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Revisiting Ruddick: Feminism, pacifism and non-violence
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Revisiting Ruddick: feminism, pacifism and non-violence

The work of peace is always specific, a particular resistance to particular violences.
(Ruddick, 1989: 245)

 - the peacemaker is defined by a commitment to developing non-violent relationships

and ways of fighting, not by a principled or contingent attitude to uses of military

violence. (Ruddick, 1998: 219)

1   Introduction

Feminist theory is suspicious of how the relationships between violence and politics have been

conceptualised and explained within canonic western political thought. Feminist thinkers are suspicious

of instrumentalist, linear means-end reasoning in the service of justification of violence whether that is

perpetrated by states on each other, by states on civilians, or by political actors on each other or on

representatives of state power. For some feminist thinkers these concerns about violence and politics

conduce to a theoretical and practical commitment to peace in the form of pacifism (absolute or

contingent) and to nonviolent political and social practice. For others, however, the feminist critique of

violence cannot sustain such inference. The matter of the relationship between violence and politics, and

the justification of practices of coercion, resistance, and violence, in the course of political engagement,

remain open, and deeply problematic, questions.

This paper builds on research into a range of published polemics and disputes about women's anti-

nuclear and anti-war activism that arose in the context of controversies over the women's peace camps, in

particular the original one at Greenham Common, Berkshire, UK, in the period 1982-84. [Frazer and

Hutchings forthcoming] Analysis of those polemics highlights how many feminist activists were highly

resistant to the association between feminism, the peace movement and pacifism. There were a number

of issues at stake in these debates -- philosophical, theoretical, strategic and tactical -- but core to the

complex disputes was the matter of the proper concerns and primary goals of feminist politics. In the present paper, we first set out the rival positions of feminist pacifists or identifiers with the women's peace movement, and their self-identified radical feminist critics for whom the association of feminism and peace detracted from the meaning and purpose of feminist struggle [Feminism and Nonviolence Study Group 1983; Onlywomen Press Collective 1983].

Second, we go on to show how the terms of those polemics were subsequently reflected, and refracted, in more academic, philosophical and theoretical feminist writing which seeks to address at a more abstract level the question of the compatibility or otherwise of feminist values and political violence [Peach 1994; Sjoberg 2006; Hutchings 2007]. Third, we turn to an examination of the arguments articulated by Sara Ruddick in a series of papers published in 1983, all of which subsequently were re-presented in *Maternal Thinking* [Ruddick 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, 1983d, 1989a]. Ruddick was not directly a participant in the disputes about Greenham and the women's peace movement. But at the same time that those polemics were being conducted in the early 1980s in the UK, Ruddick was developing a particular position, for which she used a variety of terms, including 'non-violent peacemaking', 'anti-war feminism', 'anti-militarist feminism'. In the present paper we capture these under the term 'feminist peacemaking'. We show that her position puts feminist pacifism, its radical feminist critics, and the subsequently developed feminist just war theory, equally into question. Finally, we argue that Ruddick does not resolve the contestations within feminism over peace, violence and the questions of war. However, she does offer a productive way of holding the tension between them. In our judgment, her work is helpful not only for developing a feminist political response to the threats and temptations of violent strategies, but also for thinking through the question of the relation between violence and politics as such.

2   The women's peace movement and its radical critics, 1981-1983[1]

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[1] Our analysis obviously raises a number of problems of method in the history of political thought and in ideological analysis, regarding the classification of thinkers, and in particular the characterisation of feminist thinkers. We do not have space here to trace all the lines of citation, reference and influence between the various contributors to the rival positions analysed. We are aware that in calling critics of Greenham feminist pacifism 'radical feminists' we are going against the grain of a good deal of received understanding of the history of feminism, according to which 'radical feminists' endorse positions that we associate rather with feminist pacifism.[Cameron and Scanlon 2010] We are also conscious that the ebbs and flows of coalition between feminist activists and theorists call for very careful analysis, for which we do not here have space, and that the structures and fragilities of coalition politics need to be taken fully into account if the

Feminists disagree about how violence is to be explained. Some endorse a binary sex distinction, male-female, which is rooted in physiology, and in which males are associated with aggression and violence, and women with nurture and cooperation. For other feminist thinkers, the binary sex distinction and associations between men and violence, women and peace, have to be understood as social constructions, or the outcome of material interests and distributions of physical and social power. A thinker's position in this matter of the grounds of violence does not straightforwardly entail their position on whether patterns of violence, coercion, and uses of physical power are, in turn, fundamentally causal and explanatory of social outcomes. Thinkers who are committed to the physiological grounds of violence are likely also to understand patterns of aggression as being generative of other distributions, including a patriarchal social order. Equally, thinkers who are committed to a social constructivist, socially-materialist account of the sex gender system, might also believe that patterns of violence are causally very significant in the maintenance and rationalisation of the sex-gender system. Others, however, will believe that other social structures - for example, distributions of material goods like income, wealth, or productive power - are overwhelmingly generative of the inequalities that constitute the social world, while sexual difference, and patterns of aggression, are epiphenomenal. Here, then, we find a disagreement between on the one hand feminists who are committed to a social constructivist analysis of gender and an understanding of gendered violence as constitutive of social relations and flows, and on the other feminists for whom the traditional political programmes of socialism, anarchism or liberalism, with their respective contrasting accounts of the nature and conditions of social change, are explanatorily and phenomenologically more powerful.

In the period of which we speak -- 1981-1983 in the UK -- all of the above positions were articulated within the polemics over Greenham and the proper relation between feminism and the peace movement. Some feminist peace activists associated femininity with a physiological femaleness - they saw violence as a male principle and they considered patterns of violence to be overwhelmingly important for social and political reality. These feminists tended to endorse forms of feminist pacifism, which often emphasised maternalism, and shaded into a spiritual commitment to environment and nature. Other

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political history of social movements is to be understood. In what follows in Section 2 below, we attempt to be clear about the structures and dilemmas of coalition that faced the various parties to the disputes we analyse, but we acknowledge that our treatment of this theme can here only be sketchy.

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feminists focused on the role of patterns of violence in the maintenance of a socially constructed sex-gender system. In some cases this position was also conducive to a pacifist feminism, again sometimes with an emphasis on feminine traits and maternalism, but with a commitment to a project of social reconstruction - the restructuring of sex and gender relations [Feminism and Non-Violence Study Group 1983]. The women's peace movement that developed in the late 1970s and came to political prominence in the early 1980s encompassed activists whose understandings of sex, gender, pacifism and feminism were very different, but they coalesced in opposition to nuclear weapons, war in general, and in a commitment to direct action both symbolic and in the traditions of civil disobedience and non-violent resistance.[Koen and Swain 1980; Feminists Against Nuclear Power 1981; Caldecott and Leland (eds) 1983; Feminism and Non-Violence Study Group 1983; Jones 1983; Thompson (ed) 1983; Harford and Hopkins 1984]. It was a complex coalition.

However, other feminists, who shared the social constructivist understanding of sex and gender with some participants in the women's peace movement, and understood male violence to be overwhelmingly important in explaining and maintaining the reality that needed to be transformed by feminist politics, did not make any inference to pacifism. For these feminists, the association between femininity and pacifism was itself a social construct, which did not serve women well politically. In their view, the logic of feminist politics involved maintaining a clear focus on the liberation of women from the constraints and determinants of violent coercion. Politically the focus was on war -- but in the sense of the sex war. Any shift of focus from the everyday structures of violence to nuclear weapons and threatened inter-state war, involved a reactionary coalition with feminists who believed that the basis of violence was physiological [Laws 1981; Onlywomen Press Collective 1983]. In the debates of the time, these feminists identified themselves as genuinely 'radical' in their commitment to feminism as a movement for the liberation of women, not a movement for peace or for the nuclear disarmament.

The social materialist feminist pacifists, and their radical feminist critics, agreed on a great deal with respect to the grounds, causal power, and social significance, of patterns of violence. The exemplary case of violence was the infliction of physical injury and damage without benefit to the victim. Other kinds of violence, including psychological and symbolic, were understood on analogy with this exemplary case, as were forms of structural violence such as the harms inflicted by poverty, racism and sexism. However, direct and structural violence were seen as dialectically related and mutually reinforcing. Direct violence

maintained structural violence, which in turn fed direct violence. Both groups also agreed that there was a continuum of gendered violence, which connected violence against women in everyday life with organized violence in the public, and the inter-state, spheres. In addition, in neither case was any distinction drawn a priori between bad and good violence. Both of these feminist positions were critical of traditional distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate violence. However they parted company on the matter of feminist strategy and tactics. They were also divided about how women's or feminist violence should itself be understood, and whether or not the use of violence for feminist purposes could ever be justified.

Feminist pacifists of this era took the view that feminism and pacifism were in principle necessarily connected for a variety of reasons. [Feminism and Non-Violence Study Group 1983; Carroll 1987] These reasons included, first, their common recognition of the causal connection between patriarchy, war and violence. A commitment to overcoming patriarchy implied a commitment to overcoming war and violence, and vice versa. Second, both pacifism and feminism identified the mutual dependence between violence in the public realm -- war -- and that in the private sphere -- everyday interpersonal violence (and, for feminists, in particular violence against women). Third, both pacifism and feminism understood the importance of structural violence and the embeddedness of the war system in global structural inequality. Fourth, both pacifists and feminists rejected instrumental justifications of violence and the distinction between means and ends on which they relied. Finally, they shared a commitment to developing non-violent, non-instrumentalizing ways of resisting domination and exerting power.

For feminist pacifists the organized violence of war was understood as the prerequisite for and the product of a structurally and directly violent sex-gender system [Feminism and Non-Violence Study Group 1983, p.5]. In addition, however, the effect of direct violence on its perpetrators and deployers, as well as on its victims, became part of the story of the harms done by violence. Feminists, like pacifists, were critical of instrumental reasoning, and of simple linear models of cause and effect. The wrong done by violence included its direct and indirect effects of death, injury and harm. However, it also relied on as well as reproduced a sex-gender order which was exploitative as well as oppressive. Regardless of their intentions or consciousness users of violence for whatever ends were necessarily in the service of patriarchy.

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This complex analysis of the systematicity of violence meant that violence by women was doubly problematic. First, women's violence tended to be seen as either pathological or counter-feminist, sometimes both. To use violence was to be complicit in the sex and gender system that was maintained by violence. Rather than being an assertion of women's political agency, violence undermined that agency. Unsurprisingly, therefore, from this point of view, violence could not be justified morally or politically, and the only way of opposing the existing order of violence was through non-violence. Non-violence was the virtuous mirror of violence, its direct and indirect effects were good (morally and instrumentally), but it also directly instantiated an order of being that was non-exploitative. Non-violence both required and produced non-hierarchical relations and it did not corrupt the user. This was exemplified by feminist pacifists using non-violent tactics in the struggle against war, as in the case of Greenham Common, which became equated with exemplary women's agency and feminist politics. [Feminism and Non-Violence Study Group 1983, p.6].

Critics of this feminist pacifism found themselves in potential coalitions that were as problematic as those between materialists and spiritualists in the women's peace movement. As we have described, a commitment to the social materiality of the sex-gender system is consistent either with a view that male violence is fundamental in the construction and maintenance of structures of inequality, or with a view that other structures (for instance class) are more fundamental, and generative, and that the sex-gender system and its associated exploitation and oppression is rather epiphenomenal. This latter view positions feminism in coalition with socialism, liberalism, anarchism, and other counter-cultural and political movements. Within these coalitions we can expect to find disputes about whether sexual equality will be an outcome of a prior system of justice such as socialism; or whether rather feminism has to be pursued autonomously from those other political movements.

The radical feminist critics of Greenham and of the identification of feminist with peace politics were very wary of coalition, whether with pacifists, or with socialists, anarchists, or liberals. Politically their focus was on sex war, and on strategic and organisational pursuit of feminist goals by way of actions against violence against women, and the autonomous organisation of work with survivors of violence. [Onlywomen Press Collective 1983]. This range of positions certainly did not endorse violence as any kind of preferred option for feminism. However, strategically and tactically, they refused to rule out uses of violence on feminist, moral or political, grounds. From this point of view, ruling out violence was

premised on a misunderstanding of the nature, and the point, of political power. Non-violence, as such, was an irrelevant option in the violent context of state and patriarchal power. Furthermore, the focus on military forces, and state sovereignty, misconceived state and patriarchal power as top down forces, in contrast to an understanding of power as operating more horizontally at the level of the street, the city, the constraints and injuries of the everyday. Apart from the dangers of coalition, and the loss of feminist energy and eclipsing of feminist goals that that must inevitably involve, these activists objected that the idea of any deep and necessary link between feminism and pacifism simply reproduced the very ideology of gender differences, in the interests of patriarchy, that feminism emerged to oppose. For pacifist feminists, militarised violence was the most significant and consequential manifestation of violence in social and political life from a feminist point of view. For their critics, violence directly linked to the project of women's subjection was first of all of greatest political significance, and second would be overlooked in a political focus on state disarmament from nuclear capability. Pacifism, these critics claimed, was a distraction from feminism. Feminism's attention should not be on war per se but on a different war, the war against women.

The parties to these disputes shared a diagnosis of the mutual dependence of the sex-gender system, and direct and structural violences. For radical feminist critics of pacifism, however, women's or feminist violence, though by no means in any sense automatically emancipatory, was not automatically pathological or counter-feminist. To use violence as a feminist might be (though was not necessarily) the appropriate way of recognising that a war was already being fought and of asserting and achieving political agency within it. To renounce the possibility of using violence was to affirm women's lack of agency and to play into the norms of the existing sex-gender order. Furthermore, non-violent tactics, for example at Greenham Common, actually participated in state violence, in the sense that they intentionally offered an invitation to violence on the part of state representatives like soldiers and police officers, and deliberately utilized the submission of women to suffering, for example being forcibly dragged away by police from a blockade, as propaganda for the cause of peace. So-called nonviolence, it was argued, actually affirmed violence in its traditional form. On the other hand, violence that fought violence against women might be justified morally and politically. This, though, would only be to the extent that it might be the only way to fight the violence that kept women in subjection.

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3   Feminist ethics and political violence: a note on post-cold war debates

In this section we note briefly how certain themes from these polemical disputes over Greenham have been re-articulated in feminist ethics and political theory in the post-cold war period.[Warren and Cady 1994; Lorentzen and Turpin 1998; Bar On et al 2003; Elshtain 2003; Hutchings 2007; Berghoffen 2008]. Of course, there is no very clear distinction between academic philosophy and the practical political discourses that are deployed in antagonistic arguments -- and used as justifications -- in real politics. This is true in all areas of social analysis, but perhaps even more so in feminism where protagonists have principled, philosophical reasons for resisting abstraction in philosophy, in the sense of abstraction from political salience and from the everyday political project of justice and liberation. In any case, women who engage in feminist theory, teaching and research have tended to do so for practical, political, as well as straightforwardly intellectual and philosophical, reasons. Furthermore, as the reference lists in the volumes analysed in the previous section show, feminist politics in the early 1980s was to a significant extent conducted through books and journals published by feminist presses. Nevertheless, there are clear differences between the works examined in the previous section and the subsequent debates to which we now turn. The former contributions were antagonistic arguments and counter-arguments conducted in the practical political context of the Greenham actions. There was a clear bias within them to questions of strategy and tactics, albeit always in relation to the underlying social theories that ground feminism as a political project.

In the midst of these differences, there are also some interesting patterns of continuity. There are obvious continuities between the feminist pacifist activists of the women's peace movement, the intellectual sources that they refer to in publications, and the subsequent tradition of feminist pacifist or non-violent ethics, including the contributions of Ruddick.   In contrast, the radical opponents of feminist pacifism in the Greenham era do not have any direct intellectual relationship with, or influence over, the recent opponents of feminist pacifism who argue for the development of a feminist just war theory. The radical feminist activists would have been as scathing about just war theory as they were about feminist pacifism, on grounds of abstraction and irrelevance from the real context of daily politics. Nevertheless, there are some striking parallels and thematic resemblances between the discourses of the radical

opponents of feminist pacifism and more recent academic feminist critiques of pacifist ethics and adaptations of just war.

To begin with, we should note that the discourse of feminist just war has developed in the practical political context of the post-cold war period, with its internationally organised non-governmental organisations in a range of cooperative and antagonistic relationships with governments.   Political attention has once more been fixed on the significance of organized violence for the sex-gender order, and on the pros and cons of the uses of violence in politics from a feminist perspective. Feminist just war theory explicitly distances itself from the feminist pacifism of the 1980s in theory and practice. The work of Ruddick is here categorised as feminist pacifism, and accordingly rejected. [Peach 1994; Elshtain 2003; Sjoberg 2006]. The feminist just war theorists insist that uses of violence - in particular, military violence for social and political transformation - might be consequentially justifiable. Military violence includes intervention by forces exterior to the setting in question, and also either the uses of state violence in order to instill order or to alter a situation of injustice, or the taking up of arms against the state or against other social forces by sections of the society.   Justification has to be conducted on a case by case basis. Consequences, including in particular changes in the gender order that might follow on military intervention, are proper counters in this justificatory reasoning. In this feminist debate, the terms of the traditional philosophical argument between pacifism and just war theory take a distinctive twist. Just war feminists, like feminist pacifists, understand violence to occur and to be structured along a continuum: from the everyday incidence of interpersonal aggression to the socially organised or ritualised; from violence which directly inflicts injury on the person to actions, practices and distributions that indirectly injure. Violence occurs in 'vertical' situations of inequality; and it is also practiced between equally situated actors. All of these forms and organisations, critically, are central to the production and reproduction of the sex-gender order.

 Given that centrality, feminist just war theorists have to face up to the problem that any prescription of violence is likely to play into, rather than dismantle, these productive and reproductive processes. But, of course, exactly the same vulnerability is true also of feminist pacifism -- which equally stands accused of reproducing traditional gender order in prescribing nonviolence for feminist politics [Hutchings 2007]. Both feminist non-violence for justice and feminist violence for justice may plausibly be argued to be counter to feminism. In the case of feminist pacifism, echoing the critics of Greenham, feminists can be

argued to be playing into patriarchal stereotypes that reproduce the sexual division of labour on which organised violence traditionally relies. In the case of feminist just war, echoing the feminist pacifist activists of the 1980s, feminists can be argued to be justifying uses of violence that reproduce a masculinist commitment to a distinction between means and ends, legitimate and illegitimate violence, which sustains the practice of organized violence, and its imbrication in the sex and gender order, as such.

4   Revisiting Ruddick: feminist peacemaking

In the discursive and practical political contexts we have set out, the work of Ruddick becomes of particular interest. Her most famous work, the book *Maternal Thinking: towards a politics of peace* [1989a], was put together at a time when the preoccupation of feminism with peace politics was at its height in the US and Europe. The individual papers out of which the book evolves were written at the height of the cold war nuclear mobilisation, and opposition to it by organised peace movements, notably at Greenham. For many readers, Ruddick belongs squarely in the feminist pacifist camp, and indeed *Maternal Thinking* can plausibly be read as a contribution to that position. [See for example, Ruddick in Harris and King eds 1989] However, at that time, and in her subsequent writing up to and including work on weapons of mass destruction in 2004, Ruddick was at pains to distinguish her argument from that of both pacifism and just war theory. In *Maternal Thinking* she terms her position a commitment to 'non-violent peacemaking'. In later work she dubs herself an 'anti-war feminist' rather than a pacifist. For the purposes of this paper, we use the generic label of 'feminist peacemaking'. Ruddick's articulation of her philosophical and political commitments in the discourse of maternal thinking has, in our view, tended to distort the ways in which her arguments have been interpreted. Too often, Ruddick's readers have not paid attention to her arguments but have instead made assumptions about what maternal thinking must mean, and therefore pre-judged the nature and validity of her conclusions about both feminism and peace politics. For this reason, it is helpful to revisit some of the key claims in *Maternal Thinking* before drawing out the implications of Ruddick's arguments about the significance of violence for feminists, about women's or feminist uses of violence, and about the question of the justification of violence in feminist politics.

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Ruddick's notion of maternal thinking encompasses the values, virtues and practices inherent in mothering. She frequently draws an analogy between the relationship of maternal thinking to the practices of actual mothers (who are not necessarily either women or biologically related to the child for whom they are responsible) and the relationship of scientific practice to the practice of actual scientists [Ruddick 1983c: 216]. Mothers do not necessarily live up to the ideals of maternal thinking, any more than scientists necessarily live up to the ideas of scientific practice, and neither are practices that are 'natural', they are learned and inherently social [1983c: 225]. Moreover, neither of them are practices that necessarily lead to good consequences -- even in relation to their own ideals good mothers and good scientists can fail, and in addition both kinds of practice have their pathologies and unintended consequences.

Critics accuse Ruddick's maternal thinking of essentialism and ethnocentrism. The first charge is difficult to substantiate. The second charge is more persuasive, because on Ruddick's own account the experience of mothering is necessarily culturally specific, and she does not do the empirical work necessary to demonstrate the commonalities that she wants to claim underlie the differences [see Bailey 1994; Kaplan 1994; Scheper-Hughes 1998]. For the purposes of this article the question of the universal applicability of Ruddick's notion of maternal thinking to mothering as such is put on one side. In our view Ruddick's arguments do not stand or fall on the basis of the link she claims between maternal thinking and actual parenting practices. Rather, they stand or fall on one's views about the relational ethics that inspires her commitment to feminist peacemaking.

Her argument is that the key aims of maternal thinking, in general, are the preservation, nurture and socialisation of the child [1989a: 65-123]. The context in which these aims have to be fulfilled is one of the extreme vulnerability of the child or children, and unequal power relations between children, and between child or children and mother. However, this is not a static but a dynamic context of the ebb and flow of power, in which temptations to violence are felt by children and mother alike [1983a: 232-3; 1983c: 243; 1989a: 35; 180]. Within this context, Ruddick argues, although violence is a temptation, there is also an inherent contradiction between the practice, or the valorisation, of injuring, and the aims of preservation, nurture and socialisation. For this reason, she argues there is a coincidence between the principles inherent in maternal thinking (practice) and ideals of non-violence: renunciation;,resistance, reconciliation, peacekeeping [1983c: 243; 1989a: 183-4; 220]. In addition, she argues, the principles

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inherent in maternal thinking can provide a feminist standpoint for judgment that reveals the horrors of militarism and the connections between organised violence, its legitimation and the continuum of direct and structural violence that sustains the sex/ gender order [1989a: 127-137].

Maternal thinking, then, is not the same as pacifist feminism as that has been articulated in the debates we have analysed. Nor is it the same as the kinds of autonomous feminist prosecution of the sex war that the critics of pacifist feminism were committed to. Nor does it coincide with anything like feminist just war theory. Any connections or overlaps between Ruddick's maternalism, non-violence, and resistance to patriarchal violence whether by military or other means are, at best, potential elective affinities that have to be consciously brought together [1983b: 482; 1998: 215]. For Ruddick, maternal thinking can bring realism and contextual thinking to the commitment to non-violence [1983d: 248; 1989: 183-4; 220]. It offers a standpoint of judgment for feminism that can ground feminist critique and inspire a feminist politics in keeping with that critique, in a way that brings feminism and non-violence together [1989a: 222]. At the same time, non-violence can enable maternal thinking to manifest itself in the public sphere as a women's politics of resistance, as was the case with the Mothers of the Disappeared in Argentina, and feminism can transform maternal thinking into a feminist peace politics as happened at Greenham. [1983b: 488; 1989a: 233]. But Ruddick is well aware that maternal thinkers are not necessarily against war, or against militarism, nor are they necessarily feminist. She is equally aware that non-violent activists have not necessarily been maternal thinkers. Further, many feminists are opposed to any form of maternalism. She acknowledges that maternal thinking has been a major resource of support for war, and is, for many, part of the underpinning of a sexual division of labour that subjugates and denigrates rather than emancipates women [1998: 219-20].

In this respect, her argument does not offer any straightforward solution to the dilemmas inherent in the debate between pacifist and radical or just war feminisms. Instead it re-thinks the idea of commitment to peacemaking in such a way as to render both pacifism and just war positions antithetical to a feminist non-violence that builds on maternal thinking.

> "Although pacifists perform an essential service among peace activists by
> requiring every act of violence to be critically appraised, it is unnecessary and
> divisive to require of all peacemakers an absolute commitment not to kill. Nor
> does a sturdy suspicion of violence require self-righteous condemnation of

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others' violent acts or a prizing of violence from historical situations such as in Nazi Germany or South Africa today." [Ruddick 1989a: 138].

"In contrast to anti-war feminists who oppose war as a practice even if they support a particular military campaign, just war theorists implicitly accept war as a practice even when condemning particular wars." [Ruddick and Cohn, 2004].

There are several reasons why Ruddick's feminist non-violence is problematic for pacifism, for its radical feminist critics, and for the later elaborations of feminist just war theory. First, she understands the meanings of violence and non-violence holistically and contextually. Second, the ideals of maternal thinking and non-violence play a regulative, rather than either legislative or strategic, role in her judgments about the uses of organised violence in the public sphere. In other words, non-violence is not a prescriptive rule or an instrumentally justified tactic for Ruddick, but an orienting purpose in terms of which both prescriptive rules and strategies must be judged. Third, she shares the analyses of the social constructivist activists that violence consists not only in direct injury and harm, but also in the structural preconditions and effects of violence, especially in relation to the sex- gender order. Fourth, she shares specifically with feminist pacifists a concern about the corrupting effects of violence on its users.

From the standpoint of maternal thinking, a reliance on violence contradicts the immanent meaning of the practice of mothering, and reproduces subjectivities for whom others are 'killable'. Violence figures in her work as something that cuts, breaks or freezes the possibility of constructive relationships between those in conflict, both interpersonally and collectively. Non-violence by contrast preserves, maintains and creates constructive relationships between those in conflict, interpersonally and collectively. From Ruddick's point of view, all relationships are power relations, but there is a difference between relationships of domination, which stunt the potential flourishing of both dominated and dominator, and relationships in which flourishing may be possible for the less as well as for the more powerful.

What follows from this is that a feminist peacemaker cannot make conclusive judgments relating to whether a particular set of strategies and tactics are either violent or non-violent outside of a holistic understanding of the particular conflict at issue. Just as importantly, an appreciation of the importance of position in relation to the means by which political struggles are being fought is needed. Pacifist feminists, their radical feminist critics, and just war feminists alike tend to seek to develop principles to settle the

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question of whether the use of violence may be compatible with feminism. For some, the position is something like that the negative outcomes of violence will outweigh any immediate gains. For others 'we cannot rule out violence'. Or the golden rule is 'do not collude with patriarchy' or 'do not collude with the state'. However, in each of these cases, the very existence of the principle, used in argument, stands back from the specificity of particular conflicts. Feminists are thus tied down to commitments that may mean something radically different in different contexts, or from the perspective of those in the thick of struggle and most vulnerable to its means and outcomes. This is why Ruddick differentiates her argument from both pacifist and just war type positions.

> Abstract discussion of warfare is both the tool and the privilege of those who imagine themselves as (potential) users of weapons. The victims, if they can speak at all, speak quite differently. [Cohn and Ruddick 2004]
> When seen retrospectively in the light of current military aggressions and massacres, the earlier clarity of peace feminists and women of peace seems partly a function of a safe distance from actual battle and military tyranny.
> [Ruddick 1998: 221]

In the cases of both the just war and pacifist feminist positions that have been developed in the post cold war period, an abstract, principled claim as to the necessity of either ruling violence out or ruling it in, is central. Such claims lead to counter-intuitive results when judged from an orientation towards peacemaking. This does not mean that Ruddick's version of peace politics is not very powerfully weighted against the use of violence. She notes repeatedly that maternal thinking and non-violence share a sturdy suspicion of violence, including in relation to the claims commonly made for its instrumental efficacy. But it is not until one has grasped the specific context of a particular conflict, and taken on board the perspectives of those who are/ will be fighting, that a proper judgment can be made as to what actions may be in accord with an orientation to making rather than breaking relationships in which preservation, nurture and mutual accommodation are possible.

For Ruddick, one cannot separate violence from politics, and from power relations. There is therefore no implication that either violence or non-violence is a privileged site of feminist political agency as such. But there is a sense that a commitment to non-violence profoundly challenges the status quo. On Ruddick's account, feminist or women's violence is neither pathologised nor heroicised. Like

non-violence, it is everyday, both normal and tempting. Maternal thinking enables everyday violence and

militarism, but it also harbours resources that cut against both everyday violence and militarism.

Feminists can commit to the regulative ideal of non-violence inherent in maternal thinking and cultivate it

as an everyday practice, and they can extrapolate from that practice to the fight for peace in the public

sphere as well as the private. But the meanings of violence, or non-violence, are not inherent in either a

specific set of attitudes - love, self-sacrifice, self-suffering - or a specific strategic vision or set of tactics -

sitting down, allowing yourself to be hurt, hurting others. It has to be grasped holistically in relation to

specific configurations of power and violence already inherent in the particular conflict in question [1998:

223-4].

 From this perspective, it is clear that the dice are loaded against the justification of violence, but the

rejection of pacifism indicates that violence cannot simply be taken as a priori unjustifiable. This is

because, just as it is impossible either to draw a distinction in abstraction between legitimate and

illegitimate violence, or to accept the possibility of the legitimacy of violence in general without an

endorsement of its structural prerequisites and effects, so it is also impossible to draw a distinction in

abstraction between violence and non-violence.

5   Politics and violence

There are disagreements, within social and political theory and philosophy, about how violence in

relation to politics is conceptualised, how it is explained, and how it is justified. Whether we read realist

or idealist political thought, whether thinkers are liberal and reformist, or revolutionary and radical, a line

between legitimate and illegitimate violence is inevitably constructed. However, it is always inherently

unstable. In this final section, we reflect on how Ruddick's contribution to the feminist debates discussed,

can also contribute to our thinking about the relation of politics and violence more generally.

Definitions of violence within political theory range from narrow ones, in which violence is

identified only with practices of 'injuring and out-injuring' carried out by non-state actors, to maximally

inclusive accounts in which violence is identified with law and language per se. [Scarry 1985; Bufacchi

1985; Frazer and Hutchings 2011b] In general, feminism endorses an account of violence that

encompasses state and non-state, direct and indirect, practices of injuring, and, like anti-colonial

arguments in particular, while it keeps physical injuring its heart, it nevertheless extends the meaning of violence to encompass the ongoing material and psychological effects of both direct and structural harm. Feminist work makes a critical contribution to thinking about the question of what counts as violence, because it takes structural violence, and the interplay between direct and structural violence seriously, and understands the continuity between different manifestations of violence from the domestic to the inter-state sphere. Ruddick's work, we suggest, adds something distinctive, because it stresses how the meaning of violence is not given simply by the infliction of pain and injury, but also by the relations of power into which inflictions of pain and injury are introduced. Ruddick makes the commitment to creating relationships in which the less powerful can flourish the touchstone of non-violence. In doing this she opens up the possibility that some contexts that are apparently free of pain and injury may actually be violent, and some contexts in which pain and injury are inflicted may be non-violent, or at least not incompatible with nonviolence. From this point of view, no mechanisms through which conflicts are fought, whether violent or non-violent, are free from the risks of violence. This is why: 'The most elaborate definitions cannot substitute for judgment and indeed must be altered in its light.' (Ruddick 1989a: 164)

Within realist and revolutionary traditions of political thought, violence is accorded a privileged position as a form of political agency. This is evident in accounts of violence as an instrument for politics. It is also present in accounts of violence as a transgressive or creative force in politics. It is also central to critical understandings of state power, oppression and exploitation.[Frazer and Hutchings 2007, 2009, 2011a] The representation of violence as a particularly efficacious form of political action relies on assuming absolute lines of separation, between means and ends, and between 'good' and 'bad' violence. Yet the lines of separation turn out to be unsustainable. Violence in politics is not simply a tool, it is a whole series of practices, supported by a range of resources, institutions, subjectivities and discourses. Its effects are not confined to whatever political goal it may have been meant to serve, it transforms the lives of perpetrators and victims, and many of its consequences are unintended and unforeseen. [Frazer and Hutchings 2008]

Ruddick objects to instrumental and expressive justifications of political violence -- her goal is a creative and open-ended politics. It does not rely on drawing a sharp conceptual line between politics and violence in order to make her case for peacemaking. Ruddick regularly criticises the twin sins of

moralisation and abstraction, which she regards as central to just war theory, but also, as we have seen, to absolutist versions of pacifism. For her there is always a politics to violence and non-violence, not simply because these are modes of fighting political conflicts, but also because there is a politics to the practices of violence and non-violence and to the judgment of what counts as violence or non-violence, war or peace, in the first place. The line between justifiable and unjustifiable violence is destabilised by feminist theory, but then feminist pacifist and feminist just war arguments seem to reinstate it. In contrast, Ruddick seeks to work with the recognition that this kind of line drawing is simultaneously unavoidable and impossible for the political activist and the political judge. In this respect, Ruddick's position is closer in atmosphere to that of the anti-pacifist radical feminist activists. Political judgment, inevitably local, and contextual, is grounded in the meanings generated through political action itself. Judgment has to be understood regulatively rather than legislatively, and there are no given criteria by which it can be known to be right or wrong in advance of action.

Feminist analysis starts from an understanding of violence as embedded in the sex gender order. The feminist analyses considered in this paper see violence as constitutive of that order and as playing an ongoing role in its maintenance and reproduction. Feminist analyses mean that violence and non-violence alike cannot be conceptualised in purely instrumental terms. Hence, the place of violence in feminist strategy and tactics is very difficult to theorise in a principled fashion. Ruddick's response to this dilemma is to treat non-violence as both a regulative ideal and as an everyday, materially embodied, socially and politically embedded, practice. She then sees peacemaking as the ongoing negotiation between the two. Ruddick makes explicit the fundamentally political character of justifications of violence. In the contentions between feminist pacifists and their radical feminist critics, Ruddick is in a position to agree with each in their critique of each other. Her response is not to solve the dilemmas to which both parties offer an answer. Rather it is to articulate an exemplary ethics and politics that forces both activists and theorists to keep thinking.

> - - a peacemaker who does not resolve but instead expresses the conflicts she
> experiences may be a more fitting guide for actual peacemakers, women and
> men, who live in radically different relations to battle and everywhere
> disagree among themselves. (Ruddick 1998: 224)

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