spirits remember. Our birthright must be

reclaimed. United we can uphold our truth. Our voices must once again take the forefront, and heal the earth, transforming it once again into a space of peace.<sup>36</sup>

These ideas reflect the alternative feminist and holistic analysis that was used within this chapter to draw together many of the interrelated feminist themes and theories that have evolved from within this thesis. They include a discussion of the hierarchies inherent within patriarchy and tangible examples of spiritual, economic, and environmental alternatives that could contribute to the building of a transformative paradigm. Although each of these theories is clearly focused--on spirituality, environmentalism, economics, and patriarchal sexism respectively--they share similar feminist assumptions, critiques and analyses, and collectively, they contribute to a deeper understanding of women's spaces of peace.

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<sup>36</sup>These words were inspired specifically by ideas presented in the gift economy and "A Women's Creed", which was written by Robin Morgan, in collaboration with other feminists, several of whom are theorists whose ideas have been incorporated into this thesis and support its theoretical base. For "A Women's Creed", see Linda Christiansen-Ruffman (2013, 584-585).

**Chapter 9:**  
**Living Peace: Wise Women, Thinkers and Theorists**  
**Who Frame the Thesis**

The themes surrounding the issue of women's space that consistently emerged throughout this thesis from the voices of the participants, from the case studies of two women's peace groups, and from the literature reviewed are as salient now as they have been in the past. In order to illustrate this, I have chosen to conclude by discussing the ideas of two primary feminist theorists, Virginia Woolf (1929, 1938) and Angela Miles (1996), and three prominent feminist thinkers and activists: Ursula Franklin (2006), Vandana Shiva (1988, 1989, 2000), and Muriel Duckworth (2006). I to reflect on the relationship of their ideas to women's spaces of peace. Their work illustrates the historical thread by which the issues discussed in this thesis have affected women over time. I conclude the thesis with a final tribute to the work of Muriel Duckworth, who during her lifetime, both embodied and created women's spaces of peace. All of these women are linked by the same concurrent theme that has run throughout their work. They are feminists who have worked throughout their lives to define and create an alternative paradigm based on peaceful values, including equality, ecological, economic and social justice.

When I initially began this thesis, I had not expected to focus on women's space and its relationship to peace. I then began to conceive of the importance of women's space in an effort to analyze the historical case studies and the interviews and to understand the data. I began to notice it as a feminist concept not necessarily "theorized"

in the literature about women and peace. For example, women's difficulty in transforming theory into action is often related directly back to their lack of space in which to enact changes. Space as it is used here can be equated with power, therefore, its lack can be seen as a primary cause of disempowerment among women within patriarchal culture.

Using grounded theory methodology, I returned to the feminist literature for further comparisons between my inductive findings and the literature, for a second look at a more macro analysis. I then found that the concern over the lack of women's space has historical roots, and it can be related directly back to the writing of Virginia Woolf (1929, 1938). I found Woolf's (1929, 1938) writing about women's space very powerful symbolically and was surprised by its absence at present in scholarly writing. I discovered that Woolf had addressed and articulated many of the themes that had evolved out of this thesis, from both the interviews and the feminist literature I had reviewed. Since Virginia Woolf (1929, 1938) is one of the primary authors to write about women's space, and her work helps to reveal the historical thread by which these issues have affected women over time, I will discuss the themes that she addressed and then move onto those discussed in the works of Angela Miles (1996).

### **Virginia Woolf and Women's Autonomous Spaces**

In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf (1929) discusses the importance of women's space from her perspective as a writer. Morag Shiach (1992, XIV) wrote in her introduction to the book that Woolf (1929) "insists on the importance for women of gaining both a space, or 'a room', and a degree of financial independence." In *Three Guineas*, Woolf (1938) extends her argument for women's space from the individual to

that of the larger community in order for women to have the ability to influence the peace process, specifically in the area of international relations. It is evident in Woolf's (1938, 313) often quoted assertion in *Three Guineas*: "[A]s a woman, I have no country." This statement by Woolf (1938) could be interpreted further to mean that the institutions of the world were not constructed to include the presence of women, and in fact, serve to divide women from each other. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that *A Room of One's Own* was written by Woolf (1929) after women had won the vote, when many still saw the political institutions of the world as excluding women, especially from decision-making tables.

### **Virginia Woolf and Hierarchy, Education, and Economics**

Woolf (1938) perceived the nuclear family, located in the heart of the domestic sphere, as the primary unit through which patriarchy exerts its control over women. She saw it as essential that women become emancipated from this control in order to be able to participate freely in politics. If women could contribute to international relations, they could encourage the development of peaceful methods of conflict resolution among nations and thereby prevent war. Women's financial independence could be facilitated through gaining an education. Woolf (1938, 174) expands on this argument in *Three Guineas*: "In short, she need not acquiesce; she can criticize. At last she is in possession of an influence that is disinterested." Woolf also realized that women needed to be educated differently from men in order to be able to bring about peace. Woolf (1938, 82) asks: "What sort of education will teach the young to hate war?" Woolf described the values contained in a new type of college, values that foreshadowed those espoused by the feminist revolution of the 1960s. She stressed that this college should be available to

all, regardless of financial means, and therefore, called it the poor college. “It should teach the arts of human intercourse; the art of understanding other people’s lives and minds, and the little arts of talk, of dress, of cookery that are allied with them. The aim of the new college, the cheap college, should be not to segregate and specialize, but to combine. It should explore the ways in which mind and body can be made to co-operate; discover what new combinations make good wholes in human life” (Woolf, 1938, 200). Woolf (1938, 201) described a college where the hierarchical dualisms resulting from competition and differentiations in wealth did not exist: “They would come to the poor college and practice their arts there because it would be a place where society was free; not parceled out into the miserable distinctions of rich and poor, of clever and stupid; but where all the different degrees and kinds of mind, body and soul merit [co-operation].” Woolf (1938, 199) also warns that patriarchal values should not be taught within the college: “Not the arts of dominating other people; not the arts of ruling, of killing, of acquiring land and capital.” Instead, the values of an alternative paradigm should be taught. These values of peace in the space provided by the new college would ideally replace the values of militaristic thinking that promote war.

Woolf (1938) realized that in the world in which she lived, the ideal education for women was far from being realized, and yet she saw it as essential that women receive even the education that was available in order for them to earn the financial means to move beyond the domestic sphere and begin to influence politicians in the direction of peace. Woolf (1938, 204) re-emphasizes the core principles of her argument in the following quote:

For, to repeat, if those daughters are not going to be educated they are not going to earn their livings, if they are not going to earn their livings, they are going once more to be restricted to the education of the private house; and if they are going to be restricted to the education of the private house they are going, once more, to exert all their influence both consciously and unconsciously in favour of war.

As the goal of the three essays contained in *Three Guineas* is to decide whether to donate three guineas to three requested causes, Woolf (1938, 208) writes: “So, Sir, if you want us to help you to prevent war the conclusion seems to be inevitable; we must help to rebuild the college which, imperfect as it may be, is the only alternative to the education of the private house. We must hope that in time that education may be altered.”

### **Virginia Woolf, Separate Women-Only Spaces, and Pacifism**

Woolf (1938) proposed a separate space for women, which she named “The Outsiders’ Society.” From within this space, women could critique patriarchal institutions with a greater clarity and work to create a culture of peace by pacifist means. Woolf (1938, 366) writes about the egalitarian quest for peace: Woolf (1938) saw her thinking and writing as a form of resistance. Her writing was her activism, and her ideas, especially about a new women’s college, contained the ideas for the emergence of a transformative paradigm. These ideas had a profound impact on society at the time and are still equally relevant today. Julia Briggs (2005, 328) writes about how the Outsiders’ Society saw their role as observers of the patriarchal state rather than agents of it. This reflected Woolf’s (1938) pacifist stance that wanted no part of the war culture and supported the creation of a separate space where women could work together towards peaceful changes in society. Only in this way could women hope to develop a feminist analysis of war and subsequently create new transformative institutions. Pacifist strategies must first be developed within alternative spaces of peace before they can be

used to influence the patriarchal paradigm to move away from its present existence as a culture of war (Briggs, 2005).

### **Angela Miles and Connections**

The Outsiders' Society described above by Woolf (1938) bears a strong resemblance to the alternative feminist paradigm of Angela Miles (1996) in *Integrative Feminisms: Building Global Visions, 1960s--1990s*. Miles (1996) lays out the groundwork for the theoretical dimensions of the global women's movement. Using a holistic feminist analysis, she extends the argument that Woolf (1929, 1938) began, of a separate space for women to freely think, by building on ideas of women's relationships and connectivity and focusing on local and global women's movements. As discussed in the previous chapter, local and global women's movements have formed the basis for peace groups to form spaces in which to develop a critique of war. In this way, the women's movement played a crucial role in opening up political spaces for women's peace work. Examples of these spaces are: Women in Black, the World Courts of Women--including those specifically dealing with crimes of war, and the local and global Women's March as discussed in chapter 6.

More specifically it is essential, explains Miles (1996), for women to connect both at the local and global levels with an awareness of how patriarchy affects women globally. Miles (1996, 85) states:

The same conditions that underlie women's increasing activism in North America are operative in aggravated form in Third World countries, where processes of "modernization" and "development" are intensifying dependence on Western industrial nations and the transnational capitalist economy, dividing and impoverishing whole communities, and degrading environments. Women in particular are being marginalized, losing even minimal traditional securities and powers at the same time as their work load increases to inhuman proportions.



Militarism and war fostered by poverty, dependence, and exploitation affect women disproportionately.

Women of the South may often have a clearer view of patriarchal injustices, which are blatantly obvious within their everyday lives. They have a strong, women-centered voice within their communities, and they have maintained a deep connection to their indigenous knowledge. This allows for less mystification, or for less access to greater resources under the romanticized guise of freedom of choice that many North American women experience (Miles, 1996). As northern feminists, we can learn from our southern sisters and strengthen our relationships so that we mutually support each other in order to challenge global systems of oppression and reinstate women's values of peace. The diversity of a "multicentered women's movement" provides the richness of "integrative feminisms" that makes connections that Miles (1996) states can link the local to the global and unite women with the strength necessary to replace patriarchal systems of domination.

Miles (1996) discusses the importance of a feminist women's movement that recognizes the unique qualities in each woman's life, and how that specificity, or uniqueness of standpoint and experience, contributes to the rich diversity from which the women's movement is formed. The commonality that emerges provides the framework and the basis for their collective strength. This sense of connectedness, experienced initially among individual women, emanates outwards to form local communities and, in turn, links to form global feminist networks. While international feminist networks are essential in order to link women's ideas and their common purpose over multiple divides, it is important to remember that real change, or the true power to shift political space, occurs at the local level. Miles' (1996) concept of a multicentered women's movement

corresponds with a metaphor that Muriel Duckworth used to describe relationships--as consisting of intersecting concentric circles, like those moving outwards from pebbles dropped into the water--as mentioned by an attendee at the Quaker Memorial Service that was held for Muriel shortly after she passed away.

Miles (1996) rejects post-modern theorizing based on limiting women's location to reductionist or anti-reductionist theories, arguing that they are dualistic in nature and can be destructive in the struggle to build a strong women's movement. This is an important issue, as an adoption of this theoretical standpoint would severely contract women's already shrinking political space.<sup>37</sup> These theories artificially limit and obstruct the holistic, fluid nature of women's lived experience and the very connections--to themselves, their communities, and the global networks of feminists--that supply women's networks with the strength and potential needed to challenge patriarchal systems and work towards the creation of an alternative paradigm (Miles 1996). In support of the necessity of creating specific women's spaces where these experiences can flourish, Miles (1996, 79) asserts:

The core practice of consciousness raising is nothing if not a commitment to the collective work necessary to build political understandings of common systems of oppression from diverse experience. Much feminist theory, literature, and practice deals with and describes the difficult but necessary political struggle to build coherent and autonomous *female* subjectivities and communities in the face of the complexities of women's lives and loyalties and the cultural refusal of powerful and positive identity to women.

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<sup>37</sup> A full discussion or critique of post-modernism would take an entire thesis.

## **Angela Miles on the Environment, the Economy, and Transformative Women's Spaces that are Based on Life**

Miles (1996, 2013) states that a new paradigm, based on integrative feminist principles, contains within it the inherent features of an environmental movement and an alternative economy. The relationships formed between and amongst women mirror the dynamic, sustainable relationships found in nature. These relationships are simultaneously life-affirming, reflective of the specificity of every woman, and diverse, co-existing within a complimentary paradigm that supports and enhances life. Miles (1996, 132) builds on the analysis presented in the previous chapter as she points out: “The worth of these things needs to be seen in terms of an altogether different value system—one that is holistic (integrative) as opposed to dualistic (separate) and grounded in the value of life rather than profit.” In her analysis, she states: “The problematic ‘mindset’ identified here is one that reflects, legitimizes, and fuels the competitive production of commodities and profit, while it renders invisible and devalues life producing and sustaining activity” (Miles 1996, 134). Miles (1996, 136, cites Vandana Shiva, 1989a, 13) in her discussion on ecofeminism:

Feminism as the affirmation of women and women's work allows a redefinition of growth and productivity as categories linked to the production, not destruction, of life. It is thus simultaneously an ecological and a feminist political project which legitimizes the ways of knowing and being that create wealth by enhancing life and diversity, and which delegitimizes the knowledge and practice of a culture of death [and militarism] as the basis for capital accumulation.

Miles (1996) sees many parallels between the way women and nature are treated by patriarchy, although she points out that women are not passive recipients of these life events, but rather, active participants. Miles (1996, 136) describes women's relationship with nature in the following quote: “It is an extension of women's responsibility and

concern for human life to the life of the planet.” Miles (1996) supports the connection of women through a “multicentered women’s movement”, one that is based on women’s recognition of their shared conditions and experiences while honouring their “specificity” or rich “diversity.” “In fact”, as Miles (1996, 62) states: “this political articulation of women’s shared interests provides the necessary frame for the affirmation of women’s diversity.”

According to Miles (1996), one way that women can build an identity, in order to also have a strong voice within society, both individually and collectively, is outside the narrow confines of the patriarchal culture that surrounds us. This echoes Virginia Woolf’s (1938) recommendation for separate colleges and the creation of The Outsiders’ Society. Miles (1996, 135) discusses this and also points out how women from the South, because of their political location, are farther ahead in this area than women in the North: “The simultaneous insistence on both women’s necessarily separate voice and central role in general change that integrative feminists in the North have had to fight to articulate is more firmly understood and entrenched in many of the feminisms of the South.” Miles (1996, 63) adds that within the alternative spaces that feminists create, it is important to recognize differences in power and privilege, yet, “without also recognizing women’s shared, though not identical, specificity and vulnerability, [people] fail to see this. They have lost sight of the importance and fragility of feminism’s main vision and task, which is to build solidarity/sisterhood across deeply structured and heavily enforced separations.” Feminists with a clear understanding of their origins can focus on the connections that bring us together as women in order to support the creation of an alternative paradigm.

Miles (1996, 63) envisions transformative social spaces that are brought about by integrative feminist values such as “cooperation, nurturing, connection, and reciprocity”—values that have been marginalized by patriarchal culture. As Miles (1996, 63-64) points out:

The affirmation of diverse women’s specific work, characteristics, and concerns is the necessary basis for a deep challenge to the patriarchal power that institutionalizes oppressive dualisms and dominations. It makes possible dialectical redefinitions of universality/diversity, individuality/community, autonomy/dependence, justice/compassion, equality/heterogeneity and supports new visions of life-centered non-hierarchical non-uniform social arrangements, and new forms of multicentered (rather than either monolithic or decentred) political unity and struggle.

Adrienne Rich describes here the types of connections embodied by the women of Greenham Common to each other, to feminism, and to the global women’s peace movement (Rich, 1978b as cited by Miles, 1996, 77):

Adrienne Rich’s powerful “dream of a common language” puts front and center differences and divisions among women and articulates a longing that we might recognize and hear ourselves in each other. This “dream” she represents as requiring a conscious political naming of connection and a claiming of identity by diverse women—a celebration of womanhood and community in diversity and adversity. This statement epitomizes the energy and values present in spaces of peace that are created by women.

### **Ursula Franklin, Vandana Shiva, Muriel Duckworth and Praxis: The Interactions of Theory and Experience**

A key component in the multidimensional way that women in the peace movement take up political space is the activism in which they engage. Thinkers such as Ursula Franklin (2006), Vandana Shiva (1988, 1989, 2000), and Muriel Duckworth (2006) express incredible amounts of wisdom because they are attempting to live peace. These women illustrate a way of creating, maintaining, expanding, and promoting spaces of peace. The direct link they make between ideas and their implementation, or theory

and action, is called praxis by feminist theorists. It inspires their work with hope, a term often used by Muriel Duckworth. These women engage with the ideas developed in feminist theory and combine knowledge and ideas with pragmatic activism, in order to take them into the field and apply the principles in direct action, and then continue to theorize.

A crucial element in these women's lives is the passion that fuels and maintains their commitment to activism. Their passion is grounded in their spirituality. Muriel and Ursula (2006) have been Quakers for many years, and Vandana Shiva (1988, 1989, 2000) also cited above by Angela Miles (1996), interprets the spiritual truths of the ancient Hindu goddesses in ways that empower women. This is a way of living, a way of connecting one's life with ethics, morals, and spirituality. From living a holistic life based on these values comes incredible wisdom as these feminist women speak truth to power and live in wise, alternative ways. In this way they inspire people to continue in activism, belying the patriarchal notion of inevitability used to describe the present world system. They encourage people to realize tangible, positive solutions, actualized by the combination of a clearly articulated feminist analysis of the core problems and pragmatic action.

### **Ursula Franklin and “Pacifism as a Map”**

In *The Ursula Franklin Reader: Pacifism as a Map*, Ursula Franklin (2006) illustrates how pacifism became a map by which she guided the rest of her life. In her introduction to the book, Michelle Swenarchuk (2006, 3) writes about Franklin's (2006) early experiences during World War II: “Ursula was born in Germany and spent time as a prisoner in the Nazi concentration camps, where she lost members of her family. She

experienced the bombing of Berlin and later the Soviet occupation.” This led her to seek out the Quaker faith, largely because of its pacifist beliefs, as a new way of living peace in the world.

Ursula Franklin’s (2006) Quaker beliefs coincide with and support the components of a holistic feminist analysis as outlined in this thesis. Franklin (2006, 61) calls herself: “a Quaker, a feminist and a physicist.” Franklin (2006) discusses some of the historical premises on which Quakers originated, as she points to the Quakers’ attempts to free the basic Christian message of love and equality from the oppressive influence of the political institutions of the time in Europe. Franklin (2006, 47) understands the equal importance of each person: “When Quakers speak of “that of God in everyone,” they mean that every person is worthy of reverence and that each has within himself or herself a seed that will illuminate their conscience and help them to grow spiritually.” In this way, she explains how every person is equally responsible for, and capable of, contributing to and making changes in the world (Franklin, 2006). This reflects the feminist values supported by this thesis, wherein women see themselves as the subjects of their own lives, hence possessing the right to take up their own space, as opposed to being objects of patriarchal control. Franklin (2006) further supports this idea in her discussion about the self-sufficiency and wholeness of individuals who possess the qualities of discernment within themselves, while also reflecting on issues within a group, such as occurs in Quaker meetings. In describing how Friends (Quakers) wished to return to a non-dualistic way of living their faith, Franklin (2006, 47) says: “Friends left behind what they regarded as lifeless forms or empty professions of faith rendered on fixed occasions and in set phrases, and refused to accept arbitrary divisions between the sacred

and the secular. All life was to be lived under God's guidance and every act was equally sacred." Illustrative of her beliefs illuminated by practice, or praxis, Franklin (2006, 47) adds: "Quakers have always believed that it was practically—not merely theoretically—possible for people to conduct their lives and affairs, and the affairs of community and state, accordingly to basic Christian principles. The Christian principles that Franklin (2006) is referring to are those of peace, and she explains how the Quaker view of peace precludes that of "othering the enemy", which encapsulates a fundamental critique of patriarchal warfare. "Friends' Peace Testimony is a direct consequence of Quaker faith. After all, it is hardly possible to believe that God is in every person, and then starve, oppress, or shoot God in the guise of others" (Franklin, 2006, 51). "The Peace Testimony is a universal testimony against conditions, such as war, violence and preparations for war, that no one should have to face" (Franklin, 2006, 51). The pacifist method of working towards peace may be slow and tedious at times, but it does bring positive results, as Franklin (2006, 53) attests to: "It must also be noted that slowly, over the centuries, the position of conscientious objection to military service—to which Friends and others paid dearly in lives and suffering—has become recognized as the human right in many civilized countries where alternative service options have become available." Many Voice of Women members, including Ursula Franklin and Muriel Duckworth, were members of "Conscience Canada", a group that refused to pay any portion of their taxes that would be used to support warfare in any way.

Ursula Franklin (2006) wrote and lectured extensively about the increased use of technology in the world today. She warns us not to allow the linear mindset promoted by technology to overshadow more creative ways of problem solving. As Franklin (2006,



168) explains: “I think that apart from some isolated, cocooned, individual situations, technology requires conformity. You can be creative only within a set of quite closely defined parameters that includes the computer itself. I think we have to realize that as the world gets more and more structured by technology, the possibility of the unexpected is reduced.” In order to create an alternative paradigm, she sees the need for new ideas and for women’s voices to offer new solutions to the age-old problems of war and militarism. In the introduction to this thesis I refer to the brilliant insight by Franklin (2006), that other feminists like Betty Peterson of *The Voice of Women* can quote, where she defines war as “a complete lack of imagination.” I also discuss my initial intention to explore feminist mechanisms and theories of peace in order to gain a better understanding of the meaning contained within this quote. This has, in fact, been accomplished within the thesis, by engaging in a discussion of feminist analyses that challenge the patriarchal assumption that war is the only way for society to move forward, and by exploring new and creative alternatives that can contribute to building a new society, formed around peaceful values. Coinciding with Franklin’s views, these are among the ways that the thesis uses to demonstrate how the expansion of feminist spaces of peace both requires and incorporates imagination as a key element in the process of its creation and in discerning new ways of doing things that support peace.

By her life and in her writing, Ursula Franklin (2006) exemplifies peace. She speaks to the urgent necessity of working together on the planet to create an alternative paradigm of peace and the necessity of including women’s voices in its construction. In *The Ursula Franklin Reader: Pacifism As A Map*, Franklin (2006, 262) describes what her vision of a new world order would look like:

Its peaceful world would bring a society that might work somewhat like a potluck supper, where a diversity of offerings is essential. In such a world there would be no one who could not contribute their work and care, and no one who could not count on receiving nourishment and friendship. I hold this vision with firm confidence.

With the deep political and economic crises that are affecting the world on a daily basis, the window of opportunity may be here to instigate the changes that will bring about this vision for a new reality based on the creation of peace.

Franklin (2006) brings the discussion of peace and its value in protecting the environment into the contemporary sphere by bringing awareness into the public space of the destructive impact war is having on the planet. Swenarchuck (2006, 5) describes Franklin, a member of The Voice of Women since its inception in 1960, who has been a strong anti-nuclear advocate and has made “proposals to Parliament regarding Canadian foreign policy.” Her background in science made her an invaluable member of the team of peace workers that lobbied for and succeeded in having all above-ground nuclear missile testing banned as was discussed in greater detail in chapter 4 about The Voice of Women.

### **Vandana Shiva and Links Between Ecofeminism and the Causes of War**

Vandana Shiva (1988, 1989, 2000), who, like Ursula Franklin (2006), is a physicist, has also chosen to take her understanding of science into the field of environmental rights and justice. Her primary focus is the environment, and it bears a deep connection to peace. I have chosen to include her here because she is a wonderful example of a thinker who engages in living action research and who actualizes theory in her everyday life. Shiva (1988, 1989, 2000) makes the links between patriarchy, capitalism, warfare, and environmental destruction. Vandana Shiva wrote *Ecofeminism*

with another leading feminist theorist, Maria Mies (1993). It became one of the first major comprehensive analyses that linked the treatment of women by patriarchy to the treatment of nature and provided the theoretical framework for the study of ecofeminism.

Vandana Shiva (1993, 13) writes in the introduction to *Ecofeminism* that:

Ecofeminism, ‘a new term for an ancient wisdom,’ grew out of various social movements—the feminist, peace and the ecology movements—in the late 1960s and early 1980s. Though the term [ecofeminism] was first used by Franchise D’Eaubonne it became popular only in the context of numerous protests and activities against environmental destruction, sparked-off initially by recurring ecological disasters.

Wherever women acted against ecological destruction or/and the threat of atomic annihilation, they immediately became aware of the connection between patriarchal violence against women, other people and nature, and that in defying patriarchy in this way we are loyal to future generations and to life and this planet itself. We have a deep and particular understanding of this both through our natures and our experience as women.

In an interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Shiva (2009) discussed the need to return to small-scale farms and biodiversity in order to salvage agriculture in India. This would, in her view, return prosperity to the land and replace the disastrous effects of the “Green Revolution” and mono-crop methods of farming. She stressed the importance of putting land back into the hands of the women at the local level who know how to successfully operate small market and back-yard gardens.<sup>38</sup> Shiva (2009) applies her knowledge of science in a way that breathes life and hope into environmental activism by offering practical, proven solutions to large-scale problems of starvation and environmental destruction. Shiva (2009) illustrates how women can reclaim the space by informed, passionate activism for themselves, their children, and all living beings to live sustainable lifestyles on a healthy planet.

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<sup>38</sup> This information was incorporated from a documentary interview conducted with Vandana Shiva, which was done by CBC’s “The Current” that was aired on November 18, 2009.

I have used these particular theorists and thinkers to add to the insights that have been brought out in this thesis. Their work points us in new directions and is therefore particularly relevant to its most prevalent theme: that of working to create a new paradigm that is a peaceful alternative to the predominant warlike, fear-based society in which we presently live. They are looking at the theme of using women's space to transform society so that what has been invisible not only becomes visible but becomes the central paradigm.

### **Muriel Duckworth and Connections, Pacifism and a New Paradigm**

In conclusion, I return to Muriel Duckworth, who embodied peace and the search for an alternative paradigm. She lived in a way that exemplified living in a different physical, intellectual, and spiritual way from that espoused by the dominant paradigm, the values of which she refuted. Muriel demonstrated all of the features of a woman's space of peace that I have discussed in this thesis by her practice of living peace, creating spaces of peace around her, and by working toward peace in the public sphere through vigils and in other public and peaceful ways. Muriel, who was an icon of the women's peace movement, left Halifax in June of 2009 and passed away on August 22, 2009, in Magog, Quebec, not far from where she was born. In Muriel, knowledge became transmuted into the wisdom of lived experience.

Muriel Duckworth and Ursula Franklin became close friends in the early 60s when they both participated in founding The Voice of Women. They worked together on such campaigns as the collection of children's teeth in order to measure radiation, resulting in the above-ground ban on nuclear weapons testing as was previously discussed in chapter 4. Both became Quakers and confirmed pacifists later in life, a

position they arrived at after a great deal of consideration. Most importantly, they both possessed an incredible sense of their own ability to think through issues and arrive at their own solutions. Both Muriel and Ursula used praxis by living theory. They exemplify the contribution of feminist theory, illustrating how women's theory is continuously in the process of being created. They did this through an analysis of their lived experiences in their interpersonal, community oriented, national, transnational, and global contexts.

In *Portraits of Women's Wisdom: Feminists Exploring New Paradigms in Life, Knowledge and Politics*, Muriel Duckworth (2006, 35) recounts a cherished experience of her youth that may have formed a quintessential turning point in her life: "I found my voice when Jean Hutchinson, the leader of a religious women's group, raised questions which challenged our assumptions. She believed in our ability to sort out our own thinking. I had never encountered that kind of leadership from parents, teachers or the church." This style of mentorship had a profound effect on Muriel and facilitated the development of her confidence in her own ability to think autonomously. This was illustrated by Donna Smyth, a long-time friend of Muriel, who stated after a recent Quaker meeting that: "One of the draws to Muriel was her thinking; she would think through assumptions until she arrived at her own idea of what she believed was right."<sup>39</sup>

Muriel not only theorized about but also created feminist spaces of peace.

The teachings of Jean Hutchinson guided Muriel to become the type of leader that she was. Muriel not only had the power to think for herself, but she recognized the strength in a diversity of ideas, and she encouraged others to seek out and share their own solutions to issues. She realized that considering many different approaches would

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<sup>39</sup> This comment was derived from personal communication with Donna Smyth following "Halifax Monthly (Quaker) Meeting", November, 2009.

strengthen and enrich the scope of solutions to the issues at hand. As discussed in chapter 4, Muriel demonstrated her recognition of the commonality of human experience and our shared vulnerability to political crises by her involvement in anti-racism work in Halifax and by bringing two Vietnamese women over during the Vietnam War to show how all women are connected. Emphasizing the connections that exist between people was one primary way that Muriel had of building community one that reflects the principles of a multicentered women's movement as discussed by Angela Miles (1996). Muriel was a natural leader who loved to bring people together to work for peace. It formed a primary component of her activism. One woman said at the Quaker Memorial Service: "Muriel formed community by connecting us with each other."

Muriel exemplified the wisdom of living praxis. She actualized this principle without writing it down. Muriel was the embodiment of "maternal feminism" and played a role in "mothering the world." She supported countless young women, all of whom felt they had a special relationship with her. Muriel's feminine wisdom is the type gained by many older women. It is part of the act of living into the world--their praxis stems from continually readjusting their approaches to solving problems--acting on one set of solutions, discarding what doesn't work, and rethinking a better solution. This type of building upon the successful application of knowledge results in the deep feminine wisdom of many older women. It may not be named by many of the women who practice it, yet it forms the critical base for the social justice work that is encompassed in the work they do within their own families and their communities. Muriel's social justice work contained a universal quality; her kindness and quest for peace included her immediate family and also extended far beyond it to include the larger world. She, like Ursula

Franklin, consciously chose to live by values that are important and yet not part of the dominant paradigm that exists today.

Muriel was similar to Ursula Franklin in her strong belief in pacifism as the only method for working for peace. As Duckworth (2006, 35) points out, “There are hints from all through my life that I would eventually become a feminist and pacifist--not being passive but active for peace by peaceful means.” It comprised the process by which she carried out the lived wisdom of her praxis. Working for peace was Muriel’s passion as was evidenced in the happiness she constantly exuded. As Ruth Bishop stated in a conversation: “Muriel was surrounded by an effervescent quality of joy.” This joy contributed to Muriel’s magnetism, her amazing ability to draw people into working in the peace movement. Peace was not an abstract concept to Muriel. She modeled it in the way she lived peace everyday in her own life, and in this way, gave people hope. By doing this, she showed us that tangible, peaceful solutions to political problems are possible, and that yes, we can change the world if we work together to do it. She strongly believed that by working together to achieve peaceful goals, others would see that it is possible to change the world, and they would want to join in so that they too could realize the dream of living in a new paradigm of peace.

Alexa MacDonough said at Muriel’s Memorial Service, which was held at Mount Saint Vincent University on September 27, 2009, that Muriel had demonstrated to her how women could participate in both grassroots and partisan politics. Muriel led countless women in the peace movement by example, and encouraged community building among women, always in a collaborative, never hierarchical way. She empowered many young women by helping them to find their voice, just as she had

experienced fifty years before. For fifty years, Muriel Duckworth was the galvanizing force behind the creation of transformative spaces of peace, especially as a leader in The Voice of Women for Peace. She took up, promoted, and articulated women's space in the pursuit of social transformation and in the creation of peace around her, in order for social justice and social change to be appreciated. After she was widowed, her home became predominantly a women's space, for over thirty years. The walls were a collage of pictures, many of which were of her family and well-known women, with their slogans of encouragement or political defiance printed in bold letters on large posters. It was also a space of learning, with progressive political material always available, as were tea and cookies and Muriel's kind hospitality. Peace meetings abounded there and the walls reverberated with the incredible energy of women working together to bring perspective, change, and dreams of social transformation.

Muriel set an example that lives on in the vibrant energy of powerful women's spaces, such as The Voice of Women, that are capable of bringing change to a world fraught with war. In the face of the present intensifying neo-liberal and neo-patriarchal agenda, that is contracting women's spaces, women need to ensure that Muriel's spirit lives on by reclaiming, maintaining, and expanding these types of women's spaces in order to work together to co-create a culture of peace. Muriel recognized the need for women-only spaces and also the need for including the larger community in mixed-gender spaces for peace.

I end this thesis with a quote of Muriel's that was shared by Betty Peterson who participated in the Memorial Ceremony, a commemoration and celebration of Muriel's life, that was held at Mount Saint Vincent University: "My world view is the relationship



between all things, and I believe that Love is my Guiding Light.” The essence of this quote is hope, a vital ingredient in women’s peace work. The word “HOPE” was carved out of wood in six inch capital letters, and displayed above Muriel’s television, where almost every evening she watched “The National”, a news broadcast on CBC, to make sure she kept on top of current affairs. In terms of transforming society, Muriel lived into hope and most who knew her felt obliged to act for change and transformation. She built a culture of peace around her. In the words of Pat Kipping, a lifelong friend of Muriel: “Muriel was love.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> This comment was shared in a personal communication with Pat Kipping.

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## APPENDIX A

### SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I would like to ask you about your participation here at the “Escalating Peace Conference” and in the peace movement in general, about when and why you became involved, about your experience in the peace group of which you are a member and about your thoughts as to the possibility of a greater connection between peace groups in the future of the peace movement.

1. How long have you been involved in the peace movement?
  - in this particular peace group?
  - tell me about your experiences with this involvement i.e. what kinds of things does this group do? What are its goals, vision, etc.?
  - why did you join this group?
  
2. What motivated you initially to become involved in the peace movement?
  - what or who has influenced you in your involvement the peace movement?
  - what goals did you have when you became involved?
  - what do you hope to achieve?
  - have your goals changed over time, with involvement?
  - have you been satisfied with your participation in/involvement with the peace movement and the group you are a member of?
  
3. Why did you choose to join a women’s peace group or a mixed group? Do you think that women’s groups have a different perspective than those that include men? How do you see this perspective as linking to your work in

the peace movement? How important is the link between the peace movement and the feminist movement? How consistent are their goals?

4. Do you define yourself as a feminist? What role do you see feminism as playing in the women's peace movement?
5. Do you see the peace and anti-globalization movements as related? If not, why? If so, in what ways? Have you participated in any anti-globalization activities? --If so what kind and where? Do you see the peace movement and the anti-globalization movement as having shared or different goals and strategies? Do you see a greater connection between these movements as being a possibility in the future? Why or why not?
6. Have you participated in any other peace conferences? If so, how many, and what type were they, i.e. local, global, all women, mixed?
7. Are you part of any other movements or organizations, for example the environmental movement? Do you see them as connected and if so in what ways?
8. Do you see a greater connection between peace groups as being a positive move? If yes, why? If not, why not?
9. What are the barriers that have prevented this from coming about on a larger scale and what strategies could be implemented to remove or reduce them?
10. Do you think that this conference, given that it is the first time that these three peace groups have met to work together, will be an initiating factor in

instigating a greater connection among peace groups in the future and in the peace movement as a whole?

11. What do you see as the commonalities between the different groups here at the Escalating Peace Conference? Differences? Between groups working for peace around the world?
12. What is your vision for change in the peace movement?
13. Is there anything I missed in this interview that you would like to talk about? Is there anything you would like to ask me?
14. Before finishing, I just want to ask you a few questions about your background. (Possible demographic questions to be asked during the progression of the interview--this question allows me to ask any outstanding questions.)

:

where are you from?

- where are you currently living?

- what is your nationality?

- what do you do (for a living), (work, occupation)?

- how would you describe your economic situation growing up? Today? -

what is your educational background?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview.