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**Feminist Activism, Education and Social Change:
Young Feminists' Perspectives in the Third Wave**

By

Lacey Lanigan

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Education at the
University of Windsor

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ABSTRACT

Semi-structured individual interviews were used to document the experiences of five young women, who created the grassroots feminist activist group, the Miss G_ Project. The Miss G_ Project was created to advocate for equity in education. The integration of a women's and gender studies course in the Ontario secondary school curriculum is a primary goal of this organization. All participants self-identified as feminist, and this identity interacted with and was affected by their activism. As well, it was expressed that their friendships and sense of belonging to a feminist community helped to sustain the project. The group used a collective approach to organizing, which developed organically, through their friendships with each other. Online communication was a key element of their organizing. The study also revealed that a two-pronged approach was used, as the group strived for legal change, while also working at a grassroots level to strengthen the support in schools for the course. At the curricular level, they saw that the interdisciplinary curriculum and the locally developed course option were spaces where women's and gender studies was being developed and thus supported these efforts. Feminist identity, feminist organizing, curricular change and the notion of the third wave were primary themes, which were considered in this study. Further the struggles they have faced in their work with the Miss G_Project, as well as their notions about the potentials for curricular change were explored.

DEDICATIONS

This work is dedicated to my family, whose unwavering love has helped me to achieve my goals.

Thank you to my fiancé Barry, who has always encouraged me to pursue my dreams and continues to support my goals. As well, thank you to my parents, Tamara and James, who have always encouraged and supported my education since before Kindergarten through graduate school. It is because of your guidance, love and the self-confidence you gave me that I am the person I am today. I love you all so much!

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I would also like to thank the four women who participated in my study. Thank you for your time and patience. Your dedication to feminist activism and social change is truly inspirational.

INSPIRATIONAL WORDS

In order to really change things, you have to be sort of utopian – you really have to think that things could be very, very different than they are. That requires clearing your mind, but it also requires wanting a lot more than anybody tells you you can have. You can't get that [big] stuff on your own – you can't buy it – you have to go out and find other people and try to build it together, and that's what community is about. Social movements, as Che Guevara said, are in the end about love. You find other people to care about, and together you find things that you care about, and together you go out and [say], 'Damn it all, we're going to try to get it anyway.' (Judith Levine as being interviewed by Rachel Fudge, 2006, 94).

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction

One of the fundamental challenges of the feminist movement is one of identity. The concept of a feminist identity is rife with notions of how multiple aspects of the self are defined. This confusion over prioritizing and validating various interlocking aspects of individual identity is mirrored in discussions of the identity of the feminist movement.

Academics and activists have questioned whether there exists a cohesive rallying point upon which young feminists may struggle for (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Ballou & Mulrooney, 2006). A false dichotomy has been constructed, wherein the ‘cohesiveness’ of second wave feminism is compared to the confusion and diaspora of the third wave (Bellafante, 1998; Bronstein, 2005). The suggestion is that the women’s movement has settled into a scattered and inactive phase.

Yet, despite these allegations, the women’s movement, arguably in its ‘third wave’ of development, continues to strive and evolve. As such, the ‘waves’ of feminism will be further discussed in the literature review. Young feminists are struggling to find and create inroads for activism, in a more diverse and inclusive wave of the movement. However, these stories are absent from many narratives. Honouring these experiences and accounts challenges the view of third wavers as apathetic and egocentric.

Women’s studies and gender studies classrooms provide venues in which these stories can be told and disseminated. Guided under the pedagogical considerations of feminist pedagogy, women’s studies and gender studies create discursive practice, which enables students to express their experiences with feminism.

However, although women's and gender studies (WGS) act as challenges to patriarchal ways of knowing within the academy, their effects are limited by their narrow residence within this sphere. For example, this field of study is often delegated to program status, rather than departmental status in Canadian universities. However, it is notable that these courses are offered at most universities in Canada.

Recently there has been activism related to teaching WGS outside of university settings. This has been engaged in through the actions of the Miss G_Project, a young feminist activist group, committed to having this course implemented in Ontario high schools. To do such and move beyond the ivory towers of the university would allow the unique philosophy and pedagogy, which are the foundations of WGS, to move into a different sphere of knowing. With this dissemination, WGS could act as a challenge beyond the walls of the university elite. For, these are the spaces in which feminist education has been recently noticeably absent.

Indeed, historically, public education has not taught children how to question gender, but rather has reproduced traditional gender roles and aided in gender role socialization. As well, there is a pervasive sentiment in many historical and social narratives, that women "...have only rarely been significant actors in the making of society and history" (Code, 1995, p. 21). These demonstrations of androcentric pedagogy and curricula are evident in many classrooms. Feminist pedagogy, manifested in a WGS classroom, may be used to challenge the dominant patriarchal narrative, which is perpetuated through traditional forms of liberal democratic education.

B. Statement of the Problem

This research will investigate the identities and efforts of four young feminist activists, in the third wave, in the midst of their struggle to integrate women's and gender studies into the secondary school curriculum in Ontario, through the Miss G_Project. The Miss G_Project, which is primarily comprised of young, high school and university age women, is engaged in activism intended to transform the Ontario public high school curriculum. The participants in this study are all members of the core steering committee of this group.

Significantly, there is a large gap in the current Canadian literature on the subject of third wave feminist activism. However, there is evidence of some work in this area. For example, the Canadian anthology, *Turbo Chicks: Talking young feminisms* (Mitchell, Bryn Rundle & Karaian, 2001) represented a diverse array of feminists and feminisms. Although, not all individuals who contributed to this volume were involved in activist pursuits, each supported and/or strove for feminist goals.

Accordingly, there have been calls to do this type of research by those in the field. For example, McCabe (2005) called for more qualitative research in this area, suggesting the possibility of conducting in-depth interviews with individuals who identify as feminist. As well, McCabe (2005) encouraged more research on the impact of women's studies, stating that, "...future researchers should explore the impact of institutions, particularly women's studies programs, on feminist self-identification..." (p. 497).

As well, academic research has not yet explored the experiences of young third wave educational activists in Canada. This thesis investigates the activism of young third wave educational activists in Ontario and asks questions, such as: How do participants

identify and describe themselves within the feminist movement? What lived experiences have shaped their identity and participation? What strategies have been used (and struggles have been faced) in the process of working within this feminist activist organization? How does the Miss G_Project challenge current conceptions of Secondary education in Ontario schools? What potentials and opportunities exist in the Miss G_Project for moving feminist pedagogy into mainstream teaching and learning?

Participants' efforts have been enacted within the feminist organization, the Miss G_Project, which is sustained by the work of these women. The complexity of motivations, identities and goals of these activists were considered through discussion of their participation and understanding of the feminist movement. This research acknowledges how activity within the feminist movement has shaped the identities, goals and motives of each participant. As well, it considers the activist and organizational strategies of this organization.

Participants' experiences with and perceptions of, the educational system and the changes posited by this organization were a primary focus. As such, specific attention was drawn to their work within the Miss G_Project.

C. Definition of Terms

- Androcentricity - Androcentricity is the characteristic of being derived from, based upon, and relevant principally to the experiences of men (Code, 1995, p. 15)
- Conceptual Baggage - Conceptual baggage is a record of your thoughts and ideas about the research question at the beginning and throughout

the research process...Recording your conceptual baggage [adds] another dimension to the data, one that is always present, but rarely acknowledged (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 32).

Feminism -

A social-justice movement for human liberation, social, political and economic equality for men and women. This conception of gender equity also means that women have the ability and right to access enough information to make informed choices about their lives (Baumgardner and Richards, 2000). hooks' (2000) definition is also useful: "feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (p. 1).

Feminist Pedagogy -

Brings feminism to the classroom, through the questioning of androcentric knowledge, and a focus on critical social change (Fisher, 2001). Modeled on consciousness-raising, it revolves around three educational areas: the power and roles of the teacher; recognition of knowledge and truth in personal and subjective experiences; and an acknowledgement of diversity and difference (Weiler, 1998).

- Feminist Power Sharing - A concept, which challenges strict hierarchical power structures, which are associated with a masculine approach to organizing (Ferree & Martin, 1995).
- Intersubjectivity - This concept is descriptive of, "...an authentic dialogue between all research participants in the research process in which each person is respected as an equally knowing subject" (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 10).
- The Steering Committee- The six individuals who were involved in much of the early conceptions and work of the Miss G_Project and have continued to sustain it through their organization and activism.
- Third Wave - The concept of feminist 'wave' theory assumes there have been three explicit waves of feminism. The most recent third wave, which is thought to have begun in the early 1990s is defined as, "...a movement that contains elements of second wave critique of beauty culture, sexual abuse, and power structures while it also acknowledges and makes use of the pleasure, danger, and defining power of those structures" (Heywood & Drake, 1997, p. 3).

D. Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions

In this thesis research, I explored the complexity of motivations, identities and goals of four young feminist activists through discussion of their participation and understanding of the feminist movement. Specific attention was drawn to their work in creating and working within the Miss G_ project.

Initially, I was hesitant to create a list of primary research questions. It was not in my personal agenda to do this. However, I soon realized that the confines of research methodology within the academy affirm the need to ascribe definite, clear research questions. Thus, for the sake of this thesis, I outlined three primary research questions to be explored within this project. I organized these questions around several areas of interest, which included: identity, organizing and activism. They were:

- 1a. How do participants identify and describe themselves within the feminist movement?
- 1b. What lived experiences have shaped their identity and participation?
2. What strategies have been used (and struggles have been faced) in the process of working within this feminist activist organization?
- 3a. How does the Miss G_ Project challenge current conceptions of Secondary education in Ontario schools?
- 3b. What potentials and opportunities exist in the Miss G_ Project for moving feminist pedagogy into mainstream teaching and learning?

Admittedly, these questions helped to create a clear framework for my understanding of this project. Generating a clear set of inquiries was also helpful in the formulation of the interview guide.

The interview guide (see Appendix C) specifically was aided by these primary research questions. I used these questions as both a jumping off point and an organizational structure by which to create the interview guide.

Hypotheses

Initially I sought to avoid making any concrete hypotheses in my research design, as to remain open to various conceptions, ideas and interpretations, which may arise in the process of this research. I felt that creating pre-conceived notions of the discourse which would occur would only serve to limit interactions within this discursive practice. “Since there is no pre-established hypothesis to jeopardize, there is only information that leads to a variety of conclusions specific to the setting in which it has been gathered. The data will speak in its own voice” (Kirby and McKenna, 1989, p. 78-79).

Although I realize the structure of an academic program relies on hegemonic notions of research, which assume that the researcher must have distinct hypotheses before she endeavors to research, the adoption of a feminist research methodology challenges this research construct. Yet, as I am working within the confines of academia, I will ascribe hypotheses, although they are purposely vague, so that I still may be able to view this research in a feminist manner.

Firstly, I hypothesize that my participants will view themselves as active participants within the feminist movement. This hypothesis is derived from my knowledge of my participant pool. I hypothesize this as I understand that the pool which I am drawing from is narrow and encompasses only women who are active in the steering committee of the Miss G_Project, which is a feminist activist organization.

I also assume that previous lived experiences have influenced their feminist activism. As research (Zucker, 2004) has shown that "...being exposed to feminism in a variety of ways is related to feminist identity" (p. 431-432), I assume that my participants have been influenced by past experiences with feminism. Similarly, Liss, Crawford and Popp's (2004) research, "...showed that life experience variables, including having a mother who was a feminist, having experienced discrimination, and having taken a class that focused on women's issues were correlated with feminist collective action" (p. 777).

E. Significance of Study

The possible significance of this study may be multi-fold. There may be beneficial effects to myself, the participants in the study, as well as to the academic community.

As I research and connect with the participants in this study, my consciousness may be continuously raised. I may grow, both as an individual and a researcher throughout this process.

Similarly, the process of exploring, disclosing and discussing identity, organizing and activism may be beneficial to participants. As well, their own consumption of the results of this study may reveal to them the multiple perspectives of individuals working within the feminist movement, specifically in an organization they are deeply involved with.

On a broader scale, the research/academic community may benefit from this work. Disseminating work which promulgates information about third wave feminist activism in Canada supplements a somewhat lacking pool of academic literature on the topic. Recognizing the efforts a group of young Canadian women are taking within the

feminist movement today challenges notions of young feminists in the third wave as apathetic and individualistic (Bellafante, 1998; Bronstein, 2005).

Appreciating the voices of feminist women exemplifies an effort to recognize their valued place in society. This opposes popular conceptions of feminists as deviant, which research has suggested that many young women and men have subscribed to (Aronson, 2003; Banziger & Hooker, 1979; Fox & Auerbach, 1983; Griffin, 1989; Horn et al, 2001; Kamen, 1991; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995). As well, my research works against the assumption that women's experiences are not worth understanding (Code, 1995). Rather, it emphasizes the importance of creating knowledge, which highlights women as not only of importance to study, but also as active participants in the transformation of society.

Although there is an abundance of literature on young feminists in the United States (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Baumgardner & Richards, 2005; Findlen, 1995; Heywood & Drake, 1997; Jervis & Zeisler, 2006; Walker, 1995), the literature available on this population in Canada is sparse. My research will contribute to the existing literature on the third wave, by working within a Canadian context. As well, the activist organization, which participants are involved in, has yet to be explored in academic writing.

Acknowledging the work of feminists is essential to the women's movement. Feminist historians have emphasized the importance of recording the stories and experiences of women within the feminist movement, for both current and future use, (Adamson, Briskin & McPhail, 1988; Black, 1992; Sebestyen, 1988; Rowbotham, 1989).

This thesis will attempt to contribute to this work, by acknowledging the work of young feminists, for present and future scholars.

Accordingly this will be enacted through four organized chapters. The remaining parts of this thesis will focus on first providing a review of the existing literature, which relates to this study. It will then consider the design and methodology used in this research project. Following this will be an analysis of the findings. Finally, the conclusions and implications of this study will be considered.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Feminist Waves

Within academic circles, influenced by constructivist ideas, there have been acknowledgements that, "...any history is somewhat arbitrary" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998a, p. 11). Yet, some of these same researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998a) have used historical divisions to help define cultural shifts.

This tension, between the subjectivity and fluidity of time, and the desire to mark its progress is palpable. Yet, as was illustrated above, some researchers have found a way to manage this contradiction. As a result, my own thinking about history, subjectivity and categorization was furthered through this understanding. Once I realized the possibilities for recognizing multiple ways of framing and understanding history and embracing this tension, I was better able to conceptualize my use of historical periods in this project.

The use of time periods is made clear in the title for this thesis project: *Feminist Activism, Education and Social Change: Young Feminists' Perspectives in the Third Wave*. The term third wave is indicative of the use of feminist wave theory (Aikau,

Erickson & Moore, 2003; Orr, 1997). I have used this theory as a framework for understanding feminist movements. The wave of feminism, which this project addresses, is the most current third wave.

While I do acknowledge that the boundaries, which separate the first, second and third waves of feminism are not concrete, they are widely used within feminist writings and communities (Aikau, Erickson & Moore, 2003; Heywood & Drake, 1997; Kinser, 2004; Orr, 1997; Pinterics, 2001; Purvis, 2004; Walker, 1994), as a way to understand the movement. Thus, the use of these categories provides a framework to think about the past present and future of the women's movement. As such, each feminist wave will be further addressed in this literature review.

To begin with, feminist 'wave' theory has functioned with the premise that there have been three explicit waves of feminism. The work and activism from the first wave of feminism spanned from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. The first wave was primarily equated with women's fight to attain equal access to institutions, and is often associated with the fight for women's suffrage (DuBois, 1975; DuBois, 2000). During this period of time, women attained the right to vote and, in Canada, recognition of personhood (http://www.collectionscanada.ca/famous5/053002_e.html).

Additionally, connected to the fight for access was the struggle for women to gain admission to educational institutions, which had been primarily set up for the education of males. Prominent feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton, spoke on this topic in her *Declaration of Sentiments*. She lists the things men (in general) have done to women. One of these points specifically addresses education: "He had denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education - all colleges being closed against her" (Stanton, 1854).

Thus, it is clear that the recognition of women being deprived of education was a key issue, even in the first wave of the feminist movement.

Further, many of those involved with early women's movements also organized for prohibition (Bordin, 1981). For example, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), a first wave feminist organization, who advocated for suffrage (McDonnell, 1893; National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1884) also fought for temperance. Their arguments for temperance, and motivations for joining this organization, often came from their experiences of the negative impact men's alcohol use had on women and families (Bohlmann, 2001). This change was sought both through legal shifts and educational activism in schools and newspapers (National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1884).

Theoretically, the basis for arguments for women's rights in the first wave relied on women's traditional roles as wives and mothers, and thus their desire to protect their families. This type of feminism is what is commonly referred to as Maternal Feminism. As such, the first wave has been mainly categorized as using conceptions about feminine morality to argue for women's rights (Freigang, 2001). Further, the goals of the first wave were largely striving for access to male-dominated institutions and for legal transformations.

Conversely, the second wave has been associated with the period of questioning male-dominated institutions (many of which women of the first wave fought to gain access to). The publication of Betty Friedan's, *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, has been noted as a pivotal second wave text, being published in an early moment of this period (Bronstein, 2005; Horowitz, 2000a; Horowitz, 2000b; Kolmar & Bartkowski, 2000).

Primary goals and points of activism during the second wave were: reproductive freedom, battered women's shelters, equal pay, and the passing of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the United States (Ferree & Martin, 1995). Pressure from feminist organizations in Canada, incited the creation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada in 1967 (O'Neill, 2003). Through both grassroots research methods, accessing spaces where women frequented (i.e. churches and grocery stores) and more 'formal' studies, the commission studied the position of women in Canadian society (O'Neill, 2003).

Major goals which were met included: the creation of women's health clinics, increased reproductive freedom, the passing of laws prohibiting sex discrimination, and the implementation of women's studies courses in post-secondary institutions. However, many prominent ones were not. Of noted significance, within the United States, is the failure to pass the ERA. Consequently, many of the goals set by feminists in the second wave are still sought by women today. As such, many of the organizations created during this wave still exist today. Two major mass-member feminist organization created during the second wave, the National Organization of Women (NOW), in the United States, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, in Canada (which was created due to the findings from the Royal Commission on the Status of Women research) have continued to do feminist work, since their developments in the 1970s.

Thus the first and second wave worked in various manners to both attain access to and transform male-dominated institutions. Although many of their goals were met, many were not. The impacts of these waves include: legal shifts and the creation of mass

member feminist organizations. Many of these organizations, as well as the goals from these eras have remained prominent in feminist movements in the third wave.

B. The Third Wave?

So, what is the third wave? Although pinning down a distinct definition for this wave of feminism is a somewhat illusive and challenging process, it is this expansiveness that may define its greatest feature and asset. Ballou and Mulrooney (2006) highlighted how the goals and activism of the third wave of feminism are broader than its precursors. This was emphasized by considering various aspects of the third wave, which have broadened the feminist agenda, including: the recognition of non-Western women; the embracing of elements of queer theory and postmodernism; and extensive critiques of gender constructions. Else-Quest (2006) agrees with this notion of the increasing diversification of the movement; “feminism is not dead; it is just evolved” (p. 325).

Some have argued that the third wave acts as a challenge to earlier breeds of feminism, which have placed all but the experiences of white, western, heterosexual and middle-class women on the periphery of analysis (Ballou & Mulrooney, 2006; Bronstein, 2005). Thus a distinguishing feature of the third wave has been regarded to be its focus on embracing and acknowledging diversity. As such, this emphasis on diversity has ushered in critiques of interlocking oppressions and identities that are far more complex than sex or gender (Ballou & Mulrooney, 2006; Zack, 2005). Thus the third wave has attempted to be more inclusive and representative, expanding and shifting the definition of feminism and what comprises a feminist (Ballou & Mulrooney, 2006; Walker, 1995).

This inclusivity involved recognition of both interlocking oppressions and privileges. Feminists who were privileged were challenged by “...radical women of

color, poor women, and lesbians...to confront racism, classism, and heterosexism within the second wave” (Bronstein, 2005). Thus the emergence of the third wave began with critiques of the second wave. It was assessed critically for ignoring the experiences of all but the most privileged women (Anzaldua & Moraga, 1981; Minh-ha, 1989; Sandoval, 1991).

For example, Anzaldua & Moraga’s 1981 anthology, *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, explored the differences and divisions within feminism. It acknowledged experiences of prejudice, both within and outside of feminist movements, which were experienced by women of colour. Thus, it expanded the definition of feminist and embraced conceptions of this term from radical women of colour in the United States.

As well, hooks’ (1981) book, *Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, captured the tensions within the feminist movement. It uncovered the prejudices and silences within a movement that although was dedicated to liberating women, had ignored many and whose members continued to oppress black women. hooks (1981) also recognized the sexism within the civil rights movement. Through analysis of: “...the impact of sexism on the black woman during slavery, the devaluation of black womanhood, black male sexism, racism within the recent feminist movement, and the black woman’s involvement with feminism” (hooks, 1981, p. 13), these interlocking oppressions, racism and sexism, experienced by black women, were explored in this text. Thus, both Anzaldua and Moraga’s (1981) and hooks’ (1981) books highlighted the diversity of the feminist movement and the necessity to unpack the prejudices within this movement and give voice to the many people involved in it.

Since the aforementioned works were published, efforts have been made to represent the variety of voices and perspectives of feminists in the third wave (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Baumgardner & Richards, 2005; Findlen, 1995; Heywood & Drake, 1997; Jervis & Zeisler, 2006; Walker, 1995). Mitchell, Bryn Rundle and Karaian's (2001) anthology *Turbo chicks: Talking young feminisms*, is comprised of entries which represent a diverse array of feminists and feminisms. This anthology is unique, in that it displays the vitality of the movement, within a Canadian context. Although this text (Mitchell, Bryn Rundle & Karaian, 2001) displays that there has been some effort to speak from a Canadian context, much of the writing from the third wave has ignored or placed very little emphasis on the experiences of Canadian women.

For example, the popular third wave text, *Manifesta: Young women, feminism, and the future* (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000) analyzed the feminist movement from a North American context, drawing primarily from the experiences and occurrences of feminism within the United States. The authors considered the repercussions of various social and cultural institutions on feminist movements, with little emphasis on the experiences of Canadian women. Specifically, they contrasted the negative portrayal of feminism by the media, with the actual activities of young feminists in the third wave. Baumgardner and Richards (2000) offered a positive perspective of the feminist movement today, which emphasized its strengths and potent activism.

Heywood and Drake (1997) made similar efforts to validate the third wave. Yet, they did so in a manner different than Baumgardner and Richards (2000). By giving voice to feminists in the third wave, through narratives, this anthology (Heywood and

Drake, 1997) gives the reader a step into understanding the complexity of young feminists' lives, identities, and activisms.

However, the age range of contributors is somewhat limited, as they are women and men born, between 1963 and 1973. Being that this book (Heywood & Drake, 1997) was written ten years ago, the ages of participants were between twenty-four and thirty-four. While this age bracket may aptly mark those who entered feminism in its third wave, ten years later, there are many more young feminists to account for, who were born after the 1973 cut off this text provides.

The aforementioned works all make efforts to explore cultural influences on the feminist movement in some manner. This analytic move is appropriate being that the third wave is linked to and influenced by various other movements and their organizational tactics. Some of these other ideas and groups were active during its inception, others have developed since. Thus the methods of the third wave were influenced by several other movements, which included: the Do-It-Yourself Movement (DIY) (Bail, 1996) and the Punk Movement (Garrison, 2000). Riot Grrrl culture is also often linked to the third wave, as it reclaims the term girl, with an empowered tone (Robbins, 1999). Riot Grrrl is typically associated with the punk-influenced music of bands like Bikini Kill and Bratmobile, but was also evident in zine culture. Many of the women involved in this scene openly identified with feminist ideals. As well, Riot Grrrl music explored issues of sexualities, violence and addiction.

Zine culture, tied to the DIY movement, involves the independent publication of small magazines. These zines have been used by many social movements to distribute information in an inexpensive manner. For example, the grassroots third wave feminist

activist group Bloodsisters (1999, n.d), used self-published zines to advocate and enact menstrual product activism. These paper zines were an essential part of their activism, as they were used to critique and encourage critiques of traditional menstrual products and their producers.

More recently, technological advances have brought feminism into another arena. The internet is a space in which Electronic zines (e-zines) and blogs can be created and seen by millions of people, without the expense of printing and distribution that zines required. E-zines and blogs can be created and posted on regularly, with access to an internet connection. These forms of communication and consciousness-raising give feminists the space to voice their ideas. For young third wave feminists who have grown up with computers, these forms of expression are aptly used.

Thus, the third wave represents a more diversified, critical period of the women's movement. It has been influenced by several other social movements, as well as cultural shifts, which include: earlier feminist movements; critiques from women of diverse identities; punk and diy movements; as well as technological changes.

C. Antifeminism - Critiques of Feminisms and the Third Wave

Since the inception of the feminist movement, when mass groups of women began to stand up and take action for their rights and freedoms, as a historically noted movement, there have been sentiments against such actions. Various groups and individuals have attempted to attack and devalue feminist values and feminist activism. Howard and Adams Tarrant (2000) compiled some of these written attacks in their collection of primary sources, *Antifeminism in America*. They drew from popular literature, which included: magazine articles, journal articles and excerpts from books. A

common theme which they found in these pieces pertained to the grounds on which feminism was critiqued. Howard and Adams Tarrant (2000) noted that antifeminists often argued against the women's movement, based on women's maternal responsibilities.

Critiques of feminisms and feminists have persisted. Bellafante's (1998) much discussed article in *Time* magazine, "Feminism: It's all about me!" continued an anti-feminist agenda. Bellafante framed young women as apolitical, self-absorbed and egocentric. This attack was constructed by using media figures, actors and fictional characters as examples of today's young women. For example, her critiques were furthered with an extended in-depth analysis of Ally McBeal and Bridget Jones (two fictional characters). These two characters, developed in television, novels and/or film, portrayed young single professional women in the late 20th and early 21st century. She uses their purported self-involvement and ambivalence about feminism as examples of the flightiness of the women's movement today. Bellafante also took the time to critique the work of prominent young feminist writers, like Rebecca Walker and Naomi Wolf, for the lack of theory in their books.

Bellafante provides a bit of a paradoxical argument. As within the same page that she asserts that as the feminist movement has met all its goals and is now 'dead', she also takes the time to look at continuing gender inequities, the wage gap and child care issues.

However, an apt point was made when she noted that often exposure to the theoretical basis of feminism occurs, primarily, within the walls of college and university campuses. As such, feminism is often misunderstood by those without experience in these venues (Bellafante, 1998). Bellafante notes that the women who are most likely to support and identify with feminism are those who have a post-secondary education.

She also offers a poignant critique of the place of feminism in academia. She noted that women's studies programs have been opting to focus on gender constructs and symbols rather than on social action. She noted the increase in and shift to gender studies programs.

Nevertheless, Bellafante's critique of young women is weakened by her failure to interview or acknowledge young feminist activists. Rather she focused much of her critique of the women's movement on media figures and fictional characters.

Arguments like Bellafante's (1998) have given rise to the term post-feminism. This term is used to regard sentiment that all the goals of feminism have been met and thus there is no purpose for the movement anymore and as such feminism today is nonexistent. Tasker and Negra's (2007) anthology *Interrogating Post-Feminism* represents a collection of writing which variously embraces and critiques this notion. Yet, claims that the goals of feminism have been met are quickly disputed by activist and academic feminists alike (Ahn, 2001; Steenbergen, 2001).

For example, Steenbergen (2001) used Bellafante's (1998) work as a starting point to critique the concept of post-feminism and to reflect on the media's portrayal of the women's movement today. Steenbergen (2001), through an exploration of the media's construction of feminism, challenged the use of post-feminism in a culture still very patriarchally controlled and in which many young women are active in feminist movements.

Ahn (2001) also explored how the media portrays feminism as an antiquated movement, which has met all its goals. As well, she discussed how the media's portrayal of what is feminist, has often been limited to the negative (i.e. bitchy, angry) or frivolous

and self-involved (i.e. 'Girl Power'). She contrasted the media's view of feminism, with the actualities of sexual and gender inequalities, which still exist in Canada and throughout the world.

Surprisingly, critiques of the feminist movement have not only come from those outside of it. Noted second wave feminist activist, Phyllis Chesler, in her 2005 book, *The death of feminism: What's next in the struggle for women's freedom*, attacked the efforts and values of young third wave feminists. Chesler (2005) posited third wavers as apathetic and self-involved. She expressed the belief that the third wave doesn't consider global issues of the oppression of women. Chesler offered a call to action to help Muslim women. Yet, unfortunately this came off more as an attack on young third wavers. She further argued that feminism, in the third wave is dead and needs to refocus on the global oppression of women.

In response to these attacks by Chesler (2005), Else-Quest (2006), self-identified as a third wave feminist, provided an analysis of these critiques of third wave. She stated that, "feminism is not dead; it is just evolved" (2006, p. 325). In other words, Else-Quest (2006) insisted that although feminism is changing and may not parallel the values of the second wave, this does not mean that it is not just as strong, active and involved.

Subsequently, the media has also had a hand in portraying women's movements in disparaging ways. Deconstructing media portrayals of women (Bronstein, 2005) has revealed that third wave feminism has been depicted quite negatively.

An apt example is Bronstein's (2005) textual and content analysis of over 10 years of news stories about feminism and/or feminists. The study focused specifically on the portrayals of the third wave and made various comparisons to portrayals of the second

wave of feminism. Bronstein (2005) noted that the third wave was often framed as “Feminism Lite” – feminine and girlish, frivolous, passive and juvenile. In this analysis of various news stories, pertaining to feminism, Bronstein (2005) found that the use of “Feminism Lite” as a framework, by which the third wave was portrayed, represented 34% of the news stories studied. This research also concluded that often the portrayals of feminism not only trivialized the third wave, but also demeaned the identities and goals of those of the second wave.

These critiques of the third wave by antifeminists, feminists and the media point to the need to acknowledge the experiences of young feminist activists working in the third wave. hooks (2000) recognized the misconceptions about feminism and thus the need to spread knowledge about feminism broadly. Thus this thesis, in recognizing the efforts of the women of the Miss G_Project represents an effort to give voice to feminists in the third wave. This acts as a challenge to critiques of young women in the third wave as apathetic and egocentric. As well, it represents an effort to spread knowledge about feminism and feminists.

D. The Miss G_Project

The Miss G_Project was developed in 2005 for the purpose of advocating the implementation of a women’s studies course in the Ontario Secondary School curriculum (<http://www.themissgproject.org>). This organization was developed by a group of women who were attending a university in Ontario, as undergraduate students.

The name of this organization was inspired by an excerpt from a book, which one of the members of this group read in a women’s studies course. This book, by Dr. Edward H. Clarke (1873) argued against women engaging in activities deemed

masculine. Among these activities was the pursuit of education. Clarke (1873) explained how such work could have dire consequences, which included sterility, insanity and death. He argued against both coeducation and the education of women in general. His theories about education, women's bodies and the need for the conservation of energy for reproduction, were used in the years that followed by those against coeducation as well as against women's activity in other spheres (Seller, 1983).

Clarke (1873) illustrated a number of cases wherein women suffered due to their educational work. Miss G_ was one of the cases which Clarke used in his book. He noted how Miss G_ , a college educated woman, had been an avid student and scholar. Her work had surpassed both male and female students'. After college, she passed away. Clarke (1873) explained how the post-mortem exam revealed degeneration in her brain. He attributed her death to the over work of her brain in engaging in intense studies, a masculine pursuit, and her not engaging in reproductive work (Clarke, 1873). Clarke (1983) goes on to argue that if Miss G_ had chosen to focus on feminine rather than masculine pursuits, she would have not died as early.

After reading this text, the women in the Miss G_Project adopted the name Miss G_ as the name of their organization. This group was "...named for, and dedicated to, the unidentified Miss G_" (www.missgproject.org). As highlighted in this quote, it is significant that this woman who strove for educational success was left unnamed. This thesis reflects on issues of identity and labeling ones identity. It was a key goal of this research project to understand how participants conceptualized their identities. It is unfortunate that the woman, for whom the organization studied is named remains unnamed and thus as such void of some aspect of her identity. This circumstance

cemented my own thinking that it is so important to chronicle the work of women and to create spaces wherein women can conceptualize their own identities and express their voices. Exploring the women involved with the Miss G_Project and the work that this organization has done is an example of an attempt to create such a space.

The work that the Miss G_Project has engaged in has involved meeting with the Minister of Education, organizing a feminist read-in at Queen's Park, and traveling throughout Ontario running high school workshops and promoting the project (<http://missgproject.livejournal.com>; http://www.rabble.ca/news_full_story.shtml?x=48961).

Since its inception, changes have occurred in the group's philosophy, goals and organizational strategies. Of the philosophical shifts, the most evident was posted on the official Miss G_Project website (www.missgproject.org). The group altered their original objective to implement a women's studies course into the Ontario Secondary School curriculum. This alteration involved the integration of the concept of gender studies. This change was enacted through a consensus decision at the Miss G_Project Chapters Conference in August of 2006, and subsequent responses from the group's mailing list. This decision was made to better reflect their conceptions of the course, as not only involving considerations of women, but also the construction of gender:

This change reflects not a change in mandate, or a loss of focus. Rather, it reflects a better articulation of the aims of the course/the project and the historical development of the discipline following three decades of feminist scholarship. (<http://www.themissgproject.org/about/wgs.pdf>)

As this group is still in its early years, academic research has just recently started to acknowledge the work of the Miss G_Project. Miller, a student at the University of Western Ontario recently finished her work regarding this group. Miller's (2007) thesis discussed how the media constructed the Miss G_Project through images and text as young, fun, and non-threatening. She explored how this media friendly image was helpful in the project getting accepted by the public.

E. Women's Studies/Gender Studies

Women's studies was integrated into the academy, in the North America, as the 'academic arm' of the Women's Liberation Movement, in the 1960s and 1970s (Bird, 2002; Boxer, 1982). The first course "...was taught at the Free University in Seattle in 1965 and was closely linked to the students' movement for a democratic society (SDS)" (Stromquist, 2001). In 1970 the first women's studies program was created at San Diego State College.

These courses and programs intended to bring a keen gender analysis into universities and colleges, which were primarily patriarchally controlled and androcentric, in both administration and curricular content. Having feminist academics working within courses designated as women's studies gave their voices and perspectives visibility on campus. As well, women's studies introduced many women and men to feminist theory, who may not have had the opportunity to be exposed to these ideas otherwise. Women's studies also brought forth the concept of teaching through an explicitly feminist pedagogy.

Bird (2002) explored the tensions between feminist activists and academics, which existed during the period in which women's studies courses were being introduced

to the academy. Interviews were carried in 1998-1999 with sixty women England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, and the USA, who had been active in helping bring women's studies to academic institutions (Bird, 2002). Bird (2002) concluded that in North America, the links to activism were more prevalent in course design. While in the United Kingdom, there was much more of a focus on the academic aspect of this discipline. While participants from all geographical areas reported that sisterhood was practiced in the academy more so in the early years of the course (Bird, 2002). She concludes that overall, women's studies and women's studies instructors have become more focused on the scholarly pursuit of knowledge than in social change and activism.

As such today, as women's studies has become further invested and institutionalized within the university structure, there have been perceptions that it has been straying further away from the goals of social change which originated its development. Gardiner's (2003) discussion of interdisciplinary feminist pedagogy delved into its manifestation in women's studies programs. The author perceived that the institutionalization of women's studies has often moved it away from activist pursuits. Yet, Gardiner maintained a fervent belief in the emancipatory potential of an interdisciplinary feminist pedagogy through women's studies. She discussed how this pedagogical approach can connect to and insight activism and community action: "If we continue an engaged scholarship and pedagogy, the fissures between activism and academy may seem less sharp," (Gardiner, 2003, p. 419). She also discussed how, through analysis of gender constructs, students begin to challenge and question "the gendered nature of traditional disciplines" (p. 415).

As Gardiner (2003) discussed, women's studies is, ideally, manifested in the classroom through the implementation of feminist pedagogy. This pedagogical approach creates a learning community wherein all classroom participants are empowered to initiate individual and social change and encouraged to question androcentric knowledge (Fisher, 2001). Weiler (1998) noted that this pedagogical approach is the actualization of feminist goals and values within educational institutions.

Today, women's studies programs and classes are operating across the globe. The impact of these courses is consistent both within a North American context and abroad. Common themes noted in analyses of students' reactions to women's studies included empowerment, connection to women, awakening and a desire for social change. For example, Halevi and Blumen's (2005) study of graduates from a women's studies program in Israel revealed these similar ideas. The Palestinian and Jewish women, disclosed during semi-structured interviews that they felt very positive about the program, specifically noting feeling empowered by their experiences.

Empowerment is a common theme in research on the impact of women's studies and gender studies. As well, understanding how these courses impact activism has been explored in academic literature. For example, Stake's (2007) longitudinal study of 662 students, enrolled in 48 women's and gender studies courses in the United States' Midwest investigated how students' activist attitudes and actions changed throughout the process of completing a women's/gender studies course. The study found that students increased both their intentions for participating in feminist activism and their behaviours of engaging in feminist activism. A key element of this shift was students' feelings of empowerment that they experienced through the course. Thus, students, through their

sense of empowerment in women's/gender studies, were politicized and brought into activism.

This study mirrors earlier work, in which Stake participated. Specifically, research by Stake, Roades, Rose, Ellis and West in 1994, considered how women's studies classes impacted students' feminist activism. By accessing both qualitative and quantitative methods, this research was undertaken. A comparison was made at the beginning and end of a university semester of women's studies and non-women's studies students' feminist activism and intentions for feminist activism. There was no significant difference at the beginning of the semester in students' responses. However, by the end of the semester, women's studies students answered that they had participated in more feminist activism and had greater intentions of being involved with feminist activism, than the non-women's studies students (Stake, et al, 1994). Their feminist activism was measured through a checklist for feminist activism. This checklist was developed by the authors, who were all women's studies teachers. It included eight items, related to: keeping informed about women's rights issues; discussing their opinions with others about these issues; signing petitions related to women's rights; attending protests and/or other events about women's rights; engaging in letter writing regarding women's rights; circulating petitions about women's rights; working for a campaign for women's rights; and engaging in other women's rights work (Stake, et al, 1994). This was linked to the course, through a Likert style evaluation of class impact and open-ended questions. As such, it was concluded that the women's studies course had positively impacted students' feminist activism.

Several other attitudinal changes were noted as well, by women's studies students. These common themes included increased awareness of discrimination, enhanced self-confidence, greater tolerance of others, ability to educate others, adoption of new/nontraditional behaviours, enhanced assertiveness, and wanting to learn more (Stake et al, 1994). As such, it can be surmised that women's studies courses impacted, both students' feminist activism and their attitudes.

On a broader scale, women's studies has been noted as a catalyst for social change and a space in which this change can be imagined (Dickinson, 2005). Dickinson (2005) also argued that women's studies has transformed the knowledge pool in universities. Women's/gender studies asks questions that are often ignored by the traditional disciplines (when untouched by feminist pedagogy). These courses use epistemic analysis about power and the construction of gender and identity. As well they give voice to marginalized people. By making central the analysis of women and gender, women's studies de-peripheralizes the experiences of women and the construction of gender.

Although extensive research has been done on the impact of women's and gender studies in post-secondary institutions, the impact of women's studies in secondary schools is a topic which has rarely been considered. However, Joseph's (2005) research on a women's studies high school club highlights the effects this area of analysis may have on adolescents. Participants included sixteen adolescent girls of colour, in high school, who participated in a Young Women's Studies Club (YWSC). Joseph (2005)

used qualitative interviews to collect data. Eight girls were interviewed individually and eight were interviewed in a group.

Participants maintained that their involvement with YWSC was empowering. In this organization, primarily populated by girls, they felt more comfortable and confident expressing their opinions (Joseph, 2005). Through their experiences in the YWSC, they were able to recognize experiencing sexism, racism and unequal treatment, which they attributed to their gender. Participants also noted that being in YWSC allowed them to resist restrictive gender roles. These findings are very similar to those found by scholars considering the impact of women's studies and gender studies on students in post-secondary institutions.

F. Feminist Identity

Discussions of feminist identity in the third wave are plentiful. What defines a feminist? How does one act in a feminist manner? Efforts have been made to deconstruct stereotypes created both within and outside of the women's movement which articulate very limited conceptions of the term feminist (Heywood & Drake, 1997; McCabe, 2005; Walker, 1995).

For example, McCabe's (2005) research engages in such a pursuit. Through her analysis of interview data, she demonstrates that there has been a schism between representations of feminists and the actual characteristics of feminists in the United States. By accessing data from the 1996 General Social Survey (GSS), a national survey, which used personal interviews, carried out by the National Opinion Research Centre,

this research was undertaken. The GSS survey involved approximately 3000 English-speaking adults in the United States.

McCabe (2005) analyzed this qualitative data, through a quantitative approach, focusing on two pertinent questions, pertaining to feminist self-identification and the link between feminist self-identification and gender-related attitudes. Consideration was given to percentages of respondents, who responded in various ways to these questions, controlling for various demographic variables.

The study found that more women than men identified as feminist. It also found that feminist self-identification was positively correlated with level of education and region (living in urban areas), liberal views and Democratic political affiliations. Further, predictors of feminist self-identification included: gender (female), urban residence, liberal political views, Democratic political party affiliation, higher education, and "...beliefs in broad societal explanations for gender inequality and significantly linked to self-identifying as a feminist" (McCabe, 2005, p. 492). Conversely, variables which were not significantly correlated with feminist self-identification included race, income, marital status, number of children, and work status (part-time and/or full-time).

Although McCabe's (2005) exploration into of the lives of those who identify as feminist expanded understandings of these individuals, this work is limited by two key factors. Firstly, it is from the context of the United States. Although Canada is heavily influenced by this culture, this country still maintains a separate identity. As such, it is important to understand the identities of individuals who identify as feminist in Canada.

Secondly, although interesting correlations and predictions are made by McCabe (2005), they are somewhat limited, due to the reliance on quantitative methodology to

analyze the GSS data. Qualitative research in this area may have resulted in a more in-depth, fluid analysis. McCabe (2005) also recognizes this, calling for more qualitative research in this area and suggesting the possibility of in-depth interviewing individuals who identify as feminist. Yet, overall, McCabe (2005) makes a strong effort to reveal the contradiction between what has been thought of feminists and who these individuals actually are.

Rebecca Walker (1995), also made efforts to reconceptualize the concept of a feminist identity in her anthology, *to be real: telling the truth and changing the face of feminism*. As she approached this work as a collection of narratives, she added to the qualitative work on feminism and identity.

Walker (1995) drew from self-identified feminists whom discussed the contradictions and evolutions of their identities. Her main premise in compiling these stories was to affirm that feminism does not have one face, one identity, one desire. She underscores the multiplicity of experiences and beliefs which are evident in these feminists' stories. By deconstructing and reframing the "good" feminist, Walker subverts stereotypical assumptions of gender and feminism.

Baumgardner and Richards (2003) have made similar efforts to explore the malleability of feminist identities in the third wave. They discussed young women's relationships with feminism. They found that although many young women are active in the women's movement, comparisons to the activist pursuits of the second wave have caused some to question the value of their actions. Baumgardner & Richards (2003) drew from their experiences lecturing at various colleges, since the publication of *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*, to discuss this issue. They explored how many

young feminist women, who identify as feminists, are active in various feminist pursuits, for example: taking women's studies courses, organizing against domestic violence, volunteering at women's centers and Planned Parenthood (2003). Yet, they noted that many of these same women expressed insecurity and feelings of not being worthy of being feminists because of, what they perceive as, inadequate action (Baumgardner & Richards, 2003). They affirmed that many young feminists they have met during their college lectures have expressed that they feel that the second wavers were the real feminists and, thus, they were not sure if they had anything new to add to the movement.

Their work indicates that there is some dissonance noted by young feminists, with a movement they have studied and worked within. Baumgardner and Richards (2003) discuss this phenomenon: "Committed to feminism, active in organizing against violence, taking women's studies courses, young feminists today nevertheless fear their unworthiness to carry on the goals and ideals of the women's movement" (p. 448). As such Baumgardner and Richards (2003) encourage that more research on feminist activists be undertaken.

Yet, there is a small body of literature in the area of feminist identity which has focused on the connection between feminist identity and participation in feminist activism (Duncan, 1999; Zucker, 2004). Although, as this work has often relied on research methods that draw from positivistic, quantitative approaches, there has been an acknowledgement (McCabe, 2005) that future qualitative work should be done, which further explores feminist self-identification and behaviour.

Another area of feminist identity research, which has developed is the use of qualitative methods to ascertain how feminists develop and conceptualize their identities. Barata, Hunjan & Leggatt (2005) represents an especially poignant example of this type of research. Their study used a group discussion to explore the graduate school experiences of ten feminist women graduate students. The research was structured so that all ten acted as both researchers and participants. They found that all participants identified as feminists. As well, these feminist identifications had been impacted by their educational experiences. Thus this study provides some insight into Canadian feminist graduate students' perceptions of identity.

Other research has focused on women who supported and believed in feminist values, but refused to adopt a feminist label. This conflict in identification versus values is highlighted by Spears (1995). By accessing both qualitative and quantitative instruments on 261 college-age women and men, this research was undertaken. Spears (1995) found that there was very little difference in values and beliefs between feminists and non-feminists. However, many individuals who supported feminist beliefs, did not identify as feminist. The only difference between these two groups was in two categories, which feminists rated as more personally important: occupation and political identity. Thus the primary schism between those identifying as feminist and those not identifying as feminist was the greater value feminists placed on their occupations and political identities.

In sum, then, the research on feminist identity has found that identifying as a feminist is correlated with and can be predicted by several factors, including gender and education. It has also been revealed, through the narratives from feminists, that feminism

does not have one concrete identity and as such the social group who define themselves as feminists hold various other identifications and values and are dispersed through many other social groups. Research has also shown that some women support feminist values and/or act in feminist manners, but do not associate with this label for a variety of reasons.

G. Feminist Activism & Organizing

Feminist movements, just as all social movements, are characterized by their organizing and activist work. The plural 'movements' is used as feminism is not a cohesive movement that can be labeled and categorized clearly. Thus, there are many feminisms and feminist movements, which exist in a variety of contexts and for a variety of reasons. While they are connected by their concern for the place of women in society, this is often the only connection. For example, feminist movements have arisen among farm women (Shortall, 1994), students (Miller, 2007), Catholic women (Ferree & Martin, 1995; Schlumpf, 2007), and mothers (Christiansen-Ruffman, 1995), among others.

The ways in which these groups are organized also varies. Large-scale, mass member, formalized women's groups have often relied on adaptations of hierarchical power structures, using titles and concrete roles to designate responsibilities. For example, the National Action Committee for the Status of Women has a President, Executive Coordinator, as well as Vice Presidents from various areas in Canada. Further, in the United States, the National Organization of Women uses a similar structure, with a President and chapter leaders. These highly structured groups are typical of large feminist organizations, which were conceived during the second wave.

However, studies on young and/or grassroots feminist groups have demonstrated that these same techniques are not exclusively used (Baumgardner & Richards, 2005; Marshall, 2002). While these techniques are not ignored by these activists, they are often used in different ways or accompanied by alternative approaches to organizing. Research has shown that these organizations, sometimes influenced by work on feminist power sharing, often use collective organizational structures (Ferree & Martin, 1995). This collective organization is more fluid and flexible than the traditional hierarchical organization.

For example, Baumgardner and Richards' (2005) text *Grassroots: A field guide for feminist activism*, draws from their own and other activists' experiences of organizing, to demonstrate how anyone can be an activist. They showed how those who act as feminist activists, both within and outside of groups, were not always formally organized, in the traditional manner, but were often more fluid with their understandings of structure and responsibilities. Fittingly, they encouraged the use and development of alternative forms of activism. Their work provides an inroad to activism, for those wanting to use grassroots approaches.

Marshall (2002) also made efforts to investigate grassroots activism through her exploration of feminists organizing to elect women to public office. Participant observation and in-depth, unstructured interviews were used to understand the work of twenty-two women active in a chapter of the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC). Marshall (2002) found that participants' activism was organized both through the formal confines of the NWPC, as well as through the development of informal

community-based networks. As well she discovered that feminist activism impacted electoral activity; specifically, participants' activism had an impact on electoral activity.

This research displays how grassroots activism can create social change, with regard to political activity. Thus, it displays the significance of both engaging in and studying local activism. This work contributes to the literature, which stands up against critiques of feminists as egocentric and apathetic. This work displays that feminists today are still active in organizing, striving for and attaining social change in their communities. It also shows how grassroots organizing can be combined with more formal approaches to activism.

As was demonstrated by Marshall (2002), feminist activism in the third wave is inclusive of both methods used widely in the second wave and alternative grassroots methods. For example, the Bloodsisters (1999) (a third wave feminist activist group) use of culture jamming in their zines, allowed them to critique popular media in a creative and feminist manner, by writing on and manipulating menstruation print ads. This is a form of menstrual product activism, which is "...loosely defined as various attempts to expose the hazards of commercial 'feminine protection' to both women's bodies and the environment and the promotion of healthier, less expensive, and less resource-intensive alternatives" (Bobel, 2006, p. 331).

Bobel's (2006) research considered third wave menstrual product activism through content analysis. Five websites and eight zines, which advocated for and acted as a form of menstrual product activism were analyzed. Bobel (2006) used an axial coding method of thematic analysis. It was concluded that menstrual product activism was linked with elements of the third wave. Some key elements of the third wave, which are

connected to the menstrual product activism considered in this article, included: the “do it yourself” (diy) movement, anti-essentialism, inclusion, irony, humour and reappropriation (Bobel, 2006).

Culture jamming is a technique used in various mediums by third wave feminists. Websites, blogs, and zines have all used this technique to transform the messages of popular culture. This may involve critiquing media messages through irony and shock or reclaiming terms used to denigrate women. Postering, which may also use culture jamming techniques, is an act of taking public space to send a message to the public that is accessible and affordable. As, Bruin (2006), a member of About-Face, a feminist organization which seeks to challenge negative images of women stated, their goal in postering “...is to use public space as a forum to challenge our culture’s messages and remind people they too can make a stink” (p. 332).

Although the noting of efforts by the aforementioned activists adds to the pool of knowledge regarding contemporary feminist activism, much of this work has been acknowledging feminist activism in the United States. Further, while research regarding feminist activism in the United States is not abundant, the research in this area from a Canadian perspective is far more lacking. Yet, efforts to capture the work of Canadian feminist activist groups have resulted in interesting findings.

For instance, Christiansen-Ruffman (1995) added to the literature in this area through her case study exploration of three Canadian women’s organizations in Nova Scotia. She interviewed members of these groups about their political and social beliefs. The groups considered were inclusive of: Mothers United for Metro Shelter, a low-income housing group and support group for battered women; The Association des

Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Ecosse, an advocacy and support group of Acadian women; and Pandora, a collective organization, which publishes a feminist organization in Halifax. She found that most of the women did not see their groups as political when they first joined. Consequently, when questioned about their perceptions of politics, many of these individuals had varying perceptions of what being political entailed, which were inclusive of governments and political parties, the powerful elite, and women working together to change society (Christiansen-Ruffman, 1995).

There was a lot of variation between the methods and organizational structure of these groups, as they relied on tactics that would best help them fulfill their diverse goals. Methods used by these organizations included public demonstrations, rallies, marches, and organizing conferences and workshops. The structure of these groups also varied. Organizationally the groups ranged from more fluid power divisions and consensus decision-making, to more formal democratic structures with elected executive committees. Christiansen-Ruffman (1995) avoided deeming any one approach more activist or more political. Rather, she embraced that "...all three are political because they are working toward what they consider important in community life" (p. 380). Additionally, she also acknowledges the significance of women's activism, stating that: "...women's groups enable analysis to emerge from action, expand political horizons, redefine and challenge structures of oppression, and empower women to create a better, more just world for everyone" (p. 391).

As was illustrated by Christiansen-Ruffman (1995), women's activist groups have used various organizational approaches. Many feminist organizations have drawn from non-hierarchical power systems, in resistance to those found in other more traditional

groups (Ferree & Martin, 1995). To organize collectively and share power, as well as the use of consensus decision making are key aspects, which have been drawn from by feminist organizations and groups.

For example, Uppal and English (2005) discuss the use of collective organizing between students and faculty at Queen's College campus of the City University of New York. They explored the process of collaborating to organize an interdisciplinary conference entitled 'Teach Feminist' and working to draw notice to and strengthen their women's studies program. Discussed are the tensions of working within an academic institution which is hierarchically organized, while attempting to work as a collective. Uppal and English found that they were so focused on the final product (the conference), that they often forgot about reflecting on the process of developing community through organizing (2005). As such, their analysis of this process did not occur until after the conference. This article points to the efforts of feminist to use a collective approach to organizing and the difficulty of using this method within a hierarchically organized context.

Other research on feminist organizing has drawn from the concept of pre-figurative politics to explain the structure of these groups (Buechler, 2000). This concept assumes that the way in which a group is organized is a reflection of their politics (Arnold, 1995; Breines, 1989).

In conclusion, research on feminist activism and organizing is multi-faceted and reveals the diversity of techniques that are used to further feminist goals. Third wave feminist activist techniques mentioned in the literature included culture jamming, writing

and distributing zines, DIY projects, postering and reclaiming/reappropriating spaces and labels.

H. Feminism and Educational Change

Feminist goals and struggles for educational change have continually developed throughout the three waves of the women's movement. These efforts have included: striving for equal access to educational institutions (Butler, 1968; Wollstonecraft, 1787); considerations and critiques of how these institutions have treated girls and women different than boys and men (Frazier & Sadker, 1973, Sadker & Sadker, 1994); and the creation of curricula which reflects and reflects upon women's gendered experiences (Bowles & Klein, 1983).

These struggles have inspired and initiated tremendous shifts in educational systems. Specifically, from a Canadian context, women have gained access to educational institutions, once dominated by men. Moreover, women have not only entered these institutions, but have often become the greater part of student bodies. As such at the post-secondary level, "...in 2005, the Canadian average female/male ratio on many campuses was 60 per cent to 40 per cent" (Teitel, 2006, p. 81).

Drawing from an example close to home, the University of Windsor (originally Assumption) was designed and initially used as an educational facility for boys. As of 1950, due to a connection with Holy Names College, it allowed women to enroll, thus creating a co-ed campus (MacEachern, 2007). Although statistics are not yet published about the recent gender makeup of the University of Windsor, Statistics Canada research reveals this ratio nation wide. Tibbetts (2007) in the *Windsor Star*, cited this Statistics Canada research on the 2004-2005 school year. She noted that during this period, female

students comprised 58 percent of university students. This marked a large shift from the 1971 census, in which women accounted for only 32 percent of university graduates, aged 25 to 29. Tibbetts (2007) also draws from data collected by Statistics Canada to highlight how this trend begins long before children are university aged, as by age 15 girls are outperforming boys. As well, it is shown that educational expectations are now higher for girls than boys.

As well, feminists' efforts for the creation of new curricula, which represents women's lives have been successful in academic settings. In the 1970's, feminists began to ask epistemic questions about what type of knowledge was being disseminated at educational institutions (Boxer, 1982; Case, 2001). Inspired by consciousness-raising and activist groups searching for curricula, which better represented women, the field of women's studies was created (Bird, 2002; Bird, 2004).

Case (2001) explored how women's/feminist studies in post-secondary institutions emerged from activist challenges to education and knowledge. This research explored how from activism came social change. Women's studies brought women to the centre, as a social group worthy of in-depth study, thus shifting epistemic conceptions about what is valuable knowledge (Case, 2001).

As well, Bird's (2004) exploration of the introduction of women's studies in the academy, in North America and the United Kingdom, added to knowledge in this area. More than sixty women from these geographical regions were interviewed. All were involved in the introduction and/or the early teaching of this discipline in post-secondary institutions. By analyzing both influential feminist texts and interview data, Bird (2004) expressed the sentiments and struggles of women working to integrate women's studies

courses into the academy. She considered how the feminist activist separatist roots of the program interacted with the expectations of these institutions. She highlighted several debates which occurred during this period, which included: struggles with academics and administration; whether men should be allowed to attend women's studies classes; whether men should teach women's studies; the role of patriarchy in the university; and the concept of academic freedom. Bird concluded that men in the academy acted as both supportive allies and "enemies" to the development of women's studies courses. While there were attempts to keep men out of women's studies, as both students and teachers, these were largely unsuccessful in the long run, due to values of academic freedom, openness and access (Bird, 2004).

Although efforts to ameliorate educational systems and curricula by feminists have been regarded in current literature, often the focus has been on activity in post-secondary institutions. Recently the naming and construction of women's studies has been considered.

There has been a wide trend in academia to broaden the scope of analysis from women to gender (Bird, 2004). Bird (2004) noted that this area of inquiry added to women's studies by embracing the study of men and masculinities, while also considering various gendered identities.

Within academic literature there have been questions posed about the use of the term women's studies and/or gender studies to name this discipline. Some have argued that women's studies, although representing the experiences and voices of women, fails to question the construction of this categorization (Bridger, 2004). Gender studies, it has been argued (Bridger, 2004; Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004), offers a more inclusive field of

study, which deconstructs gender as a social category. As well, many women's studies courses and programs have added the title gender, and/or transformed their programs into gender studies (Bird, 2004). Overall, there remains some apprehension over how this shift has been manifested. Gardiner (2003) noted on this issue: "As women's studies has become institutionalized, it has often morphed into gender studies, an exciting, sometimes uneasy mix" (p. 413). Others have stated more boldly, that gender studies is a threat to women's studies and thus to academic feminism. Kane (2001) argued that "by embracing gender, academia is poised to weaken or annihilate already struggling women's studies programs throughout the country." Thus the debate over the labeling of gender deconstruction in a classroom women's studies and/or gender studies has continued to be an issue within the last decade.

Unfortunately, this discipline still remains on the periphery of many universities. Many women's studies programs have failed to attain departmental status. Scholars in this area have shown how women's studies programs are often marginalized and under resourced (Uppal & English, 2005).

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter will provide an overview of how this study was designed and conducted. Specifically, attention will be drawn to the participants, instrumentation, design and procedures, data collection and analysis of the data.

A. Participants

To select participants for this research, purposive sampling was accessed. By using this sampling method, I was able to select a group of participants who fit specific

characteristics, which were pertinent to the analysis of my research questions. I used my knowledge about the Miss G_ Project to select participants who were active within this organization. As such, I was careful to select only participants who were members of the steering committee, from the core group of women who sustain the work of this organization.

Although Berg (2004) notes that this sampling method lacks wide generalizability, this was not a goal of my research. Rather, I was trying to acknowledge the distinct voices of these feminist activists. As well, as I was drawing from a very narrow population, purposive sampling was most fitting. The choice to use purposive sampling also fit into my positioning of this research project as constructivist, while also drawing from elements of critical theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998c; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1998; Schwandt, 1998). As Glaser and Strauss (1967) have stated, many researchers who draw from these traditions (as well as postpositivism), access this mode of sampling. Such researchers, "...seek out groups, settings and individuals where (and for whom) the processes being studied are most likely to occur" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998b, p. xiv). My choice to use this sampling method was also guided by my own conceptions about research, which have been influenced by feminist, constructivist and critical theory.

My previous knowledge of this organization had, on various occasions, put me in contact with one of the founders of the project. Thus, I had some idea about who my participant pool may consist of through my discussions with this individual. As well, I am also part of a mass e-mail list, which those interested in and involved in the project receive. Through this e-mail list, I received a list of several members of the project,

holding various positions and responsibilities, in this organization. I decided that I wanted to converse with those who were involved with the Miss G_ project from its inception. Thus, from these two sources, I was able to ascertain a list of the individuals who I wanted to interview, as well as their contact information.

Accordingly, the participant pool which I was drawing from was young women, involved with the workings of the Miss G_ Project, from the earliest days of its development. Specifically, the participants in my study were all involved in the inception and continuation of the project. They all contributed to developing this organization and thus have experienced working together, creating a feminist group. As well, each of my participants has continued active participation in the activist pursuits of this organization.

To be specific, there were four participants involved in this study. Demographically they were all young Canadian women, in their early to mid 20s. They were all also university educated, as they all attended the same Ontario university together, during their undergraduate studies.

B. Instrumentation

The interviews carried out during this research were semi-structured (Berg, 2004). As such, an external instrument was used as a guide to foster discussions, rather than as hard and fast lists of questions to ask. Semi-structured interviews allowed me the flexibility to both create a list of questions (an interview guide) and also expand from these, depending on the flow of conversation. Further, interviews also allowed me the opportunity to ask connecting questions so that participants could clarify answers, when they thought appropriate. They were also able to ask me questions throughout the interviews, thus creating more of a dialogue between us.

Consequently, the questions I included, in the interview guide (see Appendix C), included a variety of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. For the most part, I wanted my questions to be open to various interpretations, so participants would have the opportunity to discuss ideas that were of significance of them. Although I had pondered the use of unstructured interviews (Berg, 2004), I believed that this may not have allowed me the ability to direct the conversation toward my research concentrations. Thus, I felt it essential to create an interview guide, as I assumed that it would help maintain a focus on some of the prominent ideas I was studying. As such, inquires outlined in the interview guide stemmed from my broader, aforementioned, primary research questions.

The interview guide included questions, pertaining to how participants felt about their work within the Miss G_ Project, and their feelings about activism, feminism, gender and education. Questions were asked relating to their experiences and struggles working together, striving for social change.

C. Design and Procedures

In this project, I drew from a feminist tradition of qualitative research to define my research (Code, 1995; Olesen, 1998). This choice was made to both genuinely connect to my own beliefs, as well as to embrace the perspective of the organization, which I studied. Guided by this philosophy, I designed this study as to integrate a reflexive critical feminist approach to research (Olesen, 1998). As feminisms are varied and complex, I make no effort to claim that this is the model of feminist research, or that it integrates all elements of feminist approaches to research. Rather, this study is one example of how feminist research may organize and present itself.

I relied on a qualitative approach to research for this study. I felt that quantitative methods would not aptly address the questions and issues I was considering. Due to my focus on understanding participants' feelings and perceptions, I felt that qualitative techniques would more aptly allow me to do this. As qualitative researchers, "...seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998a, p. 8), I thought it apt to use this methodology.

Data Collection

The strategy of inquiry used for this study was the interview. Interviews allowed me a method for collecting empirical data, which would connect me directly with the research participants.

I selected individual face-to-face interviews as my primary means of collecting data for this study. I selected this method as I thought that individual face to face interviews would foster a more comfortable space for communication than other models of research would. Some individuals may be more at ease speaking with an individual rather than within a group setting. One-on-one interviews may also reduce the amount of information that participants may censor or leave out in the context of a focus group. Interviews may be rawer and less thought out and polished – thus more genuine, than focus group or surveys. Hence, guided by the assumption that individual interviews would create a more comfortable space to engage in dialogue and ask personal questions, this method was selected.

In addition, interviews also allowed me the opportunity to ask connecting questions so that participants could clarify answers when they thought it appropriate. As

well, as a result of participants' asking me questions during the research process, more of a dialogue was created between us. This choice was guided by my feminist-informed consciousness. I wanted to avoid, as much as possible, the objectification of my participants that I see as perpetuated through a traditional positivist approach to research. I hoped that the dialogue between us would help to blur the boundaries between researcher and participant. To clarify, I hoped that by making this methodological choice, the power difference and hierarchical relationship between researcher and researched would be minimized.

A secondary source used was an intense literature review, which provided the background and basis for this type of research. This research helped me to frame my research questions and design a research process which was most conducive to my area of study. As well, the information which I gathered about social movements and education aided in my increased understanding of this topic and the organization which I was exploring.

Finally, I included my own reflections about this research, the questions and process, as a source of data. These reflections were included as an effort to break down the traditional hierarchy between researcher and researched (participant). This last source was inspired by Kirby and McKenna's (1989) conception of conceptual baggage, which immediately relates the researcher to the questions and focus of the research. "The researcher becomes another subject in the research process and is left vulnerable in a way that changes the traditional power dynamics / hierarchy that has existed between the researcher and those who are researcher" (Kirby and McKenna, 1989, p. 32).

This small adjustment to a traditional qualitative approach was guided by my personal feminist philosophy. I felt that by acting as both researcher and participant, I could transform the way in which these roles were perceived. I wanted to make myself vulnerable in the research process and minimize the power difference between researcher and researched.

As well, I felt that by taking an intersubjective approach, my research would present a more genuine view into how my perspective interacted with the research and the questions dealt with. I purposefully wanted to avoid feigning any illusions of objectivity, but rather make my own subjective responses to the research and the data as overt as possible.

To summarize, during the interview process, the fluidity of discussion was aided by encouraging participants to ask their own questions, elaborate and challenge my own questions and responses. This was done to ideally attain a truly collaborative research process, staying within the goals of a feminist research methodology, and to break down the traditional hierarchy between researcher and researched. I incorporated my own conceptual baggage within this research, as well, thus acting as both researcher and participant and blurring the lines between the traditional conceptions of these roles. Kirby and McKenna's (1989) book, *Experience, Research, Social Change: Methods from the Margins*, was fundamental in the conceptualization of the research methodology for this project. Thus my desire to attain a more collaborative research approach than has been traditionally manifested was derived from their work. "The more interactive the various steps in the research process are, the better the research will be" (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 76).

D. Data Analysis

Data was analyzed in this project by drawing from both Glaser and Strauss' (1967) conceptions of grounded theory (a form of content analysis) and the constant comparative method.

Grounded theory, an interpretive approach to data analysis (Strauss, 1987; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Berg, 2004), was drawn from to help guide my actions. In fitting with this approach, interviews were transcribed for analysis. As well, data was organized, "...in order to uncover patterns of human activity, action, and meaning" (Berg, 2004, p. 266).

The first step in data analysis involved the transcription of audio tapes from the interviews. This process resulted in the creation of hard copies of research data, which could be used for later study.

Once data was transcribed, it was essential to develop a well organized filing system (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Thus, to help keep track of where data originated as it was filed, I created a coding system for the interview transcriptions. Each participant was coded with a randomly selected letter. Accordingly, a separate file was kept, which contained a chart, indicating each participants' name and the corresponding code letter, which was associated with them. This key to the name codes was kept apart from transcriptions and data analysis files.

Further, when data was transcribed, each page and line was numbered. This created a system, wherein when data was referenced in data analysis files, it was easy for me to identify from whose transcription and upon what page(s) and line(s) the selected data abided.

For example, the code Xp.8,27 would indicate that the data referenced would be located on line 27 or page 8 of participant X's transcription. To determine the identity of participant X, I would have to enter the file holding the key to the coded names.

Once the transcriptions were coded and complete, I was able to use this coding system in the organization of the data. Lofland and Lofland (1984) have noted the essentiality of creating a filing system when analyzing data. As such, I was encouraged to further develop my system of filing. Thus, I used index sheets, as was suggested by Berg (2004) to categorize my data, using the aforementioned coding system, into themes and sub-themes.

In an effort to draw from elements of the methodological procedures ascribed by grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I read and re-read the transcriptions to find patterns within the data; rather than from a preconceived list of themes and sub-themes, which data could be slotted into. This was done with the intent of getting, "...more of a code-in-use flavor than the generic code-for-many-uses generated by prefabricated start lists" (Strauss, 1987, p. 55). This inductive approach allowed me to immerse myself in the data to recognize patterns and themes (Abrahamson, 1983).

Pattern recognition was somewhat contextual. By this, I mean that being that the number of participants was so small, my standards for pattern recognition needed to shift. It has been noted that "a common rule of thumb is that a minimum of three occurrences of something can be considered a pattern" (Berg, 2004, p. 287). Although this evaluation may be apt in research that draws from large sample sizes, I found it difficult to apply to my own research. As such, if more than one person noted a similar idea, I usually filed these ideas together. My personal analysis was that these were commonalities or patterns

in my data. While not every pattern conformed to the three and up rule, they were certainly similarities worth noting.

As such, several patterns, commonalities and non-commonalities began to arise as I further explored the data. These included references to experiences and events, expressions of emotions, beliefs in similar and dissimilar values, and conceptions about identity, feminism, activism and the Miss G_ Project.

I considered how participants interpreted their work in the Miss G_ Project and within the feminist movement. I also looked at aspects of identity and how their personal identities and the identity of the group had been informed by their activism.

Once data analysis was complete, I began the process of writing about the key themes, commonalities and non-commonalities in the data. I used pseudonyms for each participant to maintain their anonymity. The charts which indicate names, pseudonyms and codes were stored in a locked filing cabinet.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

A. Findings

This section will explore various themes which arose during the analysis of the data from this study. Several themes were highlighted during analysis, which were related to the primary research questions. I found several of these findings surprising and interesting. They included: identity; the third wave; emotional responses – anger and love; feminist community, friendship and sisterhood; collective/feminist power sharing; online communication; the two pronged approach; constructive feedback – from WS to WGS; negative feedback – antifeminists and second wavers; challenging current

conceptions of secondary education; challenges to implementing WGS into the high school curriculum; and possibilities for implementing WGS into the high school curriculum.

Identity

Identity was a key concept, which was highlighted in the primary research questions and interview guide (see Appendix C). Specifically this theme relates to the first primary research questions in this study, which were discussed earlier in Research Questions and Hypotheses. These questions (1a. How do participants identify and describe themselves within the feminist movement?, and 1b. What lived experiences have shaped their identity and participation?) were key inquiries in this study.

As such, these topics were discussed in depth during the interviews. Some participants responded with questions about what is implied by this term. In this study, I used the term identity in a fluid manner, which was not exclusively reliant on labeling, but rather a sense of ones self, however participants chose to interpret or define that. This is consistent with third wave feminist theory, which has embraced multiple flexible identities (Schriefer, n.d.; Walker, 1995). For example Walker's (1995) anthology, *to be real: Telling the truth and changing the face of feminism* demonstrated the ambiguities in identities and the possibilities to self-define and manage contradictory identities.

As well, my own thinking about identity has been influenced by feminists who used postmodernism and poststructuralism as lenses with which to view identity politics (Butler, 1990; Mouffe, 1992). This is linked to my own educational background, which draws extensively from studies of feminist theories, with my undergraduate work being in women's studies. As well, during my graduate studies, I have focused my papers and

research on feminist and gender issues in education. During this schooling I became inspired by feminists who analyze using postmodernism and poststructuralism. I began to deconstruct my own perceptions of objectivity and found value in the notion of subjectivity as a framework for understanding society. I believe that identities are socially constructed, impacted by ideologies, social interactions and institutions. Thus, I can see my own identity and the multi-faceted parts of it as socially constructed.

Multiple dimensions of identity were considered during interviews. These included: political affiliations, gender, class, race, ethnicity and sexuality. Politically, the four women all identified as feminist, using that label without hesitation. One participant, in particular, Nancy S. acknowledged that she had held this identity, even as a child. She noted that pop culture, which had feminist elements in it, drove her to feminism. The following quote is from Nancy (all participants' names are pseudonyms):

I identified as feminist really early on I think – when I was a kid for sure I think we just read a lot in my family, I read a lot – I used to watch Ann of Green Gables, and other stuff, these movies that are really popular, but also have really subversive feminist elements to them, which for some reason I think me and my sister were able to see or at least feel almost and that was driving us towards feminism and sort of feminist politics, in a lot of ways – even when we were younger, which I find interesting.

This account corresponds with literature from the third wave. Other feminists have similarly acknowledged that they were drawn to feminism initially as a children and adolescents, through exposure to subversive pop culture. This is exemplified by the work of Aikau, Erickson and Moore (2003), three third wave feminists, who highlighted their journeys with feminism. In their article, one of the personal narratives included seems to somewhat mirror Nancy's sentiments. Erickson reveals that similarly, cultural influences ranging from Sesame Street to AniDifranco and the Sarah McLachlan introduced her to

feminist ideas. Erickson frames this as a generational experience, derived from the popular culture in the 1970s through the 1990s. She posits that “popular culture, as such, is part of what laid the groundwork for my early excursions into feminist inquiries,” (Aikau, Erickson & Moore, 2003, p. 407).

Similarly, Karlyn (2003) argued that it is essential for academic feminists to consider the importance of popular culture for young women in the third wave. She notes that although popular culture has often been critiqued and dismissed by the academy, it is essential to consider its importance to young women. She notes its relevance to the feminist movement by deconstructing the roles of women in popular media.

Conversely, other participants noted that their feminist consciousness was raised through their experiences in university. These experiences were noted to be through classes, as well as their interactions and friendships with each other. Helen describes her experience of coming to feminism and identifying as feminist:

My third year at university is when I became at all familiar with feminism and women’s studies. So then that was through Nancy ... so not really turned onto feminism at all until Nancy lured me and then at that point just you know kind of catching fire in that way, being really awakened. And all the time that I have my radar out, noticing this is fucked up about the world, this is fucked up about the world, this too and then finally getting to this point where I was like Oh wait, these are gender things and feminism really explains this.

The experience of going to university was noted by all participants, as having an impact on their feminist activism. Nancy noted that:

I think that the university part was really important for us, because the sort of activism that we do, I like to call it theorivism, where its theory meeting activism, or praxis is another word. But I think that our activism as a group, but also individually is very much informed by our interest in feminist theory, in literature, in sort of the academic aspect to that too – and I think that being at university, at the university we were at, really kickstarted that.

The experience of going to university seems to have had a major impact, not only on the identities of the individuals, but also on the construction of the group and their activism. This theme aligns with research on university and experiences of feminism. For example, Barata, et al.'s (2005) research on women in graduate school who identified as feminist found that participants all recognized that university had influenced their feminist identification.

Another interesting point was made by Carolyn, who explained the impact her involvement with the Miss G_ project had on her identity:

It's definitely solidified my identity. I mean I definitely identified as a feminist before the project. But within the past two and half years feminism has definitely been a big part of my life, in a much larger way – so it definitely made my identification as a feminist a much more up front part of my identity.

Clearly, involvement with activism had an impact on Carolyn's feminist identification.

This finding is consistent with what other researchers and activists have reported about the effects of their activist experiences (Ferree & Martin, 1995; Remington, 1990; Remington, 1991). For example, Remington's (1991) analysis of women's organizations in the twin cities found that the women active in these groups described being transformed by their work. Ferree and Martin (1995) stated, in their work on feminist organizations, that "organizational experiences can shape world views, politics and a sense of self in relation to society, as many women can attest" (1995, p. 6).

Thus, with respect to political affiliations, all participants self-identified as feminists. They variously chose to highlight how other aspects of their identity, experiences of sexism and prejudice, and exposure to feminism impacted this identification. This finding parallels quantitative research in the area of feminism and identity.

For example, Liss, Crawford, and Popp's (2004) study discussed how feminist identity/feminist self-labeling was linked to previous experiences and subsequently with collective action. The participant pool was comprised of 215 female undergraduate students in an Introductory Psychology class at a northeastern American university, who were mostly white and middle to upper-middle class. Questionnaires, of a quantitative nature, were used to determine students' opinions about women's issues. Research, "...showed that life experience variables, including having a mother who was a feminist, having experienced discrimination, and having taken a class that focused on women's issues were correlated with feminist collective action," (Liss et al, 2004, p. 777).

Thus, Liss et al's (2004) correlational findings point to the connection between exposure to feminism and/or discrimination and having a being a part of feminist activism.

This study's (Liss et al, 2004) results in regards to exposure to feminism and/or discrimination being linked to feminist activism are consistent with the experiences expressed by one participant. Helen explained her high school experiences of viewing discrimination in regard to her feminist identity.

it wasn't until high school where I, I had like a very bad high school experience and especially with like girl on girl bullying and harassment by teachers, sexual harassment by teachers, there was a lot of that at my school – but I didn't know, that's why we started the project, because looking back I didn't know that there were a set up politics and ideas for which to deal with these issues

Helen, a self-proclaimed young feminist activist recognized her exposure to discrimination in high school. She noted how at that time she did not have the feminist knowledge and tools to handle these situations. She also acknowledged that this was part of what inspired the creation of the project. Women's and gender studies, she expressed,

provided the tools to deal with these injustices. Thus her position as a feminist activist was linked to her experiences with discrimination.

Other quantitative research has also echoed these findings. For example, Zucker's (2004) exploration of how women interacted with the term feminist and its values, discussed why women chose to accept and/or reject the label 'feminist'. Participants included 272 alumnae of the University of Michigan who graduated in 1952, 1972 and 1992. They were educated, primarily white and heterosexual. Questionnaires that were analyzed quantitatively were used to measure both acceptance of feminist beliefs and acceptance of the label feminist.

Zucker (2004) found that alumni from the 1992 graduating class were most likely to identify as feminists. It was also surmised that positive predictors of feminist activism were: identifying as a feminist, having a feminist in one's family and experiencing suffering. Thus, Zucker concludes that, "...being exposed to feminism in a variety of ways is related to feminist identity" (2004, p. 431-432). Thus both Liss et al (2004) and Zucker's (2004) quantitative explorations of feminist identity are consistent with the findings in this study.

Other interlocking aspects of participants' identities were explored as well, both formally through the interview questions, as well as through connecting questions and reflections by participants during our dialogues. Issues of class, sexuality and ethnicity were discussed as impacting identities and activism. These will be further considered here.

Participants described how their middle class position in society has impacted their activism. Many recognized how their class allowed them to spend time on activism

during university without worrying about paying tuition, rent or buying food. Nancy explained:

And I think that it's also important to, just in general to talk about the project's identity as a middle-class ... project identity - as well as the members of the project have tended to be middle class. Cause at first, at the beginning because we didn't have to work to get by, we were able to, the first summer especially, really establish the project – I just wanted to put that out there the identity that sort of follows the project or informs what the project does, or doesn't – but it's something we're aware of and that we are sort of trying to be more aware of...

Helen as well identified class as influencing her ability to participate in activism:

I'm able to go to university, I'm able to do extracurricular things, to take time to do little unpaid things and things that are interesting to me and I don't have to work to survive, take care of a family, you know what I mean, those are things that would prevent me from participating in activism, even if I really wanted to, that would make it difficult. So [I] understand that even that we're able to participate is totally informed by our class.

Most participants recognized how their being middle class had privileged them with the time, money and resources to think about social change and participate in activism. In doing so, participants recognized that the ability to participate in activism is a privilege.

Lister (1997) and Scott (2001) have noted, to be a socially and politically active citizen necessitates that one to have the social and material means to do so. "It requires time, space, money and sociocultural and material resources, and relative bodily safety" (Scott, 2001, p. 410).

Race and ethnicity were also points of importance in some of the interviews. Interestingly participants who were not white identified their own ethnicity as a component of their identities. White participants made no mention of their own ethnicity. Being that being white is a privileged identity in North American society, and that this privilege is often invisible to those who embody it, this finding does not appear unusual

(Lloyd, 2004; McIntosh, 1999). Lloyd (2004) argued that whiteness allows people the privilege to not think about race (p. 2). In this logic then, those whose ethnicity is not privileged may be more likely to be aware of it. Similarly, those whose gender, sexuality, abilities are not privileged may be more aware of these aspects of themselves.

As well, half of participants mentioned their sexuality as being a factor in their identity and activism. These participants identified as queer, a marginalized sexual identity, as such it follows that in this un-privileged position, they were aware of this element of themselves as affecting their feminism and activism. Carolyn mentioned:

I do describe myself as a feminist. I'm also queer – so that affects my activism in some ways. But, I think in a lot of ways, the other way around. You know, my activism affects who I am and how I think about myself.

This aspect of identity was discussed by queer participants as impacting their identities as feminists and activists. While this aspect of identity is fundamental, unlike race or sex, it can be concealed. A queer identity is not visually evident, the way that race, sex and often ability are. However, the manner in which this aspect of ones identity can be hidden was not explored in depth by participants. Thus, this is an area of inquiry that could be further explored with future research regarding the identities of young queer feminist activists in Canada.

However, it was clear that participants were aware of the body of knowledge, which insists that women recognize both their oppression and privilege – how we are both oppressed and oppressors. Pinterics (2001) stated, about this issue:

[An] important aspect of third wave feminist theorizing involves pushing the boundaries and limitations of gender definition, sexuality definition, race and class definitions. In pushing these boundaries, it is essential not only to explore

the various ways in which we are oppressed by some of these identities, but also the ways we are privileged by them.

Peggy McIntosh's famous work, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (1999) provides an apt illustration of this idea. She 'unpacks' how her race privileges her by listing the experiences that are made easier and the concerns she need not have due to her white skin. The concept of invisibility is used to demonstrate how privilege can often not be apparent to those who embody it. As well, through her recognition of how this privilege impacts her life, she is acknowledging this privilege and thus the oppression of those who do not hold this attribute. Thus, following Pinteric's (2001) reasoning, which embraces the idea that third wave feminist theorizing involves the analysis of individuals as both oppressed and privileged by multiple aspects of identity, McIntosh's (1999) work can be considered an example of third wave feminist theorizing.

Harriet acknowledged, in her discussion of identity that "if you do feminism right it's hard because you have to confront your own racism and it's personal to see oh, I'm a part of the system," Although Harriet did not apply the label third wave to herself, her conceptions about interlocking identities, oppression and privilege reflected conceptions of identity from third wavers.

Participants' responses revealed both how they identify and describe themselves within the feminist movement (question 1a) and what lived experiences shaped their identity and participation in feminist activism (question 1b). It was found, regarding question 1a, that participants all self-identified as feminists. As well, some participants

chose to highlight other aspects of their identities, such as their race, ethnicity, class and sexuality.

Additionally, it was found (regarding question 1b), that various lived experiences, such as childhood exposure to feminism through the media and pop culture, family experiences, and university experiences had influenced the shaping of their feminist identification.

The Third Wave

An additional aspect of identity, with regards to its relation to the feminist movement, the Miss G_Project specifically and participants individually, which was considered, was the notion of the third wave. Although this was not a part of the interview guide, it was discussed in each interview because the previous title of my work had been: *Feminist Activism, Education and Social Change: Third Wave Feminist Perspectives*.

This theme also contributed to further developing knowledge about the first research question, which addressed how participants identify themselves within the feminist movement (see Appendix C).

When I asked participants how they felt about the idea of the third wave and whether they would identify as such, there were varied responses to this question. One participant (Carolyn) adamantly stated that both she and the Miss G_Project would identify as third wave. She also noted how this group purposefully uses third wave tactics:

I would definitely much more strongly identify as third wave and I think our organization across the board identifies in that way. I mean we also draw on third wave tactics and that sort of thing, like culture jamming and stuff. We've quite consciously used the third wave network – so pretty consciously a third wave

organization ... I think I would pretty comfortably identify myself as a third wave feminist...

However, other participants were less sure of the use of this term, associating it with the feminist movement in the early to mid 1990s. For example, Nancy expressed that, "I feel like third wave to me really represents the early 90s in my head, it's like the early 90s riot grrrl thing and stuff."

Finally, there was one participant, Harriet, who felt that she would not take on the label third wave. Although she had previously identified this way, she felt that now the label did not represent her and her feminism. Harriet expressed that her disenchantment with the third wave was somewhat because of its malleability:

The rhetoric of the third wave can be lost on everyone - it's about contradiction. I think it just made it too easy for people who weren't really identifying themselves - so I wouldn't consider myself third wave

Thus, the first research question (How do participants identify and describe themselves within the feminist movement?) was considered during conversations about identity, as well as those pertaining to the third wave. It was found, relating to question 1a, that while one participant took on the identity 'third wave' wholly, the other participants embraced, questioned and rejected it to various degrees. Although the 'third wave' identity was not embraced fully by all participants, many recognized how the work of the Miss G_Project used third wave tactics.

I was surprised by these responses by participants. Their responses revealed to me my own assumption that these women would all identify as third wave. I was not cognizant of this assumption in my conceptualization of this project. It only became

apparent to me when I realized that their identities contradicted my assumptions about how they would identify themselves (as third wave).

As such, due to these responses by participants, I felt inclined to avoid labeling them as third wave, but rather as young women working within the third wave of the movement. As such, the title was changed to: Feminist Activism, Education and Social Change: Young Feminists' Perspectives in the Third Wave. This change was made to both reflect the mixed reactions by participants to the label 'third wave', as well as to be considerate of participants' affirmations that this was a young feminist organization.

Curricular Change and Motivation

Envisioning the potential for curricular change was noted by each participant as a primary motivation for their activism. They expressed that understanding the possible impact that a women's and gender studies course could have on students and on society in general encouraged them to strive for social change through the Miss G_Project.

Carloyn expressed her notions about women's studies in high schools as such:

When you take women's studies, you have that moment when it's just like- yes! ... can you imagine if we had this information when we were in high school ... you get this information in first year university or whenever you end up taking women's studies and you feel so empowered – it's a cliché, but it's true, you feel empowered by it and so ... imagine if you could give like a 15 year old girl this information and a 15 year old boy too...

This vision was linked to their perceptions of women's and gender studies as a discipline and its value. Participants all expressed the gap that women's and gender studies fills in the current curriculum. Nancy expressed that she saw women's and gender studies as, "... this really exciting, enriching course, or area of study out there that really spoke to personal experiences and just spoke about real things, all of [this] stuff [which] just does not touch on in high school."

They felt that the knowledge and inquiry that is evoked from women's and gender studies were essential to a current Secondary school curriculum, which lacks these epistemic explorations. Harriet noted that she felt that it was essential to integrate women's and gender studies into the high school curriculum to integrate analyses of gender. This vision of the possibilities of having this course in the curriculum was part of what motivated participants to engage in feminist activism in the Miss G_Project.

Much research on women's social and political activism, although exploring various motivations for activism, such as group consciousness (Duncan, 1999) and anger (Taylor, 1995), has not recognized how envisioning the impact of activism can be a motivator for this activity.

However, Faver (2001) made an effort to explore women's motivation for social justice activism, which somewhat recognized the role of envisioning met goals as a motivational factor. Fifty women, who were working for social justice professionally, or as volunteers, were interviewed (Faver, 2001). These women were also all involved with a liberal Protestant denomination. Participants revealed three key motivations for their activism: "(a) to ensure the rights of individuals and groups, (b) to fulfill responsibilities, and (c) to restore relationships and build community," (Faver, 2001, p. 322). The last motivation factor, restoring relationships and building community, is somewhat similar to envisioning social change. Participants in Faver's (2001) study expressed their hopes for the change that their social justice efforts may spark, through creating connections and developing a sense of community. This work brings light to the role that imagining change may have had on their motivation to engage in activism.

Thus, Faver's (2001) the last finding (c), which notes that women activists were motivated by restoring relationships and building community relates to envisioning social change. Participants' vision of social change motivated their activism.

Similarly in this study, participants discussed how their vision of social change motivated their activism. Specifically, imagining the implementation of women's and gender studies courses in Ontario Secondary schools was mentioned as a key motivator by some participants

Emotional Responses – Anger and Love

Emotion was a key theme in this research. Participants expressions of emotion ranged from angry 'fuck you's' to terms of endearment. Anger specifically was noted as a motivation by most participants. Consider Nancy's response to a question about her motivation to work as a feminist activist:

Whenever I hear about some sort of like the range of oppressions that people face and I feel like I'm very sensitive to those things ... I think anger is something that really drives me. I like to call it righteous rage, actually Ani Difrango likes to call it righteous rage. But anger and the fact that there are things that we could be doing about these things...we need a paradigm shift... so, the rage, the injustices I see every day and having that analysis that lets me see that it's tied very directly to the work I do or to the type of changes I want to see happen.

Helen echoed this response, stating that part of her motivation is derived from "the rage and anger over all the stuff that's preventable and that we're trying to change".

Participants consistently noted that anger over injustices was a key motivational factor to their feminist activism.

Both women's organizations and subsequent research have demonstrated that moving women past passivity and into an acknowledgement of anger is key to the

success of a feminist social movement (Holmes, 2004; Pam, 1972 ; Trish, 1981). Yet, women's anger contradicts their traditional feminine socialization into passivity and acceptance (Brown, 1998; Holmes, 2004; Thomas, 1993). This step out of feminine passivity and into anger is what sparked participants to identify with feminism and engage in feminist activism. This emotion can be productive, as it was stated as a motivational factor by most participants. In this manner, anger can be channeled strategically to further a social movement, as it has with the Miss G_ Project. "Anger can call attention to a group's demand for respect and recognition, but also highlight inequalities more generally," (Holmes, 2004, p. 222).

Yet, anger has often been used to characterize women as irrational and void of intellect. This emotional response has been considered less acceptable for women than men (Taylor, 1995). As well, anger, although it can be productive at inspiring work and activism has been used to frame women as unfeminine. This emotion contradicts the feminine socialization into prudence, passivity and silence.

Being that these individuals are marginalized, as women and often multiply marginalized through ethnicity and/or sexuality, it makes sense that they expressed feelings of anger. This finding is consistent with research on anger and oppression. Holmes (2004) acknowledged that "for marginalized groups, anger has often been essential in trying to constructively address lack of respect for them as human beings, as well as a response to social inequalities affecting them (p. 221).

The direction to which this anger was channeled was similar across participants' responses. They acknowledged anger at the prejudices and social injustices that have

occurred in high schools and thus motivation to transform these injustices through feminist education. Thus, the women in this study discussed their anger towards oppression and injustices, rather than towards one another.

Conversely, the expressions of emotion towards others within the group were overwhelming filled with terms such as care, support and love. Nancy S. noted, “I think we’re all very caring of each other too because we’re friends and sisters in a lot of ways”. Many social movement theorists have noted that within feminist movements both anger and love typify women’s interactions (Freeman, 1974; Rupp, 1980; Taylor & Rupp, 1993; Taylor, 1995). Thus, this juxtaposition of both anger and love, expressed during the interviews was consistent with the literature on emotion and feminist organizations.

Feminist Community, Friendship and Sisterhood

As I began to consider emotion, I questioned the role that care played in their activism. What did the expressions of care, support and community, which were acknowledged by participants, mean to the activism of their organization? All participants expressed that the close friendships amongst the members of the steering committee were key to the continuance of the group and their commitment to activism.

This sense of community guided their actions. Helen clarifies:

We’ve all benefited from having this amazing feminist community and that’s really where the project is. I think a lot of other organizations, activist organizations, are an organization first and then maybe their lucky enough to develop some community after that. But we really are a community first and then our activism is really motivated by that sense of community we have, the feminist community we have

Nancy as well noted that part of her motivation is drawn from “the sisterhood, the community, it keeps me going”.

Both Helen and Nancy's expressions about community are consistent with previous research, which has noted the fundamental role of friendship networks and ties in sustaining social movements (Kish Sklar, 1995; Sayre, 1989, Shemtov, 2003). For example, Sayre's 1989 inquiry into the radical therapy movement in the late 1960s at the University of California at Berkley found that the social friendships in this movement, as an element of the New Left, sustained its progression and political activism.

This sense of community expressed by participants is connected to the concept of belonging. Participants discussed that they felt they belonged to not only this social group, this particular feminist organization, but to the larger feminist movement in general, to a community of feminists. Yet, being a part of this community, however wonderful and reinforcing has also created an exclusionary experience.

Within the group and within the feminist communities they encounter, they all expressed feelings of comfort and reinforcement. Nancy expressed her own sense of happiness at being a part of a feminist community:

I'm so lucky in my life to be able to be working on this project and working on these really important preventative measures, like preventative in terms of harm, oppression ... [and] being able to sort of live the feminist dream and getting to work with an amazing group of women, getting to meet amazing people every day ... it's just kind of a sense of community, I think and it's really important to me.

Yet, participants also expressed feeling various negative emotions when interacting with those outside of these communities. As well, they noted how this feminist bubble may create a situation in which critiques of their activism are invisible. This dichotomous experience was described by Carolyn as the 'feminist bubble':

I kind of feel like I live in this feminist bubble a lot of times, which is awesome, I mean I hate having to go outside it, I'm surrounded by a community of really awesome feminist people and doing feminist activism all the time and going to all these conferences and just being surrounded by feminists all the time and I sometimes forget that – oh yeah not everyone is going to be all about this – not everybody wants their kids to learn about Virginia Wolff...

Nancy echoed this sentiment, by reflecting on her feelings of leaving the feminist bubble:

Sometimes when I'm not around my community, it's made me feel more alienated – when I'm outside of my bubble of comfort of feminism, it's made me feel more like – are you fucking kidding me ... I've always felt like I'm on the outside And I think being socialist or having left leaning politics in general also does that – so being sort of a radical, socialist, feminist, vegetarian, bitch...

Helen echoed this binary experience of feeling like an outsider in some settings and an insider in others:

I guess feeling on the outside, but then feeling like you're on the inside of something else. You know, it's like why is it I don't fit in, why is it I don't have the inclination for whatever is going on here and then realizing it's because I'm a part of something else, I'm a part of another community

It is clear that there was an acknowledgement by most participants that they felt the comfort, security and support of the strong feminist community they were apart of. This was juxtaposed by a sense of embodying an outsider status when not with those inside their community.

Another key aspect of their mutually supportive relationships and sense of community which was highlighted by participants was the importance of mentors. When discussing issues of community, participants often mentioned the help and guidance they had received and were continuing to receive from strong female professors, politicians,

and activists. These women were oft quoted during the interviews, as providing advice, support and wisdom for understanding their actions. As Nancy stated:

When we first started the Miss G_ project up, it also came at a point in our lives where we were really lucky in a sense that we were getting to meet some really amazing activists...all these people who are on the ground doing stuff, we're just really lucky, not just through the project, but through our other involvements, we're able to meet them and see how they live their lives as activists – At all levels, like [we've met] some strong CAW women to the liberal bourgeois, which is a range and to hear their stories and to see that they've been there but they've gotten through it too.

Thus the members of the Miss G_Project involved in this research relied on a supportive community of mentors. This finding is similar to that in Joseph's (2005) research on the high school girls involved with the Young Women's Studies Club. The participants in Joseph's (2005) study asserted that older female mentors, who embraced the characteristics of a strong, independent, accomplished and assertive woman, inspired them to set high life and career goals for themselves (Joseph, 2005).

Collective/Feminist Power Sharing

Although it is notable that the friendships amongst these women have helped to sustain the group's activity, the relationships they have with each other have another role, which has not been recognized by literature on feminist activist groups. This role has impacted the organizational structure of the group.

It is notable that this discussion, seated within the theme Collective/Feminist Power Sharing, contributes to answering the second primary research question in this study: What strategies have been used (and struggles have been faced) in the process of working within this feminist activist organization? As a collective feminist power sharing

approach is an organizational strategy that was accessed by the Miss G_Project, it is relevant to this point of inquiry.

The organizational structure of the Miss G_Project is very fluid and represents a collective approach to organizing. Helen described the organization as such: “Well we don’t have a hierarchy ... that works very well for us, it’s very fluid and also very consensual...we don’t have executive directors or anything like that.”

Social movement theorists have often assumed that the organization of feminist groups is managed as a reflection of their ideals (Arnold, 1995; Buechler, 2000; Freeman, 1975). This type of organization is referred to as prefigurative politics, wherein the structure of a group mirrors the desired societal structure sought. As such, it has been assumed that collective or communal forms of organizing in feminist organizations were enacted for this intention, as a symbol of the group’s values (Buechler, 2000).

However, the findings from this research project challenge the conclusions from these social movement theorists. Pre-figurative politics, although perhaps an apt analysis of other activist groups, does not apply to this organization. Rather, the organization of the Miss G_Project reflected the structure of the pre-existing relationships between the women involved. Their friendship ties have played a key role in defining the organizational structure of the group. Specifically, the organization of the Miss G_Project has developed organically, emerging as an extension of their friendships. Thus, the group’s structure is intimately linked with the structure of the relationships amongst these women.

The steering committee identified by participants as the core six individuals who maintain and drive the activity in the project all identify as close friends with one another.

These relationships, most of which existed prior to the development of the group, have set a context to help ensure that decisions and work is negotiated fairly and collectively.

Consequently, often their activist work and friendship work are difficult to untangle. As well, much of their activist work and thinking has occurred during social meetings. These informal conversations at pubs, restaurants and their apartments have often led to activist conversations. Nancy stated that:

From the start we've always been very social, socially minded, like we do have a lot of meetings at bars or at someone's house and just chill and really put more effort into the bonding time, which is I think just part of the kind of people we are, but also our organization is very community-building based.

Thus the work that has been done in the Miss G_Project and the manner in which it has been organized have been intertwined with the close friendship bonds they have developed with each other. This is perhaps related to many of them having friendships with each other, which pre-dated this organization. Many of these women started as friends first and have become activists together through the creation and work of the Miss G_Project. The activist group emerged from the friendships and as such these friendships continue to define its organization and work.

Power sharing and consensus decision making were already aspects of these friendships. As such, these elements continued to be a part of the way in which this group was organized. To clarify, the Miss G_Project's organization reflected the management of their close friendships with one another, rather than a vision of a desired future.

Harriet reiterated this same sentiment, noting that those most involved in the running of the group are friends: "If you want power in the group, you have to be a friend, the meetings really happen when we're trying to have socials." As such it is easy

to see how the group's core, "everyday running motor" (**phrase used by Nancy) of the group, are the six steering committee members, who are also close friends.

While there have been efforts made to try to organized the group, with the creation of chapters at various universities, the main group which has continued to drive the activism of it, has remained consistent, with the six steering committee members.

Carolyn explained about the organization of the group:

It's always been collective. We've had moments where we've tried to have more, sort of structure in organization...but it's always just fallen back to the six of us...[and] we've always had power quite evenly distributed on the steering committee.

However, this is not to say that the women involved in this organization are ignorant of the literature in this area. Carolyn clearly stated:

We never really sat down and said, we're going to have a collective structure. We definitely – we've all done the reading on feminist decision making and power sharing and that sort of thing. But, there was one point last summer where we all sort of realized that like okay this is working and it's developed organically, so why should we sort of try to make some sort of structure to make it work a little bit better.

To conclude this section, the Miss G_Project, rather than relying on complying with a preconceived form of feminist organizing, has developed more organically. As such, the organization of this group is derived from their close friendships with one another. Interestingly, elements of this structure parallel some aspects of feminist collective organizing and power sharing. Yet, the women in the Miss G_Project did not seek out to use a model of pre-figurative politics in their activism, instead their work stems out of their ongoing friendships.

This theme, *Collective/Feminist Power Sharing*, addressed the second primary research question, which considered what strategies have been used (and struggles have been faced) in the process of working within the Miss G_Project. Participants' responses revealed that a collective approach to power sharing was used in the organization of the steering committee of this organization. As was highlighted, this form of organization developed as an extension of the collective power sharing that existed in their friendships with one another.

This finding is especially relevant in that it reveals an alternative framework for feminist organizations. It challenges theorists (Arnold, 1995; Buechler, 2000; Freeman, 1975) who have relied on the concept of pre-figurative politics to explain the collective organization of feminist groups.

Online Communication

When questions were posed about the ways in which communications and organizing are done, the internet was mentioned by all as the primary tool with which they communicate with each other.

This theme contributes to answering the second research question (see Appendix C) in this study, as it considers the strategies that have been used while working within the Miss G_Project. Participants revealed that the use of technology, specifically through the internet allowed them to communicate and collaborate about their activism in this organization.

As participants have shifted to different schools and cities, the internet has allowed them to maintain close contact with one another and thus has helped to sustain the activity of their organization. Harriet noted that “the internet is so important for communication.” Carolyn echoed this response:

We use email almost exclusively ... we email each other a couple of times a week, over various issues ... we do, I mean despite us being so spread out all over the place, we do communicate with each other quite often. We've done msn [instant messaging] meetings every once in a while when we can figure out a time that works for everybody.

This response shows how online communication is used in various forms to discuss the project. These include email and instant messaging.

The internet was also mentioned with regards to blogging, through both video and writing, as a new venue for feminist communication and community building. It seems as though as technology develops, so do the spaces in which feminist organizing can take place (Ollivier, Robbins, Beauregard, Brayton & Sauve, 2006; Scott, 2001). For example, Ollivier, et al, (2006) explored how a feminist electronic discussion list created space for feminist communication. As well, Scott (2001) provided a trenchant analysis of feminist activism in the information age. She argued that information communication technologies have been transforming the spaces in which feminist activism can occur, the accessibility of feminist work and the pace at which this activism and communication can happen.

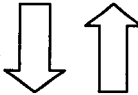
Harriet expressed that “video blogging is an important way to speak out”. The internet creates a space in which feminists can connect to one another, who may be geographically or culturally from different places, and previous to this technology may never have interacted. Harriet has used the internet to create video blogs representing

both herself and the Miss G_Project to raise awareness about feminist issues and activist events. Thus, video blogging has been used as a strategy to disseminate information about the Miss G_Project, as well as to connect feminists together in online communities.

The significance of these cyber communities has been acknowledged by third wave feminist scholars. Ten years ago, Zita (1997) noted that "the recent expansion of feminist-centred cyber communities attests to the tenacity of young feminists in claiming the right to exist" (p. 7). This statement takes on more significance when one considers the online developments that have occurred over the past decade and the subsequent changes that are happening right now.

In conclusion, this theme, Online Communication, addresses the second primary research question in this study. Participants' responses revealed how the internet is used to discuss and collaborate their activism with one another. As well, it has been used as a tool used to network with other feminists, organizations and interested individuals. Thus online communication was key to the organizational strategies of the Miss G_Project.

The Two Pronged Approach

Much of the data related to the second primary research question (see Appendix C) was grouped into this theme, the Two Pronged Approach . This theme is especially relevant as it relates to participants' approaches to activism and the activist strategies, which have been used within the Miss G_Project. Participants explained their feminist activism in this organization as using a two pronged approach.

Participants identified two distinct strategies that have been used to further the goals of the project. They have enacted their activism by accessing, what were termed by most participants as ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ strategies. Carolyn explained:

There are two strategies that we can go about this, so we’re trying to use both of them. One is the sort of top down strategy that we started with, which is talking to politicians and trying to get it written into the actual curriculum and that sort of thing. Which we’re still definitely full-on very much doing, but now we’re starting to use also talking to teachers and getting teachers to do fully-developed courses, which several of them are now, so getting it actually taught in schools right now on the ground-running. And the teachers are like the ground in that sense, you know, so it’s sort of our grass-roots organizing around that stuff that’s been really effective too. So we’re kind of taking this two-pronged approach right now, which is working really well.

This approach is consistent with the flexibility which characterizes the third wave. The group did not limit itself by defining and manifesting their activism in a purely grassroots or bureaucratic manner. Rather, by using multiple strategies, they have drawn from more resources. Nancy also identified these two approaches, noting that, “the first [is] our political lobbying and stuff. And the second [is] the grassroots, classroom and teacher work”. This two-pronged approach developed through their initial experiences with activism and the feedback they received about their efforts.

Initially they had lobbied for curricular change primarily through putting pressure on the Ministry of Education. This top-down approach was soon accompanied by bottom-up tactics, as they found that they needed to garner support for the course not only within the Ministry, but also from teachers and students. Helen described this transformation in depth:

So we did a lot of our lobbying ...it’s non-partisan, we just wanted to get our message out to whoever would listen ...so that was where a lot of our focus was

on in the beginning and it was very, we realized later, very top-down and it's something that we were told and something that we began to realize as we started to talk to teachers and people that were actually on the front lines is that, even if a course were in the curriculum, if students aren't interested and if there aren't teachers with the appropriate background and interest and support from their fellow teachers and school board and principal and interest from the students then the course would never be taught and eventually, you know we'd have this great little course in the curriculum, ready to be taught and it would never – it would just be – you know forgotten. [So] where the change is now coming from the bottom-up now, rather than top down ...

She further elaborated on how their new approach, the two-pronged approach, is manifesting itself in their activism:

We're going to keep pressure on the Ministry always, but we've already started putting a lot more energy into our teacher support and on working with teachers on the courses they're developing ... we're developing curriculum materials right now, we're also planning a conference for teachers and students, so they can share ideas and we want to set up, like we want to have our resources available online for download, we want to continue to network so – a way for teachers to connect and students, so we want to do that and through that do a lot more grassroots activism with high school students to get them involved.

It is clear that through the feedback from teachers and other educational workers, that the organization changed their strategy, integrating grassroots, bottom-up activism to their work.

Several other bottom-up initiatives were described in detail by participants, including working through informal feminist networks on university and high school campuses, running workshops in community centers, distributing Miss G_Project paraphernalia at concerts and conferences, organizing events and public demonstrations.

One poignant effort described by all participants was a public event, wherein students, teachers, musicians and other interested individuals gathered at Queen's Park. The steering committee wore sashes, with 'Miss Educated' written on them and played croquet. This was done to parody the concept of the Old Boy's Club, by calling

themselves the New Girls Club. As well they used irony and reclaiming through the image of a beauty contest. After this event the Toronto Star (Brown, 2006) featured an article with photos of them playing croquet at Queen's Park. Helen explained:

We recognized that some of these fun, smart, interesting, unconventional things would get us attention – we were out to get attention and we got it – it worked ... There were conventional aspects of our lobbying, like just asking for meetings with the Ministers, so we could plant our ideas, and there were these unconventional aspects too, which are staging these kinds of events and just being kind of media savvy or cheeky.

This event provides an example of using third wave tactics of irony, parody and reclaiming to critique antiquated social institutions. Although some participants did not identify as third wavers, their organization draws from tactics associated with the third wave.

Public displays are a prominent tactic used by activist groups to draw attention to issues. For example, the Raging Grannies, a feminist group, uses public displays to work for feminist causes, peace, environmental change and social justice (Roy, 2007). By using costume to portray caricatures of elderly women, they use "...wit, humor, songs, and dynamic actions, inflicting giggles on unsuspecting audiences and, from time to time, generating reactions from authorities" (Roy, 2007, p. 150).

CodePink Women for Peace, a grassroots women's peace organization also uses public displays to draw attention to their cause. They dress in pink during public demonstrations in which they advocate for an end to the war in Iraq (Kricoran, 2006). It is clear that this strategy has been prevalent among women's modern social movement activism.

In addition, the Miss G_Project has continued to sustain its top-down activism. These include talking to the Ministry of Education, undertaking a postcard campaign directed to the Minister of Education and talking to other members of Ontario's provincial legislature.

These two strategies are combined to rally support for the project from students, teachers and the Ministry of Education. By building support through bottom-up grassroots activism and maintaining pressure on the Ministry through top-down approaches, they hope to build a community of advocates for this course, so that when it is implemented it will be highly supported.

Thus, the two pronged approach, described by participants gives insight into the second primary research question, regarding the strategies that have been used in their work with the Miss G_Project. This strategy was used to build support for the project in communities, schools and the Ministry of Education.

Constructive Feedback – From WS to WGS

As was highlighted, the feedback from students, teachers and educational activists transformed the manner in which these women fought for a women's and gender studies course. By listening to and responding to this feedback, they integrated bottom-up approaches to their activism.

Similarly, the responses Miss G_ received in regards to the name of the course they were fighting for was also helpful. Through dialoguing with students, teachers and others interesting in the Miss G_Project, many through Miss G_Project chapters at universities, the name of the course was changed. Nancy explained:

Last year's decision to change the name of the course we are asking for, from women's studies [WS] to women's and gender studies [WGS], that came from feedback. That came from discussions amongst us, amongst the chapters and also from feedback from all the people that we have on our emailing list ... feedback came in really handy because people were like, your not reflecting trans communities when you say women's studies, you're not assertively addressing the gender analysis aspect or placing that out enough and because that stuff is in your course, but when you call it women's studies, you lose that. And then we also had people saying, you can't lose the women part, because don't forget the goal is to bring women's experiences into the curriculum.

Through the feedback from members, chapters and other interested feminists, the title of this course was expanded to embrace the term gender. Thus, the course the Miss G_Project is fighting for is now called 'women's and gender studies'. They felt that this more aptly represented the course they had envisioned, by both recognizing the experiences of women and deconstructing and critiquing the construction of gender.

Thus, feedback was instrumental in both changing the activist strategies used and transforming the name of the course that this organization fought for. While this feedback was constructive and motivating, other comments were more negative.

Negative Feedback – Antifeminists and Second Wavers

The negative feedback, which participants spoke of relates to the second primary research question (see Appendix C). Specifically, this issue answers the element of struggles which have been faced in the process of working within this feminist organization. These struggles included hearing and responding to the negative feedback from other individuals and groups.

Two distinct groups were identified by participants as providing negative feedback towards the activist work of the Miss G_Project. These individuals were consistently recognized as anti-feminists or second wave feminists. Carolyn explained:

It's interesting because we kind of get it from both sides ... at first the only people who were against the project were the antifeminists, who were kind of like Oh well, why do we need this? ... And then as we got more established and started being more known in the feminist community, going to all the feminist conferences and doing that sort of thing, we got more of a backlash from other feminists, which was interesting. We get – there was a while back where it was really rough, because we got a lot of backlash from second wave feminists.

The opposition that feminists have experienced to their work has been acknowledged (Simonds, 1995). Especially notable have been the conflicts between feminists and antifeminists, which have been widely discussed (Boles, 1982; Mueller, 1995; Petchesky, 1982; Ryan, 1992).

While critiques from those against the concept of feminism holistically (antifeminists) were noted, participants put most of their emphasis on the negative responses from other feminists. These detailed response revealed experiences of being critiqued by second wavers because of their activist tactics, youth and sexualities. Carolyn explained:

We went to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women conference and it was a horrible experience – I mean there was a real schism there between sort of older feminists and younger feminists ... so again we get a lot of backlash from people saying why do we need this? or critiquing how we go about it – we get a lot of backlash, especially from second wave feminists, we started getting a lot of backlash for being too queer and for being too radical and for not being, you know, mainstream enough to be acceptable or whatever and we started getting some of the satellite members of the project would [say] I signed on with you at the beginning but now you're just too radical for me ... it was just like, our goals haven't changed, our mandates haven't changed at all, so it was really frustrating ... and it was like from other feminists – It was very disillusioning ... we had a

bunch of meetings, mostly online between like the six of us and just sort of said ok, what do we do about this? We basically just decided to stand our ground and just be like fuck you, we don't care ... you don't want to support the project, this is who we are, this is who we're going to be ... we're not going to pretend that we're some lame, really mainstream organization, because we're not, we want to be radical, we're going to be radical.

Carolyn's narrative reveals the struggles faced when critiqued by second wave feminists and the group's subsequent response to these critiques. They used online communication tools to discuss this issue and decided to stand their ground on who they were and how they conducted their activism.

This is consistent with literature from the third wave (Heywood & Drake, 1997), which notes how second wavers have critiqued the varied and sometimes informal and individual approaches to activism that third wavers use. Heywood and Drake (1997) aptly describe third wave reactions to these critiques: "These forms of third wave activism don't always look 'activist' enough to second wave feminism ... [but] exploring different activist practices doesn't mean we're not feminists, " (p. 4).

Carolyn elaborated on how the negative feedback from second wave feminists critiquing the Miss G_Project for doing their activism in a radical, third wave manner:

I think that backlash comes from second wave feminists being like – oh, I thought you were like us – you're not us ... like you don't do things the way that we do things and therefore you're doing it wrong and they try to tell us this – which can be frustrating but ... we do things in a very third wave kind of way, which I think is uncomfortable for a lot of people because especially at the beginning a lot of people who jumped on board originally and who were really excited about us were second wave feminists and were sort of more mainstream feminists ... but all of us always were very, you know pretty radical and not very identified with the second wave ... so we got more established and started getting more resources and doing more of the things we've always wanted to do and people were like, what? ... but I don't know, that's what we wanted to do, so...

However, the discourse on activism has shifted, as to embrace understandings of activism enacted in the everyday (Baumgardner & Richards, 2005; Martin, Hanson & Fontaine, 2007). The Miss G_Project accesses both these everyday acts of activism along with more traditional approaches to activism, like public demonstrations.

Yet, although there has been acknowledgement (Baumgardner & Richards, 2005; Martin, Hanson & Fontaine, 2007) that activism is broad and manifests itself in multiple manner, this backlash from feminists from the second wave is not unusual. As was illustrated in the literature review, older feminists have attacked the work, methods and goals of younger feminists. For example, Phyllis Chesler, a notable second wave feminist activist has critiqued the work of third wavers (Chesler, 2005).

Reflecting back on how this theme considers the second primary research question, it can be surmised the facing negative feedback was a struggle, which participants experienced in their work with the Miss G_Project. Participants spoke about this feedback as emerging from two groups: anti-feminists and second wave feminists. Together, they chose not to change their mandates or approaches to activism.

While some feedback was negative, it helped the group join together and affirm their own activist stance. Through their reactions to negative comments, they openly acknowledged their radical feminist approach to politics.

Challenging Current Conceptions of Secondary Education

Participants expressed strong opinions about how women's and gender studies acts as a challenge to current manifestations of education in Ontario Secondary Schools. This theme aptly explores an element of the third primary research question: 3a. How does the Miss G_Project challenge current conceptions of Secondary education in

Ontario schools? Participants felt that this course would change not only the content being taught in schools, but also the epistemic foundations of that content and the social atmosphere in High Schools.

Carolyn expressed that knowledge gained in a women's and gender studies course, as they envision it, examining gender and also discussing the lives of women would move into their other courses and impact their confidence to ask for these types of analysis from other teachers, thus transforming their other courses.

hopefully that [knowledge from WGS] would be something students would be able to take to their other classes and would maybe have the confidence to demand, maybe some of those kinds of things from their other teachers as well...

The revolutionary manner in which all participants' perceived women's studies, as largely political was linked to its challenge to traditional curricula. Harriet noted that:

what is taught to us is political , history is chosen – it's not objective, it's subjective, women's and gender studies giving more history, how women have contributed, girls have low self esteem because they don't have role models, it's giving voice to untold stories and giving us the tools to understand how we're produced through gender in a way that largely isn't integrated into most high schools.

Harriet elaborated on how women's and gender studies act as a challenge, by focuses on the role of critical thinking in WGS classrooms. "[Women's and gender studies] brings critical thinking that is really important - it is questioning what we know instead of just memorizing things and regurgitating - it's not just tolerance, it's acceptance, which is achievable, instead of just spitting out memorization".

Helen also focused on the role of critical thinking in WGS, offering an analysis of and questioning the goals of education. She stated, "What is public education good for, if not to give all students an opportunity to think critically about their lives? ... Isn't that

what the point is, to produce people who can be responsible citizens?" This analysis reveals her assumptions about critical thinking as being linked with responsible citizenship and the role in education in fostering this development.

Helen also focused on the importance of a women's and gender studies course, by considering its potential for adding to a lacking curriculum and transforming the knowledge and messages that are given to high school students.

the curriculum right now does not reflect the experiences of women, a lot of women – it doesn't reflect the experiences of a lot of students too and this is really damaging to a lot of high school students ... because the public education system is failing a lot of students right now by limiting or foreclosing access to information on feminist knowledge and that's a failure, it's a major failure of the public education system ... and it's damaging high school students' lives. High school students don't feel themselves reflected in their classes, they are taught on a daily basis they don't and can't achieve the same thing ... I really think that this course could save a lot of lives. It could save a lot of young women from bad relationships, abusive relationships...

Helen expressed an urgency to get this course into the curriculum as it would add to a lacking curriculum through feminist knowledge and by reflecting students' experiences. As well, she felt that this knowledge could impact how students live their lives and perhaps even change the choices that they make in regards to relationships.

Research has demonstrated how women's and gender studies act as a challenge to the traditional discourse on university campuses (Gardiner, 2003). These comments are consistent with research on the impact of women's and gender studies, which was discussed in the literature review. For example, Stake, et al's, (1994) study of how women's studies classes impacted students' feminist activism showed that women's and gender studies impacted students': level of feminist activism; awareness of discrimination; self-confidence; tolerance of others; ability to educate others; adoption of new/nontraditional behaviours; and assertiveness positively.

Thus participants' sentiments about the possible impact that a WGS course may have in Secondary Schools are not unfounded. Rather, they are supported by research which has considered the impact of this field of inquiry (Halevi & Blumen, 2005; Joseph, 2005; Stake, et al, 1994; Stake, 2007).

Although this research is significant, in that it explored how women's and/or gender studies challenges the University curricula, it failed to explore how this same discipline may act as a challenge to Secondary education. This is another gap filled by this research project, as it has considered how women's and gender studies challenges the curricula in Secondary schools, specifically in Ontario.

In summary, this theme explored a component of the third primary research question, which pertained to how participants saw the Miss G_Project as challenging current conceptions of Secondary education, as has been manifested in Ontario schools. Participants expressed feeling that the project acted as a challenge in multiple ways. These included: impacting the content of courses other than WGS with similar analyses; including the voices of women; exploring the construction of gender; emphasizing critical thinking; and encouraging acceptance.

Challenges to Implementing WGS into the High School Curriculum

Participants identified several barriers, which hindered the implementation of a women's and gender studies course in the Secondary School curriculum in Ontario. These included the political process, politicians, sexism, parents, students, teachers and individuals in administration who are opposed to the course. Harriet expressed that even politicians who may want to endorse this course are also in a place where they want to

stay in power. She also highlighted how sexism, entrenched in our society, was a barrier for the acceptance and implementation of a WGS course in High Schools. “I think politically, there are people who would like to do it, but politics are strange because you want to stay in power, but sexism is in the system and so people don’t want it [women’s and gender studies] in there because it threatens those ideas and it shakes up the world.”

Nancy’s response was very similar, although she acknowledged not only sexism, but also the fear associated with that prejudice. She stated, regarding the barriers to implementing a WGS course into the Ontario Secondary School curriculum:

I think almost fear of taking on issues related to women, I think is a huge thing because it’s dangerous ... you need the political will to do it, but it might not be the most popular stance to take – the fear of women, the fear of feminism – I think that really does hold back any political movement on that. And also teachers, if they don’t have the support of administration or of other teachers, it can be really hard for them too.

Another barrier to implementing this course, as they have envisioned it, is the lack of qualified teachers. Because women’s studies is not a teachable subject, Nancy felt that many individuals with this background may not choose to enter into the teaching profession in Secondary schools. Thus, this may create a pool of teachers who may not have a strong background in WGS. She expressed that:

women’s studies is not a teachable, so a lot of students who take women’s studies do not go into teaching or a lot of students who go into teaching don’t take women’s studies as much or major in it, because they can’t count it ... we need to start training those students to teach at the teacher level ... and that’s a good example of the systematic, systemic barrier of not having it as a teachable.

Thus, the barrier identified here is an inadequately trained pool of educators to teach Women’s and Gender Studies in Ontario Secondary Schools. Nancy does posit a

solution to this systemic dilemma in the aforementioned quote. She notes that training students to teach WGS may remedy this situation.

Helen's analysis of the barriers to implementing this course focused on the political process:

the Ministry of Education, which is, you know the big Ministry in Ontario, it's mammoth ... So naturally, it's heavily bureaucratized and the progress working with them is always going to be slow ... but maybe it's a good thing, maybe it's better that it's taking a bit of time to get done up there. By the time we've got enough courses being taught, it will be this really well developed, great course that will be taught forever.

In sum, several barriers to implementing a women's and gender studies course into Ontario's Secondary School curriculum were identified by participants. These included: the political process, politicians, sexism, parents, students, teachers and individuals in administration who are opposed to the course.

However, although participants were cognizant of many barriers, which faced them in pursuing their goal, they communicated how they believed that their strategies (top-down, bottom-up) were effective amidst these barriers. By building a network of teachers and students and encouraging the development of new WGS courses, through the locally developed and interdisciplinary course option, they felt that their activism was supporting the implementation of WGS courses in Ontario High Schools.

Possibilities for Implementing WGS into the High School Curriculum

A key inquiry in this study was stated in an element of the third primary research question. It asked: what potentials and opportunities exist in the Miss G_ Project for moving feminist pedagogy into mainstream teaching and learning? As this was a fundamental aspect of this research project, it was discussed during each interview.

Participants largely spoke about the possibilities they saw for implementing a women's and gender studies course into the high school curriculum in Ontario. Overall they expressed a lot of confidence in this change. Carolyn expressed this well: "I actually feel very confident about it. I think that the chances are still really good".

Participants discussed how this field of study could move into this arena through both Ministry approved change, as well as through social and community support. As well, the importance of supporting teachers who are teaching the course and trying to encourage other teachers to follow suit was expressed.

One participant considered how feminist pedagogy could move into Secondary Schools by focusing primarily on teaching various courses in feminist ways, as well as by considering the spaces within the curriculum, wherein women's and gender studies can be taught. Nancy expressed that:

I think the course itself is a good way to get it in there. I think developing feminist pedagogies for different subject areas ... having teachers teach history from a feminist perspective, how do you include more women in the curriculum? – how do you teach science? ... units that attach to civics courses and then units that teachers can – because teachers do this all the time, they sneak in their own little units that are a little subversive. So within the curriculum documents that the Ontario Secondary School ... is the locally developed course option, which allows schools and administration and school boards to develop courses for particular communities within the school board community that meet the needs of what's going on there ... Also there's the interdisciplinary curriculum document, which a lot of teachers have been using to develop this course as well. But I think there's already those two spaces in the curriculum documents.

Nancy noted that as she sees that these are spaces wherein feminist pedagogy can enter the curriculum, the Miss G_Project is working to support teachers working in these spaces. Nancy remarked that: "we're really focused on getting materials out there, getting

resources out there for teachers” to teach through the locally developed course, the interdisciplinary curriculum, as well as to integrate analyses of women and gender into other courses. Nancy recognized the connection between what needed to be accomplished and working within the spaces where opportunities for this were possible.

Helen also highlighted the locally developed course as a space of possibility for putting WGS courses into High Schools. She mentioned that opportunity exists in, “moving through the grassroots and working with teachers who are doing the locally developed courses.”

Much emphasis was put on building support for the course by working with teachers who are developing women’s and gender studies course through the locally developed course option. This was linked by Helen to their strategic choice of using both top-down and bottom-up activist approaches. Helen, like Carolyn, expressed confidence that by using these approaches a WGS course will be integrated into the curriculum with a supportive community to embrace, teach and learn in it. Helen expressed that she was:

optimistic about things working through the Ministry right now and it’s probably actually a good thing that it was delayed the way things are at the Ministry, because had it gone through immediately, it probably wouldn’t have been taught and wouldn’t have been public enough and wouldn’t have had the same impact, so you know now we’re working so much more from the bottom up and the top down that hopefully they’ll meet in the middle and the course will be everywhere

This optimism is linked to the strategic choices the Miss G_Project has made, as well as the WGS courses that are being taught in Secondary Schools today through two spaces in the curriculum. These spaces were identified as the interdisciplinary curriculum and the locally developed course option.

The Ontario Ministry of Education (2002) stated that, “the interdisciplinary curriculum emphasizes active investigation of issues from diverse perspectives” (p. 9). As well, it was described as encouraging critical thinking, recognition of diversity and university preparation (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2002). These qualities parallel many aspects of the WGS course, as participants envisioned it. Although there is not specific reference in this curriculum document to gender analysis and integrating women into the curriculum, it seems as though this option is flexible enough to manifest itself in multiple ways.

Similarly, the locally developed course is described as very flexible and malleable to many different fields of inquiry. It was put in place for, “...cases where students’ educational and/or careers preparation needs cannot be met by courses authorized by the provincial curriculum...” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 2). *The Guide to locally developed courses, grades 9-12: Development and approval procedures* (2004), issued by the Ontario Ministry of Education specified that these courses must be approved by the Ministry before they can be taught.

The interdisciplinary curriculum and the locally developed course have filled gaps in the curriculum, by integrating diverse perspectives, emphasizing critical thinking and encouraging course content that is relevant to students and speaks to their experiences.

During our interview, Carolyn noted that women’s and gender studies courses have been taught through these options in several schools in Ontario. However research has yet to acknowledge these courses and their manifestation in Ontario Secondary Schools

To conclude, a component of the third primary research question, regarding the opportunities for moving feminist pedagogy into mainstream teaching and learning, was explored through this theme. Participants felt that it was possible to move women's and gender studies into the Secondary School curriculum in Ontario by pushing for change at the Ministry of Education and building support for the course through high school and community workshops, conferences, public events and by using other forms of consciousness-raising. This is largely tied into their strategy for activism, the two pronged approach. As well, they expressed that by working with teachers and supporting the development of women's and gender studies courses through the interdisciplinary curriculum and locally developed course, this field of inquiry will be implemented into Ontario High Schools. It is evident that where participants saw possibilities was where they were working for change.

This theme concludes the findings section of this thesis. As was stated earlier, a key element of this research project involved my reflections about the research process. These will be explored here in a separate section, titled *Conceptual Baggage*. I struggled on whether or not to group this element with the Findings, as I felt that this component was a significant layer of data. Yet, I surmised that it was necessary to give each aspect of the data precedence in its own section: *Review of Literature*, *Findings* and *Conceptual Baggage*.

B. Conceptual Baggage

This section will include my reflections about the research process, questions and data. I kept a research journal to record these reflections, as well as to consider my

perspectives, biases, experiences and feelings throughout the research process. The label 'conceptual baggage' was drawn from Kirby and McKenna's (1989) work.

Further, this section represents my efforts to reflect upon my own subjectivity. This activity is grounded in the work of educational researchers (Bowen, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Maxwell, 2005; Peshkin, 1988; Peshkin, 2000). Peshkin (1988) argued for a recognition of researcher subjectivity throughout the research process: "researchers should systematically seek out their subjectivity, not retrospectively when the data have been collected and the analysis is complete, but while their research is actively in progress" (p. 17). Thus, my recording of my conceptual baggage was my effort to recognize my subjectivity as a researcher throughout the research process.

I felt that it was important to maintain my research journal and compile my conceptual baggage for two key reasons. One motivation was related to Peshkin's (1988) conception of researcher subjectivity. I wanted to reflect upon my subjectivity throughout the research process, unpacking my perspectives/biases/subjectivities. My perspectives/biases/subjectivities have bled through the entire research process, from the formulation of a topic of research to the analysis of the data and the writing of this piece. Thus, I want to make explicit my experiences, feelings and thoughts about this research.

Another motivation, which influenced my decision to include my conceptual baggage as an aspect of this research was my desire to conduct research which was both feminist and not profoundly hierarchical. I wanted to make this explicit effort to make myself blur the boundaries between researcher and researched and layer the data with my own thoughts. Bowen (1994) argued that for research to be feminist, it should

acknowledge researcher subjectivity. Thus, I felt that, due to my commitment to feminist research, it was necessary to embrace my own vulnerability and expose my feelings during the research process. Although I realize that in doing so, I am in a powerful position, in that I can select which excerpts of my research journal that I share.

Entry #1

Sometimes I feel as though this topic has just come to me, as if through some transcendental dream. Other times I become caught up in the who, what, where, when and how? of this whole process. I think that in some ways I envy the work of activist feminists, who are creating and enacting praxis in their day to day lives, Yet, in order for me to avoid being in awe of their actions which I think will immobilize me ... I am trying to re-conceptualize my own identity as a feminist by placing it within an activist framework – struggling against oppressive ideologies.

I think that by recognizing my position as activist – by acknowledging these voices in academic discourse – I am becoming a part of the research. Both participant and subject – intersubjectivity – I cannot weave myself out of this work, when I see how I am so much a part of it. My perspective will bleed into each line and thus I hope to try to embrace this process. Perhaps just taking on and proclaiming a feminist identity is somewhat of an activist approach in itself. Although part of me somewhat does not believe this.

This passage, written very early on in the conceptualization of this project, reveals my own thinking about my identity. I felt that my embracing my identity, not only as feminist, but also as activist, I could better understand this research. Like my participants, I too, was influenced by cultural, social and educational experiences that led me into and solidified my feminist identity.

However, the end of this passage reveals insecurity over whether I am feminist enough or activist enough. Baumgardner and Richards' (2003) analysis of young women, who were active in learning about and striving for social change, yet did not feel like their actions were feminist or activist enough, parallels my own experiences.

Entry #2

In my experiences, it seems as though what many young feminists are looking for and what feminism is seen as lacking are inroads to activism and a rallying point to bring the movement together. In the U.S. the recent threats to Roe vs. Wade (ie. Ms. Mag article) may provide this. In Canada – the Miss G_ project may supply this rallying point to politicize and connect.

This entry was written during my early research process. Throughout my research on feminist activism and the Miss G_Project, I reflected on my perceptions of education, feminism and social change. This paragraph reflects my perception that to draw the feminist movement together, to work for change, may require a concrete goal to strive for.

As I dialogued with Carolyn during the end of the interview, I expressed this sentiment. She discussed how this is one of the wonderful things about this project and this goal that it provided something to “latch on to.”

As well, she expressed the value of this goal, of fighting to use education as a tool to fight sexism:

And I think one of the things I really like about this goal too, what I really like about using education to address sexism and that sort of thing – is that at the same time it can address all of those things. It can address sexism, it can address violence, it can address all of these things potentially, you know. Because in a sense, by fighting for a course, we are fighting for an arena to address all of these sorts of things.

Entry #3

During my undergraduate work in women's studies, a friend of mine and I would refer to the women's studies bubble. The bubble created a discursive community, wherein everyone carried similar philosophies and although debate occurred, it was done in the most respectful manner. We would say that we didn't want to know what existed outside of the bubble. This was somewhat wonderful, as it fostered out social and intellectual growth. Yet, it was also somewhat debilitating, as when I entered the B.Ed. program I was somewhat taken aback when my ideas were dismissed, as this had never occurred in the women's studies bubble.

I wrote this after my interview with Carolyn – as her analysis of the feminist bubble reminded me of my experiences in women's studies. I felt that I could relate to the insider/outsider status that participants were describing, by reflecting on my educational experiences with feminism and feminist theory.

Entry #4

If it was not for the guidance and friendships I have had with strong female teachers, students, and professors who I admire, I may not have entered graduate school. These relationships continue to help motivate me to work towards my aspirations and take chances with my work.

I wrote this after transcribing and analyzing the interview data. Through reflecting on participants' experiences of friendship and mentorship, I considered my own feelings about these things. I recognized how important my relationships with other women have been in guiding and inspiring me to pursue my educational goals.

Entry #5

Pointing to the need for women's and gender studies in high schools highlights the curriculum as lacking. This attacks the canon, attacks the epistemic foundations of our educational system. These efforts highlight information and theoretical conceptions which remain absent from curricula. It is essential that we continue to deconstruct current ideological frameworks, which insist our current education(al) system provides a cohesive and comprehensive perspective/approach.

This entry demonstrates my own passion for this topic. It is a blatant notation of my belief that the current curriculum is lacking. As well in this piece I noted how women's and gender studies challenges this lacking curriculum by pointing out its absences and creating spaces for dialogue and critical thought.

This reflection makes my stance on the educational activism of the Miss G_Project clear. It is notable to mention as well that many of the sentiments I expressed here are similar to those expressed by the participants in this study. Their passions for women's and gender studies and curricular change were made overt, as well, during our conversations.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

A. Conclusions

Through the interviews carried out in this research project, it was found that the Miss G_Project draws from grassroots activist tactics associated with the third wave, such as culture jamming and diy activism. However, this group also uses coalition building, cooperating with more mainstream feminists and organizations. Thus, their activism takes a two-pronged approach, striving for legal changes, while also working to help feminist teachers and students, to build support for women's studies and gender studies in high schools.

It is clear from this research that feminism is not a cohesive whole, nor are the ideals, goals and identities of feminists. There were variations in how participants thought

of themselves, their activism and the third wave as a whole. Yet, these differences attest to the strength of this grassroots feminist activist group, who see draw from this diversity to help attain their goal. As well, this research attests to the powerful bonds of friendship these women have with one another and how these relationships have fostered the growth and effected the organization of this activist group.

The findings of this study challenge the claims that feminism is in the past and that young feminists in the third wave are apathetic and egocentric. The women interviewed were all enthusiastic, passionate and driven to attain the goals they set out to attain for themselves, their organization and society. As well, they all identified as feminist and were adamant to define their organization as young, feminist and radical.

Although they experienced struggles through the negative feedback from antifeminists and second wavers, their strength in their own values and beliefs in their activism persisted. As well, they relayed positive outlooks about the future of education and expressed confidence that women's and gender studies will be integrated into the Secondary School curriculum.

As the literature review revealed, struggles to transform educational systems have been prominent in feminist movements. Women's and gender studies have transformed the academy, by bringing feminist pedagogy and inquiries into gender into post-secondary institutions. The work of the Miss G_Project, which strives to implement a women's and gender studies course into the Ontario Secondary School curriculum represents the next step for feminist educational activism and the future of feminist inquiry. The implementation of a women's and gender studies course in the Secondary

School curriculum in this province would mark a watershed moment for Secondary education in Ontario.

B. Implications

The implications of this study are multiple. Exploring the voices of young feminist women involved in educational activism gives their experiences a place in academic research. Significantly, this work is from a Canadian perspective. It is important that more research be conducted which gives voices to the lives of young feminists in the 21st century in Canada. This small research project makes an effort to contribute to this work.

The women of the Miss G_Project reveal a multiplicity of experiences with feminism. Their conflicting identifications with the third wave have uncovered the tensions that exist in labeling themselves, their activism and the feminist movement with this definition. Yet, their passion for feminism and the work that they have been involved in speaks to the continuance of a movement that has been deemed by some as having met all its goals. Their voices reveal drive, ambition and hope that contradicts claims that young feminists are egocentric and self-involved.

This work also stands as a representation of my journey with feminist research and thus as an example of the way in which feminist research may be carried out. By disclosing my feelings about the research project, as I had kept in my research journal, I hoped to blur the boundaries between researcher and researched, to make myself vulnerable by uncovering my researcher subjectivity.

For the field of education, this study stands as an example of those striving for educational change. It uncovered the experiences of those who felt that the current Secondary school curriculum in Ontario was lacking and in need of revision. The solution posited by these women was the implementation of a women's and gender studies course into the high school curriculum. As well, their experiences working for educational change uncovered spaces in the curriculum wherein this change is possible, which I was unaware of, the interdisciplinary curriculum and the locally developed course option. It is important that the field of education remain cognizant of the efforts that young feminists are making to transform curricula.

More research should be done which explores young feminists' perceptions of the Ontario Secondary School curricula both in high school and during post-secondary studies. As well, research should explore the women's and gender studies courses, which are being taught in Ontario high schools. I plan, during my future doctoral work, to explore classrooms in which feminist pedagogy is being implemented in Ontario Secondary schools. This is foremost due to my own passion for this area having increased as I conducted this study and wrote this paper.

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Appendix A

Thesis Petition for the Faculty of Education

Thesis Petition
FEMINIST ACTIVISM, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE:
THIRD WAVE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES
Lacey Lanigan

Part 1

This proposed research project will investigate the identities and efforts of third wave feminist activists, (which will be defined in the following sections), in the midst of their struggle to integrate women's studies into the secondary school curriculum in Ontario. These efforts have been enacted within the feminist organization, the Miss G_ Project, which is sustained by the work of these women.

I wish to explore the complexity of motivations, identities and goals of these activists, through discussion of their participation and understanding of the feminist movement. This research will attempt to acknowledge how activity within the feminist movement has shaped the identities, goals and motives of each participant.

Participants' experiences with and perceptions of, the educational system and the changes posited by this organization will be a primary focus. As such, specific attention will be drawn to their work within the Miss G_ Project.

Educational Relevance

Recognizing the efforts a group of young Canadian women are taking within the feminist movement today challenges notions held by critics that Third Wavers are apathetic and individualistic (Bellafante, 1998; Bronstein, 2005). Appreciating the voices of feminist women exemplifies an effort to recognize their valued place in society. This opposes popular conceptions of feminists as deviant, which research has suggested that many young women and men have subscribed to, (Aronson, 2003; Banziger & Hooker, 1979; Fox & Auerbach, 1983; Griffin, 1989; Horn et al, 2001; Kamen, 1991; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995;).

Although there is an abundance of literature on young feminists in the United States (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Baumgardner & Richards, 2005; Heywood & Drake, 1997; Jervis & Zeisler, 2006; Walker, 1995), the literature available on this population in Canada has languished. My research will contribute to the existing literature on the third wave, by working within a Canadian context. As well, the activist organization, which participants are involved in, has yet to be explored in academic writing.

Acknowledging the work of feminists is essential to the women's movement. Feminist historians have emphasized the importance of recording the stories and experiences of women within the feminist movement, for both current and future use, (Adamson, Briskin & McPhail, 1988; Black, 1992; Sebestyen, 1988; Rowbotham, 1989).

Literature Review

Third Wave Feminism

The concept of feminist 'wave' theory assumes that there have been three explicit waves of feminism. The most recent third wave has been defined as, "... a movement that contains elements of beauty culture, sexual abuse, and power structures while it also acknowledges and makes use of the pleasure, danger, and defining power of those structures," (Heywood & Drake, 1997, 3). Many efforts have been made to acknowledge the voices of third wave feminists, (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Baumgardner & Richards, 2005; Heywood & Drake, 1997; Jervis & Zeisler, 2006; Walker, 1995). Although there has been some effort to speak from a Canadian context, (Mitchell, Bryn Rundle & Karaian, 2001); much of the writing from the third wave has ignored or placed very little emphasis on the experiences of Canadian women.

The Miss G_ Project

The Miss G_ Project was developed in 2005 for the purpose of advocating the implementation of a Women's Studies course in the Ontario Secondary School curriculum, (<http://www.themissgproject.org>). Its work has involved meeting with the Minister of Education, organizing a feminist read-in at Queen's Park, and traveling throughout Ontario running high school workshops and promoting the project, (<http://missgproject.livejournal.com>; http://www.rabble.ca/news_full_story.shtml?x=48961).

Feminist Identity and Activism

Research in the area of feminist identity has focused on the connection between feminist identity and participation in feminist activism (Duncan, 1999; McCabe, 2005; Zucker, 2004). Although, as this work has often relied on research methods that draw from positivistic, quantitative approaches, there has been an acknowledgement (McCabe 2005) that future qualitative work should be done, which further explores feminist self-identification and behaviour.

Another area of feminist identity research, which has developed is the use of qualitative methods to ascertain how feminists develop and conceptualize their identities. Barata, Hunjan & Leggatt (2005) represents an especially poignant example of this type of research. The primary themes, which underscored much of the data collected, surrounded Canadian feminist graduate students' perceptions of identity.

Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research methods have often been guided by a conception of knowledge as subjective and defined by the perceptions that people have of experiences

in their lives (Creswell 2003). Creswell (2003) noted that research guided by social constructivism challenges the traditional power arrangement in positivist research. Social constructivism, manifested under a critical approach to research, attempts to reframe power in a way in which the role of researcher and participant begins to blend. Kirby & McKenna (1989) also illustrated how in qualitative research power can be re-distributed in a way which validates and gives authority to all participants and/or researchers in the research process. This is especially evident in feminist conceptions of research, which have made explicit the intent of giving visibility to the subjective experiences of women and increasing the involvement of the participant in the research (Neuman 2000).

Part 2

As theory and method define and compliment one another – it is essential that I highlight both the theoretical (and philosophical) foundations which guided me toward my choice in methodology.

My epistemic foundations for this project lie in a feminist, post-positivist perspective. My background and experiences have constructed my personal identity as feminist and thus it is essential that I speak from this perspective. Drawing from a critical ethnographic approach, which encourages the researcher to situate herself/himself within the research (Madison, 2005), I am choosing to draw from my reactions and interactions with the research process, as a source of data, to be integrated within the project. Kirby and McKenna (1989) label this source of information as conceptual baggage. Thus, I will use this conception of conceptual baggage to destabilize the traditional positivistic dichotomy of researcher and subject. I hope that in doing this, myself and my participants can engage in more meaningful discourse.

The education system continues to be resistant to feminist thought and the formal teaching of feminist and gender studies, thus perpetuating a structure, in which knowledge and education are patriarchally controlled (Weiler, 1993). Thus the work that these women do is especially noteworthy.

A post-positivist orientation is also intrinsic in my understanding of this project. I reject the feigned objectivity that positivism adheres to (Denzin, 2001). Rather, I choose to embrace the multiplicity and complexity of subjective human experience, which post-positivism recognizes (Madison, 2005).

The approach to research which I am drawing from is a qualitative approach, as it allows me to delve into the ideas and experiences of my participants more comprehensively than I could ever do within the confines of a quantitative approach.

The methodology, which defines both the research questions and data collection process in this thesis, is critical ethnography (Benson & Nagar, 2006; Visweswaren, 1997). This framework is fitting, as I am interacting with very few participants, by which I would like to explore their experiences and perceptions of education and social change.

To select participants for this research, purposive sampling will be accessed. I will use my knowledge about the Miss G_ project to select participants who have been active in this organization from its inception. Thus, there will be three to five participants involved in this study.

Although Berg (2004) notes that this sampling method lacks wide generalizability, this is not a goal of my research. Rather, I am trying to acknowledge the distinct voices of these feminist activists. As well, as I am seeking to draw from a very narrow population, purposive sampling is most fitting.

The research methods to be used in this study are telephone interviews and a (focus) group interview with all participants. Research questions, which are guided by my philosophy and methodology, include:

- 1a. How do participants identify and describe themselves within the feminist movement?
- 1b. What lived experiences have shaped their identity and participation?
2. What strategies have been used (and struggles have been faced) in the process of working within this feminist activist organization?
- 3a. How does the Miss G_ Project challenge current conceptions of Secondary education in Ontario schools?
- 3b. What potentials and opportunities exist in the Miss G_ Project for moving feminist pedagogy into mainstream teaching and learning?

The first step that must be completed involves the attainment of permission from both the Graduate Committee and the Research Ethics Board, to complete this study. Once this permission is attained, the participants will be contacted via email to give subjects an understanding of the purpose of the research, ask questions they may have of the study (Berg, 2004) and determine appropriate times for telephone interviews.

The next step to be taken will involve the conducting of the telephone interviews and a telephone conference with the participants, if consent has been given. Efforts will be made to travel and conduct a group interview with participants, following the telephone interviews. Both the individual and group interviews will be semi-structured, directed by flexible interview guides. Interviews will be audio taped and transcribed.

Finally, time will be taken to analyze the data. Data will be analyzed by accessing Glaser and Strauss' (1967) conception of grounded theory and the constant comparative method. I will consider how participants interpret their work in the Miss G_ group and within the feminist movement. Once analysis is complete, this portion, as well as conclusions will be included into my thesis.

Proposed Timeline:

Winter 2007 -- Research Ethics Board Approval / Data Collection (Telephone Interviews and Telephone Conference) / Construction of Literature Review

Intersession and Summer 2007 --Analysis / Conclusions / Completion of Literature Review

Although this time line is somewhat flexible, it gives a general guide for tasks to be completed.

Part 3

My educational background draws from both feminist and educational theory. I attained a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Women's Studies, as well as a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Windsor.

Throughout my educational career, I have worked as a Teaching Assistant, Graduate Assistant and Research Assistant. I also presented at the University of Windsor's Feminist Research Group, in 2006, on a collaborative project myself and my friend conducted, which used qualitative research methods, drawing explicitly from focus group data.

As well, my involvement in community and campus activism has inspired my thinking in this area. My role as co-founder and president of the Women's Studies Student Association provoked me to explore feminist activism. As well, collaborating through the Womyn's Centre with members of the Sexual Assault Crisis Centre, in organizing a Take Back the Night March allowed me to experience collaborative feminist work. Thus, my background has driven me toward an interest in feminist pedagogy and feminist social activism.

Part 4 & 5.

Supervisor - Dr. Finney Cherian – his research on pedagogy and social justice is essential to the development of this thesis

Internal Reader - Dr. Yvette Daniel – her work on educational policy and practice – as well as use of various qualitative research methodologies will be extremely helpful

Outside Reader - Dr. Dale Jacobs (English) – his work on composition, pedagogy and social justice will be helpful in thinking about this project


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UNIVERSITY OF
WINDSOR
OFFICE OF THE
RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

Today's Date: July 25, 2007
 Principal Investigator: Ms. Lacey Lanigan
 Department/School: Women's Studies
 REB Number: 07-114
 Research Project Title: "Feminist Activism, Education and Social Change: Third Wave Feminist"
 Clearance Date: July 23, 2007
 Project End Date: September 30, 2007

Progress Report Due:
 Final Report Due: September 30, 2007

This is to inform you that the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board (REB), which is organized and operated according to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* and the University of Windsor *Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects*, has granted approval to your research project on the date noted above. This approval is valid only until the Project End Date.

A Progress Report or Final Report is due by the date noted above. The REB may ask for monitoring information at some time during the project's approval period.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. Minor change(s) in ongoing studies will be considered when submitted on the Request to Revise form.

Investigators must also report promptly to the REB:

- a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

Forms for submissions, notifications, or changes are available on the REB website: www.uwindsor.ca/reb. If your data is going to be used for another project, it is necessary to submit another application to the REB.

We wish you every success in your research.

Dr. Maureen Muldoon

Maureen Muldoon, Ph.D.
 Chair, Research Ethics Board

cc: Dr. Finney Cherian, Education
 Research Ethics Coordinator

This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.

Appendix C

Individual Interview Guide

1. What do you perceive to be the relationship between a feminist identity and activism?
2. How do you see your role in the Miss G_ project?
3. What does your experience of working within the Miss_G project mean to you?
4. How did you get involved with this project?
5. How does your sense of identity connect to your actions? How do you define what you do?
6. What critical incidents or events help you commit to the ideals and social visions attached to feminism? How has past lived experience contributed to your work?
7. Has your work with Miss_G advanced the ideals and vision of 3rd wave feminism? Explain.
8. What inspired the creation of the Miss G_ group?
9. How is the group organized? How is power distributed in the group?
10. What methods have you used in the collective action of the Miss G_ project? Why?
11. How do you discuss the actions of the group (i.e. meetings, email, instant messaging)?
12. In your experience, what struggles have been faced in promoting this project? How have these struggles been faced?
13. What techniques have you used to further the goals of the project?
14. Why do you think women's/gender studies should (or shouldn't) be a part of the high school curriculum in Ontario? Why do you believe it has been overlooked?
15. How do the goals of this organization challenge current ideas and practices of Secondary educational institutions in Ontario?
16. How have the feedback and resources the project has received aided in furthering its goals?
17. What opportunities do you think exist for moving women's/gender studies into Secondary schools in Ontario?
18. What do you perceive to be the barrier(s) to implementing a women's studies course in the high school curriculum?

Appendix D

Letter of Information



LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: **FEMINIST ACTIVISM, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE: THIRD WAVE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Lacey Lanigan, a Masters student, from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The results from this study will contribute to a Masters thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Faculty Supervisor Dr. Finney Cherian at 519-253-3000, ext. 3958.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research project will investigate the identities and efforts of third wave feminist activists, in the midst of their struggle to integrate women's studies into the secondary school curriculum in Ontario. These efforts have been enacted within the feminist organization, the Miss G_ Project.

This research will attempt to acknowledge how activity within the feminist movement has shaped the identities, goals and motives of each participant. Participants' experiences with and perceptions of, the educational system and the changes posited by this organization will be a primary focus. As such, specific attention will be drawn to their work within the Miss G_ Project.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Answer a few questions about your experiences with and views of feminist activism, social change and education in an individual one on one interview (for approximately one hour) with the researcher.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks and discomforts to participating in this study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

This research may benefit the academic community, as it expands the available research on third wave feminist activists in Canada and the possibility of women's studies in high school. It may also be beneficial, as it may inspire future research in these areas.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not be paid for participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

Once data is analyzed, it will be incorporated into my Masters thesis. Pseudonyms will be used in my thesis, when referring to ideas and/or themes noted in interview data. Audio tapes and transcriptions of these tapes will be destroyed at the completion of my thesis.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. Once data is collected, you do have the option of removing the data collected from you from the study, if contact is made with the researcher within one month of data collected.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

Research Findings will be available to you through an e-mail attachment that will be sent to you once data analysis is complete.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

This data may be used in subsequent studies.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3916; e-mail: lbunn@uwindsor.ca.

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix E

Letter of Consent



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: **FEMINIST ACTIVISM, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE: THIRD WAVE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Lacey Lanigan, a Masters student, from the faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The results from this study will contribute to a Masters thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Faculty Supervisor Dr. Finney Cherian at 519-253-3000, ext. 3958.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

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This research will attempt to acknowledge how activity within the feminist movement has shaped the identities, goals and motives of each participant. Participants' experiences with and perceptions of, the educational system and the changes posited by this organization will be a primary focus. As such, specific attention will be drawn to their work within the Miss G_ Project.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Answer a few questions about your experiences with and views of feminist activism, social change and education in an individual one on one interview (for approximately one hour) with the researcher.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks and discomforts to participating in this study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

This research may benefit the academic community, as it expands the available research on third wave feminist activists in Canada and the possibility of women's studies in high school. It may also be beneficial, as it may inspire future research in these areas.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not be paid for participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

Once data is analyzed, it will be incorporated into my Masters thesis. Pseudonyms will be used in my thesis, when referring to ideas and/or themes noted in interview data. Audio tapes and transcriptions of these tapes will be destroyed at the completion of my thesis.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. Once data is collected, you do have the option of removing the data collected from you from the study, if contact is made with the researcher within one month of data collected.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

Research Findings will be available to you through an e-mail attachment that will be sent to you once data analysis is complete.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

This data may be used in subsequent studies.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3916; e-mail: lbunn@uwindsor.ca.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject

Signature of Subject

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix FLetter of Consent for Audio Recording**CONSENT FOR AUDIO TAPING**

Research Subject Name:

Title of the Project: Feminist Activism, Education and Social Change: Third Wave Feminist Perspectives

I consent to the audio-taping of interviews.

I understand these are voluntary procedures and that I am free to withdraw at any time by requesting that the taping be stopped. I also understand that my name will not be revealed to anyone and that taping will be kept confidential. Tapes are filed by number only and store in a locked cabinet.

I understand that confidentiality will be respected and the viewing of materials will be for professional use only.

(Research Subject)

(Date)

VITA AUCTORIS

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