Abstract

Feminist geographies seek to challenge the invisibility of particular spaces by examining the complexities of gendered spatiality. The women of A New Environment for Women’s Healing (ANEW), Christian Welfare Trust, Meren, New Zealand, create, define, and defend their women-only space in a variety of ways. This research explores the power and processes of ANEW’s women-only space, as expressed through interviews and as noted through participant observation. This research also explores issues of feminist research methodology. The struggles and strategies of the women of ANEW are examined in the context of feminist geography and feminist theory. ANEW's resistant, paradoxical geography is dis-covered.
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Thank you
Chapter One: The Emergence of the Research Question

Introduction

In 1996, I travelled to New Zealand for the first time. On the plane from London, England, I practised bending my flat Canadian vowels into the sounds my New Zealand friend had taught me, awl tee ah row ah, Aotearoa. It was to be a journey beyond my expectations...

Still in New Zealand in August of 1997, I was employed as a support worker at ANEW, A New Environment for Women's Healing. ANEW is a service of the Christian Welfare Trust (hereafter referred to as The Trust) in Meren, one of New Zealand's major cities.1 ANEW is a 9-5 voluntary drop-in centre for adult women who are experiencing difficulties with their own or other's mental health issues. ANEW provides information and support, both clinical and non-clinical, and offers a safe space for women to gather. My employment at ANEW was the beginning of a very significant learning period for me, and one that is ongoing.

During the 10 months that I worked at ANEW, I developed close relationships both with other staff, and with women who regularly dropped in to ANEW. I found myself noting and appreciating the differences of working in the women-only...

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1 Meren is a fictional city. The decision to use a fictional location was based partially on the ethical requirements of my New Zealand host institution, Massey University. Additionally, I considered the stigma attached to mental health and the small size of New Zealand and determined that the identity of the research participants would have another layer of protection with a fictional location. At the Women's Studies Association conference, Victoria University, Wellington, NZ in November 1999, I was challenged to reconsider this re-naming. Some people felt that revealing the true location could increase my accountability to the research participants, and to New Zealand in general. I have attempted to ensure a high level of accountability in this research by offering the final manuscript of the project to all involved parties.
environment. My academic background, as an undergraduate with a minor in Women’s Studies, contributed to my feminist perceptions of the centre. As a feminist, I was aware that the struggles experienced by the women added up to a similar tale of oppression, despite the differences among them in terms of class, sexuality, ethnicity and life experience. I pondered the implications of a women-only mental health service, which, by its very existence, implicitly supported the idea that there are issues of mental health specific to women.

I left New Zealand in 1998 to begin an MA in Gender Studies. When I revisited my experiences of ANEW in that context, I found I was particularly intrigued by the powerful impact of space and spatial relations on ANEW’s daily operations. Spatial politics were important both in terms of defending the women-only boundaries around ANEW, and also in negotiating ANEW’s positioning in relation to the Trust, ANEW’s governing body. This research attempts to explore these spatial politics.
The Project

Introduction

The goal of this research was to reach a deeper understanding of the power and processes of women-only space by exploring the ways in which the women of A New Environment for Women's Healing (ANEW), Christian Welfare Trust, Meren, New Zealand, create, define and defend their women-only space. Related to this is the need to understand the 'whys' of such space. That is, why is such a space necessary, if indeed it is? Once in existence, why is it necessary to defend it, and against what? In order to work towards answering these questions, I have attempted to understand the struggles and the strategies of ANEW within the women's daily geographies, through interviews, the analysis of relevant literature and participant observation. The collaboration and participation of the women of ANEW was essential to this undertaking and I have made every effort to involve them in each step of my process.

The impetus for this research came out of my intimate experience as an employee of ANEW as described above, my feminism, and my subsequent belief in the significance of women-only spaces. The experiences, strategies, successes and disappointments of ANEW offer a valuable model for other women-only services and centres.

The Setting

ANEW, A New Environment for Women's Healing, is a women-only service located within one of New Zealand's major centres, Meren. ANEW is one service of several under the umbrella of The Christian Welfare Trust (The Trust). The service offers a 9-5 voluntary drop-in for adult women who are experiencing either their own mental
health issues, or concerns resulting from the mental health issues of someone close to them. The service is open to all women; however, the clientele is primarily Pakeha. ANEW staff, all women, and currently all Pakeha, offer clinical counselling skills, empathic listening and support, and the provision of information to assist women in their healing processes. ANEW strives to operate on a model of collective decision making and in keeping with this, all women (staff and those who attend ANEW) are encouraged to take part in decisions that affect the service. Women thus have some level of control in the creation and development of their environment.

As a service of the Trust, ANEW is accountable to the (primarily male) management team of the Trust, and subject to the kaupapa of the Trust. Thus, the service necessarily exists within the hierarchical, patriarchal structure of the Christian Church. As ANEW, from my experience of it, is a space created and maintained according to feminist principles, expressly attempting to be non-hierarchical and non-patriarchal, friction between the two bodies is inevitable. The resulting tension from their conflicting ideologies manifests itself in a sense of a continual struggle on the part of the women of the house (and the staff in particular). The women of ANEW strive to maintain the integrity of the women-centred space in the face of a lack of support and understanding.

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2 This Maori word has come to mean 'European' or 'white', and is commonly used in New Zealand to refer to New Zealanders of European extraction.

3 There have been Maori women employed at ANEW; however, during my employment and throughout this research there were no Maori women on staff.

4 The use of the Maori word 'kaupapa' reflects the Trust's description of its service. Used in this way, 'kaupapa' is translated as 'constitution' or 'mandate'. I indicate it is their usage and not mine, to reflect my awareness and respect for the appropriate use of Maori and the provision of translations in scholarly documents. These issues have been debated by various New Zealand feminist academics (Matahaere-Atariki, 1999). Personal communications with Lynne Star, Massey University, have also alerted me to this concern.

5 I use the term patriarchal here to refer to a structural framework that promotes the social and economic domination of men over women. There are several feminist critiques of the manifestation of this domination within some organised religions (Brewer, 1992; Daly, 1973, 1990).
from the Trust management. (I will return to a discussion of these struggles in Chapter Four). The majority of the Trust’s other services have a community welfare and health focus, and are open to both men and women.

ANEW’s Physical Geography

ANEW occupies an entire residential house in the central city, across a busy street from the main buildings of the Trust (see Figure 1). Viewed from the street, the house seems small, but in fact, it stretches back from the road, opening up into 11 different inside rooms or areas. These rooms include a front lounge, a craft room, a staff office, a quiet room (for reflection or counselling sessions), a dining area, a kitchen, a children’s play room, an information room (with books, videos, and pamphlets), a kitchen, a washroom and a back area (for clothing exchange, gardening tools and storage). The ceilings are high and most of the rooms have only one window and as such are dimly lit. There is also a large back garden, where some women have contributed their gardening skills towards the establishment of a vegetable patch. The back garden is the furthest point away from the street. There is a veranda off the front of the house looking onto the front garden, which is less than half the size of the back garden. A waist-high white picket fence stands between the garden and the busy street. Across the street, the Trust’s two-story buildings face ANEW, from behind a tall iron fence. A large gateway stands

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6 Despite this lack of understanding, the Trust continues to maintain the women-only service as ANEW attracts funding dollars to the Trust.
7 The majority of the interviews for this research project took place in the back garden due to its quiet and private location.
8 In the New Zealand context, fences such as the one described take on a particular connotation of colonial containment. Personal communications with Lynne Star alerted me to these cultural ramifications and to the resulting potential offensiveness of the fence to Maori. In the Feminist Scholarship Series, Massey University, July 15, 1999, Maori visual artist, Kura Te Waru-Rewiri also referred to this symbolism of fences within the New Zealand cultural frame.
Figure 1. An illustration of ANEW's position in relation to the Trust. The two buildings face each other, but the perspective of this illustration has been deliberately altered so as to reveal the front of each building.
open during business hours, allowing cars and people to enter from the street into the Trust compound. This gateway is directly visible from the veranda of ANEW.

Across the Street

During my time as an employee of ANEW, I became aware that the women of ANEW had developed a language of resistance around this physical distance between ANEW's house and the Trust buildings. Due to ANEW's women-only mandate, meetings between ANEW and the Trust management rarely take place at ANEW as the trust's management team, headed by Reverend Jacob Anderson, is primarily male. ANEW's communications with the Trust were thus described by the women as taking place "across the street", that is, in the Trust compound.

I additionally became aware during this time, that to 'go across' symbolised a difficult and draining journey for both the paid staff and for the women who use the service. This was evidenced by reluctance on the part of women to cross the street in order to use other Trust services, and on the part of staff who had to cross to attend various Trust staff meetings. As an ANEW staff member, it was my experience that Trust meetings 'across the street' were often confrontational, impacting negatively on ANEW staff. For example, in my capacity as the ANEW representative on a Trust-wide Health and Safety Committee, I had to attend regular meetings 'across the street'. At a meeting that I attended in 1998, my efforts to represent the maintenance of ANEW's women-only space as a health and safety concern were greeted with primarily irritable disbelief, but also with openly derisive laughter by some male management figures at the meeting.

To protect the confidentiality of the participants, the names of all involved parties have been changed. Participants had the option to choose their own pseudonym.
Working With/In Aotearoa/New Zealand

There is both a personal and a political context to this research. I offer a brief glimpse of my experience with the women of ANEW in order to indicate the personal nature of the research. Next I consider the significance of the larger setting of this research: Aotearoa/New Zealand.

A Memory

The tiny cubicles - I wonder if their restrictive, constricted space is intended to focus the penitent thoughts of wayward nuns. A small bed fits exactly from the left wall to the right. A small table is beside the bed - the only object on its surface is the bedside lamp. Somehow I was expecting the bible, like in a motel drawer. I can hear the women around me - Hinemoa on one side, Sue on the other as we each explore our temporary space. For all of us, this trip away is a rare chance for a room of our own. I lay my bag down on the bed and place my journal on the nightstand. Sarah is just outside my door on the balcony. Each of the cubicles, they resist being called rooms, opens out onto this balcony, and the balcony looks out onto Rundle Beach from the majesty of Laurel Hill. It was a long steep, zig-zagging climb from the car to the retreat but this view is spectacular. Smoke drifts in the door and through a sunshot haze Sarah's freckled face smiles in at me. This is lovely mate she says, bouncing in her perpetual jig, a restless energy that keeps her away from deep layers of pain. I smile too then and now as I recall

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10 I borrow the idea of 'a room of one's own' from Virginia Woolf's (1929) essay of the same title.
her pleasure and mine. Stepping out of my cell, for I suddenly remember this is how these spaces are named, I stand on the balcony. We are all there now. Five of us, standing in the sunlight and separated from the turquoise sea by brilliant terraced gardens etched in an otherwise unforgiving rock face. I am the only one who is paid to be here and this must also form a barrier, as does my foreign-ness, my speech immediately signaling other lands, other worlds. There is a path says Liz, leading up to the top of the cliff, and time for a walk before dinner. Hinemoa nods. I luxuriate for a moment in the warmth of this February afternoon and shake my head. I'll pass, I'm going to read, or maybe sleep. There is peace in the easy decision. Sarah also lingers on the balcony. The other women's laughter slips over the hill.

The above memory briefly describes a trip I took with women from ANEW while I was an employee there. Even in the intimacy of that small group I remained conscious of my status as tau iwi (outsider) within Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, as I will discuss later, my positioning as an outsider paradoxically brought me closer to the women who use ANEW, many of whom also have a sense of living 'outside'. The memory is indicative of my shifting sense of place in the ANEW community: as a woman, an employee, a friend, a support person, a foreigner, and now, a researcher.

The New Zealand Context

A feminist analysis acknowledges that we each look at the world through a 'different lens' according to our particular consciousness and societal positioning (Bunch, 1995, p. 11). An inquiry from a feminist standpoint similarly begins in "the everyday/everynight local actualities of our living and ruling relations (Smith, 1999a, p.

11 Chapter Three.
Thus I begin my analysis by locating myself as a white feminist heterosexual woman from western Canada, remaining aware that I approach any exploration of the New Zealand landscape/womanscape as a 'sister outsider' (Lorde, 1984), even as my personal experiences in New Zealand, and at ANEW, may simultaneously constitute me as an insider. This awareness allows me to bring my own knowledge and understanding to my project, while acknowledging my difference(s). By offering a (necessarily partial) understanding of the New Zealand lens, below, I similarly acknowledge the positionings of the diverse women of ANEW.

New Zealand has the historical distinction of granting women\textsuperscript{12} the vote in 1893, before any other self-governing country in the world (CEDAW, 1998, p. 610). New Zealand women of the 1990's are increasingly occupying influential positions in the political and business sectors.\textsuperscript{13} However, women in contemporary Aotearoa still encounter institutions and social practices that are overwhelmingly male-dominated (Wilson, 1998a, p. 225). In addition to its overtly masculinist culture, New Zealand has been described as a place that is “exceedingly careless of its own history” and one where “women’s history...is still a marginal activity (Wilson, 1998b, p. 2).

\textsuperscript{12} This included Maori women. In May 1893, Maori woman, Meri Te Tai Mangakahia approached the New Zealand Parliament with a motion that would enable women to vote for and sit in Parliament. She based her claim on the fact that Maori women were experienced at owning and managing land. The extension of voting rights to Maori women was unanimously approved (Page, 1999). In contrast, First Nations people in Canada did not receive the right to vote until 1960.

\textsuperscript{13} In 2000, both the political party in power (Labour) and the opposition (National) are women-led, by Helen Clark and Jenny Shipley respectively. Helen Clark became the first elected female Prime Minister in New Zealand in November, 1999. In August 1999, Theresa Gattung was appointed the first woman to head Telecom, the major telecommunications company in New Zealand.
As a legal entity, ‘New Zealand’ is currently based upon a formal acknowledgement of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (The Treaty of Waitangi) (Du Plessis & Alice, 1998, p. xv). Since the 1980’s, *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* has increasingly become “the symbol and centre of debate for a harmonious bicultural society, and the basis for a wide-ranging reassessment of race relations in New Zealand” (Hazlehurst, 1993, p. 175). In contrast to North America, where there are many treaties, *Te Tiriti of Waitangi* is the only treaty in New Zealand (Duffié, 1998, p. 184). This treaty has thus come to have great significance in the Aotearoa of the 1990's.

Essentially, in a postcolonial context, the treaty is interpreted as setting out the guidelines for a partnership between the *tangata whenua* (first peoples) of Aotearoa/ New Zealand and all non-Maori citizens (Pakeha). However, "[p]artnership between the two signatories, Maori and Pakeha, has only recently been identified as such -- partnership as a comfortably positive conception on which to hang all the other issues" (Te Awekotuku, 1991, p. 163). This framework assumes that both 'partners' have equal status and power, obscuring the actual politics of difference that exist.

Nira Yuval-Davis in *Gender and Nation* notes that women “are often excluded from the collective ‘we’ of the body politic, and retain an object rather than a subject position...[and therefore] the construction of womanhood has a property of ‘otherness’” (1997, p. 47). Despite homage to the partnership ethic of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, Maori women are especially vulnerable to the invisibility of the other. For example, colonial
education has ensured that Maori women were not incorporated into historical discourses and thus Maori girls in the school system do not find themselves represented (Johnson & Pihama, 1994, p. 91).

An Issue of Respect: The Accountability of a Foreign Researcher

Maori scholars and activists, fueled by a determination to prevent a recolonisation of Maori by white/Pakeha researchers, have been very outspoken in their criticism of the appropriation of Maori issues. In particular, due to “white culture’s patriarchal constructs, Maori women have been defined by anthropologists and educators in a way which negates their power to an extreme degree” and thus Maori women’s stories are carefully protected (Awatere, 1995, p. 35). Maori academic Patricia Maringi G. Johnston indicates her reasons for such caution:

There is a distinct difference between research undertaken about Maori by non-Maori and research with Maori by Maori.... As Maori researchers, we bring our own culture-bound perspectives to bear on research, and we are writing accountability into an equation that has not before recognised accountability to Maori. (1998, pp. 34-35)

While there are Maori women who use ANEW, it is primarily used by Pakeha women. This discrepancy is due in part to the presence of other similar local services that are specifically Maori. Currently there are no Maori women amongst the staff. As well, none of the women who completed interviews for this project identify as Maori. However, this does not erase the responsibility on my part, as a visiting researcher, to the first peoples of Aotearoa.

To be aware of Maori perspectives, Pakeha New Zealand perspectives and my own North American, academic feminism has required respectful negotiations. During a presentation of an earlier stage of this research at the New Zealand Women's Studies
Association Conference\textsuperscript{14} I was firmly reminded of my responsibilities. Maori women in the audience demanded to know how I, as a foreigner, intended to be accountable to the New Zealand people who took part in my project. I felt that my respectful assurances that I would be returning the thesis to those involved in the project, and that I was aware of the need to consider my foreignness and the distances/differences it might create, were only partially acceptable. However, when I asked the women of the audience for their suggestions as to how I might attend to this issue, a silence fell. It seemed that the important part of the exchange was the naming of our different locations; the acknowledgement of my status as an outsider in New Zealand. Out of my respect for this desire, I have therefore tried to be explicit about the places and spaces from which I am working.

\textit{A Note About Names}

Except for my own name, all personal names in this research project have been altered. Some women have selected their own pseudonym, and the others I have chosen pseudonyms for, in order to protect the confidentiality of all the participants. In light of the small population of New Zealand, and of the mental health community, I also had to alter the name of the service with which I worked. The service's specific mandate has been deliberately broadened to encompass a generic mental health focus. This is an effort to provide participants with some level of anonymity. I discuss the political and ethical implications of the naming process in Chapter Three.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Hui Raranga Wahine: New Zealand Women's Studies Association conference, Victoria University, Wellington, NZ, November 1999.}
Overview of Thesis

This first chapter has been an introduction to the places and spaces of this research, including my positioning and the various positionings of ANEW.

In Chapter Two I construct the theoretical framework for my exploration of ANEW, by tracing the evolution of feminisms, and by developing a link between feminist theory and feminist geography. I describe my attention to feminist standpoint theory and to feminist geographic understandings of resistant paradoxical spaces. I combine these theories in order to use both materialist and postmodernist strategies in this research.

Chapter Three details my research methods and my engagement with the current feminist methodological literature. I explore issues of methodology, epistemology, and language that arose during the course of my research.

Chapter Four presents a detailed analysis of the interviews completed by the women who participated in the project. The women’s observations and experiences are explored in the context of resistant paradoxical spaces.

In the fifth and final chapter I conclude with the implications of exploring ANEW as a resistant paradoxical space. A feminist analysis that incorporates an awareness of spatial politics provides one more diverse way of thinking about gender.
Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

In this section, I discuss understandings of feminisms, patriarchy, standpoint theory, feminist postmodernism, and feminist geography. I determine that a twofold theoretical frame combining standpoint theory and its structuralist understanding of patriarchal oppression, with a more postmodern understanding of spatial politics as developed in feminist geography, is the most suitable framework for my current analysis of ANEW.

Feminisms

For me, 'feminisms' represent an activist tradition of fighting against the subordination of women, and also denote a body of theories and critical questioning surrounding the issues, existence, and explorations of women’s social, economic, and gendered positions (Pollock, 1996; Harding, 1991,1987; Fiax, 1990; Hekman, 1990; Weedon, 1987; Mies, 1983). Not surprisingly, considering feminisms' wide area of representation, 'feminism' is a contested term, encompassing diverse and competing theories and multiple meanings. Along with many feminists in the 1990’s (Armstrong & Du Plessis, 1999; McDowell, 1999; Kemp & Squires, 1997; Women and Geography Study Group, 1997), I acknowledge the existence of plural 'feminisms' in order to reflect these conflicting interpretations, and the multiplicity of positions.

The Place of Patriarchy

Like the term 'feminism', interpretations of 'patriarchy' are various and contested (Smart, 1984; Rowbotham, 1982; Beechey, 1979). Patriarchy literally refers to the law of
the father; however, within some feminist scholarship it is commonly understood as referring to the structural domination of men over women (McDowell, 1999, p.16; Grosz, 1988, p. 94). In this understanding, men’s alleged superiority and control over women is constructed and enforced through various systems, such as legal, social, and economic systems. The concept of a patriarchal framework has played a vital role within feminism, providing feminism with both an overarching term for the multiple oppressions and exploitations of women, and a focus point for collective feminist resistance. However, constructs of patriarchy have been heavily critiqued for their implicit assumption of a white, Western feminist worldview. For example, Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991), describes patriarchy as a ‘cross-culturally singular, monolithic notion’ that has little value for non-First World feminists.

Origins

The contemporary concept of patriarchy has its origins in nineteenth century theories of human relations. Marx’s (1867) analysis of the family as a microcosm of the class relations of the state, and Engels’ (1884) conception of private property, have been jointly credited with unwittingly offering the first theory to attribute women’s subordinated status to the social, rather than to the biological realm (O’Toole & Schiffman, 1997). Although they did not have an analysis of gender, Marx and Engels postulated that the first type of ownership of one person by another developed out of the division of labour within a family. Using a feminist analysis, it can be see that this division of labour effectively enslaved women and children to the man of the house, and that this establishment of ‘private property’ (manifested as male control of women’s bodies) led to the economic practices of exchange and profit (Humm, 1995).
In Feminist Terms

‘Patriarchy’ entered contemporary feminist vocabulary during the ‘second wave’ of 1970’s politics. Radical American feminist Kate Millet, in *Sexual Politics* (1970), a dissertation turned best-selling book, probably gave this concept its widest audience within a North American feminist context. Millet’s concept of patriarchy, while permitting contradictions and exceptions, describes a society based on two essential principles: that man shall dominate woman, and that older men shall dominate younger men (1970, p. 25). Millet (1970, p. 24) described her work as ‘notes towards a theory of patriarchy’, arguing that sex was a politically imbued category, and debunking the mythology of men’s biologically based domination over women. Millet has been credited with formulating one of the first critical theoretical frameworks for analysing the oppression of women (Beechey, 1979, p. 68).

Working from a Marxist perspective, British feminist Veronica Beechey (1979) also explored the value of ‘patriarchy’ as a theoretical and analytical tool. Beechey concluded that although *Sexual Politics* was valuable, Millet only described patriarchal relationships and failed to explain them sufficiently. Beechey discusses ‘revolutionary feminism’ as a development of the radical feminist analysis espoused by Millet. According to Beechey, this strand of feminisms claims that biological differences are a crucial element of patriarchy. Theorists such as Shulamith Firestone (1970) and Sheila Jeffreys (undated), have argued for this point, proposing that men’s domination over women can be explained by men’s control of women’s reproductive potential (Beechey, 1979, p. 69).
Building on the work of Marx and Engels, Marxist feminist arguments have linked patriarchy to capitalism, contending that the two are mutually advantageous (Beechey, 1979). For example, patriarchal relations in the home ensure that the domestic labour of women supports men, removing a financial burden from the state. In the public sector, women's low wages similarly reduce the costs to the state, while allowing men to maintain a financial upper hand. Marxist and socialist feminists have struggled between placing class oppression or gender oppression at the heart of their analysis.

Beechey (1979) argues that to be a satisfactory theoretical concept, patriarchy must be historically specific (as opposed to assuming a transhistorical perspective). Additionally, it must provide analyses of patriarchy's alternative social forms within different societies (capitalist, pre-capitalist, or socialist), and within different social institutions (workplaces or homes). German socialist feminist, Maria Mies (1986, pg.2) further argues that patriarchy and capitalism must be addressed simultaneously, otherwise “the feminist rebellion may be co-opted by the forces that only want to continue the destructive model of capital accumulation.”

British feminist and legal scholar Carol Smart (1984) refers to 'patriarchal relations' or 'patriarchal structures' instead of 'patriarchy', regarding the latter term as both controversial (within feminist theory) and lacking clear definition. Her terms are intended to imply a more diversified sense of women's oppression as opposed to a rigid monolithic understanding of male domination. Thus, feminism's focus can shift to specific instances of gendered domination in order to develop analyses that are useful to a women's movement. Smart nevertheless maintains a theoretical relationship with the concept of patriarchy. She cautions that to abandon it entirely would be to deprive
feminist theory of its “major instrument of criticism against social, political and economic theories which exclude the category of women and ignore the special nature of their oppression” (1984, p. 9).

Patriarchal dis-ease

In the last decade, some feminists have expressed their dissatisfaction with patriarchy as a seemingly inflexible and outdated Western concept (Kishwar, 1994; Mohanty, 1991). British feminist Sheila Rowbotham (1982, p. 74) critiques 'patriarchy' for implying a 'universal and historical form of oppression which returns us to biology'. That is, 'patriarchy' suggests that all women are presumed to suffer the same oppressions across time. Rowbotham (1982, pg. 78) illustrates the inaccuracy of this assumption, by pointing out that while some women may have been confined to the private realm, other women (for example, working class and black women) may have viewed such 'confinement' as a luxury denied to them. In terms of the return to biology, a concept of patriarchy (the 'law of the father') suggests a mother and children, and therefore implies that women's mass subordination lies in their reproductive capacities (Rowbotham, 1982, p.74). The problem with this implication, as Rowbotham identifies, is that it cancels out individual women's creative and transformative potential by assuming a biological determinism. Rowbotham (1982, p. 76) thus argues for a 'historical concept of sex-gender relationships' instead of 'patriarchy'. This would allow the recognition that societies have bestowed different types of power based on sexual differences, and that those power differences are the issue, not sexual difference itself.

Madhu Kishwar (1994) notes that the implicit critique of the family within a patriarchal reading of power and control, alienates non-'Western' women who have
different interpretations and experiences of family. Kishwar (1994) resists the label of feminism for those reasons, and expresses her exasperation at the importation of feminist ideas from 'the West'. Kishwar notes, for example, that battered women's shelters cannot function in India as they do in 'the West' (as substitute extended familial homes), because Indian women have natal families to turn to. According to Kishwar, Indian women are also unlikely to strike out on their own, as 'Western' women are encouraged to do, due to the Indian woman's economic dependence on her family.

Kishwar's argument, while crucial for its necessary rebuke of 'Western' feminisms' ethnocentricity, reveals that she too depends on cultural stereotypes. That is, her unquestioning use of the terms, 'the West', and 'Western women' do not reflect the wide range of women and the correspondingly diverse experiences of 'family' that exist across North America, Europe and Australasia. For example, African American feminist, Patricia Hill-Collins (1991) notes that the black women of America have a high degree of support from their families and communities. Additionally, Kishwar's example of Indian women's use (or not) of battered women's shelters lacks an analysis of the intersections of class, caste and race among Indian women.

Adrienne Rich in her landmark essay "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (originally published in 1980) argues persuasively that it is the institution of heterosexuality, not simply patriarchy, that creates the major obstacle for women's advancement. Rich's self-professed intent in this essay was to write lesbian existence into scholarly feminist literature, while awakening heterosexual feminists to the idea that heterosexuality is a political institution (Rich, 1986, p. 23). That is, heterosexuality is
overtly and covertly imposed on women by political, economic, and cultural means (Rich, 1994, pp. 311-326).

Rich's conception of heterosexual domination fits neatly with Smart's (1984) idea of patriarchal relations or structures. Rich's argument retains a structuralist framework that is also similar to Rowbotham's concept of sex-gender relationships. In developing a 'lesbian continuum' (Rich, 1994, p. 317), Rich allows the theoretical space for women to re-define their sexuality in a creative way, and in a way that acknowledges the existence of heterosexual, patriarchal politics without being constrained by them.

Despite the criticisms of patriarchy's 'Western-based' ethnocentrism, some feminist scholars have continued to develop theoretical work based on the structurally maintained inequalities of gendered relations (Walby, 1997, 1990; Connell, 1995, 1987; Kandiyoti, 1988).¹⁵ I agree with Smart (1984), that this understanding remains a useful strategy for feminism. The various strains of standpoint feminist theory are an example of the strategic use of a concept of patriarchal relations.

**Standpoint Theory**

Standpoint theory is one theoretical feminist model to emerge out of the last two decades of feminist scholarship and it retains a concept of patriarchal relations as an axis of critique. Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith (1979, 1990, 1999a, 1999b) argues that sociological inquiry can start from a woman's position, any women's position, or any 'outsider's' position. Furthermore, she argues that such a position can be a location from which to examine the structural relations of ruling, whether social, economic, racial, or sexual, that determine a woman's particular experience. Smith (1979, p. 135) speaking to

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¹⁵ For a brief summary of these theories see McDowell (1999, pp. 15-21).
'women members of an intelligentsia' therefore urges feminist scholars to locate women in their everyday world, acknowledging their/our material and bodily existence. Smith cautions that "[t]he notion of a standpoint of women doesn't stand by itself as a theoretical construct, [rather] it is a place to begin inquiry (1999a, p. 5). Thus, the inquirer, or 'situated knower' must also participate and actively experience as a way of knowing (Smith, 1999a, p. 6). In my research project, I have attempted to do this, by speaking directly and only to the women involved in ANEW, in an effort to understand their particular, situated experiences of ANEW.

Nancy Hartsock (1997) argues that a standpoint implies a particular epistemological engagement with social issues. That is, women's engagement as knowers is contextual, situated and positioned depending on different material circumstances. Hartsock's theoretical position is thus very closely related to a Marxist position. Hartsock further argues that a feminist standpoint can be utilised as an epistemological tool for conceiving and resisting all forms of domination (1997, p. 152). It is this resistance to oppressive forms of social relations, which allows those who struggle to gain an education that is unattainable from other positions, such as from the ruling class. Thus, it is this struggle that produces the engagement necessary for the adoption of a standpoint.

Hartsock's theory falls down, for me, on her understanding of the role of mothering in socialisation. Motherhood is central to epistemological functioning according to Hartsock, as an institution if not as an experience. She argues that even without the experience of biologically mothering, women are socially prepared for it as daughters, and thus mothering affects all women's social relations. This insistence on the centrality of mothering weakens Hartsock's arguments, as it does not allow for the
experiences of women who are not prepared for mothering, nor intending to experience it. It also does not allow for the positioning of women (and this includes the majority of the women who attend ANEW) who have not been mothered.

Sandra Harding (1991) also picks up the notion of a standpoint theory, arguing that starting from women’s lives in order to develop a critique of dominant knowledge claims is a means of reducing partial and distorted understandings of natural and social life. That is, dominant knowledge claims can only represent the knowledge of the dominant knowers, therefore their claims can only be biased and unrepresentative. Harding’s (1991) proviso is that women do not automatically have a feminist standpoint. As Hartsock (1997) also indicated, such a standpoint can only be achieved by the struggle against the domination and oppression of the ruling groups. Out of this struggle, an understanding and critique will emerge. Patricia Hill-Collins (1991) also works with the notion of a standpoint, arguing that a 'self-defined Black women's standpoint' in combination with an 'Afrocentric feminist epistemology' can function to question socially accepted truths.

Following Marxist theories of the proletariat, most feminist standpoint theories take the position that women as an oppressed group have a particular claim to knowledge based on their experience of oppression. Hill-Collins (1991) is careful to point out that this understanding can lead to an additive approach to oppression, which falsely suggests that adding the oppression of race to that of gender for example, will produce an even clearer standpoint. Instead, the common thread through the above theories is their emphasis on locating women in their everyday experiences. Thus, the epistemological
basis for feminist standpoint theories is the politicisation of women's experiential knowledge.

The Charge of Essentialism

Essentialism is a belief which, in its simplest form, claims that male and female natures are distinctly different from each other, as opposed to the idea that 'male' and 'female' are social constructs (Humm, 1995, p. 80). Feminists have complex and contested relationships with notions of essentialism. Feminist standpoint theory has been accused of an essentialist reliance on a unity among women (Flax, 1990), and thus of assuming that all women have a shared and distinct (from men) way of understanding the world. Flax (1990, p. 56) notes that:

Any feminist standpoint will necessarily be partial. Thinking about women may illuminate some aspects of society that have been previously suppressed within the dominant view. But none of us can speak for 'woman' because no such person exists except within a specific set of (already gendered) relations – to 'man' and to many concrete and different women.

Flax's critique of standpoint theory suggests that standpoint theorists do attempt to speak for women, therefore creating an essentialist 'Woman'. Thus, differences among women are allegedly ignored. Many feminists have argued against this idea of an essential 'Woman' suggesting that women are made, not born (Wittig, 1992; de Beauvoir, 1953). Other feminists have been drawn to the unity of a woman's way of knowing (Belenky et al., 1986).

Diane Millen (1997) defends the criticism of standpoint theory as essentialist, citing the research of Belenky et al. (1986) and Carol Gilligan (1982), to support her argument that women do appear to know the world in a way that is different and distinct
from men. However, Gilligan's and Belenky et al.'s work is controversial in that those projects have also been accused of relying on the assumptions of a unified 'Woman'.

Australian feminist Carol Bacchi contemplates the difficulties associated with rejecting the idea of 'Woman', noting that while this rejection signals the challenging of the imposition of an ideology onto women, it also may remove an important construct in some individual women's lives (1990, p. 253). Valuing women's supposed differences from men, and buying into a 'myth of woman' (Wittig, 1997, p. 223), can also be dangerous, as Bacchi demonstrates. Bacchi (1990, p. 236) uses a court case to exemplify that treating women differently from men as legal subjects opens up the potential for justifying discriminatory treatment. Bacchi's strategy is to search for a 'usable theory of the subject', something accessible and something which rings true with experience.

The Personal Narratives Group (1989), a feminist research group based in the United States, note that feminist approaches that emphasise women's commonality have shifted to allow for a greater recognition of diversity among women. For this group, this shift has meant acknowledging that individual women will have their own context, 'a dynamic process through which the individual simultaneously shapes and is shaped by her environment' (1989, p. 19). The group takes a feminist standpoint by viewing women's personal narratives as a vehicle to uncovering the existing structures of meaning within which individual locate themselves, and thus make sense of the world (1989, p. 22).

Like Bacchi (1990, p. 236), I would argue that standpoint theory allows for the creation of a 'theory of the subject' that moves past an essentialist notion of 'Woman'. That is, standpoint theory does not support the notion that all oppression is the same.
Instead, standpoint theory expressly allows for the diversity of women's experiences in that individual women's locations, multiple and diverse, in their everyday worlds, provide the place from which to begin analysis. The political strength of standpoint theory lies in its attempt to link women's actual lived experiences with an understanding of how knowledge is gained. While material concerns do not need to exclude theoretical concerns, the theoretical realm often seems disconnected from material reality. If we are to make progress we must maintain a connection between the two: "An understanding of the integrity of being and knowing, sense and sensuality, recognizes that the mind cannot exist without the body, and our bodies cannot live without our minds... To make sense, we have to make knowledge with our experience..." (Brodribb, 1992, p. 147). Thus, women's material reality needs to have a place in feminist theories. As Mary Evans (1994, p. 5) points out, "materialism – crude and frequently cruel – is precisely the condition in which many women live." Indeed, it is the condition in which we all live.

Postmodern Views: A Critique

As feminist research has moved through the 1990's, theories of postmodernism, and an increasing awareness of women's multiple positionings have unsettled existing feminist narratives. Thus the notion of a 'standpoint' from which feminists could think or act has been problematised and understood by some theorists to be only a partial perspective, resting on "an optimistic belief that people act rationally in their own interests and that reality has a structure that perfect reason...can discover" (Flax, 1990, p. 56). Some feminists have argued that personal stories are constructed, that individual women can assume multiple identities, and that as such, no one personal story is inherently more truthful than another (Armstrong & Du Plessis, 1999, p. 107). Scholars
such as the American theorist of gender identity, Judith Butler (1990a, 1990b) have critiqued structuralist approaches to gender, based on new postmodern understandings of the fiction of categories of 'male' and 'female' (in McDowell, 1999, pp.54-56). Butler (1990a,1990b) argues that gender is a performance, influenced by the norms of hegemonic heterosexuality. As it is a performance, we can subversively choose to discard our socially regulated roles and take on an/other. In this reading, a standpoint position is inherently flawed because it accepts the believability and inevitability of a women's standpoint.

However, postmodernism moves toward a feminist standpoint in that theorists of both reject a universal truth or universal answers (Humm, 1995, p. 276). That is, both a women's standpoint, and a post-structuralist/postmodernist project reject the existence of an authoritative unitary consciousness that reproduces existing power relations (Smith, 1999b, pp. 97-98). The difference, Smith (1999) argues, is that post-structuralism/postmodernism's project can be critiqued for replacing a unitary subject with the same subject only multiplied and fragmented. Thus the postmodernists have "slipped into the form of the theories [they] criticize by importing the very universalized subject of knowledge [they] have repudiated" (Smith, 1999b, p. 98). Smith further argues that consciousness is separated from everyday activity by the post-structuralist/postmodernist imbrication of the subject within discourse, thus distancing a sociological inquiry from the active, relational world. A result of this distancing is the necessary substitution of theory for inquiry (Smith, 1999b, p. 103). Somer Brodribb (1992, p. xix) similarly critiques the postmodern project:

Postmodernism exults female oblivion and disconnection; it has no model for the acquisition of knowledge, for making connections, for
communication, or for becoming global, which feminism has done and will continue to do. You have to remember to be present for another, to be just, to create sense. But 'the demon lover' will not do this....Indeed, ego and conscience are not connected here!

Millen (1997) sees the efforts to develop a feminist postmodernism as cleanly exposing the anxiety within feminist research, in that this theoretical stance both validates feminism as a critical tool for exploring power and knowledge, and yet functions to distance feminism from women's political realities by questioning the validity of material experience. Hawkesworth (1989) warns against the 'uncritical adoption' of postmodern ideas by feminist theorists of knowledge.\textsuperscript{16} In particular, Hawkesworth critiques what she views as the relativism that accompanies a postmodern rejection of a single truth:

Rape, domestic violence, and sexual harassment (to mention just a few of the realities that circumscribe women's lives) are not fictions or figurations that admit of the free play of signification...[I]t would be premature to conclude from the incompleteness of the victim's account that all other accounts (the assailant's, defense attorney's, character witnesses' for the defendant) are equally valid or that there are no objective grounds on which to distinguish between truth and falsity in divergent interpretations. (1989, p. 555)

Hawkesworth thus insists that some things can, and must be known, and, in these critiques lies the heart of my resistance to my current understanding of feminist postmodernism. Despite the urgings of postmodern theories, I do see the need, quixotic though it may be, to establish some claims to know, to find some common feeling across the differences among and within women, amidst the undeniable dangers of living female. As McDowell (1999) remarks:

\textsuperscript{16} Hawkesworth offers a number of examples of feminist postmodernist scholars, including Flax, 1987; Haraway, 1985; and Hekman, 1988.
In circumstances where women, as a group, are clearly subordinate to, unequal with and dominated by men as a group, then it seems to me that we must hold on to ways to theorize these differences which recognize structured inequities between social groups. However fluid and variable the social construction of versions of femininity and masculinity, it is still habitual practice to assume that the former constructions are vastly inferior to the latter and so men as a group are implicated in the domination of women. (p. 21)

Beginning with this basis in women's material reality enables me to employ specific postmodern strategies, while remaining connected to women's embodied and situated knowledge. The creative revisioning of gendered spatiality within feminist geography offers one such strategy.

Space Moves

Geography

In my imagination, 'Geography' as a discipline conjured up images of men stalking through dense jungles and rafting down dangerous rivers in order to map the world for the less adventurous. Looking more closely at these men of my imaginings, I saw the pith helmets and khaki colours of the colonial explorer, who surveyed the unknown (to him) lands of an/other culture. While this is somewhat of a caricature, geographic explorations have carried connotations of a specifically white masculinity, which seeks to know the world in relation to its position in space. As with other disciplines in the social sciences, geography has been extensively critiqued for placing man and men's interests at the centre of knowledge and learning (McDowell, 1999; Rose, 1993) and the discipline has responded in radical and interesting ways.
Space and Place

Geography as a discipline has undergone various epistemological shifts, with the result that geographers may variously define themselves as positivist, Marxist, humanist, or feminist, and may focus on cultural, physical or political geography, among others. Due in part to these disciplinary politics, the concepts 'space' and 'place', which are central to geography (Laurie, et al., 1997), are much debated.

Feminist geographer, Joanne Sharpe (1999, p. 257) notes that space remains "notoriously hard to define". The many existing definitions of space within geography reflect the differing ways that space has been understood. For example, space has been conceptualized as material environment, as difference, and as social spatiality (Morin & Berg, 1999, p. 314). The material environment is associated with the notion of absolute space; that is, physical space is independent of what occupies it. Space as difference implies that there is a separation of the subject and the space. The concept of social spatiality asserts an opposing claim about space: there is a fusion of social intent and physical extent (Smith in Gregory, 1994, p. 584; Stratford, 1999, p.173). In this latter view, space is not an empty container (Crang, 1996, p. 3), but is instead both socially produced, and, productive of the social (Morin & Berg, 1999, p. 314). Thus "behaviour and space are mutually dependent" (Ardener quoted in Rose, 1993, pg. 17). Furthermore, space can now be understood as paradoxical (Rose, 1993), in that space is thus open to the shifts and alterations of the behaviours that constitute it and are constituted by it, and therefore space alters in contested and multiple ways.

17 For a recent discussion of these different strains of the geographic discipline see Rose (1993).
18 For a recent discussion of political geography see Sparke (1998a, p. 465).
'Place' is a similarly debated concept. Associated with a (male) human sense of belonging (Crang, 1998, p. 102), a 'place' has been defined as a 'space' that is occupied by a person or thing (Duncan, 1994, p. 442), and it is further argued that a place thus becomes an extension of human identity:

> [P]laces provide an anchor of shared experiences between people and continuity over time. Space become places as they become 'time-thickened'. They have a past and a future that binds people together round them. This lived connection binds people and places together. (Crang, 1998, p. 103)

Massey (1997, p. 322) deepens the understanding of place by critiquing the notion that a place must be a bounded entity held together by historical detail:

> [W]hat gives place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular locus....It is, indeed, a meeting place. Instead, then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated movements in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be a street, or a region or even a continent.

Thus, place is actively and partially constructed depending on our specific positioning within a social space. Construed thus, 'place' moves away from a sense of ownership or possession. Massey's sense of place thus allows for the conflicting and contested views of place that are revealed in First Nations sovereignty and land claims in British Columbia (Sparke, 1998a), and also offers an insight into the differing understandings of ANEW by the women who meet within the house, and by the management who view ANEW from across the street.
Feminist Geography

Beginning in the late 1970's (primarily in the United Kingdom and the United States), the early encounters between feminism and geography sought to reclaim the spaces and places that masculinist geography had passed over unseen (Rose, 1993). This characterisation of early feminist geography reflects the actions of feminists in other social science disciplines during this time period, who sought to value ‘Woman’ as an equally important though opposite category to ‘Man’. In later years, this tendency has became known as ‘Add women and stir’. This type of binary thinking also reflects the nature of the geographic tradition within which dichotomies of public/private, home/work, and global/local are deeply embedded (Laurie et al., 1997). In this tradition, public space, "the space of transcendence, production, politics and power, is the sphere of men", while private space is "domestic space, the space of reproduction...[.]women's space" (Sharpe, 1999, p. 259).

By examining women’s work in the home, feminist geographers sought to add women to the ‘work’ side of the home/work binary, which conventionally situated women in the home (private space), and men in the workplace (public space). Thus, the working world was reclaimed as a women’s space. Additionally, the ‘home’ side of the binary, undervalued because associated with women, was also reclaimed and valued. Projects working within this framework have included efforts to examine how women use space (Ardener, 1993), and attempts to re-define home space, for example, Valentine and Johnston's (1995) work on lesbians living in a family home, or in an intrusive neighbourhood.
In the past, discussions of gendered approaches to space tended to concentrate on the social conventions that have prohibited women’s access to particular spaces (Ardener, 1993: 21). Examples of such prohibitions range widely from footbinding, preventing women's movement through space via 'appropriate' clothing, to the overt or covert exclusionary policies of some men's clubs and bars. More recent work in feminist geographies (McDowell, 1999; Pollock, 1996) seeks to challenge the invisibility of particular spaces and to examine the complexities of gendered spatiality (Laurie et al. 1997). Anthropologist Shirley Ardener’s collection of essays *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps* (1993) provide insights into the various ways that women step into and exploit space (for example, J. Blair’s essay in this volume discusses the ways in which actresses, as creative artists, are able to experiment with new social forms). Ardener notes that although women may not appear to exert control over physical or social space, they are able to determine or mediate how space is allocated and they can occupy political space (1993, pp. 9-10). This recognition of women's ability to be determinants of, or mediators in, spatial organization is crucial in that it acknowledges our power to devise, channel and control social interactions. According to McDowell, such organization of space, as well as “the construction of places, in the sense of known and definable areas, is a key way in which groups and collectivities create a shared, particular and distinctive identity (1997, p. 2).

According to British feminist geographer Linda McDowell, the project of current feminist geographies is “to investigate, make visible and challenge the relationships between gender divisions and spatial divisions, to uncover their mutual constitution and problematize their apparent naturalness” (1999, p. 12). That is, feminist geographies seek
to understand how space and place are differently experienced by men and women, while illustrating how these very differences form part of the social constructedness of gender, place and space. Recent work in feminist geographies has thus offered new ways to understand women-only spaces by focusing on how women's lives shape their experiences and/or perception of environments, their creation of places, their definition and use of cultural resources, and their construction of geographic knowledge (Domosh, 1996, p. 420). Women-only spaces can thus be viewed as exemplifying complex interweavings of identity, gender and spatial organizations.

Gendered Spatiality

The interventions of feminist geography have further examined the ways in which space is gendered (Sharpe, 1999, p. 259). Geography as a historically masculinist discipline implies a belief about space: it is knowable. In particular, that which is knowable is also that which is seen. The role of the visual, Rose (1993) argues, has always been critical to masculine knowledge claims.19 The gaze, in terms of the voyeurism of social sciences towards the close of the nineteenth century, was directed towards the production and control of societal experience. Thus the standpoint of the voyeur is a fixed place; for the (male) directors of the geographic gaze, space is everywhere that they are not. Rose (1993) describes this as 'transparent space', which, "as an expression of social-scientific masculinity's desire for total vision and knowledge,

19 Belenky et al. (1986, p. 18), in their research on women's ways of knowing, found that in contrast, "the tendency for women [is] to ground their epistemological premises in metaphors suggesting speaking and listening (which is) at odds with the visual metaphors (such as equating knowledge with illumination, knowing with seeing, and truth with light) that scientists and philosophers most often use to express their sense of mind".
denies the possibility of different spaces being known by other subjects" (Rose, 1993, p. 40).

Examining the processes of the gendering of space enables feminist geographers to illustrate that the lines drawn between binaries, such as male/female and public/private, can be blurred and/or contested by the resistance of those involved in the space. In particular, feminist geographers (such as the Women and Geography Study Group, 1997) have demonstrated that the boundaries between home and work, two spaces often assumed to be separate, are much less distinct than previously thought. This positioning in feminist geography is undoubtedly influenced by a postmodern understanding of a fragmented and complex culture, wherein numerous sources of differentiation exist, personal identities alter over space and time, and space and time are differently understood.

Spatial Politics

Wendy Larner (1995) in her essay, “Theorizing ‘Difference’ in Aotearoa/ New Zealand”, acknowledges that the studies of feminist geographers have provided valuable empirical knowledge by explicating and thus differentiating between different women’s experiences. However, she warns that such geographical literature has tended to ignore the overarching concern of identity formation, nor has it given sufficient energy to problematising the relationship between identity and experience. Both Larner (1995) and McDowell (1992) call out to feminist geographers to develop theoretical frameworks that will support political struggles (Larner, 1995, p. 177). The Women and Geography Study Group (1997) incorporates this need for activism into their definition of feminist geography:
[Feminist geography is] geography which explicitly takes into account the socially created gender structure of society; and in which a commitment both towards the alleviation of gender inequality in the short term and towards its removal, through social change towards real equality, in the longer term, is expressed. (p. 19)

The clear imperative for the feminist geographers above is to develop a theoretical paradigm that is also grounded in some material way, to enable an politically active agenda.

Paradoxical Space

Rose’s (1993) conception of a paradoxical space offers an exciting and creative theory for the development of both feminist geography and feminism. In her discussion of paradoxical space, Rose is specifically addressing the space associated with what Teresa de Lauretis (1987) has named ‘the subject of feminism’. This subject refers to an assumed identity which attempts to escape only occupying space other than that of the ‘master’ (male) subject. That is, this subject signifies “a movement from the space represented by/in a representation, by/in a discourse, by/in a sex-gender system, to the space not represented yet implied (unseen)” (de Lauretis, 1987, p. 26). This movement is crucial if women are to resist the representations and naming of patriarchal discourses.

Thus, space is paradoxical in Rose’s lexicon of spatiality because it can be occupied in multidimensional, shifting and simultaneous fashion. That is, centre and margin can be in the same territory at once. To visualize the dimensions of such a space, it is helpful to imagine a single sheet of paper crumpled into a ball. While the sheet remains two-dimensional, individual territories remain discrete. Once the paper has become three-dimensional, a multiple number of territories may coexist in the same
This is significant for a few reasons. First, it offers a new way to conceptualise a politics of location, suggesting the capacity for individual movement through both identity and space. Second, it emphasizes the competitive, contested and confined nature of human movement through space. Third, it gives a sense of our concrete bodily presence.

Alternative views of paradoxical space exist in other imaginations and frameworks as 'interstitial space' (Trinh, 1992), 'rival geographies' (Sparke, 1998b), and 'ecotones' (Krall, 1995). Rose (1993) astutely notes that the feminist preoccupation with an 'elsewhere' place or space of resistance exists because 'the subject of feminism' has to believe that something exists beyond patriarchal regimes; there must be a space beyond representation. That this resistance thus becomes unrepresentable, at least in a discursive sense, is another level of the paradox. That it is simultaneously imaginary and real (in the sense of the material world) is another.

Bodies can be constrained not only by their gender, but also by their class, sexuality and race positions. Rose asserts that these constraints are the result of masculine knowledge claims, which are manifested in claims to real or imagined space. Paradoxical

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21 Trinh T. Minh-ha (1991, 1992) explores a concept of an 'interstitial space', or interval or interstice. Trinh (1992, p. 173) conceptualises this space as one where women are striving to avoid 'arrested meanings and fixed categories', struggling to find a positioning that is continually precarious, never rooted. Thus a space where 'the rules', or the boundaries of the social order, need not apply.
22 Matthew Sparke (1998b) refers to 'rival geographies' in his discussion of a First Nations geography as opposed to a colonial geography in Canada. Sparke explores the epistemological damage wrought by representations of 'pure' native space, and the contested translations that occur between political identity and that space (1998).
23 Florence Krall (1995) uses the metaphor of the biological ecotone to conceptualise a dynamic place of transitions, separations, and encounters.
space offers the potential for critique of this masculine authority in that it dis-covers the spaces that the masculine subject cannot see, therefore disrupting the masculine spatial claims to know. Such a space also allows for the embodiment of space, in contrast to the disembodied spectator of transparent space (Rose, 1993).

Paradoxical Geographies of Resistance

Rose (1993) argues that confinement is a recurrent image in women's life narratives. Examples are easily summoned from my own experiences. I currently share a home with a woman who laments her inability to walk to and from work due to the constraining clothes her workplace requires. I have seen women cover their mouths to prevent that too loud, too hearty, too much from the belly laughter, from escaping. I have felt my own sense of available space shrink as daylight dies away. This inability for women to feel freely mobile in public space has been examined in a 'geography of women's fear' (Valentine, 1989).

At some level, a women-only space can be interpreted, paradoxically, as a confinement of women. However, Rose (1993) argues that despite the condemnation by some feminists of separatist strategies, women's spaces can be valuable in order to contemplate both resistance and coalition. That is, the very act of separating women from men in whatever way is a resistance to hegemonic, heterosexual boundaries. For example, ANEW, conceived of as a 'geography of resistance', can work to "occupy, deploy and create alternative spatialities from those [spaces] defined through oppression and exploitation" (Pile, 1997, p. 3). Yet, in creating new boundaries, separatists must acknowledge what is newly inside and outside those boundaries if they are to avoid the exclusionary practices of the original boundary-setters. Thus, ANEW must also carefully
attend to the practices of resistance that develop within their space. Therein lies the paradox, that even as resistance is enacted, coalition, in the form of interrelations, must be mooted.

Conclusion

Rose's conception of paradoxical space appeals to me for its flexibility and imaginative quality, as well as for its potential for resistance. My personal experiences of space, both materially and over time, have predisposed me to these spatial analyses. As a body that has traveled, as a body that has recently learned to be disembodied via internet technology, as a body that has experienced both imagined and material constraints, I feel at home in paradoxical space. I also find myself in a paradoxical theoretical positioning, somewhere both in and out of a materialist, structural need for tangible enemies and tangible goals, and yet leaning both towards and away from postmodern tendencies. Ultimately, I would agree with Millen (1997) who proposes that we require both postmodern insights to aid our critical examination of gendered research methodologies and epistemologies, AND modernist ideas to push forward feminism(s)' political claims. Millen proposes that a
dual role, where we use postmodernist insights to continually critique the role of feminist research and the gendered aspects of mainstream research, but utilise modernist ideas to advance feminism's political agenda, may be possible
and adds that "consensus is not, after all, necessarily a primary aim of feminism" (1997, sec. 7, line 10). We can then insist, as Hawkesworth (1989) does, that some things can be known, while exploring what is ultimately unrepresentable. Thus, working with the conceptual ideas of resistant, paradoxical space, in combination with working from a
feminist standpoint, provides an appropriate and strategic framework for understanding ANEW.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The methodological considerations of this project were possibly the most challenging aspect of the work, involving an (at times) unwieldy combination of feminist scholarship, loving friendships, and the mechanics of the research process. This chapter details my methods, my methodological interactions with the women of ANEW, my understandings of feminist methodology, and a variety of issues of methodology, epistemology and language that arose during the course of the project.

Methods

My research methods have included a literature review, ethnographic approaches such as participant observation and interviews with women at ANEW, and an analysis of those observations and interviews. The literature review involved extensive reading in the areas of feminist geography (as discussed in Chapter Two) and of feminist research methodology (discussed below).

The participant observation was carried out during three separate visits to ANEW, June 29-July 6, 1999, August 23-28, 1999 and October 4-10, 1999 (hereafter referred to as the July visit, the August visit and the October visit respectively). The interviews took place during the August visit.

The July visit included meetings with the ANEW staff and the Trust management in order to secure permission for the research project. Prior to this visit, I had sent the ANEW staff tentative drafts of the consent forms and potential interview questions. This
early version of my proposed interview questions included the question: "Do you consider yourself a feminist, or hold feminist beliefs or ideals?" I later removed that question because I did not wish to alienate women who did not identify as a feminist, or who were unsympathetic to feminism, by my overt identification with it. However, in my communications with the current staff of ANEW during the July visit, I was explicit about my desire to make any research interactions a participatory experience in order to reflect my feminist values.\(^{24}\)

At the time of the July visit, the ANEW staff in turn specifically requested that the research be an 'informative learning experience' for the women who participated, in line with their protocol for ANEW's participation in research projects.\(^{25}\) In keeping with the way that the house is collectively organised, the staff of ANEW requested that the work be as collaborative as possible. Further to this end, staff requested that women have veto power over their interview transcripts.\(^{26}\) We further agreed that the project called for a high level of participation from me, and I indicated my plans for two further visits. Additionally, while the staff indicated their agreement for me to do the research, staff wished for me to acknowledge the personal relationships I had developed with women at the house during my time as an employee, and to further note the influence that this personal involvement might have on the women's decisions to participate in the research project. Although none of the staff named the project as feminist, their parameters for the research project align with feminist methodologies in that they attempt to "avoid any perpetuation of the exploitation of women" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 27).

\(^{24}\) In hindsight, this is an idealistic hope. I will discuss this issue later in this chapter.
\(^{25}\) To my knowledge, ANEW has been approached by one other researcher prior to myself.
\(^{26}\) Women who participated thus were able to read over their interview transcripts. The veto power did not extend to the manuscript of this research project.
During the July visit I also met with Nell Gordon of the Trust management team to obtain the Trust's permission to do the research. This meeting was originally scheduled with Reverend Jacob Anderson, the head of the management team, however, when I arrived for the meeting he was not there and no explanation was offered for his absence. In fact, at no time during this research project did Reverend Anderson respond directly to my emails, faxes, phone calls or presence. The staff at ANEW were not surprised by this absence of interest. Briar commented in her interview that Reverend Anderson "has no understanding of the [ANEW] work." The staff are also accustomed to having to wait for his responses to their requests. For example, Briar noted that an ANEW staff request regarding the redistribution of ANEW staff hours was yet to be acknowledged. Despite the passing of some weeks, Briar stated, "there's been not, not even a blink from across the road, no answer, no."

During my meeting with Nell I indicated my willingness to provide some service in return for permission to conduct research with ANEW. Nell suggested that I provide the management with a report about the value of women-only services (Appendix A) that they could use during their next funding round. I agreed, with the proviso that the report would be a general document, as opposed to a report about ANEW, as my research would still be unfinished at the time that the report was required (September 30, 1999). This report was delivered to the Trust by fax and by post. I have received no comments from the Trust regarding this.

Prior to the August visit, I sent a poster (Appendix B) announcing my upcoming

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27 Aside from my general awareness of the appropriateness of reciprocity in a research arrangement, I was also made aware during personal communications with Lynne Star, of the significance and importance of kohā (gifts) in New Zealand research settings.
visit, and information sheets (Appendix C) detailing the project to ANEW. In the poster, I suggested various ways for interested women to participate, including individual interviews, group interviews, collaborative projects, or alternatives as suggested by women. Upon my arrival at ANEW I created another poster that was much larger and brightly coloured with paint and ribbon. During the August visit, five women approached me to signal their interest in participating in an individual interview. At each interview, women received an information sheet detailing the project and listing the contact details for my academic supervisors (Appendix C). Each woman signed a consent form (Appendix D) to indicate her understanding of the information.

Most of the interviews took place in the back garden. I suggested either this location or the quiet room (a room used for counselling sessions or private time) for the interviews. Both of these locations are outside of the main flow of traffic through the house. The back garden is the furthest point from the street and therefore communications held there are neither audible nor visible to passers-by. The back garden is visible to women using ANEW's kitchen. Although the interviews were held during the New Zealand winter, the days were sunny and the pleasant weather may have also influenced the women's choice of this space.

All of the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The interviews were designed to facilitate a conversational dialogue. That is, in each interview, there was a space set aside for women to 'ask questions back' (Oakley, 1987, p. 42), reflecting the

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28 Briar told me that the original posters were not big enough or different enough from all the other paper on the walls to attract attention. As soon as I saw them there I saw how they did not fit. I spent a morning in the craft-room making an alternative version. The text of this poster read: "What do you think about ANEW? Talk to Deb."
participatory experience I hoped to generate. I attempted to answer all the questions that were directed at me as fully as was necessary. Women were able to view the list of questions that I had prepared (Appendix E) before and during our interview. I explained that the questions were only a guide to areas we could cover in conversation, and that they were not expected to answer each one.

In my effort to provide fuller transcripts for myself and for the women whose words are on the pages, I designed the following code for variations of speech (loudness or quietness) and non-speech (actions) as they appear in the transcripts:

- Actions ([sighs], [laughter]) appear in square brackets.
- Indicates missing words or sentences due to muffled parts of the tape.
- Ways of speaking (quietly, slowly) appear in round brackets.
- Indicates that there has been a short pause in speech.
- Indicates a long pause in speech.
- Capital letters indicate that a word was said with emphasis.
- Italic letters indicate a word that describes a sound (i.e. ruff ruff).
- Indicates that a word or words have been omitted in the text for clarity, or for the protection of information.

The October visit to the house was an opportunity for the women who had been interviewed to discuss their interview transcripts. All the women had opted to view their transcripts so these were made available to them prior to my arrival for this visit. All of

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29 Once again, this desire was idealistic and I return to this later in this chapter.
30 I explore the process of transcription in some detail later in this chapter.
31 Some of the following coding methods were adapted from Liz Kelly's (1988) coding for identifying patterns of speech in transcripts, as described in Reinharz (1992, p. 40).
the women had some discussion with me about their transcripts, and some of them made
minor changes related to grammar and to clarity of meaning.

The first stage of my analysis began by gathering together all the notes, transcripts, and thoughts that had been generated during the course of the research. I read through the interview conversations, my journal notes following those conversations and during the course of my participant observation, and the notes I made during my literature review. Next I put all the transcripts into a single document, colour-coding each individual woman's speech. I then determined a set of significant words or phrases and searched the document for these. These were: space, place, across the street, the Trust, 
magic wand, y'know, and I don't know.

I searched for 'space' and 'place' to see when and how women used these terms, if
at all. I suspected I might find that I was the primary one to use those words, because of
the focus of my research, but in fact all the women used 'space' and 'place', and in a
variety of ways.

During my research visits, I observed that 'across the street' and 'the Trust'
seemed to be the two primary ways of referring to the Trust management. I looked for the
incidence and context of the usage of these phrases in order to determine a sense of the
women's feeling about the relationship between ANEW and the Trust.

One of my prepared sets of interview questions was as follows:

If there was another ANEW opening up how would it be?
How would you want it to be – which are the bits from here that you would take
with you? Which rooms? Which are the bits you would leave behind?

In the course of the interviews, this set of questions metamorphosed into a question about
magic wands. That is, I asked women to imagine that they had a magic wand and that
they could create or re-create ANEW at will, including or excluding the existing rooms and practices. By searching for the phrase 'magic wand' I was hoping to locate the places in the interviews where women expressed their hopes for ANEW's future. Finally, I searched for the phrase 'y'know' on the basis of my experience of the transcription process, which revealed that women used this and other similar verbalisations to work out ideas as they surfaced, and also used the phrase to confirm or request my understanding of their meaning. This search led me to also look for the incidence of 'I don't know' as a means of signaling hesitation or uncertainty.

Each word or phrase generated a set of conversation fragments, which I then read through, looking for places where women's thoughts and ideas converged or diverged. In the context of this research, I have conceptualized these convergences and divergences as 'meeting places', expanding on Massey's (1997, p. 322) sense of place as a

*meeting place...imagined as articulated movements in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself.*

Four such 'meeting places' began to take shape: the strategies of resistance employed by the women in terms of their relationship with the Trust; an embodied sense of space, or a taking place on the part of the women of ANEW; the contradictions and stresses of the women-only space; and the attempt to articulate a definition of women-only space which paradoxically resulted in the emergence of a non-space, where words were left unspoken even as understanding was assumed or requested. These meeting places are the subject of Chapter Four.
The Women

Briar, Deborah, Frances, Kirsty, Rebekah, and Yvonne. These 6 women participated in this research project. The women range in age from early 20's to late 50's. Briar, Yvonne and Kirsty are part of the staff team at ANEW. Rebekah and Frances are long-time members of the ANEW community. Deborah is a former staff member and has returned as a researcher and visitor. All the women are Pakeha.

I did not ask the women who participated to complete a demographic profile, nor did I ask them during the interviews about their age, ethnicity or sexuality. I had prepared a brief demographic questionnaire but decided not to ask women to complete it after observing that the more 'paper' I gave to women, the less comfortable they became. The above information was freely offered to me in the course of conversation during the interviews, or was already known to me due to previously established relationships.

Feminist Debates about Research Methodologies

Although Sandra Harding (1987) has also argued against the idea of a distinctive feminist research method, she does see value in feminist methodological efforts. Harding takes care to distinguish between method, as in actual techniques for gathering evidence, and methodology, which she defines as a theory or analysis of how research should be carried out. Her stance is that no one method is or can be inherently a feminist method, but methodology can be feminist, in that it can demonstrate how to take existing methods and apply them to exploring women and gender. Australian feminist researchers Brenda Smith and Carolyn Noble-Spruell (1986) also examine the idea of feminist

32 Lynne Alice (1999) reminds us that Harding's distinctions are more academic than practical, in that method, methodology and epistemology are intricately interwoven in research work.
methodologies, considering the efforts of other researchers, such as Stanley and Wise (1983), Mies (1983), Reinharz (1983) and Jayaratne (1983), who have all endeavoured to develop a specifically feminist research methodology.

Smith and Noble-Spruell are especially attentive to the action research of Maria Mies, which they view as most successfully integrating 'the tough and the tender, the doing and the feeling' (1986, p. 143). This list of qualities, according to Smith and Noble-Spruell, is a 'fusion of male and female characteristics' (1986, p. 143). Although they claim to be moving past dichotomies of human experience, Smith and Noble-Spruell unwittingly advance binary stereotypes of male and female behaviour by aligning 'the tender' and 'the feeling' with a 'feminine' style of analysis and 'the tough' and 'the doing' with the 'masculine'. While I am in some agreement with regards to their respect for Mies' work, Smith and Noble-Spruell have undermined their argument for a feminist methodology by expressing it in this fashion.

Mies (1983) identifies herself both as a social scientist and as a participant in 'the women’s movement', and attempts to demonstrate connections between feminist theory and practice by outlining a set of postulates for a feminist research methodology. Her argument is for the establishment of an analytical frame for feminist action that supports the political needs of what she refers to as 'the women's movement'. In brief, her postulates for achieving this are as follows: that 'conscious partiality', or a critical empathy, developed by making some identification with the research subject, must replace scientific objectivity; that researchers must commit to achieving a 'view from below, or adopting non-hierarchical practices; that researchers must actively participate in the women's movement; that the changing of the social science status quo will create
the opportunity for gathering new knowledge; that research must be a process of 'conscientization', or consciousness-raising, for both the researcher and the researched; that women's history, individual and collective, must be studied; and that women must come together collectively in their research practice (to promote group discussions and non-competitive environments) (Mies, 1983, pp. 122-128).

Collectively, Mies' postulates strongly urge the Women's Studies community to bring the academy and the street together. Other scholars have critiqued Mies' work, pointing out that Mies and the women she researched for her paper "showed a common ideology and a strong commitment to co-operation and the value of the project", and thus the distance to travel between 'academic' and 'activist' was reduced (Smith & Noble-Spruell, 1986, p. 144).

Mies (1983) contends that female researchers are better able to study "exploited groups" (p. 121) due to "their own subjective experience of sexist discrimination" (p. 122). However, this is a debatable claim in that it implies that only men will harm or take advantage of women. In opposition to Mies's thesis, Janet Finch (1984) proposes that women researchers may in fact be in a better position to exploit women research subjects as they are able to create or participate in a more intimate research setting than their male counterparts (1984, p. 81). I had concerns of this nature in terms of my research project. I was afraid that this research would negatively impact on the relationships I have developed with the women of the house by placing women who trust me in a vulnerable position. However, as Shula Marks (1989) concludes, the dilemma of being caught up in the very processes we are endeavouring to understand is unavoidable when dealing with women's lives, but also worthwhile in that "we can try to capture both the internality of
experience and the externality of structure" (p. 40). I now believe that my position as a former member of that community has strengthened the integrity of my work and deepened my friendships with the women of the house.

Although Mies (1983) indicates that research projects should be "carefully linked to an ongoing movement," she does not explicitly address the need for the researcher(s) to maintain connections with the researched individuals or communities following fieldwork. Feminist scholars Linda Archibald and Mary Crnkovich advocate Mies' postulates for a feminist methodology, but add their desire to see feminist researchers incorporate follow-up action into their research projects (1995, pp. 120-121). I too hope to maintain some level of contact with the women who participated in this project, and would be happy to carry out follow-up action, if the women were interested in pursuing further research.

Mies' arguments are primarily problematic for her assumption of a universally understood 'women's movement'. Mies' implicit claim of women's shared oppression masks the disparity of women's experiences. Even within the same nation, feminist movements mean different things to different people. For example, in a Canadian context, the relative advantages enjoyed by wealthy white women as compared to the discrimination experienced by First Nations women result in vastly different understandings of oppression (Maracle, 1996; Razack, 1991). These examples are also distinct from Mies' European-based, socialist feminist research.

For me, the strength of Mies' formulation is her activist focus. Mies' belief that feminist methods must be ideologically interwoven with the goals of 'the woman's movement', can be translated and updated to a 1990's understanding of feminisms'
multiple projects. That is, those who choose to research in the name of feminisms can still strive to incorporate into their work an activist element that seeks to effect political change.

Working within New Zealand, Armstrong and Du Plessis (1999) advocate a radical revisioning of traditional research methodologies. They insist that feminist researchers are able to locate and identify their feminist perspective by claiming the 'I's of the text. In this way, the feminist researcher can explicitly state her positionings as a reader, an interpreter, and as a constructor of 'theoretically informed stories' (1999, p. 109). This insertion of the researcher into the research text is delightfully described as creating a "satisfyingly lumpy contradictoriness," indicating the ways in which competing and conflicting ideologies, epistemologies, and ontologies jostle for space (Armstrong & Du Plessis, 1999: 110). However, Armstrong and Du Plessis wisely remind readers that such approaches are filled with risks, leaving the researcher vulnerable to personal and professional criticism.

My methodology for this project has been informed by the above debates. I have attempted to be non-hierarchical in my process by keeping ANEW a part of my research decisions (Mies, 1983). I have endeavoured to encourage a consciousness raising experience both for myself and for the women I worked with on this project (Mies, 1983). I have also kept the 'I' in this research text, striving to acknowledge my presence at all times, and to consider the ways in which my experience is different from the other women in this project (Armstrong & Du Plessis, 1999).
Issues of Methodology and Epistemology

In this research project I have encountered a number of methodological and epistemological issues. The issues that I explore include the usefulness (or not) of a feminist methodology, the politics of power in a feminist research situation that involves (some) non-feminist women, and the implications of silences in interviews.

To be or not to be (feminist)

Although I approached this project as a feminist, I was faced with the dilemma of whether or not to express my feminist intentions overtly to all the women at ANEW. As I discussed previously, some of the women (and the staff in particular) were aware that I identify as feminist; however, not all of those women feel comfortable with feminisms. Diane Millen (1997), British feminist scholar, argues that a concentration on feminist methodology may be an obstacle in research with non-feminist women. The implication is that non-feminist women's perceptions of feminism will negatively affect their interest in being involved in named feminist research. In her feminist research with a group of women whom she describes as 'unsympathetic' to feminist aims, Millen indicates that her feminist agenda was not made explicit in order to avoid distancing her participants. Millen argues that this strategic abandonment of an overt feminist methodology can result in the research being defined as feminist by virtue of the values it upholds, rather than by the methods it has employed.

New Zealand feminist scholar Lynne Alice (1999, p. 63) similarly notes that it is the values of feminist research, rather than the techniques employed, that make feminist
research distinct from other research. This claim is also supported by Shulamit Reinharz's (1992) method of selection in her compilation of feminist methods in social research. Due to the difficulties in defining feminisms, Reinharz made the choice to accept researchers' work based on their self-definitions. That is, if the researchers identified themselves as feminist or as part of a women's movement, if the research was published in feminist journals or books, or if the research was funded by feminist funding organisations, then Reinharz included the work.\(^{33}\) In terms of my research project then, my values, as defined by me, are feminist and thus my project is also feminist, whether or not I communicate my feminism to those involved in the research. Reinharz (1992) notes that researchers may not publicly identify as feminist for a multitude of reasons (such as political pressure or cultural appropriateness), and to this I can add strategic feminist invisibility. The difficulty with taking this position in ethical terms is accepting that I have not told all the women involved in this research everything that there is to tell.

The Politics of Power: Feminist Anxiety in the Research Process

Many analyses of feminist research concentrate on issues of power and equality in research relationships (Millen, 1997; Cotterill, 1992; Reinharz, 1992; Ribbens, 1989; Oakley, 1987; Finch 1984). In particular, interviews are a common focus for discussion. In her research about mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships, British sociologist Pamela Cotterill (1992) argues that the balance of power may shift back and forth during an interview, leaving the researcher and the researched alternately vulnerable. This is in contrast to the mainstream notion that a researcher holds all the power in an interview.

33 This is not to say that Reinharz's method of inclusions is unproblematic. Despite her efforts to be inclusive and to avoid establishing prescriptions for feminist research, it is ultimately Reinharz who has chosen which researchers to include and exclude.
Refusing to answer questions, or withholding particular information are ways for the researched to exert power (Cotterill, 1999, p. 599; Ong, 1995). In the interviews for this research project, I attempted to establish some equality by creating the space for a mutual exchange of questions. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter ("Methods"), I see now that this attempt to share power was somewhat idealistic.

As Cotterill's (1992) argument illustrates, it is unrealistic to assume that I have the power to control the nature of the interview interaction. Though I offered the space for women to ask questions, they could still exercise control of the conversation by choosing which questions to ask, or by opting to ask none at all. Secondly, I was the only one to arrive with a tape-recorder, and the only one who was leaving town at the end of the week (Cotterill, 1992, p. 599). Although the women I spoke with had the opportunity to ask me questions about the research process, and the opportunity to view their interview transcripts, I have to ultimately take responsibility for the final decisions about what to include and what not to include (Ribbens, 1989, p. 590).

Millen (1997) argues that in an effort to achieve equality, a self-professed feminist methodology may attempt to enact a process of consciousness raising for research participants, while simultaneously professing to honour women's experiential knowledge. This concept of consciousness raising evokes an earlier feminist period, when in the 1970's, American groups like Redstockings gathered together to share their experiences in order to achieve women's liberation (Humm, 1995, p. 46). That period of consciousness raising has been critiqued, in particular by Black American feminists for promoting only white concepts of sisterhood, and thus de-emphasising women's diverse representations (Lorde, 1984). However, using women's personal experiences for
political purposes is still regarded to be a valid endeavour by some feminists (Personal Narratives Group, 1989). My project fits into this latter category, as my methods focused on women's individual perspectives.

In regards to this research project, an interest in consciousness-raising was present in my interactions with ANEW staff. ANEW staff were clear that they viewed the research project as a potentially informative learning experience for women who chose to participate. They were equally explicit about the women's rights to own their knowledge, in particular in terms of their veto power over their individual transcripts. In agreeing with ANEW's terms, I was promising to stimulate a learning opportunity and promising to value women's knowledge. In so doing, I implicitly supported Millen's (1997) claim that a feminist methodology may simultaneously seek to raise the consciousness of the participant and to affirm their experiential knowledge. The contradiction here, as Millen (1997) rightly identifies, is between validating women's knowledge and attempting to politicise their knowledge. The feminist researcher may find herself in the position of foisting her (assumed to be politicised) beliefs on an/other woman or women -- an effort at empowerment that ironically destroys any pretence of equality. Indeed, my interpretation of power and/or empowerment are likely to be different from, if not unrecognizable by at least some of the women I interviewed. I was therefore more at ease with affirming women's experiences than I was with any effort to 'share' my knowledge of feminism.

Janice Raymond (1986), a theorist of sexualities, argues that women have a dual relation to power. That is, women may have an ambivalence to power, having been at the negative end of power relations, but they may have also made use of power to resist the
'perversities of patriarchal power' (1986, p. 193). In this statement, Raymond reveals her analysis of patriarchy as a perverse and socially sanctioned structure that perpetuates the domination of men over women. According to Raymond, women who are critical of power may alienate themselves from their own 'power of being' (1986, p. 184), creating a deliberate distance between themselves and their personal power in an effort to avoid corruption. I believe the desire of some feminist researchers to align their interpretations of the non-feminist participants with their own, despite the seemingly unequal nature of the research process, arises out of a fundamental feminist discomfort with holding power in a hierarchical manner.

Both my research experiences and Raymond's arguments raise some complex questions about the nature of power. Many feminist theorists have examined the concept of power, and multiple interpretations are the result (Humm, 1995, p. 217). In keeping with my leaning towards the structuralist approach, my conception of power is best understood as 'power over'. That is, power is enacted in a hierarchical, relational fashion, whereby one person can hold, and therefore use more power than another, vis-à-vis her or his location in the social order.

However, all women are not equally oppressed, nor do they lack the same privileges. In fact, in terms of my project, the individual women's education, financial position, and standing in the community vary greatly from one to the next. Four of the five women interviewed have paid work, while the fifth is dependent solely on a benefit. Two of those four employed women are in positions of authority at ANEW by virtue of their paid positions and their corresponding clinical training. These two women also have standing in the wider mental health community as a result of their commitment to ANEW.
and ANEW’s successes as a mental health provider for women. Some of the women have university education and others do not.

Secondly, the concept of empowerment is also a complex one:

[W]hat we as researchers and feminists might see as empowering women by giving them the tools to analyse their situation in terms of gender and power may actually disempower them in the short term by undermining immediate coping strategies which do not involve any long-term structural change for women and which the researcher has therefore judged as being based on sexist or non-feminist beliefs or action. (Millen, 1997, sec. 2.3)

Empowerment, as Millen describes it, cannot be simply seen as a desirable choice as it may in fact make certain situations unbearable or put women’s livelihood at risk. An example of this from this research project is provided by Briar.

Briar is the ANEW staff member who has the most contact with the Trust management team. As such, she becomes a bridge of sorts, responsible for carrying information to the Trust and back to ANEW, and for ensuring that requests for particular actions are carried out. During our interview, Briar spoke about feeling criticised by her ANEW colleagues for making a decision requested by the Trust, on behalf of the ANEW team. Briar was all too aware that making the decision on her own undermined the collective decision making process, and regretted that it had to occur, but felt that her need to keep her job had put her in that position:

and me knowing that of course I can't, I can't [make that decision] um • [but] I'm responsible um, this is my livelihood on the line here, this is my bread and butter stuff we're talking about and that's what I see as constraints. I see that the process that we would be using would be really different um, it wasn't that we knee-jerked all the time.

If Briar was empowered through her participation in this research to resist the constraints of her ‘bridge’ position, perhaps these painful choices would be eliminated. However, by refusing to fulfill her obligations to the Trust in favour of ANEW's
collective practice, she could lose her job. Another alternative would be to start over and to create a service without the presence of a 'parent' organisation; however, this is also an economic risk, and Briar cannot afford to lose her income.

Seeking to empower women whose situations are vastly different from my own, by involving them in feminist research, is a prospect I am uncomfortable with. However, there is a fine line between avoiding any assumption of power, and sharing the particular knowledge that I have painstakingly worked to accumulate. (Why do we/feminist researchers hesitate to acknowledge our authority and knowledge?) After all, I had agreed to ANEW staff's request that women's participation in the project would be an informative one. My exploration of the women-only space, drawing on the work of feminists before me, combined with the contributions of the women of ANEW, can, at least potentially, contribute to the development of ANEW's service.

Reading (empty?) Spaces: A Contradiction in the Process of Analysis

One methodological implication that arose out of the process of analysis was the impossibility of reading what was unarticulated during the interviews. In one interview, a woman requested that the tape recorder be turned off for a moment while she silently collected her thoughts. Additionally, women indicated through hesitations, silence, and phrases such as 'I don't know' that they felt unable to articulate particular experiences, ideas, or situations. There were also, inevitably, omissions. For example, although it is a dimension of ANEW's women-only space, no one discussed the presence of lesbian women at ANEW, except in reference to 'outside' constructions of the ANEW women as a "bunch of feminist lesbians kind of idea" (Kirsty). Nor did anyone refer to the transgendered (male to female) individual who is a part of the ANEW community,
despite this potential disruption to definitions of 'woman', and 'women-only'. Rose (1997, p. 202) suggests that such absences and silences may constitute a radical critique and that researchers must expand their methods beyond a simple 'coding and categorizing' in order to bring forth these radical politics. These 'non/spaces' imply that

in the moments of communication during an interview, there are possibilities for escaping the oppositional roles of 'interviewer/interviewee' or 'academic/activist.' There is a possibility of communicating something else beyond the positions power consigns us to. (Rose, 1997, p. 202)

It is therefore also possible to bring these spaces into place, by illuminating their (non)existence in the post-interview, analytical process.

Issues of Language

There are a variety of ways in which language has had an impact on this research. In this next section I will discuss the transcription process, women's speech, the representation of speech, and the politics of naming.

The Transcription Process

*Listening to the tapes is so personal. I hear these women's voices, especially the women I know so well, and there they are in front of me. I feel all those ways you feel when you hear the voice of someone you care about - affection, familiarity, love - coupled with the physical memory of the day of each talk (most took place in the spring sunshine of the back garden at the picnic table). All that and I haven't yet listened to the words.*

(Research Journal Notes, Sept.3, 1999)

Following the interactive energy of an interview, the researcher or transcriber must somehow translate that dynamic performance of which she may have been a part, on/into a two-dimensional piece of paper, while still preserving the integrity of the event. Despite the delicate nature of this task, the transcription of recorded interviews is noted for its tedium and excessive time consumption. However, as the only member of my
research team, (and a poorly paid student at that!), I had to do my own transcription, and was thus able to trace some of the finer points of the process.

In the course of this research, I have re-discovered\textsuperscript{34} the subtle complexity of the transcription process. It is a multi-layered activity that encompasses not only the physical act of writing down the spoken word, but also extends to the circumstances that surround that act. Ultimately, transcription has its roots in conversation,\textsuperscript{35} (usually in an interview) and as such relies on a discerning ear, engaged participation, and a memory for the nuances of narrative expression. DeVault (1990) equates the interview and transcription process with one activity: listening. That is 'listening' refers to "what we do while interviewing, but also to the hours we spend later listening to tapes or studying transcripts, and even more broadly, to the ways we work at interpreting respondents accounts" (DeVault, 1990, p. 101). While I agree that listening is an essential component and also agree that the interview and the transcription are two parts of a more fluid whole, I feel that this description springs solely from an interpretation of the researcher as 'one who takes'. I would argue that the researcher's role is much more comprehensive than simply listening. The researcher is also contributing to the energy of an interview, by her words, her body language, and her reactions to the other person. Additionally, the researcher will often have been the impetus for the interview to take place.

Do you Swear to Tell the Truth?

The need to create written transcripts follows on my decision to audiotape my interactions with the women with whom I spoke. I made this decision mainly so that I could assure myself of accuracy in my re-membering of women's words. Tedlock (1983)

\textsuperscript{34} I transcribed a taped interview in 1994.
argues that the use of a recording device should allow for a more comprehensive interview experience. That is, the use of a recording device can free the ear of the interviewer to listen less to the words and more generally to the variations of a voice as it moves through emotions, climbs in intensity and drops into silences:

This mythographer is not scribbling furiously away in a notebook while the performer waits to see whether it will be necessary to go back or whether it will be possible to get on with the story. Instead, the initial version of the inscription is being made by a device that arranges invisible patterns of charges on a magnetic tape, charges that can later be transformed into a reasonable facsimile of the sounds that first produced them....[T]he mythographer who postpones the use of pencil and notebook will hear precisely all the dimensions of the voice that the spelling ear tunes out. (Tedlock, 1983, pp. 3-4)

The tape recorder, which only produces a ‘reasonable facsimile’ (who has ever heard a tape recording of themselves that is recognizable?), thus becomes a memory aide in the transcription process. My own experience was that it was difficult to listen fully in an interview, even with the tape recorder going. In some ways, the tape even acted as an obstacle to listening, as I tended to think that whatever I missed would be ‘captured’ on tape.

(em)Body and Soul

A transcript is a means of displaying an interview (Reinharz, 1992). A transcript also allows for its readers to visualise a woman's experience, and potentially to hear the multiple voices that may thread through a single person's speech or between speakers. The movement between recorded speech and written text, while sounding deceptively simple, is actually a complex translation process. Tedlock (1983) has examined the

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35 DeVault (1990) describes research with people as an activity that is generally rooted in talk.
difficulties in transcribing oral narratives from American Indian communities and notes
the following:

We may determine the punctuation of our text by the deciphering eye, 
which will seek out patterns of syntax, but if we listen again we may 
discover that the 'commas' and 'periods' and 'question marks' of the 
speaking voice, as signaled by pitch contours and stresses, may not obey 
the rules worked out by the deciphering eye. (1983, p. 7)

Thus, to simply transcribe the words of an interview is to lose the rhythm of the speakers. 
To move neatly from one speaker to another in the written text, like the lines in a play, is 
to lose the dynamic of a natural conversation, where one speaker's voice flows into the 
other, where people speak simultaneously, where words in the air take up less space than 
the words on a page. It is also to lose a sense of the embodiment of the speakers, in that 
actions such as shifting in a chair, leaning forward or sitting back, hitting the arm of a 
chair for emphasis, each audible in recording, are lost in a transcript of purely alphabetic 
notations. 37

It seems then that no written reproduction of an audible text will ever be able to 
represent completely the latter's multiple potentialities. However, it is possible to strive 
for an 'open text' (Tedlock 1983, p. 7), that is a document that is not tied to syntax or 
scansion, but is instead devoted to recreating good speaking, as opposed to tidy writing. 
To do this well, the transcriber must find the means to convey the movement and flow of 
a dialogue, including some representation of the non-verbal elements. A transcript can

36 The phraseology here is significant in terms of a post-colonial analysis of ethnographic encounters such 
as the interview.

37 Other scholars have developed detailed transcription conventions in an effort to preserved the integrity of 
a recorded conversation. For examples, see Beach, W.A. (Ed.), Special Issue on Sequential Organization of 
then function to develop a holistic picture of an interview, incorporating not only words, but also re-creating actions, emotions, and interactions.\textsuperscript{38}

The Whole Truth and Nothing (but The Truth)

In addition to the notations I designed for the transcriptions,\textsuperscript{39} I also recorded the use of 'yeah', 'yep', 'mmhmm', 'y'know' and other similar verbalisations. In reading the transcripts, I noticed that these words were strongly present as linking devices between myself and the women I spoke with, as our conversations developed. They also seemed to indicate a working out of ideas, and an affirmation of those ideas, as they surfaced. For example, in response to a question about whether ANEW could survive without the Trust, Briar described a possible independent future for ANEW in the following way:

Yeah it is. I think it's really possible. In fact I think actually, that's where it needs to go. Don't know if it will go, but I think in order, y'know we talk about, in theory we talk about these um, these sort of relationships that are about growth. If we look after that for ourselves, we have to grow. Yeah. Because otherwise, this will, yeah, this will just curl up its toes. Hmm.

DeVault (1990) also refers to the use of 'you know' as more meaningful than its seemingly incidental presence and repetition would suggest. Re-examining her transcripts, DeVault writes:

I see now that these words often occur in places where they are consequential for the joint production of our talk in the interviews. In many instances, 'you know' seems to mean something like, 'OK, this next bit is going to be a little bit tricky. I can't say it quite right, but help me out a little; meet me halfway and you'll understand what I mean.' (1990, p. 103)

\textsuperscript{38} A postmodern understanding of this issue would see such an ideal transcript as impossible, due to complex nature of the performativity of bodies (personal communication with Lynne Star).

\textsuperscript{39} See pg. 45 for the key to the transcription notations.
Thus, the phrase becomes a desire for understanding, or a questioning of the other's understanding. Indeed, I noticed many 'y'know's' that were intonated as questions, and these were invariably followed by a 'mmmm' or 'mmmmmm', or 'yeah', indicating that the question was noted and the listener was signalling her listening and understanding. In order to ensure that women's reality is distinctly visible, these words must be included in transcript, otherwise "we move from women talk to sociology, leaving the unspoken behind" (DeVault, 1990, p. 103).

The indicators and coding processes described above not only allowed me to represent a more complex picture of the interviews, but also enabled me to hear, to sharpen my attention to what I was listening to. However, my simple coding efforts leave many nuances unacknowledged. For example, the differences between my patterns of speech and accent as a Canadian speaker of English and those of the New Zealand women with whom I was speaking are not reflected in any meaningful way in the transcripts. I was also fascinated by laughter and by the multiple meanings laughter can convey, but I did not attempt to classify these. My project after all is not to produce a thorough analysis of patterns of speech or conversational dynamics.

In general, where interpretation was required for certain tones of voices, or lengths of silences, meanings slipped through my typist fingers, and disappeared into the cracks between my categories. In terms of listening to my own words, I found my urge to correct any unevenness or uncertainty to be almost automatic. As the author of those words, I felt I knew what I meant and tended to want to fill in any gaps. However, I steadfastly resisted this desire believing that I was upholding some notion of 'truthful'

40 Of course, this is only one way for 'y'know' to be interpreted.
transcription. Yet I wanted the women to understand that the transcripts were mutable. As I have already indicated, my methodology was constructed to give women the opportunity to read over their own transcripts and make any changes, additions or deletions that they feel to be necessary. I was assuming that the women I spoke with have an authority over their own words that I did not grant myself. Naturally, revising or rewording my questions would result in an unfair representation of the responses I received, but clarifying my own explanations, filling in a few of my own blanks would surely be part of the fiction of fact.

Feminist researchers have experimented with various ways to reflect an interview accurately. Wharemaru and Duffié (1997) have reproduced their interviews as a single stream of speech, deleting the interviewer's questions and creating an oral history effect. Others include both their own speech and that of their interviewee/s in order that the reader may discern differences between the two, or alternatively, may infer commonalities. This appearance of the researcher's voice is a way to embody me/her/us, allowing the reader to see the dialogue as a dialogue, vs. as a falsely sterile, ostensibly undirected monologue.

Naming

[A]s soon as you move from the position of a named subject into the position of a naming subject, you also have to remain alive to the renewed dangers of arrested meanings and fixed categories -- in other words, of occupying the position of a sovereign subject. 'Non-categorical' thinking sees to it that the power to name be constantly exposed in its limits. So in terms of subject positioning you can only thrive on fragile ground. You are always working in this precarious space where you constantly run the risk of falling on one side or the other. You are walking right on the edge and challenging both sides so they cannot simply be collapsed into one. (Trinh, 1992, p. 173)
The naming of women in this project has been unexpectedly complex. It is routine for mainstream, non-feminist social science research to assign pseudonyms to its 'subjects' in order to maintain their anonymity. For my feminist politics, from my perspective of social justice, I want to stand up and be named. For some of the women who participated in this project, being named carried no fear with it, but was instead perceived as a responsibility and a privilege. One such woman, a member of the ANEW staff, approached me outside of the interview to talk about keeping or not keeping her name. Since the moment of our interview, various thoughts about this had occurred to her. For example, she became aware that she had a certain privilege in having the freedom to use her name, a privilege other women at ANEW are less likely to feel due to the stigma surrounding mental health. In this case then, it was perhaps best not to use her name in order to demonstrate her solidarity and membership in the ANEW community. I suggested that the use of her name would/could highlight that very issue, by illustrating how she can have that power while others cannot. We further wrestled with whether or not using her name could also be claiming membership where she does not have it, thus disguising her privilege. In the end she remained undecided, and I chose a pseudonym for her to protect the confidentiality of all participants.

Naming places and spaces produced equal difficulties. In order to conceal adequately, and therefore protect and respect, this community of women in a country the size of New Zealand, I needed to find a fictional name for the setting of their community. I leafed through several Maori-English dictionaries thinking that a Maori name would be an appropriate choice. However, I soon changed my mind:

The use of 'Aotearoa' to indigenise the term 'New Zealand' is one example of the neo-colonial urge both to name difference and also to subsume it.
For iwi Maori across Te Waipounamu (South Island), 'Aotearoa' is representative of only the most northern regions of New Zealand, and its general adoption as a term to describe this country is dismissive of the heterogeneity that constitutes the different iwi located across many regions. The desire for an inclusive term reflects both a discomfort and an inability to allow for differences among Maori. (Matahaere-Atariki, 1999, pp. 104-105)

Donna C. Matahaere-Atariki strikes at the heart of the power and politics of naming in contemporary New Zealand. In her eyes, the politically correct 'Aotearoa/ New Zealand' (which is part of the title of the book within which her essay appears) is correct only for a privileged few. She writes: "I use the term 'Aotearoa/ New Zealand' with a great deal of irony, and wish to point out to the reader that seemingly inclusive place names both disguise and reveal the history of colonial settlement" (1999, p. 105). In the end, after a few false starts, I decided upon the name, Meren.

DeVault (1990, p. 106) notes that "[r]esearchers routinely indicate that they have changed respondents' names and some details of their lives in order to protect their subjects' anonymity, but they rarely report in detail on which details they have changed and how." To avoid this disguising of process, I discussed the ways in which names were changed for this research early on in this paper. We need to be transparent about our naming processes in research projects. Naming must be seen as a strategy, and treated with care. If we treat naming cavalierly we may simply add to the mis-naming that already lurks under the floorboards of our new methodologies.
Chapter Four: Dis-covering Space, Meeting Place

Introduction

An analysis of the interviews with Rebekah, Briar, Frances, Yvonne and Kirsty has enabled me to dis-cover a network of shifting, overlapping, and sometimes contradictory 'meeting places', which constitute ANEW's women-only service as a resistant, paradoxical space. These meeting places, or points of convergence and divergence, take shape around four issues: the strategies of resistance employed by the women in terms of their relationship with the Trust; an embodied sense of space, or a taking of place on the part of the women of ANEW; the contradictions and stresses of the women-only space; and the struggle to articulate women-only space. This chapter begins with a series of introductions to the women involved in the interviews, then describes the specific spaces and places through our interview conversations.

The Women

Rebekah

I just like coming here. It's not really for support so much in a way it's more just a place to come to, to drop in and say hi, y'know? Sometimes you don't need help y'know, you just need someone to talk to.

Rebekah has been a core member of the ANEW community since its inception in the mid-1990's. I met her in 1998, and spoke with her almost daily during my time at ANEW. Rebekah's interview took place in a very immediate fashion on the second day of the August 1999 research visit. Rebekah came through the gate and, spotting me on the verandah, came up to ask how I was and what I was doing here. I told her I was here to
ask women about the house and asked if she had seen my notices. She indicated that she
had and she said she would like to ‘do it’. As I had decided against directly approaching
women to ask them to participate, I was excited that Rebekah was interested in sharing
her knowledge of the house with me. I showed her the consent form right there on the
verandah. I felt a change in atmosphere immediately, as we went from two women
talking in a familiar way, to one woman looking at the page of writing under the gaze of
the other. Damn, damn. I felt a moment of resentment towards the university ethics
protocol that required me to produce a consent form. Despite my efforts to make it
accessible, it still seemed so uncomfortably official.

When Rebekah and I sat down to talk at the picnic table in the back garden I again
felt a sense of distance between us. Although Rebekah and I are almost the same age (in
our late twenties) many things separate us: life experience; mental health issues; children
(Rebekah has four children and I have none). Her answers to my 'carefully designed to be
casual' questions were brief. My recent immersion in a world of academics who need
only to be asked ‘why’ to respond with hours of dialogue had not prepared me for this. I
felt unnaturally stiff – I was asking a series of questions; I had hoped for a dialogue.
Eventually, aided by the presence of Rebekah's young son, and their tiny but talkative
dog, our formality dissolved and our conversation assumed a more relaxed tone.

Briar

*I got involved [in ANEW] by having been active in, in my previous
workplace around issues for women and um, being involved pieces of
work like the um, the women's clinic • and things like that um and so, uh, I
would be one of the few social workers • that had, • the women's focus.
[T]his place has been has been huge in terms of my growth. It's been a
place where the things that you, you sort of believe, the ideals, were, have
really and truly been able to be looked at really, for me, to really be
looked at...
Briar is one of the two41 clinical staff at ANEW. I first met Briar in 1998, when I began my employment there. Although there is more than ten years between us, we developed a close friendship over the time that we worked together, and that friendship continues. As with all the other women who expressed interest in participating in an interview, Briar chose a moment when she and I were alone before broaching the topic. She said with a laugh that she was just being nosey really, she wanted to know the questions I was asking.

On the day of our interview (in August 1999) I was once again uneasy, as I had been with Rebekah:

D: Oh and you know what I'll just start by saying about being nervous and about being nervous to do this because you're a friend

B: Yeah

D: And it's hard, it feels hard to do it. And I thought after yesterday and doing with women that I knew too that I would be less nervous today but I'm just as nervous as I was yesterday and it does feel, it just feels a bit scary to do it

B: Yep

D: And I just want to acknowledge that and say that it's there

B: And I do, I mean I actually do understand that because my work was with women that I knew, and some women that I only knew a little bit and I was going to get to know a lot of and, and would still keep seeing them and yeah. I found the energy going into those was really high, yeah.

From this point, our conversation flowed relatively naturally.

41 At the time of my employment at ANEW there were only two staff members who held clinical positions, however there is now a third clinical position that is connected to the newly opened side of the house.
Yvonne

[S]o the talk was to have a house in town where women could do it their way and I joined a collective to try to make that happen. And I forget how many years we worked at it, but then one of our members came to work at The Trust and then, I don’t know this precisely, then the money came up at [the Trust] for a new project, she encouraged them to do this house um and then ...... then [the Trust] appointed a person to do the house and in this [the mental health] community was excluded and nobody knew what was happening. And um, this woman/member who came to work here /// knew me quite well and when the women who were using this house at the time expressed the wish to do something creative in their program I was asked to come and do a session.

Yvonne is one of the two counseling staff at ANEW, and was my coworker during my employment there. Nine days older than my mother, Yvonne is a friend and a mentor who shares my interest in writing. Yvonne waited until after lunch, when she and I were alone on the verandah, before saying that she was interested in participating in this research project. She led into it by asking if I wanted to do interviews this week. I said yes and she said she would like to participate but that she had some anxieties about it. I asked her what I could do to alleviate her anxieties, if anything. She went on to explain the source of her anxiety and I was not surprised to hear that it concerned friendship issues. Having carried out research projects in the past that involved women she knew, Yvonne is aware that friendships can be altered by the introduction of this different dynamic. She was also feeling very sensitive about a lack of harmony between herself and Briar over the current and future directions of ANEW. She worried that exposing her different views might create a rift in their friendship, or in ours. She said she would need to be very brave to tell me her truth about the house and that she would need to trust me. I felt very emotional during much of this conversation. The responsibility inherent in being
trusted was overwhelming. I told her that I was not going to stop wanting her friendship and that I was doing this work whole-heartedly and with all the integrity and care that I had to give.

Frances

"I'm Frances and I'm 50 years old. Turned 50 this year. And, I enjoy coming to this house [laughter] it's one of the things I enjoy. I haven't been able to come so often because I've been busy with a grandchild and travel. Uh, and I really enjoy my grandchild. It's given me a new, a new outlook really. Yeah. Well we had a bond right from the start though. Yeah.....Um, I enjoy my garden and walking, spending time with people who I feel comfortable with, singing. Yeah, that'll do it.

Frances has both staffed and attended women-only spaces. When we discussed the transcript of our interview in October 1999, Frances talked for some minutes about the different women's organizations of which she has been a part, and of her search for a feminist model of a women's centre. She also talked of her realization that there were different levels of feminism – that all women were not going to get along even under the banner of feminism. Frances confided that she had been 'accused' of socialism by women at another women's centre. After some reading, she decided she could describe herself as a socialist feminist but she continued to feel oppressed and repressed in that space.

Frances first dropped in to ANEW about three years ago:

I was invited to stay for lunch, because I was a woman and I was using the house and I thought that was just wonderful to be invited to have a meal with other women. Living on my own I found that just um, filled another need for me as well. To have the companionship at a meal table - and just their general acceptance.

Kirsty

"I was talking to my mother one day not long after I started working here and she said are you still making cups of tea and coffee and stuff for people at work? [laughs]. It's like, yeah, but, it's more than that, a lot of
people don't quite appreciate, they're like what do you do all day and I say oh, y'know, I sit on the verandah and drink coffee and do things and they're like oh! And it's like well that what I DO but what that actually means is a lot more than that. It's quite hard to explain.

Kirsty is the non-clinical staff member at ANEW, responsible for providing support and information to the women who attend the service. Of all the women who participated in this project, Kirsty has joined ANEW mostly recently (about five months prior to the time of the interview), and she is also the youngest woman in the project. During our interview, Kirsty commented that as time passes, her understanding of ANEW continues to shift and alter:

Yeah, I guess I didn't really have an idea of what it would be like because I'd never really, well never spent any time in a women-only space...
I don't, I don't think I really had an idea about what it would be like at all. I can't remember what it was anyway. Um, I guess too the more time I spend here the longer I've been here and the more I know the house and know the women that come here, yeah my idea of it is continually changing as well. As I come to understand it better I guess.

Kirsty is the only women I had not previously known and as a result our interview was less complex for me than the others had been. It was interesting to talk about the job that we had both held, and to compare our experiences and understanding of it.

Meeting Places

In Chapter One I referred to my sense that the women of ANEW had developed a language of resistance around the physical distance between ANEW's house and the Trust buildings. I had noticed that women tended to refer to the Trust as 'across the street'. Although ANEW is technically a part of the Trust, the women employ the space

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42 The position I held while employed at ANEW.
created by the road to conceptualize ANEW as a separate, autonomous space. Their various means of spatially establishing the Trust's status in relation to ANEW collectively create the first of the four 'meeting places' or themes that emerged from the analysis.

A Geography of Resistance

Authority produces space in various means, for example, by using and abusing borders, or by controlling movement within and/or across different types of boundaries (Pile, 1997, p. 3). Geographies of resistance work to "occupy, deploy and create alternative spatialities from those [spaces] defined through oppression and exploitation" (Pile, 1997, p. 3). Although it is the Trust who has ultimately set up the boundaries by designating the house as the space for the women-only service, the women have developed their own definitions of those boundaries.

For Rebekah her sense of ANEW's women-only space is both delineated and protected by the front gate:

To me, my space in the centre is the gate. If they [the men from the Trust] come past the gate, y'know, it's threatening but, y'know, but that's there, the world. To me the line is the gate.

When I asked Rebekah if she viewed ANEW as separate from the Trust she responded quickly and vehemently:

Oh, HECK YEAH! I don't even see them as one place, to me I don't even see them like that. No not at all. They've got totally different values and morals over there. No, not at all. It's hundreds of millions of miles over there.

Thus, the gate (and its accompanying fence) acts as a clear symbol of spatial separation. The road is imbued with the characteristics of an insurmountable distance, 'hundreds of
million miles’ away, metaphorically revealing the ideological distance between ANEW and the Trust.

Kirsty also sees the fence as an important boundary:

> It's sort of like the front fence is a barrier? Between here and [the] outside world. And I'm so sure y'know we'll be sitting on the verandah just talking about people walking past, just look at that man's funny hat or whatever and it feels like because the front fence is there and um, I'm sure that we say things loudly enough for people to hear them but because the front fence is there it's like it's a barrier.

The street has also become a signifier of the struggles that Yvonne and Briar have gone through in their employee relationship to the Trust. Yvonne and Briar each told me that they only took on the ANEW project on the understanding that the women-only, women-centred project would be respected and supported by the Trust. However, from the beginning in approximately 1996, Yvonne and Briar have had to struggle against their employers to maintain the integrity of ANEW. Briar notes:

> [The Trust said] basically that they were really willing and able to support a women's space and that the work was quite autonomous from the rest of the Trust • I feel now really foolish because I didn't get anything on paper, I didn't get any um, uh, guarantees about how I could work • And there was a real sense of support, really, what they wouldn't do to make sure that the Trust knew what had to happen

The lack of actual support has left the staff feeling frustrated and betrayed and this has increased their feelings of distance, that is, their sense of existing 'across the street' from the Trust. The street has become the line that ANEW struggles to keep in place, in order to defend their women-only space.

Yvonne told me about the first time that she had to actively defend the women-only space from the authoritative reaches of the Trust crossing the street. In the following
situation, management had just informed her that the (male) representatives of a funding body wanted to view the house:

I wanted to demonstrate our collective way of working so I said I’ll need to ask the permission of women • expecting that they would say ‘no’, but they said ‘yes’ [laughs] ...... • when I thought about it I realised that they were used to men walking in and out of their lives // and um, so I said ‘no’ and then it became a bit of a, a verbal war with Jacob...[I]t came to the crunch one day when um, Briar was going to be away and before she left she said to me that um, the • people who gave the money for the house were going to be at the Trust the next day and um, they would like to come over and, that, that, someone was going to ring me in the morning and tell me what time they were coming over. And I couldn’t sleep all night for thinking I cannot let this happen and I’m going to actually have to do something about this.

The next day, when Yvonne answered the phone at ANEW, the following conversation took place:

Merren [the Trust receptionist] said ‘I have been given explicit instructions to tell you that [the funders] will be over and they’ll be coming across’. Ok, so I rang back and said ‘well if you bring them over I’ll meet them at the gate and tell them no’. And she just, there was a big silence and I hung up.

Notably, it is the female receptionist who is charged with relaying the ‘explicit instructions’, even though the initial ‘verbal war’ is with Jacob Anderson, the head of the Trust. Thus Merren, the receptionist, becomes a representative in the regulation of ANEW’s behaviour and in the determination of ANEW’s boundaries. Following the reading of her interview transcript, Yvonne commented on the irony of the situation in a note to me:

The female (!) receptionist phones and says ‘the meter reader is coming across so don’t have hysterics!’ !!
Thus the Trust management, neatly removing itself from the fray, has set up an environment where women on either side of the street are forced to wrestle over the control of the space.

In the end, Yvonne was the one to cross the street, where she met with the representatives of the funding body in the Trust buildings. There she carefully explained the importance of maintaining the women-only space to her audience, who were sympathetic and understanding. This early action set a precedent for ANEW's future dealings with the management team, in that displays of resistance on the part of ANEW have been required in order to maintain their space. The Trust has slowly begun to consult with ANEW before having the meter man stroll through the gate. However, Yvonne is still sceptical and commented after reading her transcript: "It is probably very superficial action [on the part of the Trust], not in spirit if you know what I mean."

Briar must regularly cross the street in her role as ANEW's coordinator and thus she is not always able to enact the space between as a method of resistance. However, she has developed other modes of resistance:

[A]t a meeting across the road • I was told that I had to deliver the goals of this service within a few days to the Trust management which, and that's • this is what I have to, 'you have to' y'know? This is one of those 'you have to deliver that' and I forgot and I mean I know why I forgot [laughter]. It didn't stay • I forgot, • I forgot I was supposed to deliver these and what it raised here [at ANEW] was um, the, you can't deliver them you can't this you, and me knowing that of course I can't, I can't, um but I forgot.

In this situation, Briar is caught between the demands of the Trust and the needs of ANEW. From ANEW's perspective she cannot be solely responsible for the presentation of ANEW's service goals. From the Trust's perspective, Briar is the employee who has
been requested to provide those goals. As she is unable to synthesize these contrary positions, Briar 'forgets' the task, enacting a personal resistance.

**In or Out**

Speaking from a theoretical context, Rose (1995, p. 137) notes that

> resistance to the consequent exclusions and absences of geographical knowledge [resulting from dominant subject positions who can only see difference in relation to themselves] is difficult, because it is impossible to find a position that is entirely outside hegemonic discourses.

This description of a theoretical process echoes the literal reality of ANEW. That is, ANEW, as it currently exists, seems unable to resist successfully (that is, in a way that is not harmful to them) the strictures of the Trust while remaining a part of the Trust. The women I spoke to were divided on the issue of ANEW’s relationship with the Trust.

Frances expressed her opinion during our taped conversation:

> F: I, have given it a lot of thought and I can see that um, that [the Trust does have] a role, more like a, like taking a silent role really, I think that's really the best way I can describe it. Like a silent partner, uh, yes, making the resources like the workers, the house, available but in a hands-off manner.

> D: Yep

> F: And perhaps just monitoring the work um, in a way that doesn't undermine it.

Yvonne feels that, ultimately, ANEW can work within the Trust, even though she feels that currently, the intended empowering space for women is not working as she had envisaged it:

> Yes, yes I believe it could [work]. I believe that what has happened we had total control over, that , that, that I think um, that the women are well aware of the way the Trust works and I think they could have accepted the fact, the only thing that the Trust says is that only Briar can go to those
meetings across there which makes her important. But the rest of it we could address, I think, I think yeah.

Significantly, although Yvonne sees the possibility for a working relationship between ANEW and the Trust, the part that she conceives of as being out of ANEW's control is the meetings 'across there', at the Trust. In this observation, Yvonne reveals the level of the Trust's power to confer boundaries on the spaces within which ANEW can enact power.

Briar, in contrast to Frances and Yvonne, feels that ANEW would be better off without the Trust. During our interview, I asked Briar to imagine that she had a magic wand that would enable her to recreate ANEW:

D: if you could make ANEW, if this all disappeared and you could make it again, which, what about it would you bring and what about it would you leave behind?

B: Hmm. Oh, um, I think the experience of the last 4 years is what I would bring um, because I think, I think it's been absolutely invaluable, I mean it's been, this place has been huge in terms of my growth. It's been a place where the things that you, you sort of believe, the ideals, were, have really and truly been able to be looked at really, for me, to really be looked at and so the experience of having to work through this process of trying to offer the best possible service to women, yeah, yeah, and I mean, my thoughts are, if it, if a magic wand would allow me to, to let this keep developing not, yeah, but I don't think it can here um, I see the constraints of the Trust just as, just too, too limiting, too, and damaging. I see a lot of the stuff that we manage in terms of the work across the road is, does damage to us

Thus for Briar, the negative effects of the Trust's terms will not allow the healthy development of ANEW:

And again that comes back to the fact that we are in an organization that doesn't value um, the work that's done around it really, yeah. And that's the, I think there's a huge, [sigh] the Trust has a huge impact on our work here [at ANEW]. I think way beyond what we might think in a way, yeah.
I also asked Kirsty to imagine that she had a magic wand and she too commented that the current operation of the Trust negatively impacts on ANEW's wellbeing:

D: Speaking of looking across and seeing what the Trust is doing, what's your sense of how um, with your magic wand, would the Trust and it's is it also there?

K: Noooo, no. No, I think from a sort of like a I guess a management kind of perspective, y'know, the things that the Trust, well the way the Trust operates is not really healthy for the way that we want to operate.

D: Yeah. Can you describe a bit the two different positions?

K: It, I guess, well I think for one thing they don't really understand what we do here and part of that reason is I guess y'know it's a women-only space so, none of the men that work at the Trust can come here and see what it's like, but none of the women do either.

D: Mmhhh.

K: So they don't really understand what we do and I guess they have some idea, I don't know, bunch of feminist lesbians kind of idea and it's like, not like that, you have to, and you do have to spend time here to realize the way that it is, but um, so I think the Trust don't really understand and um, because of that and just their slow processes, y'know it takes them forever to get anything done, it takes them forever to decide anything um, and yeah, it's quite frustrating

D: So that impacts directly on the staff here?

K: Yeah

D: And do you think it impacts on the women who use the service as well?

K: Um, yeah, definitely actually, definitely. Even, like women who are collecting their money from the Trust um, they get hassled by the staff over there.

Thus, although the women strategically employ the spatial distance created by the street, there is a shared awareness of how the Trust's authority continues to affect them in explicit and implicit ways. Kirsty also reveals that the women are aware of being 'out of place'. That is, labeled as 'feminist lesbians', they are clearly constructed as outside of
'malestream' social relations. The relations between the women-only space and the patriarchal (father) organization offer a microcosm of a larger social system of patriarchal power and control, brought into relief by the spatial perceptions of the women interacting within those relations.

The Embodiment of Space: Taking place

A second meeting place that emerged out of the analysis of the interviews was around the issue of women embodying their space. Different areas of ANEW's geography can be interpreted as offering significant opportunities for women to take up a place, or paradoxically, can be constructed as spaces that limit women's embodiment of their space.

During my employment at ANEW I perceived the dining room as the nucleus of the house. My experience was that the dining room at lunch time was a gathering point which affirmed women's sense of place in the ANEW community. Shortly before noon, I would go on a brief expedition across the street to get our daily bread rolls from the Trust food bank. By the time I had returned, women would have started to filter into the house and to fill up the chairs around the long wooden table in the dining room. There was often a crowd and some women would end up sitting with their food on their laps. Women took this opportunity to share their news and hear from others. Frances commented:

Living on my own I found that [eating together] just um, filled another need for me as well. To have the companionship at a meal table - and just their general acceptance.

Kirsty also noted that dining room was a significant space, and further observed that this space facilitated a strengthening of individual identities as they existed outside of ANEW:
Having lunch everyday in the dining room, I guess the togetherness of that is what is most important and makes the house different from other services.

I think the fact that we're all together and we're all equally important and by eating together and cooking together um. I think it's about everyone involved with the house treating each other as real people with lives that exist beyond the interactions we have at the house.

Although Kirsty sees the dining room as an important space, she feels that the verandah is the central space:

The verandah is the hub, I mean it's pretty much where everybody spends all their time or that's where I spend most of my time and it's where most of the women using the house spend their time.

When I asked Kirsty about why she thought women congregated on the verandah she talked about the importance of the view, and how the women prefer to smoke there (as opposed to the back garden) because the verandah allows the women to do the seeing:

D: why do you think they smoke in the front as opposed to out here in the back?

K: Um, I guess cause you can see who's coming and going um, and cause, I, we don't spend time out here [in the back garden] although I think we might in the summer I'm not sure, I don't know yet, um

D: Yep

K: But, yeah, you can't see who's here and I, I don't know. it makes, it makes me feel quite insecure sitting out here rather than out there because I don't know what's going on

D: Right

K: I guess that's kind of like a bit of a responsibility thing. Yeah, but yeah, people can see what's going on and see who's walking past and what's going on at the Trust.

D: Do people tend to look to see what's going on at the Trust?

K: Oh, yeah. It's our entertainment [laughter].
Thus, through the women's embodied sense of space, the Trust, a distanced and dominant force, becomes subverted into a spectacle. This reverses the 'normal' patriarchal construct of women as the objects for viewing, wherein the "threat of being seen and evaluated is one of the most objectifying processes to which the body is submitted" and "the constitution of our bodies as objects to be looked at encourages many of us to see ourselves located in space" (Rose, 1993, p. 146). In that instance, "Women's sense of embodiment can make space feel like a thousand piercing eyes" (Rose, 1993, p. 146).

In contrast, ANEW is perceived as being a place where women can inhabit their bodies and escape the feeling of being watched or evaluated. Rebekah comments on this sense of freedom:

Yeah, you don't feel that, like you're competing with anybody, that's another effect of not having men around. Y'know, often women could compete y'know? Or um, yeah, it's just so much more relaxed. Yeah, then what those other places are. Y'know it's just like a kind of presence in the house, y'know like a, oh I can't describe it. I don't know why it's different, but it is.

Recently the adjoining half of the ANEW house, which has long stood empty, has opened to provide an overnight/short-term stay component of the ANEW drop-in service. Although the building is one, the other section is fenced separately, with its own gate, verandah, and door, in a mirror image of ANEW's layout. The significant element of this new space, in terms of this analysis, is the decision to make it open to male visitors of the female inhabitants. This decision was arrived at after lengthy discussions and deliberations within the ANEW community. It is now possible to see men coming and going through this other gate from ANEW's verandah. As well, the verandah of the newly open half of the house is sometimes occupied by men. Although it is not possible to see the other verandah from ANEW's verandah, it is possible to see and to be seen by those
on the verandah, as women approach ANEW's gate from the street. Rebekah and I talked about this new state of affairs:

D: How do you feel about, I came up the, uh, up the stairs the other day and there was a guy on the front porch of the other side

R: Yeah, that's weird, yeah it does

D: And that, yeah

R: Yeah that definitely feels strange.

D: I know that, I just, yeah, I just did sort of a double take and then I came in and Victoria was here and I said there's a guy on the other porch [laughter] and she said yeah, yep that's ok it's um allowed

R: It's ok actually

D: So how does that feeling knowing that they're sitting right next door? I guess you can't really see them

R: It's alright you can't see them so it doesn't really matter.

Although Rebekah finds it 'weird' and 'strange' that men should be on the other verandah, she is not concerned about what she cannot see. As long as her space, visually defined by what she can see from the verandah, is not threatened, she is comfortable within ANEW's gate. This is a refiguring of the masculinist subject of Rose's (1993) transparent space, who sees space as everywhere that he is not. In Rebekah's eyes, space is where she is. Rebekah's sense of space, beginning from her location, is an embodied experience of space. Taking a feminist standpoint, "the body isn't forgotten; hence, the actual local site of the body isn't forgotten" (Smith, 1999a, p. 4). Again there are echoes in a feminist geographic discussion of space:

This sense of space [...] dissolves the split between mind and body by thinking through the body, their bodies. This way of thinking also seems to disregard any distinction between metaphorical and real space, which
makes feminist spaces resonate with an extraordinary richness of emotion and analysis. (Rose, 1993, p. 146)

However, for Briar, who crosses the street frequently, the presence of the men is much more visible, and therefore much more disturbing:

That actually took me so long to get a hold of. I, I actually spent a whole hour of a meeting one day talking about seeing men play-fighting on the front lawn and it just threw me utterly and completely.

Briar's experience is different from Rebekah's because Briar can see the men, and is also seen by the men as she crosses the contested, unprotected space between ANEW and the Trust.

Ultimately, the verandah also sits directly across the street from the Trust management offices. As these offices are on a second floor, their windows have a view down on to ANEW. There is, at times, open monitoring of the activities of ANEW from across the street in the name of security concerns. It is another level of ANEW's paradoxical space that it simultaneously creates a space for women to be present in, and in control of, even as it remains a space that they are regulated within.

That this contradiction is also internally maintained is supported by Yvonne's perception of the staff office in ANEW. For Yvonne, it is the office, versus the dining room or the verandah, that (dis)functions as the hub of the house, and furthermore, she perceives the women's resulting use of ANEW's general space as lacking an embodied presence:

Y: I think um, I [sigh] I feel somewhat...um, even though these women, some of the women have a great sense of belonging here [t]hey don't um, seem to have a great deal of ownership of this, this physical space in that they leave messes, they they they, they um treat this house in a way I KNOW they wouldn't treat their own place, they leave messes they don't tidy up they take no responsibility yeah, because I think it's seen as our house
D: As in your house?

Y: Yeah, the workers' house. The Trust's house. Um, and uh, um I thought well that makes sense in a way they view, that they view this house as Briar is the boss.

From Yvonne's perspective, the office filled with desks, files, phones, and a laptop computer, signals an authority that the women recognise and respond to. Briar's frequent positioning in the office, in addition to the meetings that she attends across the street, emphasise that authority, even though the staff has struggled to create a non-hierarchical structure. Yvonne comments on her understanding of how this has occurred:

I first became aware of it when um, women would talk to about what they, talk about things, about decisions and then say they were going to check with Briar or we would have our meeting and Briar wouldn't be there for the meeting and women would say better check with Briar. And I came to see how the roles as they are created here are seen hierarchically even though we've personally tried to, to work collectively and what fascinated, in talking to women about it I can see how it happened. I'm the person who stays in the house and is low-key, just is always here, just... Briar's the one who goes out to the meetings, who does all the important stuff, and um, in a patriarchal system that's how, that's what these women are used to at home. Mom stays at home and the important person is the person who goes out to work, does the meetings and things and when I saw it happening I, I started listening to what the women were saying, what they were talking about and I could see that that's what was happening.

Thus, Yvonne concludes that the efforts of the staff to create a feminist women-only environment have been unsuccessful thus far because the women who come to ANEW bring with them the patriarchal paradigms of their life experiences. For Yvonne, this contradiction within ANEW must be addressed:

Yeah, I guess that has been one of my, one of my great dilemmas here, is that the women-only space is not enough, it's how that space is constructed and that it's, it wasn't constructed by workers it was constructed by the women who were here, who came every day and brought patriarchy into
it, and yeah, so, it doesn't matter how feminist WE were yeah, but that seems really important and if you're writing about this you need to know.

Similar to the situation described above where Merren, the receptionist, and Yvonne can be constructed as opponents, the women become their own regulators. Paradoxically, such a space will never fully allow the women to take their own place.

The Price of Paradoxical Space: The Personal is (still) Political

ANEW is a place for women's empowerment, health and healing, and for the working out of a model of collective praxis. Simultaneously, it is a space that must negotiate the boundaries, measures, and direction of the Trust, an organisation which as Rebekah notes, has "totally different values and morals over there....It's hundreds of millions of miles over there". ANEW, as a women-only space, confronts daily the paradox of being both a space for coalition and for resistance. This situation creates an environment that is not only paradoxical but is, at times, a painfully contradictory experience. The resulting stresses and strains form the third meeting place of this analysis.

Canadian feminist, Janice Ristock (1993, p. 220) defines collectives as "non-hierarchical, participatory democracies [which] are seen as being consistent with feminist philosophy in that they embody a praxis that fosters social action and empowerment". However, the collective-minded philosophies of women-centered environments come with their own conflicts and tensions. The difficulties for ANEW have not all resulted from ANEW's oppositional position to the hierarchical structure of the Trust. The staff members have also struggled with internal conflicts as they have worked to maintain the women-only space.
Yvonne believes strongly in the importance of a collective model and describes her frustration when the Trust's requirements of Briar prevent the latter woman from participating collectively:

Briar doesn't have time [to be collective] because she's out doing these meetings. It's a really sore point of mine. We needed to attend to what was happening at home [ANEW] first rather than worry about what was happening over there [at the Trust]. We don't have time to do it properly. So we bring all that stuff into the house which um, just reinforces this whole patriarchal model. So... I feel very passionate about this. I mean it's always been my passion to have a place where women could truly claim their own ways of knowing.

In her last statement, Yvonne is referring to Belenky et al.'s (1986) thesis that there are women's ways of knowing. Yvonne advocates a pedagogy of connected teaching based on Belenky et al.'s (1986) model. Connected knowing builds on the "conviction that the most trustworthy knowledge comes from personal experience rather than the pronouncements of authorities" (Belenky et al., 1986, pp. 112-113). Women are therefore encouraged to find their own authority. For Yvonne, the lack of time Briar has to devote to the collective structure directly affects the potential for women to experience empowerment and learning, in that it reflects hom(m)age to those 'pronouncements of authorities', thus undercutting the authority of personal experience.

Briar is aware that she is, at times, in an impossible space; a space where she herself becomes the distance between ANEW and the Trust. She describes her unhappiness with this position, when she becomes the bridge between the women's space and the Trust:

That's HORRIBLE. I really hate it. I hate it more than anything. I hate the um, ....... I hadn't imagined that would be the role. I often feel tainted by the hierarchy over there um, one of the insults that I take to heart every

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43 Teresa de Lauretis (1987, p. 21) plays with transformation of 'homage' to 'hommage' in her discussion of men's critical writing on feminism.
time is, is hearing um, the criticism that this isn't a collective, this isn't a power-sharing place, that we've failed to do that.

I feel I've tried really hard to keep that in mind when I do the stuff that I do. Um, and (slowly) because I cross the road I feel like I have, y'know, yeah, that I've been coloured by that. While I come in and out of it, that I'm still coloured by that. And, so I find that one, that's been the hard one. That's still the one that I struggle with because, to do the work I'm supposed to do here I have to cross the road um, and if I don't that's, that's, that's my bread and butter that doesn't arrive y'know? Yeah? So, I have to work because I need money.

For Briar it is a painful dilemma and one that is not easily resolved.

One of the costs of living with the contradictions of a collective organisation, according to Ristock (1993, p. 231), means acknowledging that such services both empower women and have power and control over women. However, this acknowledgement fails to consider the subtle layers of power. For example, power is a complex and dynamic concept that cannot be assumed to belong only to those high on the hierarchical ladder (Steinstra, 1993). That is, the women within ANEW have power collectively in meaningful ways, but also they can also enact power individually, expressed for example in each woman's actions, words, and choices. Frances offers her insight that these personal politics of women-only spaces allow hierarchical powers to maintain control:

F: [I see that the politics of women's spaces] get personal and it's not personal, it's actually other issues but it's easier to deal with the personal thing. But I also see that, I see that as political too. Y'know [sigh], while the people in the pit, have you ever heard of the pit?

D: No.

F: The people in the pit are fighting with each other, they're not noticing what the people out of the pit are doing kind of thing. So yeah, it suits some people who make policy, yeah. And that's what happens with a lot of women's groups.
Frances' example of the pit provides a particular view; it is an image that assumes a perspective outside of, and looking into, the women-only space. However, to examine that space thoroughly demands an analysis that begins from the position of the viewed. That is an analysis that begins from an embodied understanding of the insider. From this point of view inside ANEW's political power dynamic, a view that includes my place in ANEW as a former employee, friend and researcher, I see Briar and Yvonne.

Briar and Yvonne work closely together with caring and respect as they pursue two different ways of maintaining ANEW's women-only space. It is their shared affection and professional appreciation for one another that make the politics of this space so painful for them to contest. Briar describes her sense of these tensions:

There's been, I mean I think there's been some difficulties in our team of two for a long time • I think, and I think that's been a struggle. It's one that's been difficult but not one that I would be without •. But I think the, the personal stuff involved in that too is really important because um, at times it's been that desperate feeling of having been let down by the person, not the discipline, not the yeah, but actually having not been understood or, or whatever it is that comes up and I think that's, when there's only two, that is the whole team in conflict.

Yvonne offered similar thoughts when she reflected that her sense of the women-only was not an understanding she felt she could share with Briar:

[M]y great disappointment was that [this realisation] wasn't shared, that we didn't put any energy into addressing it /// so most of this stuff I've not told Briar because I couldn't get past /// (quietly) so that's fine we just see it differently, but but the longer I'm here the more important it becomes to me that if I was ever to do this again it's important that I write about it and start talking about it and I do talk about it, I do talk about it with other women... and it really feels bad to be able to, to be talking to you about it when I'm not talking to Briar about it because of all people she's the one I would most like to share this with /// (quietly).

In ANEW's intimate geography each woman has struggled to enact her differing convictions about the best practice for ANEW without damaging the balance of her
relationships. The maintenance of the women-only space thus exacts a personal and emotional toll.

It was made explicit to me by Yvonne that these difficult ideas were expressed to me only because I was trusted to convey them with care:

I definitely would not have talked about this to a stranger because I could not have trusted them to write this in a way that would not be hurtful, that's because um, we both have a shared affection for Briar and I can trust you to to, put across my insight in a way that won't be hurtful to anybody because I wouldn't be able to trust a stranger to do that and I desperately need to talk about that stuff.

Here my personal involvement, my stake in this research, is also made explicit. This research project, containing contradictory positions and desires, becomes another paradoxical space within ANEW's feminist geography.

Frances offered another personal perspective in terms of the cost and complexity of defending the women-only space. When asked about the need to defend ANEW, Frances' thoughts turned towards her adult son:

D: Have you ever needed to defend coming to a women-only place?

F: Um, not this place, but my son was um, I belong to another organisation that's women-only and he was dropping his daughter off to me there and he was stopped at the door and asked not to come any further, and he was really upset [small laugh] and I talked to him after that and he said y'know that he felt uncomfortable leaving his daughter there um, where men weren't allowed to come in, though I sort of felt like really it was his, it was his understanding of it, he took offense to it. And I think too the fact that um, I'd, I'd taken him as a child to women-only spaces and he was accepted because he was a child and now he's a male adult and he's used to going places like that, he's not allowed to go in. So I think it's,

D: Hard

F: yeah yeah, but I listened to him and um just explained as much as I could.
D: How did you explain it, do you remember?

F: Um, I said, in that situation that it was a women's healing space and that um, some of the women had been y'know abused and they need that space to heal. Of course, his journey's different, he's looking into Buddhism and um looking at becoming a gentle, gentler person and wants the world to be, all of us getting on together [laughs] that may come later for some. Yes, yes he's certainly trying to be a uh, different. It is good, it is a journey 'cause I think he's got a lot of aggression in him as well.

The separation of women from men can lead to separation of mothers and sons, fathers and daughters. Frances finds herself in a difficult place, having to uphold the material and philosophical boundaries of a women-only space against the misunderstanding and displeasure of her son. Her decision to listen and to explain is a means of countering his unwillingness as a father to leave his daughter where men are not allowed. Thus Frances resists his construction of women-only space as separatist, instead constituting it as a space for women to heal, and therefore offering an alternative subjectivity for the women who use the space. In this act, Frances discovers the complexity of a women-only space that exists not only in a literal physical realm, but also in an embodied and interactive fashion. So the mediation of spatial subjectivities and material space occurs: "We cannot separate the geographies of what we know from the geography of what we are" (Rose cited in Winstanley, 1999, p.2).

The (Non)Articulation of Women-only Space

A move towards a definition of women-only space remains a difficult project. This 'unlearning to not speak'\textsuperscript{44} is possibly the ultimate paradox of women-only space; even as such space is enacted it remains un-speakable, un-locatable, un-mappable. Briar's efforts at a description of ANEW are indicative of this difficulty:

\textsuperscript{44}This phrase is borrowed from a poem of the same title by Marge Piercy (1971).
Um, yeah, I think women-only is, is um,...... sort of a not a real thing because we um, I think it's um. I think that's about being disconnected, women-only. So, women-centred is, or women-focused or women, um, that's different, that's all different because if it's a women-focused or women-centred thing you don't use models that aren't applicable to women.

It has been argued that the lack of representation or interpretation of processes in interviews may indicate that an absence of something cannot be fully described: "What words, after all, can represent 'nothing'?" (Rose, 1997, p. 202). Kirsty, in her interview, noted that her work at ANEW was quite hard to explain: "Oh it's like well that's what I DO but what that actually means is a lot more than that". This "non/space of a politics of non/representation" (Rose, 1997, p. 202) is very unwieldy to write about.

This awkwardness in writing about the absent spaces is partly created out a sense of my complicit participation in the non-spoken. During the interviews, women often used the phrase 'y'know' to confirm my understanding or comprehension. On an intuitive level I felt/feel that I did understand and comprehend. When I returned to the places in the transcripts where such moments occurred I discovered that my replies to the women's 'y'know's were often simply words or sounds of agreement (mmm, yep, yes, mmhmm), thus, 'nothing' was explicitly confirmed:

K: It, I guess, well I think for one thing they don't really understand what we do here and part of that reason is I guess y'know it's a women-only space so, none of the men that work at the mission can come here and see what it's like, but none of the women do either.

D: Mmhmm.

However, it is also an element of the resistance of ANEW, in that women refuse to mis-name what is currently outside of representation. Rebekah remarks: "Y'know it's just like a kind of presence in the house, y'know like a, oh I can't describe it. I don't know
why it's different, but it is." (Of course I replied: "yeah"). The women-only space nurtures the potential to communicate what, for the moment, is beyond regular/regulated forms of communication. That is, the women-only space sustains an 'elsewhere', "beyond the positions power consigns us to" (Rose, 1997, p. 202).

Women-only spaces are claimed by some to be an attempt by women to control men's access to them in order for women to be able to define themselves more clearly (Rose, 1993, p. 154). Yvonne supports this view:

[T]hat's part of modeling that it's not about keeping men out of our lives but it's about taking control of when they come in and how they behave when they're in there and that sort of thing. And um, um, that um, some men // if one needs to totally avoid men, well I guess that is a choice, but, but I think that's pretty impossible and I would rather model and teach the idea of creating your own boundaries and that you decide which men are allowed in and there... So, I don't, wouldn't want an exclusively women's space, well a predominantly women's space, in that the men who enter, enter by invitation only.

Thus, it is the definition of women by women, the development of women's identification, that defines the space. Frances suggests that when a women-only space is viewed as a temporary strategy, it is the process and not the words that are the priority:

I think it has its place, I don't see the world becoming women-only space, y'know. I, I sort of see that it could be part of a process y'know.

Another insight into this process of definition is offered by Rebekah and Yvonne who both mention being mistaken for holding the other's role at ANEW. Rebekah expressed her experience of this:

R: In fact, most people think I work here.

D: Well what do you, do you take that as a compliment or not?

R: Yep, I guess I do, but sometimes I don't, I think oh dear I don't look that straight do I? [Laughter]
Yvonne commented:

One of the greatest compliments I've been paid in a long while was when one of the women the other day out there said to me 'I thought you were one of us'. I think that's the way it needs to be.

Both women view themselves as part of the community of the house. The more alike they are perceived to be, the stronger their sense of place, of identity, is in the community. Their delight in being mistaken for an/other role is possible because such divisions between women are blurred at ANEW. This blurring of roles indicates the level to which ANEW breaks down the hierarchies of authority, creating an alternative space for resistance and for identity formation.

Conclusion

The geographies of what we know create the geography of who we are. When the geographies of what we know are paradoxical and contradictory, the simultaneous enactment of resistance and coalition, then the geography of what we are will also be shifting, incomplete and contested. The above examples suggest that the women of ANEW, or who de Lauretis refers to as 'the subject of feminism', "depend on a paradoxical geography in order to acknowledge the power of hegemonic discourses and to insist on the possibility of resistance" (Rose, 1993, p. 155). When I first read through the interviews I thought that no one was talking about space or place. Instead I heard women talking about their friends and grandchildren, their habits and their beliefs, their hopes and fears. As I looked more closely, I realized that this is space; this is place. Rose notes that 'the subject of feminism' refuses to separate experience and emotion from the interpretation of places (1993, p. 155). It is a geography more intimate than I had expected.
The meeting places of this analysis contained overlapping and contradictory information. ANEW is understood as space of resistance, but it is also a constrained by external and internal patriarchal regulation. ANEW offers women a space where they can embody their space by taking place, but they are also perceived by some as 'out of place'. The analysis itself is an effort to articulate what women were (not) telling me, and contains the conflicting desires of personally political spaces.
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Contradictions

The goal of this research was to understand the ways in which the women of ANEW create, define, and defend their women-only space. These processes have emerged in contradictory, paradoxical forms. For example, the women have enacted their strategies of creation, definition and defense out of their responses to the Trust's imposition of form onto ANEW. These strategies have developed through the various ways that women are, and are not, able to take place, amidst the contradictions and (dis)harmony of the collective structure, and in the process of (not) defining women-only space. Trinh T. Minh-ha offers an insight that is useful to feminist researchers: "[E]mancipatory projects never begin nor end properly" (1991b, p. 8). The contradictions in this work make it difficult to come to any definitive conclusions about women-only space, which I suspect is not a proper ending. However, I can offer a number of implications that arise out of those contradictions and that ending seems both useful and appropriate.

This research has produced both methodological and theoretical implications for future research. The methodological implications of researching such a space suggest that the best strategy for feminist methodologies is to remain similarly conflicting and contested in order to accurately reflect or re-view women's experiences. For example, the absences or omissions in women's speech during the interview process must be acknowledged in order to adequately reflect the contradictions in their experiences, even though that acknowledgement, in its attention to what is not there, seems contrary to the goal of gathering information for research. Furthermore, the methods of (not) gathering
information need to be re-examined. For example, is an interview the best method for understanding what cannot be communicated? Perhaps it remains a useful stage in the discovery process.

This research also suggests theoretical implications. This work with ANEW has clearly supported the need to maintain a theoretical framework with a concept of patriarchal relations. Even though women and men are challenging the rigid definitions of what it is to be male or female, ANEW’s relations with the Trust reveal a deeply gendered hierarchy where men and male institutions in their towers have the power to confer boundaries upon women in the house below. The acknowledgement of this power differential is crucial in any examination of such spaces.

On an epistemological level, this research reinforces the feminist and postmodernist supposition that knowledge is partial, and the feminist conviction that knowledge is also gendered. That is, I found that what could be conveyed by the regular/regulated methods of communicating knowledge was limited. The women I interviewed were not always able to express their experiences and 'knowing' through these channels. Clearly then, what currently stands as knowledge is based on a gendered hierarchy and is thus a partial representation of what can be known.

The notion that such spaces are also gendered by the practices and strategies of the women who inhabit them, as well as by the hegemonic discourses of naming, requires theory that allows movement into a paradoxical realm. Feminist geographical perspectives have energised the discussion of space and place, and in so doing, they have brought into question the discrete boundaries that divide space from place. This research has indicated that women-only space drifts into place and into space again. That is,
women do not separate ourselves from our space; we embody our space. If place is a location in space, even though it may be shifting and contextual, then we are also place. Paradoxical space is thus an/other dimension.

A paradoxical space/place signals a letting go of "the need for form, linked to the terror of finding oneself without boundaries" (Trinh, 1991a, pp. 142-143). As a space/place, ANEW offers a paradoxical geography that exemplifies the "political projects which attempt to challenge the transparent geography created by hegemonic subjectivity" (Rose, 1993, pp. 158-159), with all the contradictions and awkwardness that this "absence or rather a pulverization of form" entails (Trinh, 1991a, p. 143).

If I were to return to a women-only space for a future research project I would like to further explore the possibility that separating space from place is a gendered process that reflects a masculinist vantage point. From such a vantage point, space is always the 'other' to place. The intimacy of ANEW's feminist geography reveals that space and place have become less distinct from one another; the paradox of such a space will dis-appear when this synthesis is recognized.
References


Appendices:
Appendix A: Report

Report on Preliminary Research†, September 29, 1999

WOMEN-ONLY SPACES

Definitions
I define a women-only space as a space for women that is 'women-centered' or 'women-focused' in its aims and goals. In terms of women-only social service organizations, these aims and goals will often include the following:

1. The establishment of mutual respect between women who staff a service and women who use a service;
2. a multi-disciplinary, holistic approach that acknowledges the diversity of women;
3. the recognition of education as a component of women's health;
4. a prevention-wellness focus;
5. a commitment to social change

The mandate of women-only social services is most commonly to work with women who have experienced violence (Ristock & Pennell 1996). However, women consumers of other social services will also benefit from the type of service offered by a women-only space. Such services seek to offer women empowering alternatives by placing their welfare and experiences at the heart of service provision.

The Value of Women-only Spaces
Health and Healing

"Women-only services create opportunities for women to take charge of their health in alternative services which contrast with the formality of medical settings" (Hunt 283).

Recent studies of women's health and healing suggest an increasing interest in the efficacy of a women-centred setting (Weisman 1998; Rogers-Clark & Smith 1998; Levin, Blanch & Jennings 1998). In the United States, research has indicated a growing trend towards models of women's health centres that provide integrated, gender sensitive, holistic services. Case studies have indicated that women-led women's services are associated with women-centred values, and that female consumers will more readily use those services (Weisman 1998). A women-only service provides a more comfortable climate for women who wish to discuss issues such as sexual abuse by men.

Safety

Various feminist scholars have argued that women's lives are constrained by the reality of an ever present sexual danger and the accompanying fear that this knowledge brings with it (Brownmiller 1975; Bunch 1995; Sheffield 1994). It is well known that women are not free from violence in their homes. It is no surprise then, that a valuable aspect of women-only spaces is their safety due to gender segregation. That is, men, the usual perpetrators of violence (Dobash & Dobash 1992), cannot enter. Women, particularly vulnerable women who may have minimal self-esteem, thus have the chance to relax, to heal, to strengthen. It is not a viable option to suggest that women must permanently retreat from the world, however, women-only spaces can offer a vital and necessary breathing space.
Education

The collective structure which commonly characterises a women-only social service, provides an in-house model for personal autonomy, political change and group decision-making processes for women who use the service. The respect and value for women's experiential knowledge in a collective environment offers women a significant role in the day-to-day working of the service. Although the relationship between gender and learning styles is somewhat controversial, research suggests that women have particular ways of knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule 1986; Gilligan 1982; Galotti, Clinchy, Ainsworth & Lavin, & Mansfield 1999). Thus, from an epistemological perspective, a women-only service is potentially able to facilitate women's learning processes vis-à-vis modeling women's ways of learning, consciousness raising, and strategizing for social change.

Maintaining Women-only Spaces

Due to the demands and time involved in maintaining a woman-centered model, as well as the varying friendships and skill levels individual women may hold, women-centered social services tend to be emotionally intensive for the workers (Ristock 1993). Accountability to both institutional frameworks and to women-centered values can result in conflicting pressures for staff. Additionally, funding (or lack thereof) has proven to be an issue in terms of the survival of a woman-only service, and workers tend to be underpaid or unpaid (Thien 1998). In these ways, women-only social services reflect women's general social position as an oppressed group. Thus, surrounding frameworks must be in place which are both supportive and informed, so that such services are enabled to reach their full potential as sites of healing, safety and education for women.

The New Zealand Context

Under the terms of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, social services in New Zealand are obligated to ensure that Maori women have access to and fair treatment. Women-only social services thus have a special obligation to acknowledge the multiple identities women have, whether those identities are constituted by ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, ability or wellness.

New Zealand women of the 1990's are increasingly occupying influential positions in the political and business sectors, however, women in contemporary Aotearoa still encounter institutions and social practices that are overwhelmingly male-dominated (Wilson 1998). Women-only spaces offer one strategy for adjusting the balance of this overtly masculinist culture.

My research is in early stages and therefore any information in this paper cannot be understood to have resulted from the research in progress.


In New Zealand in 1999, both the political party in power (National) and the opposition (Labour) are women-led, by Jenny Shipley and Helen Clark respectively. As of October 1 1999, the new Telecom Chief Executive Officer will be Theresa Gattung, the first woman appointed to head the major telecommunications company in New Zealand. Additionally, Maori women are becoming more visible in government and business appointments (see Panui, June 1999).
References


HELLO!

- My name is Deborah Thien and I am interested in your experience of the 'women-only' aspect of A New Environment for Women's Healing (ANEW). I can interview you individually (approx. 1 hour) or we can have a group discussion. Alternative suggestions gratefully accepted.

- If you are interested in participating in this research project, I will be at ANEW during the week of August 23-August 27, 1999. During that week I will be available to answer any questions and to hear your ideas and suggestions for making sure that your participation is a positive experience.

Contact Details:

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Palmerston North
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Fax: (06) 3505627
Email: deboralthien@hotmail.com
Appendix C: Information Sheet

My name is Deborah Thien and I am interested in your experience of the A New Environment for Women's Healing (ANEW). In particular, I would like to hear what you think about the 'women-only' aspect of ANEW. In consultation with you, I can arrange to interview you individually, or invite you to participate in a group discussion, or plan an alternative arrangement with you. By listening to your experiences of ANEW, I hope to better understand how ANEW works. This information might then be used to create similar places for women.

The resulting information will appear in a research paper for Massey University, New Zealand and will form part of my Master's thesis at the University of Northern British Columbia, Canada. A general report about women-only spaces will be available to the participants and to the Christian Welfare Trust. A copy of the finished thesis will also be made available to the A New Environment for Women's Healing and to the Christian Welfare Trust. Please note any interviews will be tape recorded with your permission, and that I will carry out all the transcription of the tapes. To protect your confidentiality, I will keep all recordings secure in a locked office. At your request, your name and details will be altered in all documents to maintain your confidentiality.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, or require further information please contact me:

In New Zealand (until October 31, 1999):
Telephone: (06) 356-9099 (ext. 7560)
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V2N 4Z9

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Barbara Herringer - 0-1-250-960-6643
(ask the operator to reverse the charges).
Appendix D: Consent Form

This is to state that I agree to participate in a research project about women-only spaces. I understand the following information:

- that my participation in this study is voluntary;
- that I am free to discontinue my participation at any time;
- that I am free to ask questions about the research at any time;
- that the interview will last approximately one hour;
- that the research project will be submitted for D. Thien's completion of Women's Studies 70.702 at Massey University, NZ, by October 31, 1999 and will also form part of D. Thien's Master's thesis at the University of Northern British Columbia, Canada, to be completed between April 31, 2000 - September 1, 2000.
- that the above thesis will be made available to the A New Environment for Women's Healing and to the Christian Welfare Trust and that the information may also appear in articles and/or be published as part of a book on the topic of this research project;
- that a brief report about women-only spaces will be available to the participants and the Christian Welfare Trust,
- that all data will be held in secure storage by the researcher in order to ensure that confidentiality is maintained;

I agree to have the interview tape recorded.

□ Yes  □ No

I would like to change my name to _________ in all documents so that my confidentiality is maintained.

□ Yes  □ No

I would like any transcripts of information provided by me to be sent to me at _________ so that I can make comments, and add or remove details.

□ Yes  □ No

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT, AND THEREFORE I FREELY CONSENT AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) .................................................................

SIGNATURE .................................................................

DATE .................................................................

AS THE RESEARCHER, I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THESE CONDITIONS.

SIGNATURE .................................................................

DATE .................................................................
Appendix E: Interview Schedule

Is this your first experience of a women-only space?
  Have you spent time in a women-only space before?
  Have you had a previous experience of women-only space?

How long have you been part of the house?
  How long have you been coming?
  What are your memories of the first time you entered the house?

Do you like the women-only space? What do you like? What don’t you like?

If there was another ANEW opening up how would it be?
  How would you want it to be – which are the bits from here that you would take
  with you? Which rooms? Which are the bits you would leave behind?

Do you feel like you have to defend this place? From who?
  Do you have to stand up for it – do friends or family make fun / hassle you for
  going to a women-only place?

What do think of the Trust/ across the street? Is there much contact /
  connection?

Which room(s) of the house do you tend to use?
  Where do you go in the house and why?

What have you learned from this space? – have you had new experiences
  here that you wouldn’t have had in other places that aren’t women-only?

What would you add to what we’ve talked about? Comments or questions
  about the process – what I’ve asked, what I’m doing.