

**A Green Utopia:
The Legacy of Petra Kelly.**

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For M.

Introduction

This thesis will introduce Petra Karin Kelly, former Green politician and campaigner for social justice and environmental issues to an English-speaking audience as an important figure in the development of ideas relating to ecofeminism, nonviolence, and Green politics and utopias. Kelly, born in 1947 in Germany, spent the latter half of her childhood in the United States, and attended university there before returning to Europe. While working with the European Community in Brussels, Kelly became involved in grassroots politics in Germany and was one of the co-founders of the German green party, Die Grünen, (literally: the Greens) in 1979. She was to become a formidable politician through her passion for grassroots politics, nonviolence and feminism and her excellent leadership skills. Later ostracised by the party, due in part to her inability and unwillingness to conform to party rules, Kelly worked independently, giving speeches and promoting peace and the importance of human rights. However, at the age of 44, she was murdered by her partner, Gert Bastian, who then shot himself.

It should be noted that texts so far written on Petra Kelly have been essentially biographies, which, while encompassing much of her academic and political life, focus heavily upon her personal life, in particular her relationships with married men, and her long term relationship with former NATO General Gert Bastian.¹ Naturally, the terrible

¹ The two main texts, *Petra Kelly: Politikerin aus Betroffenheit* (Monika Sperr, C. Bertelsmann Verlag: München. 1983) and *The Life and Death of Petra Kelly* (Sara Parkin, Pandora: London 1994) have addressed the social and political influences upon Kelly's life and choices, both within and outside of politics. However, analysis of her speeches and publications lack academic depth and objectivity. It should be noted that this was not the aim of either biography, yet it also means that there is a lack of

circumstances of her death overshadowed the importance of her commitment to green politics and social issues. However, to focus too greatly upon the end to Kelly's life is to ignore her many achievements and her legacy. This dissertation therefore focuses little on Kelly's personal relationships except where it is relevant to the focus of the argument. Having established this, it is also important to note that Petra Kelly was an individual who did make very personal connections to her work, and as such, it is at times difficult to separate the personal from the political. Further, to do so would be fruitless, since it is this trait which allowed Kelly to constantly question her own values and those of others, and to foster relationships with individuals who represented important issues to both Kelly and Die Grünen.

Therefore, the aim of the dissertation is not to ignore the importance of personal matters, rather to ensure a professional approach towards them. For this reason, the focus of this sociopolitical and sociohistorical thesis is upon the elements of ecofeminism, nonviolence and utopia as they relate to Petra Kelly's politics, both within her role with Die Grünen and in her political life outside of German parliament. This direction is achieved by analysing primary texts by Kelly as well as others relevant to these topics, in addition to varied secondary sources. Petra Kelly began submitting her opinions for publication even before she left high school, and on her return to Europe she continued to publish widely on topics from children's cancer and the anti-nuclear movement to the freedom of Tibet and the politics of East and West. By her death, Kelly had written,

understanding and context for many of Kelly's views and philosophies. This indulgence should be redressed with this thesis.

compiled, contributed to and edited literally dozens of texts, in addition to her speeches and work in the German government.

While all of her publications have contributed to this thesis, for the purpose of this dissertation, the main texts used are those which focus on the areas of ecofeminism, nonviolence, and utopia. These concepts were areas of constant discussion both in Kelly's written word and in her speeches. As such, her opinions and stance on these issues are stated in detail in several incidences. Thus it is not only possible to determine Kelly's position on these issues but also to evaluate how her beliefs changed as she undertook parliamentary work and other activities.

In order to fully address these areas, the dissertation is divided into several chapters. Part One will provide a background on Kelly, focusing on elements of her childhood and early adulthood which influenced and shaped her political and personal values, beliefs and paths. Through this it is demonstrated that Kelly's family life was as much an influence upon her as the social, political and cultural events which occurred at this time, especially those of the late 1960s in the United States and the 1970s in Europe. This chapter also discusses the rise of Die Grünen, that is, the West German Greens, and the role Kelly played in the party's success, as well as her split with the party during the late 1980s. Particular emphasis is placed upon the influence of American style politics which Kelly experienced closehand while working with prevalent politicians during her time in Washington, and how this affected both her personal political development, as well as her interaction with German politics and politicians.

The second section of the dissertation will discuss Petra Kelly's politics with regards to ecofeminism, and will critically analyse her political perspective from within an ecofeminist framework. The question of Kelly's reluctance to label herself an ecofeminist will also be discussed, as will the importance of the influence of other feminists and ecofeminists on Kelly's politics and writing.

Following these two sections, the concept of nonviolence and its significance to Kelly's writing, speeches and political beliefs is introduced. Kelly's concept of nonviolence will be juxtaposed by two figures, Martin Luther King, Jr and Mohandas Gandhi, both of whom Kelly admired greatly and who were great influences upon her writing and her nonviolent beliefs. The broader principles of nonviolence will then be critically discussed with particular emphasis placed on Kelly's theory, thus evaluating the validity of Kelly's arguments.

Part Four evaluates Kelly's concept of utopia and its role within her politics and her vision of a green future. The foundations of utopia will be briefly explored through discussion of fundamental texts in order to define and establish the tradition upon which Kelly's theory is based. The idea of political utopia will also be discussed with reference to Kelly, drawing on references to other utopian theories, in particular those relevant to Kelly's background in American politics. However, theories of Bloch, Mannheim, as well as critiques of political utopia (Richard Saage, *Hat die politische Utopie eine Zukunft?* and Russell Jacoby's *The End of Utopia: Politics and Culture in an Age of*

Apathy) are also juxtaposed with Kelly's version of utopia. Finally, the theory of ecofeminist utopia will be analysed and juxtaposed with Kelly's utopia.

This thesis is the first attempt to map Kelly's beliefs in an academic fashion. Moreover, access to her Stasi files and information about the role she played in the peace movement in the German Democratic Republic guarantee a novel insight and originality. Petra Kelly's political and sociopolitical legacy has been forgotten all too soon. This thesis aims to remedy this and help to discover her writings for academic discourse, away from journalistic tendencies that thrive on sensationalism rather than Kelly's deeply intellectual approach to life. In particular, the reports contained in her Stasi files emphasise the depth of her commitment to peace, civil disobedience and her own utopia.

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Part One: The Personal and the Political.

Petra Kelly, green activist, politician and advocate for human rights, came from humble beginnings in southern Germany. The chapters in this section describe her background, the development of her political involvement and the episodes and incidents that shaped her personal and political life.

I. Petra Kelly: Beginnings

Petra Kelly was born Petra Karin Lehmann in 1947 in Günzburg, a small town on the Danube in the southern state of Bavaria, Germany. Her father, Richard Siegfried Lehmann, had been a prisoner of war under the Americans, and had met Petra's mother, Margarete-Marianne Birle, in a correspondence programme between prisoners of war and local schoolgirls.¹ Originally from Dresden, Lehmann wished to move to the West when the war ended, however, this was only permitted if he could prove a permanent living arrangement. Marianne and her mother, Kunigunde, invited him to stay with them. Marianne Birle and Richard Lehmann soon fell in love and in May 1947, they were married. Their daughter Petra was born in late November of the same year. However, the marriage was not to last; Lehmann left when Petra was six years old and in 1954, Petra's parents divorced.² Petra would never see her father again, and it has been argued that the lack of a father figure at this time had a great impact on her for the rest of her life. After the divorce, Petra was brought up by her mother and grandmother. In order to support her daughter financially, Marianne went to work, while Kunigunde looked after

¹Parkin, Sara. *The Life and Death of Petra Kelly*. Pandora: London 1994. p 23.

² *Ibid.*

the small child. This close contact with two strong women was to be a great influence on Petra later, both in the private and the political realm. She admired both for their strength of character and independence:

Omi (a German term of endearment of 'grandmother') was always extremely courageous. As a war widow, even through the hardest times, she managed to take care of my mother and me. [...] My mother has also been a very important influence. She needed no men to help her determine her life and her future. After an unhappy marriage and divorce in Günzburg, she set an example of integrity and independence. She too got much of her energy from Omi.³

Kunigunde was very interested in political and current affairs, and even at a young age, Petra was introduced to this interest; her grandmother would read her the paper and explain the articles, even before she began school.⁴

Petra spent her first school years at a Catholic school run by nuns, and as a small girl, was so influenced by the dedication and discipline of the order, that she wanted to become a nun herself, so that she could "play guitar and sing to the children in Africa, while, at the same time, trying to feed them and help them be healthy again."⁵ Her faith in the church at this time was complete; the experience of her first communion, however, began to rock these solid foundations and cause her to question the power and the laws of the institution. While she happily took part in the festive ceremony, her mother, a divorcee, was not permitted to attend. "Die Zurückweisung der Mutter verstörte sie. Zwar glaubte sie weiterhin an die Institution der katholischen Kirche, doch nicht mehr mit absoluter

³ Kelly, Petra K. *Thinking Green!* Parallax Press: Berkeley, California 1994, p 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Gewißheit.”⁶ Much later, Petra Kelly, disillusioned with the patriarchal leadership in the church which ignored and discriminated against the needs of women, would leave the Catholic church by writing a lengthy letter to the Pope citing her concern about these issues.⁷

In 1958, when Petra Lehmann was 11 years old, her mother married an American officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Edward Kelly. For his part, John Kelly openly accepted and welcomed his stepdaughter, and Petra was also keen to have a father figure again. Yet she was averse to adoption as that would have meant losing her German nationality, something which she was adamant to keep. She chose instead to take on John Kelly’s name, but remain his stepdaughter.⁸ Soon after the marriage, Petra’s half sister, Grace Patricia, was born. The family then moved to the United States, as John Kelly was due to take up a position stationed at Fort Benning near Columbus, Georgia. Petra Kelly’s half brother, John Lee, was born after the family’s arrival in the United States.

⁶ Sperr, Monika. *Petra Kelly: Politikerin aus Betroffenheit*. C. Bertelsmann Verlag: München. 1983 p48 [The exclusion of the mother disturbed her. She still believed in the institution of the Catholic church, but no longer had absolute confidence in it].

⁷ Parkin, p 62-64. There is some dispute as to when Kelly left the Catholic church. In an interview with *Viva*, in 1988, Kelly states that she left the church by writing a letter to the Pope when she was 16. This would have been in 1963, however Parkin writes that after the death of Grace, Kelly was ritualistically religious, and did not leave the church until 1980. Furthermore, Kelly organised an audience with the Pope on Grace’s behalf in 1968. With access to Kelly’s papers, transcripts, and books, and personal anecdotes from Kelly’s friends, Parkin’s conclusion seems plausible. However, research conducted by the *Stasi* (East German Secret Police) indicates that Kelly left the church in 1969 (MfS-Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung Nr. 26, BStU Zentralarchiv, 14. Oktober 1983). As this document was part of a dossier on Kelly correctly citing major incidents and political milestones in her life, this is considered to be the most plausible date.

⁸ Parkin, p 28-29.

Petra Kelly adapted well and quickly to the new country. She threw herself into mastering the language, and began to achieve high grades in most subjects.⁹ Not content to merely excel in academic work, Kelly was also involved in the school council, on the organising committee of the school dance, and in the cheer squad. The interest in politics which had been fostered by her grandmother continued. Geographically, Columbus was situated between Atlanta and Montgomery, the birth of black civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King. Even during her teens, Kelly was becoming interested in human rights and equality.¹⁰ Martin Luther King was later to become one of her mentors, and her passion for nonviolent politics would be based upon his legacy.¹¹

In 1963, John Kelly was sent to Korea – news which upset his fifteen-year-old stepdaughter considerably, despite the war having been over for a number of years. She had begun to take an interest in her stepfather’s job, and discussed it with him frequently. At this time, her fears were more for John Kelly’s safety than motivated by political interest, but it led Petra Kelly to find out more about the background of the war in Korea as well as the growing conflict in Vietnam.¹² She was beginning to develop what would be a lifelong, fervent dedication to the cause of peace.

After John Kelly’s return from Korea, the family moved to Hampton, Virginia. At her new school, Petra Kelly again became heavily involved in both her schoolwork and in extracurricular activities. She worked on school publications, wrote for the school

⁹ Parkin, p 29.

¹⁰ Interview “On the Issues” in *Lebe, als müsstest du heute sterben: Texte und Interviews*. Zebulon Verlag: Düsseldorf 1997 p 15.

¹¹ This is discussed in detail part three of the dissertation, “Nonviolence and Politics”.

¹² *Ibid*, p 30.

newspaper, and was involved in various clubs. She also had a position on the school radio show, in which she discussed “Themen wie Frauenrechte, Demokratie und Menschenrechte.”¹³

A good student, Kelly matriculated from Hampton High School in the summer of 1966.¹⁴ In the autumn of the same year, she began her studies in political science at the School of International Service, part of the American University, in Washington. The choice of this university over others was not merely because it was situated in Washington, the capital city and home of many international diplomats, but also because of its close proximity to her family in Hampton. It was just as Kelly was beginning her tertiary studies that her younger sister, Grace, was diagnosed with cancer.¹⁵ The family was devastated, not least Petra Kelly. In order to provide better treatment for Grace, the family moved back to Germany while Petra Kelly remained in Washington to continue her studies.

The two biographies written to date about Kelly, one in German by Monika Sperr and the other in English by Sara Parkin, describe her student life differently. Perhaps one reason for this was the fact that Parkin’s book was published after Kelly’s death, while *Politikerin aus Betroffenheit* was completed early in Kelly’s career, with most of the information gained from Kelly herself. In this sense, Kelly had “control” over the image of her as portrayed included in Sperr’s biography. In *Politikerin aus Betroffenheit*, Sperr describes Kelly as a dedicated, tireless student, noting that Kelly threw herself into her

¹³ Interview “On the Issues”, p 15. [Topics such as women’s rights, democracy and human rights.]

¹⁴ Sperr, Monika. *Politikerin aus Betroffenheit*, p55

¹⁵ In *Politikerin aus Betroffenheit*, Monika Sperr writes that Grace fell ill in August 1966, just as Kelly was beginning her studies at university. However, in both *Lebe, als müsstest du heute sterben*, and *The Life and Death of Petra Kelly*, the time is given as early 1967.

studies as she had done in high school. This was not only due to a fascination with the material, but also to the knowledge that she needed to win a scholarship to financially support herself during the rest of her degree.¹⁶ In *The Life and Death of Petra Kelly*, however, Parkin dispels the myth that Kelly merely devoted her life to her studies. She agrees that Kelly was highly dedicated, winning both a scholarship to pay for her tuition for the remaining 3 years of her degree and an award for Most Outstanding Foreign Woman Student at the end of her first year at University. Yet she notes that there were also times when Kelly simply enjoyed being young by writing about:

... tales of a more frivolous Petra [...] [Close friend] Adam Stolpen [...] remembers a party at which she turned up wearing an 'outrageous' pair of yellow hot pants and thigh-high white boots. He also recounted his first meeting with Petra, when, with a group of students celebrating the birthday of another friend, Bruce French, he had sneaked into the Walter Reid hospital a few days after Petra had had her kidney operation. She had shrieked, they had tried to hide, and everyone had got into trouble. Bruce French's sister Susan was Petra's best friend and she recalls many nights in Anderson dorm where studying was leavened by midnight feasts.¹⁷

Petra Kelly also became involved with the university student union. When she first had first enrolled at the university, there was no representation for foreign students on the student union board and Kelly campaigned for the position:

Sie führte [ihren ersten Wahlkampf] unter dem Motto *Vote for a strong women*. Für die Wahlplakate liess sie sich auf einen schweren Motorrad photographieren, obwohl sie weder einen

¹⁶ Sperr, p 70. It is unclear why Kelly's stepfather could not pay for her tertiary education after the first year. However, the relocation to Germany and the treatment for Grace's cancer would have been expensive and this meant that it was necessary for Petra Kelly to find other means of financing her studies.

¹⁷ Parkin, p 44.

Führerschein besass noch fahren konnte. Winkend hielt sie eine Blume in der Hand. Aber nicht für *flower*, sondern für *woman power* kämpften sie und ihre Anhänger, und das zu der Zeit der Hippies, der weltweit ausschwärmenden Blumenkinder, als es eine feministische Bewegung in nennenswertem Umfang noch nicht gab. Die verwegene Herausforderung hatte Erfolg: mit überwältigender Mehrheit wurde Petra Kelly in den Studentensenat gewählt. Dort blieb sie drei Jahre lang.¹⁸

This demonstrates Kelly's understanding of the importance of stereotypes and the impact of symbols. The motorbike picture highlighted her determination to tackle traditional male stereotypes with a new approach – peace and feminism. A link was maintained to nature, and moreover, to the fragile and the beautiful, starkly juxtaposed with the manufactured steel of the motorbike. The slogan on the picture, “Vote for a strong woman”, was also significant. Choosing ‘strong’ as the adjective for woman can be seen as a deliberate tactic by Kelly to emphasise the changes she wanted to introduce, as well as to reiterate verbally the image of the woman on the motorbike. It was a means of arguing that physical strength was not the only kind of strength there was. Kelly was also completely aware how effective a symbol could be when used in the appropriate context. This is demonstrated continuously throughout her political career. One example is her appearance in the famous Mutlangen blockade¹⁹ in 1983 protesting against the arms race, wearing a soldier's helmet decorated with flowers. Later, at a meeting in Russia with Russian Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, Kelly wore a T-shirt which read “Arms into

¹⁸ Sperr, p 64. [She ran [her first campaign] with the slogan *Vote for a strong woman*. For the election poster, she had a photo taken of her sitting on a large motorbike, even though she possessed neither a licence, nor could she ride it. She holding a flower in her hand and winking. But it wasn't for *flower power*, rather for *woman power* for which she and her supporters fought, and this was at the time of the hippies, when there was as such no feminist movement. The effort was successful: Petra Kelly was voted into the student senate with an overwhelming majority. She stayed there for three years.]

¹⁹ The Mutlangen Blockade occurred at the city of the same name.

Ploughshares”.²⁰ Despite her youth, Kelly already realised the necessity of taking chances in order to make a difference in politics, and most importantly, to bring to the attention of those who could make the changes the issues which were of such importance to her.

It is unclear where Kelly developed her predilection for symbols and slogans. Her early Catholic education would have emphasised religious symbols and rituals which quite obviously influenced her as she was growing up, to the point that she wanted to become a nun and make religion her life. However, the significance of the era in which she grew up in America cannot be underestimated. The 1960s were a political coming of age of the United States, and Petra Kelly, an intelligent and concerned teenager, was duly influenced by the political and social events which shaped this era. This was the time of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., both very public figures and excellent rhetoricians, and both of whom used symbolism to their advantage. John F. Kennedy caught the hearts of Germans – and of Petra Kelly – when he gave his famous “Ich bin ein Berliner” speech in June 1963; Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a dream” in August of the same year verbalised the sense of hope and optimism for an end to inequality for black Americans. The tools of rhetoric as employed by these politicians were ones which Kelly attempted to use later during her own political career.²¹ She understood that such phrases of popular appeal could also serve her own political goals.

²⁰ *Thinking Green!*, p 141, in an afterword by Mark Herstagaard. Other such political “stunts” include Kelly presenting Erich Honecker, former Secretary-General of the GDR, a range of gifts, from a “Swords Into Ploughshares” symbol to artwork by Bärbel Bohley (peace activist, at that time in prison in East Germany) and a music record by East German musician-in-exile, Wolf Biermann, at that time living in West Germany. (Sept 1987, see file 30135 Bd V). It is also reported that at this meeting Kelly wore a t-shirt upon which “Glasnost” was written.

²¹ The relevance of this to Kelly’s experience with party politics in Germany is discussed below.

A further example which had symbolic impact on Petra Kelly during this period was her experience in the Czech Republic in 1968 at the time of the Soviet invasion. Kelly was 20 years old and holidaying in Prague with her grandmother when the Soviet tanks invaded, and was kept with other tourists under house arrest in the hotel where they were staying. In an article published in the *Würzburger Volksblatt* after her return to Germany, Kelly described both her own fear at the uncertainty of the situation, as well as the obvious distress of the Czech people. However, she also wrote of the commitment of the Czechs to Dubcek and their sovereignty:

Mit unbewegten Gesichtern saßen die Russen auf ihren "eisernen Thron", als junge, fahnenschwenkende Tschechen auf einem Lastwagen durch die Straße vorbeifuhren. Sie riefen DUBCEK... Mit dem Mut der Verzweiflung rasten sie durch die Stadt. Andere Tollkühne rannten mit der Fahne auf die Panzer zu: "Raus mit euch!" Einzelne, ob jung oder alt, schlenderten stolz mit dem blau-weiß-roten Dreieck an uns vorbei.²²

Parkin argues that such experiences began to shape Kelly into a woman who made "the directest of connections between her personal experiences and her public politics, and vice versa."²³ The boldness which was to distinguish Kelly from other politicians in her later political career, especially those from major political parties, also provided her with

²² "Kommt bald nach Prag zurück", in *Würzburger Volksblatt*, 26th August, 1968, as reproduced in Sperr, Monika. *Petra Kelly: Politikerin aus Betroffenheit*. p 80. [With faces void of emotion, the Russians sat on their "iron thrones" as young, flag-waving Czechs drove through the streets on a truck, ... They shouted, DUBCEK. ... With the courage of the despairing they raced through the city. Other daredevils with flags ran up to the tanks: "Get out!" Some young, some old, strolled proudly with the blue, white and red triangle [flag] past us].

²³ *Ibid* p50-1. This philosophy was not unique to Kelly; the concept of "the personal is political" had been a popular slogan in the second wave feminist movement. It is credited to Carol Hanisch, in *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation* (Shulamith Firestone (ed) 1970). See also Hanisch, "The Personal is Political" in *The Radical Therapist*, Jerome Agel, (ed), Ballentine Books: New York, 1971.

opportunities as a student. Her involvement in student politics, particularly in her capacity as representative for foreign students, caught the attention of the media, who invited her to appear on a talk show with other foreign students to meet Hubert Humphrey.²⁴ Humphrey was the Vice President under Lyndon Johnson, the President who had succeeded John F. Kennedy after his assassination. Unlike Kennedy, Johnson was persisting with committing more US troops to the escalating war in Vietnam. Anti-war sentiment was growing in the United States, and Kelly had informed herself well about both the Vietnamese history, the people, and the war and its impact upon them. She took the opportunity to ask the unscripted question of Hubert Humphrey's position on the war. "Mit ihrem Widerspruch gewann sie die Aufmerksamkeit dieses entschiedenen Demokraten, mehr Gefangener der offiziellen Vietnampolitik seines Landes als ihr Vollzieher."²⁵

After this initial meeting, Kelly wrote to Humphrey and they began a friendly exchange of letters. Later, Kelly was to assist Humphrey as a volunteer in his campaign for the presidency. Kelly had been volunteering for Robert Kennedy at the time of his assassination. She had first heard Robert Kennedy speak in December 1967 and was convinced that his political promises were more than mere politician's rhetoric. "Ein schwärmerischer Backfisch war sie nie, aber dieser Mann faszinierte sie. Er war jung und berühmt, und er symbolisierte für sie das andere, das bessere Amerika: die Aufforderung zum Kampf im Namen der Menschenwürde für mehr Solidarität und

²⁴ Sperr, p 65.

²⁵ *Ibid.* [With her breaking of the rules, she received the attention of this committed Democrat, who was more of a prisoner than a supporter of the official Vietnam politics of his country.]

soziale Gerechtigkeit.”²⁶ Above all, Robert Kennedy was against the Vietnam War, and promised to bring about its end, should he succeed in his bid for the presidency.

This exposure to American politics and experience in the political process was to give Petra Kelly valuable insight into how the American political sphere functioned and also into the means of succeeding in the arena. After Robert Kennedy’s assassination, Hubert Humphrey took his place as candidate, and Kelly invested tremendous time and energy in the campaign. She believed strongly in both the worthiness and possibility of Humphrey as president. However, Parkin notes that Humphrey was always at a disadvantage and as such, Humphrey’s loss in the election was devastating for Kelly. It demonstrated the darker side of politics: the male domination, “the sometimes ruthless exploitation of people’s energy, time, and goodwill”²⁷, and also the culture of violence which had led to the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., and John and Robert Kennedy. However, rather than become jaded by this, Petra Kelly saw these negative aspects as opportunities to instigate changes.

One method of doing this was to write letters. Whereas other students may have complained about the authorities or participated in protest marches, Petra Kelly instead wrote to the individuals who she believed could change the situation, often bypassing the traditional channels. Whether it was because they admired her initiative, or were simply impressed by her dedication to the cause, the recipients of Petra Kelly’s letters often

²⁶ Sperr, p 67. [She had never been a teenager prone to infatuation, but this man fascinated her. He was young and famous, and to Kelly he symbolised the other, better America: the call to fight in the name of humanity for more solidarity and social justice.]

²⁷ *Ibid* p 47

responded to her requests. An example of this is her correspondence with Robert Kennedy, when he was senator for New York. The scholarship Kelly had received as a result of her efforts in her first academic year at university had been withdrawn since American citizenship was a prerequisite for holding a scholarship. Afraid that she may have to leave university due to financial difficulties, Kelly wrote to the senator asking for his help. He invited her to visit him, but before this could take place, she met him in person at a function for foreign students. He encouraged her to find alternative, private means of support rather than rely on academic scholarships: “Er freute sich, sie zu sehen und gab ihr Tips. Existentielle Geldnöte kannte sie von da an nicht mehr, fanden sich doch selbst anonyme Spender, die das intellektuelle deutsche Fräuleinwunder selbstlos unterstützten.”²⁸

Later that year, wanting desperately to spend Christmas with her ill sister and the other members of her family, Kelly wrote to the German chancellor, Kurt Georg Kiesinger: “...aus finanziellen Gründen könne sie nicht nach Deutschland zu ihrer krebskranken Schwester, dem Bruder und den Eltern fliegen, und das zu Weihnachten!”²⁹ Her letter was passed on to the relevant minister, and on the 6th December 1967, Kelly was informed that she would receive financial assistance in coming to Germany for Christmas. This was especially important to Kelly as Grace was still seriously ill with cancer. She was receiving treatment in Heidelberg but was not recovering as well as had been anticipated. In 1968, hoping for a miracle, and at the request of her sister, Kelly

²⁸ Sperr, p 73. [He was happy to see her and gave her advice. From then on, she no longer had concerns about money. There were anonymous donors who were glad to give generous support to this intellectual German wonder.]

²⁹ Sperr, p71. [For financial reasons, she could not fly home to Germany to visit her ill sister, her brother and her parents – and this was Christmas!]

wrote another letter, this time to the Pope Paul IV and requested an audience for Grace and the family. They travelled to Rome in June to receive the Pope's blessing and prayers.³⁰

Such examples illustrate Kelly's refusal to simply accept the status quo. She was unwilling to let issues slide, especially when they involved someone or a cause about which she cared deeply. They also demonstrate her ability and passion to take the initiative when an opportunity arose. Kelly had discovered that help and support was often available if one only requested it. Moreover, her experiences had highlighted the empowering nature of action versus inaction, and this became characteristic of Kelly even during her time in the Bundestag, where bureaucracy could often hinder such innovation.³¹ A further example is the International Week she organised while at the American University. Kelly instigated the event in 1967, after realising that, while Washington was an international city with several countries and cultures represented, little was done to promote practical ways in which better international and crosscultural relationships could be built.³² Kelly contacted individuals both inside and outside the university, working to create a large multicultural event. Despite this, the first International Week was a low key affair, which disappointed Kelly. She had imagined more visitors and a greater response from both invited guests and students. However, just as she had done after the disappointment of the Hubert Humphrey's election defeat, Kelly rallied together a committee to ensure that the next International Week would be better. The second International Week was indeed successful, with a far more varied programme

³⁰ Parkin, p 49.

³¹ This will be discussed in greater depth in part four of the dissertation, "Petra Kelly's Utopia".

³² Parkin, p 52.

and greater attendance.³³ After this, the International Week went from strength to strength. 2003 Director of Alumni Affairs at American University, Carmen Iezzi, writes that the International Week “has evolved into a series of events that the SIS Undergraduate Council put on throughout the school year. These events include a Latin Mardi Gras celebration, an international dinner with foods from around the world, cultural and dance exhibitions, and prominent speakers on current events.”³⁴

This eagerness to bring people together, while perhaps motivated by a need for company, was still largely driven by selflessness. Essentially it was for others that Kelly worked so hard, at first to promote peace and understanding and then for Grace’s sake, both before and after she died. Despite this, there is some contention about Kelly’s early relationship with Grace. Sperr hints that there may have been some jealousy on Kelly’s part when the baby was born.³⁵ Parkin argues that in some ways, Kelly’s commitment to Grace’s memory and subsequently to research into children’s cancer was to some degree motivated by feelings of guilt about her childhood jealousy. For her own part, Kelly only spoke of the affection she had felt for her younger stepsister when she was alive, and the immense sadness she had felt when Grace died. In speeches, publications and conversations, Kelly expressed the connection she felt with Grace and emphasised Grace’s courage throughout her suffering. She had a strong conviction that her stepsister was with her in spirit.³⁶ Ultimately, it is not important from which feelings the motivation stemmed, rather that the faith and drive Kelly gained from the experience of

³³ *Ibid*, p 52-53.

³⁴ Personal correspondence, 7 April, 2003.

³⁵ Sperr, p 51.

³⁶ *Thinking Green!* pp 3, 160; *Fighting for Hope*, p 92-3; *Lebe, als müsstest du heute sterben*, pp 15, 40, 205, 213.

Grace's death was a trait which would remain with her and encourage her in everything she undertook throughout her life. In fact, one of the immediate effects of Grace's death was Kelly's increased interest and concern regarding the effects of radiation on the human body, and the seemingly flippant regard for human health by the nuclear industry.

The fear of nuclear war and distrust of nuclear weapons which motivated protests in the 1950s had evolved into a stronger movement which questioned the validity of the push for the unchecked advancement of science. In 1962, Rachel Carson, an American chemist, published *Silent Spring*.³⁷ A bestseller, the book signalled a definitive change in the way people viewed the world: everything was interconnected, and thus products which could kill or affect plants and animals could also have devastating effects on humans. The text not only chronicled in detail the dangers associated with the use of broad spectrum chemicals and radioactive materials, it was also written in language which made the information accessible to the general public, appealing to them to take action and instigate change. Through the information *Silent Spring* provided, people were empowered with knowledge which had been previously unavailable. Moreover, Carson's book challenged the public to question the decisions being made at government level with regards to the kinds of products which were used in industry and agriculture. It could be argued that *Silent Spring* provided the momentum for the environmental and anti-nuclear movements which were to develop during the 1960s and 1970s.³⁸

³⁷ Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Fawcett Crest: New York, 1962.

³⁸ It is not the intention here to disregard other influential texts at that time, or since. Economist EF Schumacher was also instrumental in explaining the pressures of the modern lifestyle on both humans and the planet. (See, *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*, Sphere Books: London (this edition) 1974). However, the accessible language did make Carson's book one of the first of its kind, and has been followed by others such as *Silent Spring Revisited* (edited by Gino J. Marco, Robert M.

As this movement gained momentum, Petra Kelly, already interested in the issues it raised, began to question the cause of her sister's cancer. She was especially interested in the cause of her the cancer, arguably exacerbated by the radiotherapy Grace received as a part of her treatment. Shortly after Grace's death, Kelly met Ralph Nader, who was later to become the coordinator of the anti-nuclear process and prominent US Green politician. At the meeting the connections between exposure to radiation and the development of cancer were widely discussed:

Was ist Radioaktivität? Was tut sie dem Menschen an? Kann die Menschheit mit der Atomkraft leben? Alle Forschungen beweisen: nein! Die Risiken waren nicht nur zu groß, sie waren überhaupt nicht abzuschätzen: Mutationen in der Pflanzen-, in der Tierwelt und die Gefährdung des Menschen in bisher nicht vorstellbarem Maße! Welche Wege gab es aus der Sackgasse heraus? Solche Fragen beschäftigten sie intensiv.³⁹

The added significance of this period is the connection Kelly, like Carson, made between environmental issues and the quality of human life. This association of human rights and social justice with environmental or green issues became a hallmark of her politics. It was this which set Kelly and others like her apart from those individuals who promoted purely environmental issues. This connection made Green politics real and accessible to many people.

Hollingworth, and William Durham, published in 1987) and Sandra Steingraber's *Living Downstream: An Ecologist Looks At Cancer and the Environment*, published 1997)

³⁹ Sperr, p 88. [What is radioactivity? What does it do to people? Can humanity live with nuclear power? All research indicates that it can't! The risks were not only too great, they were not even conceivable: mutation in the plant and animal world and danger for humans in previously unimaginable proportions! Where was the way out of this dead-end? She concentrated intensively on these questions.]

In 1971, Kelly graduated from the American University with a Bachelor of Arts ‘cum laude’. In her final year there, Kelly received a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, worth ten thousand dollars, a condition of which was that she teach for a year at the university.⁴⁰ At the end of this period, she elected to continue her studies in Amsterdam, at the European Institute, with a dissertation on European integration.⁴¹ On completion of the project, she was presented with documentation which proved that she had now passed the equivalent of a Masters degree.⁴² Kelly had already been offered a research scholarship with the European Community in Brussels, and after obtaining her qualification, the position was made permanent. Kelly would work for the EC for the next ten years, finally leaving in 1983, yet she did not restrict herself to mere civil servant work. During this decade, Kelly became involved with the political activism which was to lead eventually to the founding of Die Grünen. Both Parkin and Sperr note that at this time, Kelly worked extremely hard, especially towards the end of the 1970s, when her involvement with grassroots politics, including the BBU⁴³ – or citizens’ initiative – movement, was beginning to occupy more and more of her time. “... she was spending most of her weekends (and even some weekday nights) in Germany, she would sometimes work beyond the point of exhaustion, but by and large, she found some superhuman strength and, when she was there, did her EC job.”⁴⁴ In fact, Kelly was largely unhappy in her position with the EC; while a steady, paid job, it was also very bureaucratic, something

⁴⁰ Kelly, Petra K. *Nonviolence Speaks to Power*. Centre for Global Nonviolence Planning Project: Honolulu 1992, p 162.

⁴¹ Kelly’s thesis was titled: “Die Entwicklungsgeschichte der privaten europäischen Organisationen, die zur Idee der europäischen Einigung beigetragen haben – Europäischer Bundesstaat: Eine Illusion?”

⁴² *Fighting for Hope*, p 119.

⁴³ Bundesverband Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz. See below for detailed explanation.

⁴⁴ Parkin, p 76.

which did not suit her gregarious and energetic nature. Her involvement with the BBU and other organisations,⁴⁵ as well as joining the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands⁴⁶ not only provided her with an outside interest, but also a valuable background which she would later bring to her politics.

II. The Anti-Nuclear Movement: Foundations of Grassroots Politics

In Europe – and in particular, in Germany – during the 1970s, citizen-based activism against the establishment of nuclear power stations was beginning to gain momentum. The invention of the atomic bomb which was dropped on the Japanese cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima at the end of World War II had introduced the atomic age, and nuclear power was being hailed as the new clean energy. This development of nuclear energy coupled with the escalating Cold War and arms race between the United States and the USSR caused anxiety throughout the population. This is significant since it demonstrates that protest groups which formed due to this heightened fear of nuclear war did not comprise merely revolutionary students in search of a cause, as had been the perception during the 1960s. Rather, the protests of the 1970s represented a cross-section of the community. In Germany the threat appeared all the more genuine since many mid-range weapons were being placed by NATO on German soil. In order to fully explain the emergence of groups such as Citizens' Initiatives or Jungsozialisten (Jusos), which both evolved out of the anti-nuclear and anti-war movements, it is necessary to firstly

⁴⁵ Kelly was involved in several groups, including the German Peace Community Against War, the Humanist Union, and the Union Syndicate in Brussels. (see MfS-Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung Nr. 26, BStU Zentralarchiv, 14. Oktober 1983)

⁴⁶ "Social Democratic Party" (West German political party in the left spectrum).

understand the political and social culture which provided the conditions for such movements to begin.

The 1960s revolutions had the effect of encouraging people to question their political beliefs and standing. Through a combination of recession (1966-67) and the attempted introduction of emergency laws which would have given the government increased power in times of national emergency, questions began to arise with regards to the government's ability to provide the best leadership for the people.⁴⁷ Many began to question whether there could be alternative parties or groups which would better represent their needs and their beliefs. In their book, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond*, Andrei Markovits and Philip Gorski argue that there were several other reasons for the increased popularity of green issues both within and outside politics.

Firstly, the 1960s generation which was rebelling against its parents' generation considered the political environment to be one which favoured conformism. This led to demands for a more open, democratic government. There was also a change in class structure from "Fordism" to "post-Fordism" as Markovits and Gorski explain

... the shift from the previous system of regimented assembly-line mass production, often referred to as "Fordism" to a more group-oriented and flexible manner of production called "post-Fordism" entailed a concomitant shift within the working class. "Classical" or "Fordist" workers – mainly blue-collar, skilled, male in heavy industries – became less prominent at the cost of "post-Fordist" workers, comprised of professionals, clerical employees, and state-sector people. All these formed

⁴⁷ Markovits, Andrei and Gorski, Philip. *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond*. Pp 53,54.

what became known as the “new class” which, in its social composition, political aspirations and cultural expressions, was profoundly different from its “old” industrial predecessor. A new milieu of working-class politics emerged in the wake of the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism.”⁴⁸

It was from this post-Fordist class, with its different needs and aspirations, that the Greens would later draw a majority of their supporters and activists,⁴⁹ and which would form the basis of a trend towards the citizens’ initiative movement (BBU). As stated previously, student revolutions in the late 1960s were a catalyst for changes in the wider society. In addition, this new class to which Gorski and Markovits refer was educated and opinionated. They also lived under the threat of a nuclear war which could have been instigated by one or both sides in the Cold War, between which Germans felt themselves caught. Not only was the country divided into East and West, but the NATO missiles which were to be stationed in West Germany embroiled them in the conflict regardless of which side they supported.

At this time the public curiosity and awareness of scientific advances – particularly in the areas of chemical and nuclear science – which had been sparked in the early 1960s and encouraged by books like *Silent Spring*, was beginning to grow. In particular, questions were beginning to emerge regarding the safety of nuclear science and nuclear power stations. Protests at existing and proposed power stations were beginning to gain momentum, and increasingly, citizens’ initiative groups were being established as more concerned individuals joined together to attempt to instigate changes. Soon there were so many groups that in 1972 an umbrella organisation, the Bundesverband Bürgerinitiativen

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p 3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p 3.

Umweltschutz (BBU) was formed to coordinate them. Having already formed her opinions about nuclear power and the possible dangers of radiation on both humans and the natural environment, Kelly became involved in 1975 with the citizens' initiative movement in Germany, despite still living and working in Brussels.

The event which ultimately set the movement in motion was the protest at Wyhl, in Baden-Württemberg, Germany. Other protests in other areas had already taken place, however the difference in this case was the magnitude of the protest and the international attention it created; Wyhl was the site of a proposed nuclear power station which would be situated quite near the borders of Switzerland and France.⁵⁰ Kelly's speech at the protest at Wyhl focused on the experiences of Grace, and Kelly's subsequent interest in nuclear energy and its repercussions for the health of the population.⁵¹ The protest at Wyhl not only signalled the expansion of the BBU and the anti-nuclear movement, but also the beginning of greater involvement for Petra Kelly with the organisation. While this may have been due to the fact that in this context she was able to meet and network with others who held similar beliefs, it was also due to the nature of the protest itself. Parkin notes that Wyhl "became famous as an example of the 'perfect' demonstration. Consensus, nonviolence and a strict no-political-party rule were the guiding principles. The conservative winegrowers worked hand-in-hand with housewives and the whole rag-bag of left-wing anti-nuclear campaigners."⁵² This was precisely the kind of situation which appealed to Petra Kelly: it fitted exactly into her notion of nonviolent protest. In 1977, she was elected to the board of the BBU.

⁵⁰ Parkin, p 80.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, p 86.

Towards the end of the 1970s, Kelly began to spend more and more time in Germany, leading, as Parkin writes, “not so much a double life as two parallel full-time lives.”⁵³ In 1978 she travelled as a representative of the BBU to Japan on the invitation of Gensuikin, to their congress against atomic energy.⁵⁴ While the conference was organised by like-minded individuals from Gensuikin, Kelly was shocked by the seemingly blatant disregard by government and industry for the memory of the thousands who died as a result of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. She believed that Japan had, like Europe, missed the opportunity to learn from mistakes and build “eine zivile, friedliche und dezentrale Gesellschaft”⁵⁵ after the war. Japan demonstrated to Kelly how easily countries could gain great economic advances at the detriment of the environment and of many individuals. She saw a country which was economically rich, yet for many, especially those who had been affected by radiation, the affluence of their country made little difference to their lives. Furthermore, she was appalled that the leaders of a nation that had been through such horror would promote the ‘peaceful’ use of atomic energy.⁵⁶

Thus the 1970s were profoundly educational for Kelly. She was invited by the Railways Union and the Australian Peace Movement to Australia in 1977. There she gave speeches in support of the anti-uranium movement which was prevalent in Australia at the time, and attacked the pro-uranium stance of Australian Council of Trade Unions

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Sperr, p 119. Gensuikin, a Japanese organisation which draws on labour unions, radiation victim support groups and sympathetic political parties, is an anti-nuclear movement which was formed in 1965 to promote peace and an end to nuclear weapons. (see <http://www.gensuikin.org>)

⁵⁵ *Ibid* p120 [a civil, peaceful and decentralised society.]

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p119-121.

leader, Bob Hawke, who would later become Prime Minister of Australia. Kelly was already at this time deeply involved with the union movements in both Germany and Ireland.⁵⁷ She believed that there were gains to be made from educating this section of the population with regards to the potential dangers associated with nuclear energy. Typical of her grassroots democratic approach, Kelly refused to discuss such matters only with the intellectual element within the anti-nuclear and peace movements; this was an issue which should concern the whole population. For this reason, Kelly also spoke at various protests and demonstrations throughout Europe as well as in the United States during this period. Through this she not only gained respect for her skills as an orator, but also for her careful research about the topics at hand and the relevance to local political and social culture. In both Ireland and Australia in particular, her understanding and knowledge of the local issues won her many friends and loyal supporters.⁵⁸ During this time, she published widely, writing on issues ranging from nuclear energy and children's cancer to the power of nonviolence.

The progression to politics therefore seemed logical. Kelly was becoming increasingly involved with the BBU, in addition to her other appearances overseas, and the issues she spoke on were either political in nature, or had at least some political elements.

However, Kelly and many other Germans felt disillusioned by politics, and in particular, German politics, during the 1970s. Kelly herself had joined the SPD in 1972. The party was then led by Willy Brandt, whom she saw as a "Mann des Widerstandes."⁵⁹ In many

⁵⁷ This was due in part to her relationship with Irish Transport and General Workers' Union leader John Carroll.

⁵⁸ Parkin, p 81, 82.

⁵⁹ Sperr, p 68. [Man of resistance.]

ways, she idealised the party; it represented to her everything that was good about politics and democracy. It had also been the party of Rosa Luxemburg, whom Kelly had admired for her strength of character.⁶⁰ However, the reality of the fallibility of both human and nature and the political system could not compete with Kelly's idealised concept of the party, and Kelly left the party in 1978:

After ten years of Social Democrat/Liberal government in West Germany, those of us who stood outside the Chancellor's office with tears in our eyes and lighted torches in our hands on the night of Willy Brandt's election victory are now having to face facts: not even the smallest step has been taken towards reform, towards greater democracy. Our illusions are dead and gone.⁶¹

Another reason for her withdrawal was her dissatisfaction with the lack of commitment of the SPD to reducing arms and the (indirect) support they were giving to NATO.⁶² By this stage also, while Petra Kelly was less interested in Marxism or even in the Marcusean ideology which was gaining popularity, the "opt-out" movement had gained her attention.⁶³ This was a trend whereby citizens focused on decentralisation and self-sufficiency. Often people lived in communes and shunned government assistance or projects. It was an attempt to gain back a feeling of control over one's own life. This attitude was to be adopted to some extent with the formation of Die Grünen. Enforcing either power or revolution from above would never succeed in Kelly's opinion. Thus the

⁶⁰ *Thinking Green!* p 9 Rosa Luxemburg, was a prominent member of the SPD who was murdered in the 1919 Revolutions in Germany.

⁶¹ Kelly, Petra K. *Fighting for Hope* The Hogarth Press: London, 1984. pp 13-14. Kelly's use of the first person plural indicates that she believed that she was not alone in leaving the party. Indeed, there were many individuals who felt that the party was no longer representing their beliefs or interests, and who were later to become the founders of the Greens and other alternative political and nonpolitical groups.

⁶² Parkin notes that the SPD and its leader Willy Brandt later committed to rejecting the stationing of missiles, but would not definitively refuse to support NATO. (p 135)

⁶³ Parkin, p 85.

opt-out movement, as well as the strengthening BBU demonstrated to Kelly that grassroots democracy was the only way in which individuals could instigate real change.

Unfortunately, the nonviolent protest at Wyhl was not a blueprint for further protests towards the end of the 1970s, some of which began to degenerate into violent clashes with police. It was this lack of success which led some individuals to consider government as “a new arena in which to campaign.”⁶⁴ For some, this may have been the case, especially since Parkin also notes that it was revealed during the Wyhl protest that both the state Premier and Minister for Finance in Baden-Württemberg were on the boards of the companies supporting the construction of the nuclear plant.⁶⁵ Thus since corruption and duplicity existed at this high level, the only way to prevent dishonesty in parliament was from within the parliament itself.

Kelly’s justification for entering parliament stemmed from a number of personal experiences. Certainly she was disappointed with the performances of the major political parties, not least the SPD, in whom she had strongly believed. However, the dishonesty of politicians, political parties and industry was not new to her. Already when researching for her PhD in 1972, Kelly had discovered that the EC, for which she was working, appeared to favour more conservative organisations over more liberal or progressive companies in the distribution of its funding.⁶⁶ Thus by 1975 Kelly had become increasingly aware of the corruption which existed within government. Yet there was perhaps another reason Kelly gave her support to founding a new political party, due

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Parkin, p 72; Sperr p 94.

more to her private experiences with politics while still in America. Until then, Petra Kelly had had varying experiences with both politicians and politics. She had assisted in the political campaigns of both Robert Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey in America, and had harboured a deep respect for both men and their strong values. Moreover, individuals such as Kennedy and those German politicians to whom she had written while experiencing financial difficulties at university had taken an interest in her and had lent assistance. Conversely, Kelly had witnessed the way in which politicians were able to make decisions which would affect thousands of lives without appearing to take even a moment to consider the impact of their actions. One such example is her experience at the house of friends Walt and Elizabeth Rostow, in Washington, 1968.⁶⁷ After the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., riots had begun and were gathering momentum across Washington. At the invitation of the Rostows, Petra Kelly spent the night at their house, concerned for her safety if she were to stay in her dorm. Beds were set up in the library and in the night, the president rang Rostow to discuss which Vietnamese cities would be the next day's bombing targets. These parallel worlds, one with caring attitudes, the other showing callous disregard for human lives had a great impact on Kelly.⁶⁸ It also demonstrated that the success and merit of the political process relied upon the integrity of the politicians within it. It could be either abused or respected.

Kelly understood that to enter into politics was to face the danger of compromise and complicity and realised that any political party which were to attempt to change the government from within must be fully aware of the corruptions and develop basic rules to

⁶⁷ Walt Rostow was President Johnson's security advisor.

⁶⁸ Sperr, p 74, Parkin p 48.

ensure that the new party would remain faithful to its original goals. However, the mere decision to form a green political party was difficult in itself. Green parties in other European countries were also beginning to emerge, with varying success but growing support.⁶⁹ In Germany, it was not only frustrated protesters who were campaigning for political change in the form of a new ecologically-driven party. This concept was being discussed throughout Germany, by students as well as members of the “post-Fordist” classes as mentioned above. Already in 1978, individuals were meeting to discuss the growing ecological movement. In *A Rhetoric of the People: The German Greens and the New Politics*, Coleman and Coleman note that in addition to the BBU, several other groups and individuals began to give

impetus to the founding of the West German Greens: Rudi Dutschke, former SDS leader; Milan Horacek, exiled dissident socialist leader of the Prague student uprisings of 1968; Rudolf Bahro, radical political philosopher expelled from East Germany; August Haussleiter, leader of the ultraconservative Action Community for the Independent German; and Herbert Gruhl, former Christian Democrat and Bundestag member, author of the influential *A Planet Plundered*, and eventual chief of the Ecological Democratic Party.⁷⁰

Some individuals had already attempted to run for parliament as independents, but realised that in order to have widespread success, consolidation was needed. Petra Kelly and Roland Vogt, still as representatives of the BBU, attended a meeting of interested parties in March 1979, to form a political faction, Sonstige Politische Vereinigung-Die

⁶⁹ Coleman, William E., and Coleman, William E. *A Rhetoric of the People: The German Greens and the New Politics*. Praeger Publishers: Westport, Connecticut 1993. p 26 See also *Green Politics: An International Guide*, Sara Parkin, Heretic Books: London 1989.

⁷⁰ Coleman, William E., p 36

Grünen.⁷¹ Kelly was consequently voted as a candidate for SPV-Die Grünen to run in the European elections in June 1979 . She took unpaid leave from her position at the EC, and began her campaign. Sperr writes that Kelly did not expect the fledgling party to gain seats

... die junge Partei war noch zu unbekannt, die Bevölkerung der Bundesrepublik nicht aufgeklärt genug. [...] Interviews mit ihr brachten hauptsächlich die Blätter der alternativen, der linken Szene; die großen Zeitungen und Illustrierten des linkliberalen und liberalen Bürgertums, der konservativen Konzerne ignorierten die kleine, so unscheinbare Partei fast völlig.⁷²

However, while Kelly was correct to assume that the party would not gain enough votes for seats in parliament, she and others were amazed at the relative success of the first attempt by Die Grünen. The party won 3.2 percent of the vote, approximately 900 000 votes. Not only was this a large number considering the limited time, resources and public exposure, but it also buoyed the spirits of the candidates, not least Petra Kelly. It confirmed her belief that voters thought there was a place for the new party, and for herself, in parliament. Kelly began to promote the concept of the “anti-party party”, a term borrowed from Gyorgy Konrad, a Hungarian philosopher:

To me the term denotes a party capable of choosing between morality and power, that uses creative civil disobedience to combat every form of oppression, that combines audacious imagination with efficient methods, and that recognises the link between world peace and peace

⁷¹ Spretnak, Charlene, and Capra, Fritjof. *Green Politics*. Bear & Company: New Mexico, 1986.

⁷² Sperr, p 147 [The young party was still too unknown, the population of West Germany not yet enlightened enough. Interviews were mainly conducted by the papers from the alternative left scene; the big newspapers and magazines, which published for the liberal and left-of-liberal set, the conservative group, almost completely ignored the small, inconspicuous party.]

within every individual. Anti-party parties do not exercise power in the old, authoritarian ways.

They try to use power in ways that help people achieve self-determination in their own lives.⁷³

While Kelly may have been extending the definition outside of its context,⁷⁴ her intention was that the new party would remain honest to its grassroots base and its independence. Her expectations for the Die Grünen were high, and her definition of what it meant to be an anti-party party was both extensive and demanding, and in some ways, utopian, especially given that it failed to take into account the existing problems within the German parliamentary system.⁷⁵ However, at this stage in the formation of Die Grünen, the difficulties of accomplishing this task appeared either unimportant or surmountable for the party.

The positive result of the 1979 European elections, while encouraging, was not a tangible victory. To make a difference in the government, the party needed seats, and to achieve this, it needed five percent of the votes. This was due to the “five percent” clause.

Germany’s election system is based on proportional representation. The voter casts two votes: the first for his or her local constituent, and second for a party in his or her *Land* or state. The five percent clause in German law was introduced in an attempt to prevent a repeat of the disaster which befell the Weimar Republic:

⁷³ *Thinking Green!*, p 23.

⁷⁴ Parkin, p 128. Parkin argues that the comparison of the difficulties experienced by a Green party in a democratic country such as West Germany with the struggles of an oppressed people in a state which restricted political and ideological challenges was not justified. This highlights one of the ways in which Kelly idealised the role of Die Grünen within the German political context, and thus explains at least to some degree her disappointment with its failure to deliver the level of anti-authoritarianism and independence Kelly demanded of it.

⁷⁵ The way in which Kelly managed to maintain this ideal for both the party and herself will be discussed in part IV, “Petra Kelly and Utopia”.

In the Weimar Republic proportional representation led to a multi-party system, which contributed to the collapse of democracy. To prevent the recurrence of this tragedy the legislators put a most important hurdle in the way of splinter parties: in order to be represented a party must poll at least 5 per cent of valid votes cast in the whole of the *Bundesrepublik*. This proviso makes it difficult for new parties to enter the *Bundestag* (and the *Landtage*, where similar stipulations exist) and strengthens the established parties.⁷⁶

As such newcomers, this green list faced this same hurdle; in this sense, the excitement of those involved in the 1979 elections when they achieved 3.2 percent of the vote is understandable. However, in order to prepare for further elections, they needed to regroup. A green list had managed to overcome the five percent hurdle in a Bremen *Land* (regional) election and this gave organisers further encouragement. It was decided that SPV-Die Grünen, should be developed into a proper party rather than a group of sometimes loosely affiliated groups, and that the name should be changed to 'Die Grünen'.⁷⁷ In Karlsruhe, on the weekend of the 12/13th January, 1980, Die Grünen was formed. However, the alternative list from which Die Grünen had gathered support and members comprised individuals and groups from many different political persuasions. While this proved at times useful since the party could be portrayed as representing a cross-section of the community, it also often caused disruption as personalities and principles clashed. This was evident even at the meeting in Karlsruhe, when, on Sunday afternoon, a constitution was still undecided. After stopping the clocks in the hall several times for fear that people would start to leave before a decision had been made, four

⁷⁶ Kloss, Günther. *West Germany: An Introduction*. Macmillan Education Ltd: London. pp21, 23

⁷⁷ Parkin, p 115

terms were finally written down and signed by Herbert Gruhl and Jürgen Reents.⁷⁸

These four concepts – ecology, social responsibility, grassroots democracy and nonviolence – were to become the four pillars of Die Grünen. For Petra Kelly the pillars were also integral to her own personal politics. However, it is relevant that while Kelly strongly promoted feminism and feminist theory, that feminism was not included with the other pillars, despite the fact that Kelly would consistently refer to feminism as a key principle of green politics.⁷⁹

It was during this period Petra Kelly also met Gert Bastian. Bastian had been catapulted into relative fame when he resigned from his position of General in the German army in 1980. One of his reasons for resignation was the lack of modernisation within the army. According to Bastian, the sudden increase in the technological capabilities of the *Bundeswehr* had not been matched by similar developments in training or attitudes. He also held fears for a world which was under the threat of nuclear war. He believed that the concept of military force to protect a country and its peoples was not possible in a military age as nuclear warfare was completely unpredictable. Such conviction impressed Petra Kelly when she met him, and since he had now joined the peace movement, they began to have more to do with each other. Soon the pair became close friends, but their relationship deepened and Kelly was to describe Bastian as her “soul-mate.”⁸⁰ Their relationship was controversial for many reasons. Firstly, Bastian was married and 24 years Kelly’s senior, and secondly, some within the peace movement suspected the motives of a career soldier joining the ranks of a movement which prided

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ This will be discussed in detail in the chapters in Part II “Ecofeminism.”

⁸⁰ *Lebe, als müsstest du heute sterben.* p 32.

itself on its commitment to nonviolence. However Kelly was generally unconcerned about such rumours. As with other relationships and life decisions she was not influenced by the opinions of others. Her relationship with Bastian would be her longest committed relationship.⁸¹

Yet at the beginning of the 1980s this deeper relationship was still to develop. Kelly and Bastian both began to travel and campaign both in Germany and overseas to speak against nuclear weapons and the arms race. For Kelly, her status as a rising star in the international peace movement was affirmed when, in 1982, she received The Right Livelihood Award, also known as the alternative Nobel Peace Prize.⁸²

On the political front, the first months of Die Grünen were hectic, with elections in several Länder, thus the differences of opinion with regards to the direction the party should take were pushed to the background while campaigning and election strategy consumed more time and energy. However, these issues could not be ignored for long. Already in the early 1980s the conflict between those who argued for a coalition with the SPD (the *Realos*), and those who were adamantly against it (the *Fundis*), began to cause a rift within the party. Petra Kelly did not consider herself to be part of either side,⁸³ however, she did agree that coalitions with any party should be on the terms of Die Grünen.⁸⁴ She argued that at that time (1982-83), the stance of parties such as the SPD

⁸¹ *Ibid*, pp 178, 182, 183, 193.

⁸² *Nonviolence Speaks to Power* p 166

⁸³ Whereas Kelly often promoted her independence from this internal party power struggle, others outside Die Grünen identified her as a “Fundi”, due to her committed stance on the original pillars and her reluctance to join the SPD.

⁸⁴ *Fighting for Hope*, p 23.

on stationing of missiles meant that a coalition would be unthinkable. In fact, right up until her death, Kelly still believed that neither the SPD nor any other parties were not committed enough to nonviolence or green issues for Die Grünen to contemplate a coalition.⁸⁵ Despite this obvious rift, Die Grünen held together enough to gain much public interest and even greater public support, and in 1983, after a massive campaign during which Kelly again took unpaid leave from her position at the EC, Die Grünen gained 5.5 percent of votes in the federal election which equated to 27 seats. Petra Kelly had gained a seat, as had Gert Bastian.⁸⁶

It is difficult to imagine the anticipation, excitement and relief that members of Die Grünen must have felt at this point, not least Petra Kelly. The hard work and long hours they had contributed had finally paid off, and they could now see opportunities to make the changes which had long since been discussed. While this honeymoon period did not last – in fact by 1984, Gert Bastian had resigned and even Kelly was disappointed with the bickering which undermined the party – it is important to realise that at the time, Die Grünen had achieved the highly significant feat of progressing from a protest movement to a political party, which had also managed to gain state and federal seats. Furthermore, while in parliament they did manage to make changes. For example, a motion to insist on

⁸⁵ *Nonviolence Speaks to Power*, p 158.

⁸⁶ Parkin, p 124. It should be noted that although the ‘five percent’ hurdle does represent a significant barrier to those smaller parties wishing to obtain seats in parliament, once they have overcome this barrier, it is possible for them to play a significant role in coalitions with still only a relatively small percentage of the vote. This is due to the more pluralist nature of the German political system, at least in comparison to countries like Australia, whose two party system is far more distinct. (See Oswald, Franz. “Integrating Dissenters: Greens and PDS in the party system of united Germany” *CESAA*, No. 30, March 2003.) most relevant example of this is the 1998 German federal elections, when Die Grünen, with only 6.7% of the vote, became the junior partner in a governing coalition with the SPD. (Statistics from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/181758.stm>, accessed September 2005)

a “constructive dialogue” between the Dalai Lama and Chinese authorities was passed unanimously in 1987.⁸⁷ Germany also still has some of the most stringent environmental laws both in Europe and throughout the world, and the commitment of Die Grünen to nonviolence was demonstrated early in 2003 when the German government refused to send troops to the most recent Gulf War.

III. Reality for the Shooting Stars of German Politics

1984 was the beginning of an unpleasant era for Die Grünen, which effectively lasted up until 1990, when in the first elections after the BRD and the DDR had combined, Die Grünen failed to win a seat in the Bundestag and were only carried through by their coalition with Bündnis 90, the East German Green party.⁸⁸ For Petra Kelly, these years were particularly difficult. Even those outside of Die Grünen noticed the conflict which often existed between Kelly and her colleagues. In researching for their book, *Green Politics*, Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra spoke to many member of Die Grünen about the relationship between Kelly and other party members, rarely finding anyone who would defend her. Many considered that the party had outgrown Petra Kelly and needed to move on. Others had greater difficulties with her personality:

Some Greens complained that Kelly is “too individualistic” and rigidly demanding. More common, though, was talk of her allegedly spending all of her time giving interviews [...] The resentment toward Kelly is nearly relentless, but many Greens suggested that certain of her traits

⁸⁷ Parkin, p 148.

⁸⁸ Blühdorn, Ingolfur; Krause, Frank & Thomas Scharf (eds). *The Green Agenda: Environmental Politics and Policy in Germany* Keele University Press: Staffordshire 1995. p 139.

exacerbate the friction: she is considered a high-strung genius, a loner, an impatient theoretician, a bearer of the world's burdens who is always embroiled in several crisis situations simultaneously.⁸⁹

These complaints about Kelly were well founded, yet they also highlight the elements of Kelly's personality which made her such a good leader in a non-government organisation or protest movement, and so ill-suited to the political environment of West Germany in the 1980s. Other members within the party, and indeed, the party itself, had gained a momentum which Kelly felt no longer able to control. In fact, Die Grünen had grown into a political entity which in many ways no longer needed Kelly at the helm. Therefore her criticisms of the party's direction were unlikely to receive a positive response.

Kelly's refusal to defer to the party rules also caused conflict. When the basis of Die Grünen had been formed, it had been decided that instead of having the traditional party leader who would head the party for several terms, a rotation principle should apply. This meant that halfway through the four-year term, elected members would be rotated with other party members. This was also to apply to the leader of the party. The rationale for this decision was to prevent members becoming established in important roles within the party and therefore acting on their own desires for leadership rather than in the interests of the party as a whole. Members of Die Grünen believed that other political parties, namely the CDU/CSU and SPD, comprised politicians who perpetuated their own political gains, thus creating a corrupt organisation. As the notion of grassroots democracy and equality was central to the foundations of Die Grünen, the rotation

⁸⁹ Spretnak and Capra, pp 12-13.

principle was an attempt to prevent this corruption from also contaminating the party. In reality, the rotation principle was not only unenforceable, it also became a highly contentious issue. Members who had been elected by the public were reluctant to give up their seats, and Kelly, considering the principle to be disruptive and unconstructive, refused to rotate, which also caused resentment and disruption within the party, not least towards Kelly and those with whom she worked closely.⁹⁰

The rotation rule was to be overturned in 1987, after it was established that it was in fact destabilising the party it was supposed to protect, but not before Kelly had suffered ostracisation from the majority of the Greens. This was exacerbated by Kelly's public image. During the 1983 campaign, Kelly was the individual upon whom the press and wider media had focused. By then, she had already gained a large following within the peace, ecology and anti-nuclear movements, both in Germany and overseas through her visits and campaigns during the 1970s. Moreover, her energetic personality and extensive knowledge, as well as her youth and good looks, made her an ideal figurehead as far as the media were concerned. Thus the very aspects of her personality which made Petra Kelly such a successful campaigner and so suited to take a leadership role were those which provoked conflicts once the party had been elected. The 1983 campaign also highlights the influence Kelly drew from her experience in politics in the United States. Her work with Hubert Humphrey and Robert Kennedy, and her exposure to US political

⁹⁰ Parkin, p 164 In a report about her refusal to rotate, Kelly argued that Members of Parliament should have the opportunity to stay in office for a full term. "Sie wolle ihre politischen Initiativen zugunsten krebskranker Kinder, gegen Menschenrechtsverletzungen in Ost und West und für eine blockfreie Außenpolitik in der ihr verbleibenden Zeit weiter verfolgen." [She wanted her to see her political initiatives through in the remaining time, in particular those concerning children with cancer, human rights abuses in the East and the West and a non-aligned foreign policy.] (BStU Archiv der Zentralstelle, MfS HA XXZHA Nr. 30135).

issues from quite a young age had been in the American tradition of focusing on the individual running for office, rather than on the policies of the political party to which the individual was affiliated. However, Die Grünen was a party which strived to promote equality for all, and in a country where federal politics focused upon a party platform, rather than on the individual, Kelly would have struggled to conform to merely working in a team environment. This is confirmed by several friends and colleagues, who argue that this would have been very difficult for Kelly, who was used to organising and taking control of situations.⁹¹ “The Greens were determined to avoid personality cults and power trips, and this laudable goal was invoked against Kelly repeatedly.”⁹² Yet, despite these difficulties, Kelly remained closely connected to the party. This may have been due to Kelly’s theory that one could achieve more within the system than one could without.⁹³ More likely however, is that Kelly could not bear to dismiss the commitment she felt to the party, and the years of hard work she had invested within it.⁹⁴

Another difficulty for Petra Kelly was the structure of politics in the Bundestag. When Die Grünen was formed, there was great emphasis on establishing a party unlike any other, one which did not conform to the stale concept of a political party. However, Kelly, and perhaps many of her colleagues, underestimated the extent to which they were required to participate in the banality of party politics. Even an anti-party party had to conform some of the time. In this sense, Kelly was unsuited to the Bundestag.⁹⁵ Yet it was also those characteristics which made her difficult to work with which resulted in so

⁹¹ *Thinking Green!* pp 140, 141,144,145.

⁹² Parkin, p 144.

⁹³ *Fighting for Hope* p 21.

⁹⁴ Spretnak and Capra, p 12.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

many successes on Kelly's part. Her lack of regard for diplomatic conventions often shocked people, but it also shocked them into action.

In 1990, Kelly lost her seat in parliament, along with the rest of the West German Greens. The election which signified the reunification of the BRD and the DDR had caught the Greens off guard. Whereas other parties were concentrating on how to best exploit this issue, Die Grünen were committed to environmental problems:

Disagreement between the Greens in the two parts of Germany over the vital issue of unification was reflected in a failure to present a single electoral list. The Greens in western Germany also rejected the treaty outlining the terms of unification, despite the support given to it by the Greens in the new federal states and by the overwhelming majority of their own supporters. Instead, they opted out of the key electoral debate, adopting the slogan, 'Alle reden von Deutschland, wir reden vom Wetter.'⁹⁶

The lack of emphasis on the issue of reunification was not the only reason Die Grünen polled so poorly in this election. Kelly's absence from the forefront of the party had also contributed to its defeat. Joschka Fischer argued that one of the reasons Die Grünen had performed so badly was that it had "ignored the importance of personalities and a strong party structure."⁹⁷ This political failure was disheartening, and left Kelly in doubt about the future of Die Grünen, yet on a personal note she was still very well known and her presence was often requested by other organisations overseas. Through her publications and many public appearances during the 1980s, Kelly had become a well-known figure in

⁹⁶ Blühdorn et al, p 139.

⁹⁷ Parkin, p 169.

both political and public circles. In 1991, she was honoured with a place in Britain's *The Sunday Times*' list of "One Thousand Makers of the 20th Century".⁹⁸

However, the lack of facilities and contacts after the 1990 defeat meant that not only was Kelly unemployed, but also that she had lost those resources, such as free fax and phone calls and a diplomatic passport which had helped her reach and assist the many individuals and organisations which had contacted her for help. With this in mind, and with a genuine concern that the rifts in the party were enough to endanger its survival, she decided to stand again for a party speaker position on the party executive in 1991. It was at this time that the enormity of the gulf between Petra Kelly and Die Grünen became apparent. Grievances and personality clashes which had arisen during the mid 1980s had not yet been forgotten, and despite her re-election in 1987, Kelly had removed herself considerably from the more intricate details of the day-to-day running of the party. The party had evolved not only to take seats at federal level, but was well established at state level. As such she was out of touch with her colleagues and the direction in which Die Grünen was heading. This was demonstrated when the party elected its speaker, and Petra Kelly gained 39 votes. The other candidates, Christina Weiske and Antje Vollmer, received 344 and 263 respectively.⁹⁹

Such a resounding defeat would have deflated any candidate, and no doubt Kelly was hurt and depressed by the result. Further in interviews and publications around this time and in the months up until she died, Kelly did attack some policies of Die Grünen, and

⁹⁸ *Thinking Green!* p 135. Kelly's name was placed, to her delight, on the same page as John F. Kennedy.

⁹⁹ Parkin, p 176.

went so far as to say that she believed that they had lost the direction which had been sought when the party was first formed.¹⁰⁰ However, in her last publication, *Thinking Green!*, Kelly consistently refers to the party as if she were part of it. This may be partly due to the fact that chapters of the book were written before the 1990 defeat, but it is more likely that, since this defeat is also referred to,¹⁰¹ it was simply due to the connection with the party, its history, and her colleagues. Despite the many members of Die Grünen who had resented her, or found her too difficult to work with, she had also made some very close friends within the party and the movement; this is not surprising considering the time and effort she had devoted over the years.

Kelly also spoke about returning to politics, if not with Die Grünen, then in the European parliament.¹⁰² Furthermore, Kelly had nominated for the Sakharov Award, a \$US100 000 award made to “outstanding international activists” by the Gleitsman Foundation, which would provide both an income as well as allow her to continue human rights work.¹⁰³ Many of Kelly’s plans around this time appeared to be long term; she seemed to be looking to the future rather than dwelling on the unpleasantness in her past. Thus the news that Petra Kelly had died in her Bonn home on the 1st of October, 1992, shot dead by Gert Bastian, who then killed himself, was devastating for everyone. Family and friends of both Kelly and Bastian, the green movement, Die Grünen and individuals around the world were in shock, not least because it was 17 days before the bodies of Kelly and Bastian were discovered.

¹⁰⁰ *Lebe, als müsstest du heute sterben*, pp 27,40.

¹⁰¹ *Thinking Green!* p 7, 122-3,125.

¹⁰² *Lebe, als müsstest du heute sterben*, p 40.

¹⁰³ Parkin, p 192. Kelly received this award posthumously.

There has been much speculation regarding Kelly's death. With no evidence at the scene of the crime to clarify the reasons behind her or Bastian's death, police initially ruled it as a *Doppelselbstmord*. While both Parkin and Sperr note that Kelly had previously entertained the thought of suicide, after Grace had died,¹⁰⁴ it appeared that in this incidence, so many years later, a wiser and more mature Kelly would not have killed herself.

Yet it is not the frustration of a lack of information about Kelly's death which is most enduring, rather it is the fact that such an individual, who, had she lived, had the potential to contribute so much energy, insight and perspective to the green, peace and human rights movements. It is indicative of the schism between Kelly and Die Grünen that now, 12 years on, her legacy appears to have been largely forgotten by those with whom she worked and helped form the party.¹⁰⁵ Rather her influence appears to live on in the actions and minds of others, perhaps less influential individuals: the everyday people and politicians from small green movements in foreign countries. The following chapters will not only pay tribute to this legacy but trace it by looking at the main pillars of her beliefs and politics, that is, feminism, nonviolence, and the importance of combining these to ensure a peaceful and green future.

¹⁰⁴ Parkin, p 58, Sperr p 82. Parkin also notes that after lobbying from Kelly's family and friends, the case was ruled as a murder-suicide, and that Kelly was killed without her knowledge. This fact was not, however, widely published in the media. (p 14). Cf Sperr.

¹⁰⁵ Apart from the publications which immediately followed her death, for example *Gedenken heisst erinnern*, (Beckmann, Lukas, and Kopelew, Lew. (eds), Lamuv Taschenbuch: Göttingen 1993); *Eine tödliche Liebe*, Schwarzer, Alice, Kiepenheuer & Witsch: Köln 1993) and *The Life and Death of Petra Kelly*, relatively little international attention has been paid to Kelly's contribution to both German and international politics. A search for "Petra Kelly" on the homepage of Die Grünen (<http://www.gruene.de/index.htm>) produces a message: "Keine Ergebnisse gefunden" [No results found].

Part Two: Eco/Feminism

Strongly influenced by women during her formative years, Petra Kelly developed a clear feminist position by the time she began high school. By the time she had become involved in mainstream politics, Kelly had become a committed feminist, and considered feminism to be an integral part of green politics. These chapters will introduce the different waves of feminism and discuss how ecofeminism grew from the feminist movement. To this end, Kelly's feminism will be placed in the context of the feminist – and consequently the ecofeminist – movements. The question of whether Kelly could be identified as an ecofeminist and her contribution to the ecofeminist movement will then be discussed. Finally, the role of feminism within both Kelly's own politics and the politics of Die Grünen will be analysed.

I. Feminist Backgrounds

Feminism as a movement has its foundations in the 18th century, upon which the suffragette movement and International Women's Day were established. Supported by women in socialist political groups throughout Europe, including Clara Zetkin from the SPD, International Women's Day became the first worldwide feminist movement and a basis for the feminist activism which was to become even more widespread during the late 1960s with the Women's Liberation Movement.¹⁰⁶ A current definition of feminism

¹⁰⁶ Stevens, Joyce. *A History of International Women's Day in Words and Images*, online publication accessed at <http://www.isis.aust.com/iwd/stevens/origins.htm> September 2005. The first International Women's Day arose out of the 1910 International Conference of Socialist Women in Copenhagen, after a proposal by Zetkin was agreed upon by the conference.

as “the advocacy of equal rights and opportunities for women, especially the extension of their activities in social and political life”¹⁰⁷ illustrates that the aims of this movement and previous feminists still remain relevant. Michael Zimmerman, in his essay, “Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism: The Emerging Dialogue”, also provides a good overview of the development of modern feminism:

Contemporary feminism is an extraordinarily complex movement. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, many Western feminists saw the problem as women being systematically denied the educational and economic opportunities necessary for them to compete on an equal footing with men. Feminism meant fighting for equal rights in the political and economic arenas.¹⁰⁸

It is this contemporary feminism, often called the “second wave” of feminism, and linked with the Women’s Liberation Movement, upon which this chapter will concentrate, as it is this era during which Petra Kelly was introduced to mainstream feminism and is thus most relevant. Within this newer feminist movement, there also developed a number of submovements: liberal, radical, and socialist feminism, and ecofeminism.¹⁰⁹ Briefly defined, liberal feminism, with its beginnings in liberalism, “views the liberation of

¹⁰⁷ Bernard, JRL et al (eds) *The MacQuarie ABC Dictionary* The MacQuarie Library: MacQuarie University 2003 p 357

¹⁰⁸ Zimmerman, Michael. “Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism: The Emerging Dialogue” in *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. Diamond, Irene, and Orenstein, Gloria Feman (eds). Sierra Club Books: San Francisco 1990. p 142 There is some dispute about how strict a definition of feminism or feminist theory should be; from Kelly’s perspective, it was very much the idea that women should have equality of rights and opportunity as is stated above. For a discussion of the definitions of feminism, see Maggie Humm, *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory*, Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf: Hertfordshire 1995 (this edition), and Lisa Tuttle, *Encyclopaedia of Feminism*, Longman: Harlow 1986

¹⁰⁹ Already in the 1960s and 1970s, other submovements were developing, and there are arguably several more which have developed within the feminist movement since, particularly as the idea of feminism as a “white women’s movement” has been analysed and the potential for separate feminist movements according to racial, cultural and economic differences has arisen. See, for example, Karen Warren, *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture and nature*, Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*, and Malden, Mary Evans, *Introducing Contemporary Feminist Thought*. However, for the purposes of this chapter, it is necessary to limit discussion of those areas of feminism which were of particular relevance to Kelly.

women principally as a matter of women seeing themselves individually capable of a wide range of occupational, social, political, and sexual choices and fulfilments.”¹¹⁰

Liberal feminism arose from the suffragette movement. Conversely, radical feminism was the prominent feminist movement which began to take form in the 1960s and 1970s. The submovement assumed that women and men were equal yet different, that “[h]umans are biologically sexed and socially gendered.”¹¹¹ Feminists could thus argue that the superior position men often occupy in Western cultures could be interpreted as a social construct and which could consequently develop and change with the evolution of the society. Thirdly, socialist feminism, suggests that equality for women should be sought from political means, and that the oppression of the worker in capitalist society is inherently linked with oppression of women in those societies.¹¹² It should also be noted that feminism as a political movement (most significantly, including those actions which were related to the International Women’s Day movement) was deeply entrenched in socialist politics, and that the “socialist feminism” of the 1960s was not, in fact, a new movement, but rather a revival of one of the earliest driving forces of the Western feminist movement. Ecofeminism, as the name implies, drew upon several different feminist perspectives, and is based on the foundation that the destruction of the natural environment and the repression of women are linked to the extent that respect for both will lead to a more equitable balance of gender. An analysis of the development and accomplishments of ecofeminism will be discussed in the next chapter. It is, however,

¹¹⁰ *The MacQuarie Dictionary*, p 357

¹¹¹ Merchant, Carolyn. “Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory”, in *Reweaving the World, The Emergence of Ecofeminism*, Diamond, Irene, and Orenstein, Gloria Feman (eds). Sierra Club Books: San Francisco 1990 p100.

¹¹² The Chicago Women’s Liberation Union, Hyde Park Chapter. “Socialist Feminism: A Strategy for the Women’s Movement”, Chicago, Illinois 1972. Accessed from Special Collections Library, Duke University, <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/socialist/>, November 2003

important to note that while all of these subgroups were committed to the goal of promoting women's rights, their interpretation of the foundations of gender inequality and the most effective and desirable methods of rectifying this issue differed, sometimes to the point that feminists within different subgroups disagreed entirely about the methods or philosophies supported by others. This will also be discussed in particular with reference to ecofeminism in the next chapter.

There are criticisms which can be made of each form of feminism in terms of its effectiveness as a movement as well as its suitability for a basis for ecofeminism. Liberal feminism, for example, does not adequately address the relationship between men and women or humans and nature. The aim of liberal feminists is to achieve the same rights as men, and they argue that it is only a lack of opportunity which disallows women to succeed in areas which have been previously only open to men.¹¹³ However, to view lack of opportunity as the only barrier to overcome ignores the complexity of relationships, physical and mental differences, and individual choices. This criticism is of course not aiming to trivialise the struggles of women to attain equality, and it must be noted that in the temporal and social context of the beginnings of liberal feminism, women had very little choice or control with regards to many aspects of their lives. Conversely, radical feminism, by accepting and even emphasising the dualism which exists in Western cultures, risks the chance of reaffirming these dualisms, or as Merchant writes, "perpetuating the very hierarchies it seeks to overthrow."¹¹⁴ In her essay, "Is Ecofeminism Feminist?", Victoria Davion argues a similar point when writing on

¹¹³ Merchant, p 100

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p 102.

ecofeminism: "... while ecofeminists are correct in challenging dualisms such as human/nature, reason/emotion, and masculinity/femininity, the solution does not lie in simply valuing the side of the dichotomy that has been devalued in Western patriarchal frameworks."¹¹⁵

Socialist feminism, while sharing many similarities with radical feminism, does attempt to avoid the problem of dualism. It does this by arguing that the constructs of nature and gender are social constructs and therefore subject to change. Social feminism accepts that Western culture operates on a masculine dualist system but argues that the future lies not in reversing the dualism in favour of women, but rather "to direct change toward some form of an egalitarian socialist state, in addition to resocializing men and women into nonsexist, nonracist, nonviolent, anti-imperialist forms of life."¹¹⁶

Finally, while not a submovement per se, another feminist perspective has evolved within the feminist movement. Essentialism claims a superiority of women over men, and in an extreme interpretation, argues for a matriarchal type society rather than the patriarchal culture which exists today. Thus it can evolve from any of the submovements mentioned above. The major areas of concern with essentialism, in whatever form it takes, is that it not only values feminine qualities over masculine, but that it also promotes one gender over another; this is unhelpful in a theory which aims to promote advancement for women, since to begin by demeaning men, there is less chance of obtaining their cooperation to improve women's rights. Essentialist thinking was prevalent during the

¹¹⁵ Davion, Victoria. "Is Ecofeminism Feminist?" in Warren, Karen J, (ed) *Ecological Feminism*, Routledge: London; New York, 1994. p102

¹¹⁶ Merchant, p 105.

1960s and 1970s, however, there has since been a reduction in popularity of this perspective.¹¹⁷ Rather, it is understood that it is important in any feminist theory to ensure that it does not attempt to encompass the needs or abilities of the whole female population, and that women, like men, must be seen as individuals, who should be respected if equality of the sexes is to be achieved.

Petra Kelly's own definition of feminism comprises elements from a range of feminist theories. Furthermore, it is possible to observe a development in her concept of feminism through her interviews, speeches and publications, where it was established that Kelly was positively influenced by strong women from an early age. Her mother and in particular, her grandmother, led by example as women who had overcome adversity and who "needed no men"¹¹⁸ in order to succeed in life. This was juxtaposed with the resignation of the nuns to the patriarchal culture at the convent where Kelly attended school. The power of men within the institution of the church was unquestioned. However, at home, Kelly was being shown both the possibility and the value of independence and independent thought. Thus even before the "second wave" of feminism, Kelly had established her own feminist beliefs. Already in high school she would discuss women's and human rights on her radio show.¹¹⁹ As noted in the first chapter of the dissertation, Kelly's campaign for a position on the student council at university was run under the slogan "Vote for a strong woman". It cannot be disputed that Kelly's campaigns – both at university and during the rest of her life – generally

¹¹⁷ For further discussion on essentialism, see Tuttle, *Encyclopedia of Feminism*, and John Charvet, *Feminism*.

¹¹⁸ *Thinking Green!* p 4.

¹¹⁹ *Lebe, als müsstest du heute sterben*, p 15.

showed courage, imagination and occasionally foresight. However, the culture was also changing. Kelly's discussions of feminist issues at school and her feminist attitude at university certainly may have preceded the mainstream movement, but they required a certain amount of acceptance from her peers and acquaintances. If this had not been the case, no matter how emancipated Kelly might have been, her good intentions and passionate beliefs could easily have been brushed aside. Indeed, as Kelly discovered on her move to Brussels, feminism was still to make inroads into certain cultures, and the European Community was one of them.

By the time she reached the EC in the early 1970s, Kelly had developed a solid feminist attitude and theory. She believed strongly in her independence, even in her private life, and questioned the validity of the male dominated culture in both her workplace and the city in which she lived.¹²⁰ However, she also used the information and examples from her work in order to highlight the inequalities which faced women throughout Europe and the rest of the world. During 1975, research for her job involved preparing documents regarding women's situations throughout EC member countries. She discovered that there was often lip service paid to ensuring equal rights for women with regards to remuneration and employment opportunities, however in reality, this was unlikely to happen. Women were still unable to make inroads into the workforce, as it was largely controlled by men.¹²¹ Such experiences only encouraged Kelly to persist in her campaign to improve women's rights. With her increased involvement in non-government organisations such as the BBU and later, Die Grünen, Kelly realised that

¹²⁰ Parkin, p 70

¹²¹ Parkin, p 71

sexism existed even within these areas. In fact, it was so entrenched that even some women were afraid to challenge the status quo. Kelly noted that other women at the EC were often either unsupportive or could not comprehend her motivation for drawing attention to herself and women's issues:

Ich merkte, daß die meisten Sekretärinnen und Übersetzerinnen mich eigentlich nicht unterstützen wollten, weil sie Angst hatten, ihren Karriere zu schaden. Andere waren der Meinung, daß ich meine eigene Karriere zerstörte. Ich sagte, daß mir als Feministin dieses Thema wichtiger wäre als meine Karriere. Sie haben das nie verstanden. Und als ich die EG verließ, um den Grünen beizutreten, konnten viele Frauen nicht verstehen, daß ich einen so sicheren Arbeitsplatz aufgab, um in einer Männerdomäne zu arbeiten.¹²²

Kelly also stated that many men reacted negatively to her winning the position of Sprecherin: "Als ich beispielsweise auf dem Titel des >>Stern<< erschien, wurden sehr widersprüchliche Meinungen laut. Einerseits waren sie stolz darauf, daß die Grünen so großes Interesse erweckt hatten, andererseits waren ihre Gefühle dazu, daß eine Frau und nicht ein Mann auf die Titelseite kam, sehr zwiespältig. Ihre Führungsposition in den Medien war in Gefahr."¹²³ Kelly's belief in the existence of chauvinism within Die Grünen is partially supported through the absence of feminism as one of the four pillars.

It was certainly agreed that equality for every member would be an integral and necessary

¹²² *Lebe*, p 18. [I noticed that most of the secretaries and translators didn't actually want to support me, because they were afraid of jeopardising their careers. Others were of the opinion that I would jeopardise my own career. I said that, as a feminist, these issues were more important to me than my career. They didn't understand that. And when I left the EC for the Greens, many women couldn't understand why I would leave such a secure position to work in a man's domain.]

¹²³ *Ibid.* As mentioned in the previous chapter, the relative "fame" Kelly brought to the Party was also a factor which contributed to her being ostracised by most of the others in the party. As such, it was not purely due to gender issues that Kelly may have felt hostility towards her. [For example, when I appeared on the cover of "Stern", there was a lot of resistance. On the one hand, they were proud that the Greens had provoked such great interest. On the other hand, they had contradictory feelings about a woman appearing on the cover and not a man. Their position of leadership in the media was in danger.]

part of Die Grünen. However, when Die Grünen was formed, the pillars they finally agreed upon were ecology, social-responsibility, grassroots-democracy and nonviolence. There was no mention of feminism; despite this, Kelly would consistently refer to feminism as a fundamental philosophy of the party, even referring to it as a pillar of the party.¹²⁴ It is possible, as Kelly suggested, that there were men within Die Grünen who, while they may have believed that changes to the way women were portrayed were necessary, lacked the skills or courage to implement such changes. Feminism was not the only issue about which the founders, and later, the members of Die Grünen would disagree; a group of individuals with such diverse backgrounds was likely to place importance on different issues. Whether the decision not to include feminism as one of the pillars of Die Grünen was based on pragmatic rather than sexist grounds is impossible to determine. In any case, while the pool of voters from which Die Grünen would most likely receive support was generally educated and sensitive about social and environmental issues,¹²⁵ to name feminism as one of the pillars could have alienated some of their members and many of their voters. By appearing to be pro-women, the party could as easily appear to be against men. In addition, since feminism was a pressing issue both politically and culturally, to include it within the list of basic principles may have detracted from the others. The issues of ecology, social responsibility, grassroots democracy and nonviolence were perceived to be just as important as feminism, and had perhaps more wide-reaching appeal.

¹²⁴ *Thinking Green!* p 124.

¹²⁵ Langguth, Gerd. *The Green Factor in German Politics: From Protest Movement to Political Party*. Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado. 1986 (this edition), p 36.

However, while feminism was not one of the four pillars it remained an important tenet not just for Kelly, but also for many others within Die Grünen. It was agreed that it would be important to promote equality between men and women within the party, yet there was no substantial policy which ensured that this happened. Rather, it was assumed that members of Die Grünen would simply respect each other and that sexism or chauvinism would remain absent.

Two incidences illustrate the dangers of this assumption. In their party programme, Die Grünen condemn the existence of violence against women and rape within marriage, as well as discrimination against women in education or work.¹²⁶ Therefore when one of their members of parliament, Klaus Hecker, was accused of sexual misconduct, it raised serious questions about how Die Grünen should deal with such a matter:

Specifically, he was accused of touching [female staff members'] breasts after having placed a friendly arm around their shoulders during a discussion of the agenda. The Greens suddenly realized that actions they vehemently rejected in their program could happen among their own members. The rigid moral code of the Greens then led to the decision of the caucus to request the "sexist" Hecker to resign. The moral code of a portion of the caucus made it unable to accept an apology. This moralistic purity empowered the caucus to judge the behaviour of its individual members.¹²⁷

The second example given by Langguth concerns the caucus from April 1984 to March the following year. At the time the caucus "was totally in the hands of women. This was symbolic of the importance of the women's movement in the party. The move was also a

¹²⁶ Die Grünen. *Programme of the German Green Party*. Heretic Books: London. 1983 (trans Hans Fernbach). pp 39-43.

¹²⁷ Langguth, Gerd. pp 88-9.

tactical manoeuvre to change the previous leadership and thereby remove Petra Kelly. [...] The decision was also sexist because it required that the leadership positions could only be held by women.¹²⁸

This demonstrates the possibility – and indeed, existence – of sexual discrimination within Die Grünen, by both men and women. This was not, however, merely limited to Die Grünen. Within the culture of the 1980s, a backlash against feminism had begun, which meant that feminism was sometimes resented, and which in turn compelled some women to take a more radical stance.¹²⁹ Petra Kelly was one of these women. Her feminist position in the early 1980s was often aggressive and occasionally disparaging towards men. Kelly's book, *Fighting for Hope*, demonstrates her feminist philosophy at this time. On writing about visits to Washington, Moscow and East Germany, she mentioned meeting the men in government there: "...while I sat listening to those men, those many incompetent men in power, I realized that they are all a mirror image of each other."¹³⁰ Later in the book, Kelly mentioned a government hearing in which children were asked about their attitude towards nuclear weapons: "In a typically helpless male way, one of the members of the House explained that this Committee Hearing on Children's Fears of Nuclear War was being held in order to better understand the behaviour and the hopes and aspirations of children."¹³¹ Further, in justifying why women should be leaders in the fight for peace rather than men Kelly argued that women were naturally better leaders in this area due to unique feminine qualities:

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p 89.

¹²⁹ See Susan Faludi. *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women*. Chatto & Windus: London 1992.

¹³⁰ Kelly, Petra K. *Fighting for Hope* p 37.

¹³¹ *Ibid* p 41.

Woman must lead the efforts in education for peace awareness, because only she, I feel, can go back to her womb, her roots, her natural rhythms, her inner search for harmony and peace, while men, *most of them anyway*, are continually bound to their power struggle, the exploitation of nature, and military ego trips. Our timidity must end for the earth has no emergency exit.¹³²

Considering the male-dominated environment in which she worked, it may be possible to empathise with Kelly's frustration at the men in power whom she met, and her perceived lack of opportunities and empathy for women. However it is also evident that this sort of language and perspective were detrimental to promoting greater understanding between men and women. Such a position is also essentialist, since it makes sweeping generalisations about both men and women and also fails to address how the roles of men and women have developed and how feminism could work to change them. If anything, it becomes a game of blame, rather than an attempt at reconciliation and is also an attempt to justify "reverse" sexism, that is, discrimination towards men by women. Furthermore, as has been discussed above, the identification of women with nature reaffirms the dualist stereotype which already exists within a patriarchal culture.¹³³

Kelly was unapologetic in voicing her confrontingly strong beliefs, even in the context of a backlash against feminism. However, to her credit, while Kelly's commitment to feminism did not alter, in later speeches and publications, her attitude towards men was less confrontational. Her speech "Anleitungen zum Sturz des internationalen Patriachats" at a conference on Feminism and Ecology in 1986 still argued that patriarchy dominates

¹³² Kelly, Petra K. *Fighting for Hope*. p 104, [my emphasis.]

¹³³ Davion, Victoria. "Is Ecofeminism Feminist?" in *Ecological Feminism*, p102.

women, but that “[d]as Patriarchat ist ein in kapitalistischen wie in sozialistischen Ländern dominierendes System der männlichen Vorherrschaft, das die Frauen weiterhin unterdrückt und auch den Männern den Weg zu ihrer Befreiung versperrt.”¹³⁴

Kelly’s realisation that to place all men into the category of “helpless” or “incompetent” would be perhaps contrary to her cause shows a maturity of her views. It also demonstrates an understanding that to achieve a culture and politics based on feminism, it would be necessary to have the cooperation of men. This was not a case of needing men to achieve such a goal; Kelly had no doubts that women would be able to change the world without men. However, she also recognised that the patriarchal system sustained neither men nor women. In order to alter this, Kelly argued for women to make changes themselves. It is here that the link between feminism and civil disobedience becomes evident. Kelly stated that for women to suspend the further development of a patriarchal culture and instead introduce a society based on feminism and mutual respect, there needed to be action and a change of attitude at every level: “We must also practice disobedience in our own lives, starting by disobeying all systems of male domination.”¹³⁵ Achieving this would be through demanding peace and freedom for themselves and others, and refusing to participate in acts of violence or war:

Das heißt auch die Freiheit, über unser eigenes Schicksal zu bestimmen, das heißt, frei zu sein von Ausbeutung und Gewalt und in unseren Gedanken und in unserem Handeln, an unserem

¹³⁴ Kelly, Petra K. “Anleitungen zum Sturz des internationalen Patriarchats – Rede auf dem Kongreß “Feminismus und Ökologie” (1986) from *Mit dem Herzen denken*, Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung: München. 1990. p 270. [Patriarchy is, in both capitalist and socialist countries, a dominant system of male supremacy which continues to oppress women and also hinders the way to men’s liberation.]

¹³⁵ *Thinking Green*, p 10.

Arbeitsplatz, in unserem Verhältnis zur Natur und im Verhältnis zwischen Männern und Frauen, zwischen Generationen und zwischen Staaten frei zu werden von Ausbeutung, Unterdrückung und Gewalt. [...] Wir sind nicht bereit, wie die Helden der Geschichte für eine Sache zu sterben. Wir wollen den Mut aufbringen, für eine Sache zu leben.¹³⁶

Kelly argued that women, in recognising that men were part of changing the patriarchal system as well, “sollten ... nur jene Männer lieben, die bereit sind, gegen Gewalt auf allen Ebenen einzutreten. Wir sollten nur mit den Männern zusammenarbeiten, die Gewalt ablehnen, die sich unserem Kampf für unsere Befreiung mitanschließen.”¹³⁷

In *Thinking Green!* Kelly’s definition of feminism went even further to emphasise that a feminist society would be beneficial to both men and women: “Feminism rejects all forms of male dominance and affirms the value of women’s lives and experiences. It recognizes that no pattern of domination is necessary and seeks to liberate women and men from the structures of dominance that characterize patriarchy.”¹³⁸ Furthermore, achieving such a culture would help “to restore balance and harmony between women and men and between masculine and feminine values in society and within each of us.”¹³⁹

This feminist stance not only avoids alienation of pro-feminist men, but also attempts to prevent the stereotype of women as mothers, close to nature. Kelly continued to argue

¹³⁶ *Mit dem Herzen denken*, p 273. [That means also the freedom to determine our own fate, that means freedom from exploitation and violence in our thoughts, in our actions, at our workplaces, in our relationship with nature and the relationship between men and women, between generation and between nations. [...] We are not prepared to die for something like the heroes in the past. We want to have the courage to live for something.]

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p 274 [...should only love those men who are prepared to oppose violence on every level. We should only work with those men who reject violence and join in our fight for our liberation.]

¹³⁸ Kelly, Petra K. *Thinking Green! Essays on Environmentalism, Feminism, and Nonviolence*. Parallax Press: California. 1994 p11

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* p12

that women had strengths and character traits which she believed were both lacking in men, and which would be indispensable in politics. However, she warned against the stereotype of viewing woman as mother and nurturer as this would prevent women from achieving other objectives at which they could excel.¹⁴⁰ In short, it would be detrimental to the advance of women in other areas other than traditional roles:

Feminists working in the peace and ecology movements are sometimes viewed as kind, nurturing Earth mothers, but that is too comfortable a stereotype. We are not meek and we are not weak. We are angry – on our own behalf, for our sisters and children who suffer, and for the entire planet – and we are determined to protect life on Earth.¹⁴¹

In her call to women to instigate change, Kelly also warned against success at the cost of conceding to the rules of masculinity. It was important to her that women, especially those involved in politics, remained committed to their roles as women, rather than mirroring masculine behaviour in order to adapt to the largely male dominated political world. This was particularly relevant in international politics. Kelly had experienced this male dominated culture herself, as well as the ridicule some men expressed at Kelly's emotional speeches. For Kelly, women who bowed to this pressure from those in parliament and even the public, were betraying other women:

In recent years, I have also observed that some women have sought to overcome their inferior role by becoming part of the masculine world (Mrs Thatcher, Indira Ghandi, etc). When women fight

¹⁴⁰ This may appear in contradiction of Kelly's previous views as expressed in *Fighting for Hope*, however, while Kelly certainly valued the importance of respecting femininity and mother-like characteristics, she also argued that women must not remain silent on or accepting of environmental or political issues.

¹⁴¹ *Thinking Green!*, p 12.

for equal status with men, they run the risk of joining the ranks in times of war. We are so conditioned by masculine values that women often make the mistake of imitating and emulating men at the cost of their own feminism. When I assess the world of male values, it is clear to me that I do not want this kind of 'equality'.¹⁴²

Thus Kelly's theory of feminism was one which encompassed the essence of what it was to be a woman – someone who cares, understands, listens and shows emotion. Equal rights for women meant, in Kelly's opinion, the right to demonstrate these traits, not to take on those of men. However, it failed to acknowledge that any feminist theory must firstly accept the virtual impossibility of a completely objective point of view.

In her essay, "Is Ecofeminism Feminist?", Victoria Davion writes that the way to escape and overcome the masculine domination of Western "patriarchal ideological frameworks" is not to rely completely upon feminist and feminine frameworks. This is because there are many different feminist perspectives, and

if feminists fail to assert that at least some of the roles assigned to women under patriarchy are damaging, we fail to assert the very premise that makes feminism, the overthrowing of patriarchy, important. For, if sexist oppression is not damaging to women, women have no reason to resist it. If it does cause damage, we should expect to see this damage in traditionally assigned feminine roles.¹⁴³

Therefore, in order to establish a convincing argument for feminism, it is first necessary to accept that one cannot escape from the framework within which one's education and

¹⁴² Kelly, Petra K. *Fighting for Hope*. p 107.

¹⁴³ Davion, Victoria. "Is Ecofeminism Feminist?" in *Ecological Feminism*, Karen J. Warren, (ed), p 16

belief and value system has been placed. Kelly understood and acknowledged that elements of her childhood were influenced by the patriarchal culture in which she grew up. Yet the difficulty with her theory, as Davion illustrates, lies in the lack of critical analysis of the roles of women within this culture. Kelly indeed acknowledged that “[e]very individual has both feminine and masculine qualities”,¹⁴⁴ yet it is clear that it was the feminine qualities which she considered should be more highly valued. This would lead, according to Kelly, to a more equal world, where power would be shared between individuals instead of being held over others.¹⁴⁵ However, while Kelly may have valued feminine qualities over masculine, she also understood the dangers of essentialism: “I am not saying that women are inherently better than men. Overturning patriarchy does not mean replacing men’s dominance with women’s dominance. That would merely maintain the patriarchal pattern of dominance. We need to transform the pattern itself.”¹⁴⁶ Therefore it is possible that Kelly’s lack of criticism about traditional roles for women was due to her belief that these roles were not damaging, as Davion suggests, as long as there existed the opportunity for women – and men – to also move into other roles which were less traditional. Kelly’s concept of feminism did not, however, end with the demand for equal rights and a feminist society. Her approach was far more holistic. Feminism may have been a starting point, “a principle in and of itself”,¹⁴⁷ yet it also encompassed civil disobedience and nonviolence. Furthermore, as Kelly consistently asserted, feminism and green politics were so closely linked as to be inseparable; green politics must be by its nature feminist. In order to adequately address

¹⁴⁴ Kelly, *Thinking Green!* p 11

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p 13

¹⁴⁶ *Thinking Green!* p 11-12

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p 10

the importance of these issues both to Kelly and to her view of feminism, this relationship between green politics and feminism will be discussed, with particular reference to the emergence of the ecofeminist movement and its significance to Kelly.

II. Feminist to Ecofeminist

Kelly's interest in environmental issues had begun with her interest in the effects of radiation on the environment and therefore on humans, specifically, with Grace's death. Kelly's research on these issues led her to become more active in seeking to prevent the introduction of nuclear power stations. This attitude was shared by many others, especially in Germany. In *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond*, Gorski and Markovits suggest that there was a deeper reasoning behind the protests against nuclear energy:

... to adherents of the new social movements, nuclear energy is evil not only because it involves a product which is dangerous to the community's health, but because it is, by its very nature, large-scale in expenditure, in organization, in deployment. Nuclear installations, precisely because of their importance to a country's energy sources and defence-related industries, need a big apparatus of protection. Thus, to the activists of the new social movements, there exists a compelling link between the evils of the "nuclear state" (*Atomstaat*) and those of the "security state" (*Sicherheitsstaat*).¹⁴⁸

Furthermore, such a security state placed the importance of "security" before the

¹⁴⁸ Markovits, Andrei S. and Gorski, Philip S. *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond*. Oxford University Press: New York. 1993, p12.

importance of the individual, and in some cases, before the life of an individual.¹⁴⁹ With the increasing prevalence of nuclear power, some in the feminist movement began to seek ways in which their concern for human rights and emancipation of women could be combined with their growing concern for the environment. In 1974, Françoise d'Eaubonne published *Le féminisme ou la mort*, in which she introduced and discussed the term “ecoféminisme”.¹⁵⁰ Developing into a movement, ecofeminism can be defined as “based not only on the recognition of connection between the exploitation of nature and the oppression of women across patriarchal societies. It is also based on the recognition that these two forms of domination are bound up with class exploitation, racism, colonialism and neocolonialism.”¹⁵¹

Another facet of ecofeminism which differentiated it from mainstream feminism was its emphasis on nonviolence and spirituality. It was these elements which appeared to be lacking in feminism which encouraged the development of ecofeminism. Feminist writers Cathleen McGuire and Colleen McGuire were disappointed with the lack of depth in nineties feminism. In their essay “Grass-Roots Ecofeminism: Activating Utopia”, they describe a turning point in ecofeminism away from the feminist mainstream:

A specific distinction between feminism and ecofeminism was illuminated during the [1990] Gulf War. Many mainstream feminists advocated women’s equal right to participate in all levels of

¹⁴⁹ Kelly, *Fighting for Hope*, p 35.

¹⁵⁰ D’Eaubonne, Françoise. *Le féminisme ou la mort*, Editions Pierre Horay: Paris, 1974.

¹⁵¹ Gaard, Greta and Murphy, Patrick D. (eds) *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism: Theory, Interpretation and Pedagogy*. University of Illinois Press: Chicago, 1998, p 3.

military operations. In contrast, ecofeminists opposed any association with a war machine that unleashed terror and death on civilians and a hellish assault on nature.¹⁵²

Such examples of ecofeminism demonstrate the compatibility of this philosophy with Kelly's interpretation of feminism. However, while Kelly often referred to herself as a green and a feminist, she did not identify herself as an ecofeminist. This is puzzling, since the term had been employed for several years even before Kelly had begun to publish and speak widely. There are a number of suggestions as to why this was the case, not least a lack of knowledge about the term. Despite the emergence of the term during the 1970s, and the movement which followed, ecofeminism was confined largely to literary and theoretical circles.¹⁵³ Women who were not involved in these areas were more likely to identify themselves as "feminist", while maintaining an interest in social justice and environmental issues, rather than calling themselves "ecofeminist".

Considering Kelly's belief and dedication to educating herself with regards to movements, particularly with regards to peace, women's and human rights' issues, it would appear unlikely that she was not acquainted with the movement.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, Kelly mentions the term "ecofeminism" in *Fighting for Hope*, and in *Mit dem Herzen denken*, both published in the 1980s, as well as in *Thinking Green!*, which was published posthumously. This demonstrates her awareness of the concept and also the fact that it

¹⁵² McGuire, Colleen and McGuire, Cathleen. "Grass-Roots Ecofeminism: Activating Utopia", in *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism: Theory, Interpretation and Pedagogy*. p187.

¹⁵³ McGuire and McGuire, p 186.

¹⁵⁴ Texts such as *Reclaim the Earth: Women Speak out for Life on Earth* (Caldecott, Leonie and Leland, Stephanie (eds). Women's Press: London 1983), *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence* (McAllister, Pam. New Society Publishers: Philadelphia 1982) and *The Death of Nature* (Merchant, Carolyn. Harper & Row: San Francisco 1981), all published in the early 1980s, would have been easily accessible to Kelly had she wished to source them.

was not a completely marginal movement.¹⁵⁵ This raises the question of why she did not embrace it.

The answer is complex. One criticism of ecofeminism is that it focuses too much on the woman=nature connection, thus perpetuating a patriarchal stereotype on the one hand, and alienating men on the other. However, it seems unlikely that Kelly would have avoided ecofeminism for this reason, if only because she also believed, at least to some degree, in the connection between women and nature. Kelly's later speeches and publications indicate that alienation of men was contrary to her objective, as she welcomed and admired those men who were committed to peace, human rights and feminism. Moreover, in the development of her own feminist theory, Kelly had realised that men had much to offer the feminist movement. Thus it could be argued that Kelly would have been less concerned about alienating men than she was about alienating other women; taking an ecofeminist stance could perhaps have been interpreted as too radical.¹⁵⁶ Yet such a suggestion seems highly implausible, since Kelly's friends, if not already involved in politics, the peace movement and feminism themselves, were sympathetic to these causes. In addition, Kelly was adamant about doing what she believed was right, often regardless of what others thought or believed. This is

¹⁵⁵ *Fighting for Hope*, pp38, 39; *Mit dem Herzen denken*, pp 272, 274; *Thinking Green!* p 17 The evidence of ecofeminism – or at least, feminism with an environmental element – existed in Germany can be seen in *Out of the Shadows Contemporary German Feminism*, by Silke Beinssen-Hesse und Kate Rigby. (Melbourne University Press: Melbourne, 1996, pp 86-91).

¹⁵⁶ It is true that all feminist theories could be criticised for alienating men by the very nature of being feminist. However, this seems particularly pertinent when discussing the woman=nature connection, as it focuses upon a relationship from which men can be easily excluded (an example of this might be the act of childbirth, where a man's physical role is diminished in comparison to the role of the woman). While the alienation of men was certainly not one of Kelly's aims, nor, it can be assumed, was it an aim of the ecofeminist movement as a whole, this does not mean that alienation of men did not occur. The difference between the alienation of men as part of a feminist interpretation (which is not the case), and the alienation of men due to the nature of the material discussed (the interests of women) must be noted.

emphasised by her involvement in issues which even Die Grünen were at first reluctant to address, such as supporting the Dalai Lama and Tibet's struggle for independence from China.¹⁵⁷ Kelly was involved in protests, asked difficult and undiplomatic questions to visiting foreign politicians and emphasised the importance of governments meddling in situations where human rights were being abused, regardless of diplomatic or trade ties which may exist between countries.¹⁵⁸ Kelly believed that to stay silent was not an option, and that women especially must take the opportunity to make changes:

The suffering people of this world must come together to take control of their lives, to wrest political power from their present masters, who are pushing them towards destruction. This is also a plea to all women to join those sisters who have already risen up – who have helped to shape the ecological revolution. Together we can overthrow all the imposed structures of domination.¹⁵⁹

Here it is also clear that while Kelly was addressing in particular the women in her audience, she was including the men in those who suffer. The rousing words in this paragraph also indicate Kelly's desire to encourage the feeling of taking part in a change for the better, a revolution. Such rhetoric demonstrates a desire to prompt action, and certainly makes no apologies for the changes which would occur, were such action to be taken. Thus it is unlikely that Kelly's interpretation of feminism was tempered for the benefit of either men or women.

¹⁵⁷ *Thinking Green!* p 72.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p 70.

¹⁵⁹ *Fighting for Hope*, p 106

Within the ecofeminist movement there also developed a “submovement” which placed importance upon Goddess worship and a spiritual connection with nature.¹⁶⁰ While such a religious concept is incompatible with Catholicism, the religion of Kelly’s childhood, by the 1970s her faith in the Catholic church had dwindled, partly due to her disillusionment of the institutionalisation of the church, and partly due to the death of her sister, as well as a belief that the church could not provide her with the spiritual guidance she needed.¹⁶¹ In addition, through her Tibetan foster child, Nima, and through her subsequent interest in the Tibetan culture, Buddhism, and meetings with the Dalai Lama, Kelly was tolerant and accepting of religions other than Catholicism, stating that “all forms of religion seem to have at their heart the one truth that unites us, which is love.”¹⁶² Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr, both of whom based their philosophies on the importance of truth and love, were highly influential to Kelly, and she respected and embraced the religious aspect of their nonviolent movements. Granted, these religions were mainstream and traditional compared to some of the Gaian theories which arose from the ecofeminist movement, however, Kelly demonstrated an open-mindedness to religious and spiritual beliefs,¹⁶³ and it therefore seems unlikely that the association with an alternative spirituality would negatively influence Kelly in considering herself an ecofeminist.

¹⁶⁰ For further discussion of this, see Spretnak, Charlene, *The Politics of Women’s Spirituality: Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power Within the Feminist Movement* Anchor Press: New York 1982.

¹⁶¹ Parkin, pp 64-66.

¹⁶² *Thinking Green!* p 5.

¹⁶³ This is particularly evident in Kelly’s chapter, “For an Erotic Society” in *Fighting for Hope*, where she discusses love, spirituality and relationships and their relation to tantrism. (pp 111-118).

Therefore the most plausible theory as to Kelly's reluctance to identify herself as an ecofeminist is thus a reticence to be categorised¹⁶⁴ as well as the fact that her fusing of ecology and feminism was simply part of her feminist theory. Kelly would often refer to the fact that green issues and feminism were inseparable.¹⁶⁵ Her interest in the environment was connected to her desire to promote health and well-being for humans and understanding between individuals. Thus Kelly's definition of feminism encompassed that of the ecofeminist movement, with its emphasis on the value of the environment, nonviolence and protection of human rights. It could even be suggested that Kelly *was* an ecofeminist, but did not ever commit herself in so many words. Therefore, despite a reluctance to use the term, Kelly stood for the same ideals as ecofeminists, and as such leaves a valuable legacy to the ecofeminist movement. This illustrates that the definition of ecofeminism is perhaps less important in Kelly's case than the fact that she promoted its cause: that ecofeminism was the only way forward in politics, in international and personal relationships, and in the relationship between humans and their natural environment.

¹⁶⁴ *Lebe, als müßtest du heute sterben*, p 30 Other eco/feminists also rejected the label, for a number of reasons, while still arguing along similar lines and promoting "feminist" or "ecofeminist" concepts (see, for example, Lewis, Alison. *Subverting Patriarchy: Feminism and Fantasy in the Works of Irmtraud Morgner* Berg Publishers: Oxford; Herndon, 1995).

¹⁶⁵ *Thinking Green!* p 39; *Mit dem Herzen denken*, p 272.

Part Three: Nonviolence and Politics

As part of her green feminist philosophy, Petra Kelly was committed to nonviolence in both her personal and political life. The following chapters will address the concept of nonviolence, its origins, and influential figures of the movement which had a great impact on Kelly and whom she mentioned often in her speeches, essays, and conversations. They will also critically analyse nonviolent philosophy, addressing the issues which are raised when promoting a nonviolent approach to politics, defence and a way of life. The role played by nonviolence in Kelly's politics will then be discussed, as will the relationship between Kelly's theory of feminism and nonviolence.

I. Kelly's Nonviolent Background

While widely adopted by many of the 1968 generation, when it received perhaps its greatest exposure, the philosophy of nonviolent resistance was not unique to this particular era. Aside from being central to many religious doctrines, such as Buddhism and Christianity, nonviolence has also been adopted in the wider culture as a philosophy by which to conduct one's life. Examples of figures who advocated nonviolence include writers, Henry David Thoreau and Leo Tolstoy, as well as philosopher and priest, A.J. Muste who promoted nonviolence as a means of protesting against slavery and war and argued that nonviolence could be a method to negotiate potentially volatile situations. Furthermore, there are several examples of resistance throughout wars and occupations such as the Danish resistance and civil disobedience during the German invasion during

World War II or Indian resistance against colonial Britain throughout the early 1900s until gaining independence in 1947.¹⁶⁶ The many examples of nonviolent resistance were well-known to Kelly and later would be causes to which she and on occasion Die Grünen would both give, and request from other parties, their support.

Petra Kelly's own introduction to nonviolence occurred at an early age. Her grandmother, Kunigunde Birle, was vehemently opposed to the Nazi regime both before and during World War II.¹⁶⁷ Her schooling at the convent in Günzburg, along with the strong faith of her mother and grandmother influenced her greatly, to the point of her deciding as a child that she would become a nun when she grew up, in order to devote herself to helping others.¹⁶⁸ Kelly decided against taking vows to become a nun, writing later that it became apparent to her the kinds of sexism and discrimination which existed in the Catholic church, and which would render it impossible for her to serve in the institution.¹⁶⁹ However, she remained convinced that there were elements of Christianity, such as the Sermon on the Mount,¹⁷⁰ which demonstrated true commitment to nonviolence and to the Christian principles of love and tolerance. Kelly separated the institution from the religion, and in later speeches she would also name Jesus Christ as one of the first and most influential advocates of nonviolence and civil disobedience.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ Gregg, Richard B. *The Power of Nonviolence*, James Clarke & Co, Ltd: London 1960 (this edition), pp 28-30.

¹⁶⁷ Kelly, Petra K. *Thinking Green! Essays on Environmentalism, Feminism, and Nonviolence*. Parallax Press: Berkeley, California 1994. p 4.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p 5.

¹⁷⁰ Matthew, Chapters 5-8, *The Holy Bible*. Thomas Nelson Publishers: Tennessee 1982 (this edition).

¹⁷¹ Examples include *Thinking Green!* p 50; *Mit dem Herzen denken*, p 28; *Fighting for Hope* p 19.

The experiences Kelly had in the United States were also integral to her philosophy of and commitment to nonviolence. Living in the southern states of Georgia and Virginia during the early 1960s, a teenage Petra Kelly became active in the civil rights movement through becoming involved in projects which assisted disadvantaged black children.¹⁷² Kelly was also impressed by the events leading up to, and during, the civil rights' movement in neighbouring towns and states led by Martin Luther King, Jr. He was to become one of those figures whom she saw inspiration.¹⁷³ Later, while at university, Kelly would participate in nonviolent marches in the tradition of civil disobedience as promoted by King and Mohandas Gandhi. She would continue to join protests even after becoming involved in mainstream politics. Kelly was also inspired by Henry David Thoreau's essays on civil disobedience which she read while at university.¹⁷⁴ In his text, "On Civil Disobedience", Thoreau discusses the importance of the individual taking responsibility for what happens in his or her state. During the time when Thoreau was writing, slavery was still prevalent in the southern states of North America. Thoreau, who was very much against this, refused to pay taxes as a protest to the laws his government had passed. Thoreau argued that if a government made decisions which, while legal, were immoral, then it was the responsibility of the citizens of that state to disobey these laws. Kelly was also convinced of this, and used the argument both in her defence in court in 1986¹⁷⁵ as well as writing about it in her book, *Thinking Green!*¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² *Nonviolence Speaks to Power*, p 162.

¹⁷³ Parkin, p 49.

¹⁷⁴ Sperr, p 68.

¹⁷⁵ Kelly was taken to court for her involvement in a protest at a weapons factory and argued that a democracy such as existed in Germany should allow such civil disobedience. See below, p 83.

¹⁷⁶ *Thinking Green!* p 59.

By the time she had finished university Kelly had discovered such figures as Caesar Chavez and Dorothy Day.¹⁷⁷ In addition, Kelly had been introduced to the ideas of Gandhi, whose nonviolent philosophy was being adopted not only by Martin Luther King, Jr but also others in the peace movement. These influential public and literary figures certainly persuaded Kelly of the value and righteousness of nonviolence; however, she also realised the importance of acts of nonviolence and civil disobedience being put into practice by people in their everyday lives. While the civil rights' movement may have sparked her interest in nonviolent protest, there were other incidences which reinforced her commitment to nonviolence.

The first of these impacted Petra Kelly on a very personal note: her experience in Prague during the "Prague Spring" while on holiday with her grandmother. Despite her fear, and the obvious fear of the Czech people, Kelly was buoyed by the acts of nonviolent protest carried out and the refusal to simply accept the occupation. The acts of nonviolence carried out by the Czech people, as well as the continuity of resistance until the "Velvet Revolution" of 1989 was a source of inspiration for Kelly. Once back in Washington, Kelly participated in peace marches, convinced that there was a better way to resolve conflict, and that the concept of love and nonviolent resistance could overcome hatred. This was reaffirmed in a candle-lit protest at the White House in which Kelly participated shortly after she returned from Prague: "Drei Polizisten, zwei Schwarze und ein Weißer,

¹⁷⁷ Chavez, child of migrant farm workers was a prominent figure in early establishment of trade unions which used civil disobedience to gain rights and recognition for itinerant workers, who until then, had had few rights and low working standards. Day, a campaigner for peace and human rights, especially of the disadvantaged and the homeless, was a devout Catholic. She also supported Chavez in demonstrations and campaigned strongly against the Vietnam War. For Kelly, Day was an inspirational figure, managing her public life with her role as a single mother and yet remaining completely committed to the cause of peace.

scherten aus der Kette, aus ihrer Überwachungsfunktion aus und reihten sich ein bei den Demonstranten. Es wurde in der allgemeinen Aufregung kaum beachtet, aber [Kelly] hat es sich tief eingeprägt.”¹⁷⁸

Kelly’s later involvement with the BBU and her subsequent visit to the Wyhl protest reinforced her belief that nonviolent protest was not only possible, but highly effective. Her commitment to nonviolence was also a reason for Kelly’s departure from the SPD in 1979.¹⁷⁹ At this time, NATO had revealed plans to place Pershing II missiles and mid-range Cruise missiles on German land¹⁸⁰ and the SPD’s failure to adequately raise objections against the arms race and West Germany’s role within the Cold War were a catalyst for Kelly’s resignation. It is thus no coincidence that Die Grünen, to whom Kelly would commit her allegiance, was formed with nonviolence at its foundation, with this principle one of the four pillars upon which the party was based. However, differences in the interpretation of what consisted nonviolent behaviour caused rifts within the party. For Kelly, it was imperative that one should act in a nonviolent manner towards everyone, even towards those who would promote or exercise violence, such as the police or the army. If one did not, then one lowered oneself to the same level as those who perpetuated violence as a valid means of resolving a situation. When members of the peace movement gathered at Krefeld to protest against US weapons during a visit in 1984 by Vice President George Bush

¹⁷⁸Sperr, p 78. [Three policemen, two black and one white, pulled out of line and their supervisory role and joined in with the demonstrators. In the excitement it was hardly noticed, but it deeply impacted Kelly.]

¹⁷⁹ Another reason was that on forming Die Grünen, it was decided that dual membership with the new party and other political parties should not be permitted. Since Kelly was committed to the Greens, she needed to relinquish her SPD membership.

¹⁸⁰ Parkin, p 112.

...[t]he event was marred by *Autonomen* (anarchists) who threw stones at the presidential limousine. Later on it was revealed that a federal intelligence agent had acted as *agent provocateur*, but not before wide divisions were exposed within Die Grünen, between those who saw violent activists as part of the same movement and those who did not.¹⁸¹

Kelly was evidently adamant that violence was not the means to a peaceful end,¹⁸² yet it was often challenging to convince others of the value of this. Kelly's dedication to nonviolence was complete; she believed it was an essential part of green politics and that it was also a way of life: "Einige Grünen behaupten, Gewaltlosigkeit sei nur eine Taktik. Ist sie jedoch nur eine Taktik, dann hat das mit der Philosophie der Grünen nichts mehr zu tun. Gewaltlosigkeit ist eine Lebensart."¹⁸³

Kelly's was not a unique situation; other advocates of nonviolence who aspired to put the principles into practice, such as Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr, were faced with the same difficulties. Arguments both for and against nonviolence are complex, thus to place Kelly's stance in its context it is necessary to firstly address and understand these arguments. This next chapter will therefore review the nonviolent philosophies of Gandhi and King. Through this it will then be possible to compare Kelly's nonviolent position with those of Gandhi and King, to investigate the extent to which they were an influence upon Kelly's own nonviolent theory, and analyse the effectiveness of Kelly's responses to the criticisms of nonviolence.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, p 134.

¹⁸² Kelly, Petra K. *Fighting for Hope*, p 31.

¹⁸³ *Lebe, als müsstest du heute sterben*, p 22. [A few Greens think nonviolence is just a tactic. If it's only a tactic, then it doesn't have anything to do with the Greens. Nonviolence is a way of life.]

II. Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King

Mohandas Gandhi was born 1869 in Porbandar, where his father was Prime Minister, and Gandhi spent his early childhood there. His religion, and that of his family, was Hinduism, and Gandhi was to become a devoted follower of the religion.¹⁸⁴ However, he would also later question elements of Hinduism, for example, the caste system, and in particular, the caste of the untouchables.

After matriculating from high school and attending an Indian college briefly, Gandhi's family allowed him to travel to London to study law.¹⁸⁵ On returning to India after being admitted to the bar, opportunity arose through Gandhi's brother to work in South Africa. The segregation in South Africa was a shock to Gandhi, and he experienced firsthand the racism against both black Africans and Indians who lived there.¹⁸⁶ These experiences directly influenced the philosophy and principles later developed by Gandhi, as it was in South Africa where he began to develop the basis of *satyagraha*, or "love/truth-force". Satyagraha was the philosophy behind Gandhi's later civil disobedience, built on the understanding that it is better to conquer with love, tolerance, and honesty than with violence.

After a period of time in South Africa, Gandhi and his family returned to India, sailing via London. While en route, World War I began, and Gandhi, having volunteered to help

¹⁸⁴ Gandhi, Mohandas. *The Story of my Experiments with the Truth*, Navajivan Press: Ahmedabad, India. 1959 (this edition).

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

the wounded during the Boer War in South Africa, promoted the voluntary participation of Indians to fight on the side of the British. Even Gandhi realised the apparent inconsistency of a commitment to nonviolence while taking part in a war – albeit in a passive, non-confrontational role. This in no way signified an endorsement for war by Gandhi, rather it was for him a commitment to the British empire, to which, at that stage, Gandhi felt still bound. While this is an issue for which Gandhi may have been criticised, it also demonstrates his understanding of the complexities facing individuals when making decisions about nonviolent or violent action. In this sense, he argued: “To state that noble doctrine [of nonviolence] is simple enough; to know it and to practise it in the midst of a world full of strife, turmoil and passions is a task whose difficulty I realize more and more day by day. And yet the conviction too that without it life is not worth living is growing daily deeper.”¹⁸⁷

Gandhi’s position on the British empire was also to undergo a change. As laws made by the governing British became more discriminating in India, and calls by Indians for independent government were increasingly denied or ignored, Gandhi found himself questioning the validity of a ruling British minority and became involved in the campaign for India’s independence. His nonviolent stance and religious commitment, however, did not change; in fact, he considered both to be valuable, even intrinsic elements of politics: “They say, ‘means are after all means’. I would say, ‘means are after all everything.’ As

¹⁸⁷ Gandhi, Mohandas. *All Men are Brothers: Life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi as told in his own Words* Unesco: Paris, 1958, p 47.

the means so the end. There is no wall of separation between means and end. [...] Means and ends are convertible terms in my philosophy of life.”¹⁸⁸

Petra Kelly’s philosophy relied heavily on the nonviolent theory of Gandhi. She too argued that there was no other way to follow than nonviolence¹⁸⁹ and believed that it mattered very much the means which she or Die Grünen took to achieve green ends; this was one reason why she did not agree with an SPD-Greens coalition in the 1980s. However, there are also important differences to consider.

While Gandhi gave his support on many issues, and at times changed his mind with regards to some, his underlying motivation and concepts did not alter. The principles of love, nonviolence, honesty and the importance of religion featured strongly and consistently throughout his life. Such principles were also very highly valued by Kelly as is demonstrated on several occasions in her speeches, letters and essays. Yet where they differed was the lengths to which each would support nonviolence. Gandhi promoted nonviolence as the way to reform and to a better and fairer world, however he also understood that many people were in situations in which nonviolence seemed impossible to carry out, and that should one refuse to fight, the enemy would succeed in perpetuating evil. Gandhi thus recommended nonviolent action insofar as it were possible to do so. Conversely, Kelly was far less compromising in her belief in nonviolence, speaking about violence in far more general terms, arguing that “[a]ll forms of structural and institutional violence – the arms race, warfare, economic deprivation, social injustice,

¹⁸⁸ *All Men are Brothers*, p 107

¹⁸⁹ *Lebe, als müsstest du heute sterben*, p 22

ecological exploitation, and so forth – are closely linked. Making their interrelationships clear is essential for moving society in a direction that benefits all, not just one nation, class, or even species.”¹⁹⁰

There are criticisms to be made of both points of view. Firstly, Gandhi’s acceptance of violence in some cases but not in others could potentially lead to a lack of credibility for the argument of nonviolence, that is, an ethical slippery slope. Thus, should there be incidents where violence is acceptable, then a standard would need to be set and adhered to in order to prevent this arbitrariness. Since this was not stipulated by Gandhi, this inconsistency could lead to a weakness in his argument. However, Gandhi acknowledged his inconsistencies.¹⁹¹ He understood that some would criticise this, however believed that it was important to modify and develop one’s theories as one became more knowledgeable. Regardless, Gandhi believed that nonviolence needed to remain the centre of politics and conflict resolution. It is true that Gandhi would stop a protest or demonstration if it began to turn violent.¹⁹² Yet he also understood the difficulties of following a strict nonviolent programme and understood that there were sometimes shades of grey; for Kelly the concept was very much black and white.

Thus, to be as highly critical of any violent acts as Kelly risked the chance of alienating those who felt that violence was the only option to save their own lives or those of their families. The difficulty with Kelly’s stance is that individuals – as well as governments –

¹⁹⁰ *Thinking Green!* p 64

¹⁹¹ *All Men are Brothers*, p 44

¹⁹² Seshachari, C. *Gandhi and the American Scene: An Intellectual History and Inquiry*. Nachiketa Publications: Bombay, 1969. p94.

who fail to remain nonviolent have ultimately failed since there is no contingency clause for violence within Kelly's theory. One is either violent or nonviolent, and the varying external factors which influenced the decision appeared not to be given consideration. It should also be noted that Kelly's references to Gandhi and quotes by him do not refer in any way to the condoning of violence, perhaps indicating that Kelly only adopted those elements of Gandhi's philosophy which suited her own theory. This criticism will be addressed at greater length in the following chapter.

The emphasis Gandhi placed on religion and honesty, particularly in the realm of politics, was also important to Kelly. While Gandhi was a devout Hindu, and carefully respected the customs of his religion, he was also tolerant, even embracing, of other religions. For Gandhi, the kind of religion or god was not important, rather it was the emphasis on love, understanding, tolerance and a search for the truth which so many religions had at their centre. In this sense, it did not matter whether one was Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Buddhist, merely that one respected the religions of the others and understood that the journey was similar for everyone. Kelly also considered herself to be a spiritual person, yet she preferred to take a more holistic approach to religion and spirituality rather than claiming to belong to one particular religion. After leaving the Catholic church, Kelly's connection to spirituality encompassed a wide spectrum of religions. The detachment from the church meant in no way a detachment from the teachings of Jesus; Kelly believed that Jesus was one of the role models of nonviolence. It was the institution of the church with which she had severed ties. Kelly also embraced elements of Buddhism. Through her connections with her Tibetan foster daughter, Nima, and the Dalai Lama,

Kelly gained an education about Buddhism and Tibetan life, and promoted it as a means to living a nonviolent existence.

Kelly, like Gandhi, was also convinced that the process of politics could be improved if spirituality, nonviolence and honesty were the foundations of government. This idea was questioned by colleagues and opponents, both of Gandhi and of Kelly. For Gandhi, however, politics without these elements was lacking: “Some friends have told me that truth and nonviolence have no place in politics and world affairs. I do not agree. I have no use for them as a means of individual salvation. Their introduction and application in everyday life has been my experiment all along.”¹⁹³ Kelly believed also that honesty and spirituality were needed in politics, both in domestic and international politics. However, her call for spirituality and love between individuals was particularly poorly received. Even – or perhaps especially – in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when Die Grünen began to gain in influence and public popularity, culminating in the winning of seats in 1983, politics and government in Germany was traditional, secular and male-centred. Kelly’s call for spirituality, honesty, and love in politics was viewed broadly as both naïve and a relic of 1968 hippiedom. This is due in great part to Kelly’s experience with politics in the United States, where such rhetoric was not only employed, but commonplace. For a German political party, even one as enlightened as Die Grünen, Kelly’s views began to be considered too alternative for mainstream politics.

Despite the criticism she may have received for her dedication to nonviolence in the face of a militaristic world, Kelly remained convinced that this was the only way in which to

¹⁹³ *All Men are Brothers*, p 117.

ensure lasting peace between individuals and nations. As such, while relying on Gandhi for the basis of her nonviolent philosophy, Kelly also drew upon the admiration she held for the commitment to civil rights and justice by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Born in January in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, Martin Luther King, Jr was to become one of the most well-known advocates of nonviolence in the twentieth century. After completing his PhD at Boston University in 1955, King and his wife, Coretta Scott King, moved to Montgomery, Alabama, where King was due to take up the post of pastor at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. It was in Montgomery that King's involvement with the civil rights' movement began. The arrest of Rosa Parks, a black woman who had broken segregation laws by refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger while riding a public bus in Montgomery led to a boycott of the public bus system and a call for desegregation of buses. Martin Luther King, Jr was chosen as leader to coordinate the boycott. In King, the growing movement had gained an eloquent, intelligent leader who, through both his formal education and own experiences, had become ever more convinced that nonviolence was the only means to achieving a complete change in the attitudes and laws which perpetuated the discrimination of African Americans. While at college, King was introduced to nonviolence as a means of resistance against forms of injustice, including the recent world war. Attending a lecture by AJ Muste while he was attending Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School impressed him, yet King was unconvinced by the pacifist position which Muste promoted. "Like most of the students at Crozer, I felt that while war could never be a positive or absolute good, it could serve as a negative good in the sense of preventing the spread and growth of an evil force. War, horrible as it is,

might be preferable to surrender to a totalitarian system – Nazi, Fascist, or Communist.”¹⁹⁴

King altered his position after educating himself in the teachings of Mohandas Gandhi. He was inspired by Gandhi, reading several texts on the subject while at university and later discussing Gandhi’s commitment to nonviolence on a visit to India. He realised that the nonviolent philosophy held by Gandhi, and also by Muste and Henry David Thoreau, was not a passive alternative, nor did it promote surrendering to dictators, rather it was a different way of conquering injustice and violence:

As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi my skepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and I came to see for the first time its potency in the area of social reform. Prior to reading Gandhi, I had about concluded that the ethics of Jesus were only effective in individual relationship. The “turn the other cheek” philosophy and the “love your enemies” philosophy were only valid, I felt, when individuals were in conflict with other individuals. But after reading Gandhi, I saw how utterly mistaken I was.¹⁹⁵

However, King’s decision to remain nonviolent throughout his involvement in the civil rights’ movement attracted criticism from both within and outside the African American community. Young black people showed impatience at the time it took to achieve small milestones and many were attracted to the “Black Power” movement promoted by prominent members such as Malcolm X. Yet despite the malcontent of some younger

¹⁹⁴ King, Martin Luther, Jr. *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* Harper & Row: New York 1958 p 95. Muste’s theory on nonviolence and his responses to critics can be found in *The Essays of AJ Muste*, Hentoff, Nat (ed). The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc: Indianapolis; New York; Kansas City, 1967.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p 96-97.

black Americans, King still maintained a strong following, from both black and white sections of the community, who fully supported his nonviolent attitude.

The tradition of civil disobedience, also present in theories of Thoreau, Muste and Gandhi, was a necessary part of the success of King's nonviolent campaign for civil rights; indeed it was one of the six basic principles behind his philosophy. In an essay "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," published in his book, *Stride Toward Freedom*, King summarised six principles of nonviolence which he believed needed to be followed when planning and conducting a nonviolent campaign. There are considerable similarities between these points and those adopted by Kelly.

The first principle was the necessity of commitment and courage when undertaking nonviolent resistance. King argued that there was an important difference between nonviolence and cowardice:

If one uses this method because he is afraid or merely because he lacks the instruments of violence, he is not truly nonviolent [...] The phrase "passive resistance" often gives the false impression that this is a sort of "do-nothing method" in which the resister quietly and passively accepts evil. But nothing is farther from the truth. For while the nonviolent resister is passive in the sense that he is not physically aggressive toward his opponent, his mind and emotions are always active [...] The method is passive, physically, but strongly active spiritually. It is not passive non-resistance to evil, it is active nonviolent resistance to evil."¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ *Stride toward Freedom*, p 102.

Kelly was also convinced of this, especially of the necessity of creativity as part of the resistance. Knowledgeable of the fact that choosing the nonviolent option meant that the Greens would face opposition both from other political parties and from sections of the community, Kelly consistently argued that if the Greens and the wider peace movement were to succeed nonviolently, they must use imagination as a means to achieve this: “Dieser gewaltfreie Kampf bedeutet nicht passives Erdulden. Er erhält Bedeutung und Wirkung vom massenhaften zivilen Ungehorsam, phantasievoll geplant und überraschend eingesetzt.”¹⁹⁷

King also argued that a nonviolent approach involved using persuasion to achieve the desired means and emphasised that the goal was to win over the opposition, not defeat them as in a violent approach. King argued that “[t]he nonviolent resister must often express his protest that these are not ends in themselves, they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent. The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.”¹⁹⁸

Kelly too argued that the ends must justify the means as is discussed above. In particular, Kelly did not want to bow to internal and external pressure which encouraged a coalition between the Greens and the SPD, as one of her reasons for leaving that party was its failure to completely commit to nonviolence. However, she did not rule out a future

¹⁹⁷ *Mit dem Herzen denken*, p 229, “Offener Brief an die Anti-Atombewegung” signed by Kelly, Bastian and fifty-one other prominent members of the green/anti-nuclear movement. [This nonviolent struggle does not mean passive endurance. It gains meaning and effect through massive civil disobedience, imaginatively planned and implemented with an element of surprise.]

¹⁹⁸ *Stride toward Freedom* p 103.

coalition, should the SPD change its policy.¹⁹⁹ Specifically, Kelly believed that it was imperative for Die Grünen to remain loyal and absolutely committed to nonviolence, both for the sake of its credibility and in order to promote a nonviolent future:

Wir müssen die Gewalt, die von Regierungen ausgeht, ablehnen, aber auch die Gewalt ablehnen, die von denjenigen ausgeht, die sie aus Frustration, aus Verzweiflung oder aus Ohnmacht praktizieren. Genau die müssen wir erreichen, wir müssen sie überzeugen, daß unser Weg der bessere ist, der wirksamere. Ich glaube, wir müssen auch Grundsätzliches über Gewalt sagen: Gewalt ist niemals auf Versöhnung ausgerichtet. Und Gewalt bedeutet immer Unterwerfung. Ich glaube auch, daß Gewalt immer nur neue Gewalt erzeugt.²⁰⁰

The third principle of nonviolence as defined by Martin Luther King, Jr was that strikes, boycotts or protests were to be directed at the system, not the people within it.²⁰¹ Kelly agreed, and also believed that this was an element which was lacking within the Green party: “Ich glaube, daß viele von uns noch nicht gelernt haben, lange und zäh mit dem Gegner, mit dem Opponenten zu verhandeln.”²⁰²

According to King, part of a commitment to a nonviolent way of life was the acceptance of punishment for acts of civil disobedience. However, of most importance was the way in which the punishment was accepted: “A fourth point that characterizes nonviolent

¹⁹⁹ *Nonviolence Speaks to Power*, p 159.

²⁰⁰ *Mit dem Herzen denken*, p 233. [We must reject the violence which is carried out by governments, but we must also reject violence by those who use it due to frustration, despair, or powerlessness. It is these people we must reach; we must convince them that our way is better and more effective. I think we have to say of violence: violence is never a means of reconciliation. And violence always means submission. I also think that violence only ever gives rise to more violence.]

²⁰¹ *Stride toward freedom*, p 102.

²⁰² *Mit dem Herzen denken*, p 233. [I think that many of us still haven't learnt how to engage slowly and tenderly with the opponent, with the opposition.]

resistance is a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation, to accept blows from the opponent without striking back [...] The nonviolence resister is willing to accept violence if necessary, but never to inflict it. He does not seek to dodge jail.”²⁰³ This was a principle which Martin Luther King, Jr was forced to put into practice on several occasions. Indeed, he believed that his serving time in prison further highlighted the cause of the civil rights’ movement, promoting attention from the media and prominent public figures in America.

While Kelly did not spend time in jail, there were incidences where she faced prosecution for acts of civil disobedience. In 1983, motivated by the actions of Joan Baez and other activists during the Vietnam War, Kelly wrote to the Tax Department in Nürnberg, explaining that she would be withholding ten percent of her tax in order to prevent that money being used as part of the defence budget. Kelly explained that “[a]ls Bürgerin dieses Landes fühle ich mich jedoch verpflichtet, darüber zu wachen, daß die von mir an den Staat abgeführten Geldmittel nicht für verfassungswidrige oder gar unmoralische Zwecke verwendet werden.”²⁰⁴ Kelly then provided account details to the department as proof and for their examination. However, she was only able to continue this for a short time, as the penalties for withholding this tax soon became more than she could afford.²⁰⁵

Later, in 1986 at a demonstration in Hünsruck at Pydna, a weapons manufacturing plant, Kelly, Bastian and others were arrested for “gemeinschaftlich handelnd andere

²⁰³ *Stride toward freedom*, p 103.

²⁰⁴ *Mit dem Herzen denken*, p 132. [As a citizen of this country, I feel obligated to ensure that the money which the state takes from me will not be used for unconstitutional or any immoral purpose.]

²⁰⁵ *Lebe, als müßtest du heute sterben*, p 29.

rechtswidrig mit Gewalt zu einer Handlung, Duldung oder Unterlassung genötigt zu haben.”²⁰⁶ Despite Kelly’s argument before the court that the protest had only lasted minutes, and that this kind of civil disobedience should be permitted in a democracy such as Germany, she was fined DM4,500 for “verwerfliche Nötigung.” For Kelly, this kind of reaction merely reiterated the distorted priorities of the government and thus the legal system.²⁰⁷ It did, however, give Kelly a certain credibility within the green movement and Die Grünen when discussing the importance of civil disobedience, demonstrating her willingness to commit to principles despite the hardships involved.

Perhaps the most important principle underpinning King’s philosophy was that of love: “The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent, but he also refuses to hate him. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love.”²⁰⁸ Through loving one’s enemies, it was possible to see the similarities between them and oneself. King believed that “[a]ll humanity is involved in a single process and all men are brothers. To the degree that I harm my brother, no matter what he is doing to me, to that extent I am harming myself.”²⁰⁹

Kelly was also completely committed to the concept of loving one’s enemies, however, it certainly upset her when those who were against her attacked her politics or her personal life.²¹⁰ Yet to Kelly’s credit, she stood up to those who criticised her, and refused to

²⁰⁶ *Mit dem Herzen denken*, p 251. [Having coerced others with violence to condone, support or ignore an illegality]

²⁰⁷ *Thinking Green!* p 34.

²⁰⁸ *Stride toward freedom*, p 105.

²⁰⁹ *Stride toward freedom*, p 106.

²¹⁰ *Nonviolence Speaks to Power*, pp 155-6.

simply leave Die Grünen despite the rift between her and her party. Furthermore, Kelly adopted King's idea of interconnectedness and applied it not only to humanity, but also to the greater environment. Kelly's green politics were based on the concept of "what we do the Earth, we do to ourselves. Understanding our interconnectedness with all life is the essence of ecological politics and an ecological economy."²¹¹ Such an understanding of the relationship between humans and nature proposed, for example, that political decisions made on another continent thousands of kilometres away which affected people, plants or animals there were still relevant and important to Die Grünen and Kelly in Germany, despite the fact that there would be little or no direct or immediate impact upon them. At times there was opposition to this, since some individuals, both within and outside Die Grünen, believed that time, energy and resources would be of better value if used to help address issues within Germany which affected them directly.

King also believed that "the universe is on the side of justice. Consequently the believer in nonviolence has deep faith in the future. This faith is another reason why the nonviolent resister can accept suffering without retaliation. For he knows that in his struggle for justice he has cosmic companionship."²¹² Furthermore, with its emphasis on the importance of an ethical means to an end, nonviolence requires a long term commitment, as such ends are not necessarily achieved with the speed of violent means. Thus it was important for King that one have faith that nonviolence would work, and that the odds were in favour of this. To believe otherwise would, in a sense, negate the efforts and patience required by the nonviolent philosophy.

²¹¹ *Thinking Green!* p 21.

²¹² *Stride toward freedom* p 106.

Kelly also argued for the support of a nonviolent approach on the grounds that it was ethically sound, but also because she believed, like King, that violence could only lead to more violence.²¹³ Kelly was convinced that nonviolence was the only way forward in any situation.

It is difficult to discern whether Gandhi or King was the greater influence upon the development of Kelly's nonviolent theory. Ultimately, Gandhi had provided a model for King, upon which he based his plans for a nonviolent civil rights' movement and Kelly had the fortune to draw upon the philosophies of both Gandhi and King. In this sense, it is in fact from Gandhi that Kelly drew most of her principles and the basis for her nonviolent philosophy. However, through the opportunity to experience firsthand the social context in which King developed his civil rights' campaign, he provided concrete examples of nonviolence in action, in which Kelly was able to participate to some degree. Both were of great influence to Kelly, but in differing ways. In addition, Kelly mentions numerous other advocates of nonviolence in speeches and essays; therefore, it was the influence of many writers, activists and politicians which certainly encouraged Kelly in her persistence of nonviolence. Thus while Kelly shared many concepts and philosophies with others promoting nonviolence, she also shared the difficulties and criticisms they faced in defending nonviolent philosophy.

²¹³ *Thinking Green!* p 63.

II. A nonviolent defence

The previous chapter has illustrated the methods of nonviolent philosophy, yet in doing so has elucidated some of the difficulties associated with the theory. Whether on an individual or on a grand scale, advocates of nonviolence face from mild opposition to ridicule or even outright hostility due to their beliefs. Defending nonviolence as a means to promoting safer, more tolerant international and interpersonal relations is therefore a difficult task, with which Kelly and others within the peace and green movements struggled. Indeed, questions can be raised as to whether it is even possible. In order to comprehend the depth of this undertaking, it is necessary to firstly understand the arguments against nonviolence, after which Kelly's success in answering them can be determined.

Firstly, arguments against nonviolence state that while the principle is admirable, it is too difficult to gather sufficient support for nonviolence from enough individuals to make it a viable option in most cases. This is particularly relevant with regards to Kelly and Die Grünen. In evolving from a protest movement to a political party, Die Grünen were faced with how to deal with a variance of the levels of conflict they began to face. It was one thing to promote nonviolence at a protest march, but quite another to use this method in the national police force. Despite a commitment to nonviolence, Kelly and Die Grünen often faced considerable opposition to suggestions of nonviolent solutions to international relations, both military and otherwise. Martin Luther King, Jr and Mohandas Gandhi also experienced difficulties in attempting to convince others that

nonviolence was far more powerful than violence, yet there are several reasons why nonviolence has been rejected as a means of defence and lifestyle. Opponents were correct when they argued that it was too difficult to gather support; for nonviolence to work, the commitment is needed by everyone. That is, all individuals within the movement must refuse to act in violence, even when violence is being perpetrated against them. In particular, Martin Luther King, Jr emphasised this concept, to the point that he was the victim of bombings and a stabbing, and yet did not react violently.

There are evident difficulties with this stance. Within the violent cultures of many societies, persuading individuals that they must not fight back should they be attacked can be problematic. Martin Luther King, Jr had some success, despite his inability to convince Malcolm X and his followers in the “Black Power” movement that nonviolence was the desired path to equality. However, it is highly relevant that for Martin Luther King to succeed, he needed to be seen as someone who would himself stand in the face of violence and reject it outright. This is of course exactly what he did, heightening his credibility to the others within the movement. It is difficult to assess whether Kelly would have done the same, or whether such a comparison is fair. While advocating nonviolent action against acts of violence, Kelly was not often in the position to put herself between weapons and her beliefs. This was due in part to her position within the peace movement; Kelly was a student, a public servant, then a politician, not a civil rights leader like Martin Luther King, Jr or a human rights campaigner and political activist like Gandhi. There were fewer opportunities for Kelly to be involved in situations which were likely to become violent. It could be argued that this opposition to violence in any

form could only count for Kelly's credibility within the peace movement; that is, that Kelly's lack of involvement in situations which contained violence positively demonstrated her commitment to nonviolence. However, the question could also be raised whether a true commitment to peace and nonviolence could only be measured by a demonstration of refusal to participate in such events, rather than removing oneself from them altogether. This distinction may be seen as splitting hairs, however, considering Kelly's devotion to nonviolence, her willingness to quote and write about Martin Luther King, Jr, Gandhi and other supporters of nonviolence, and her commitment to Die Grünen, with its established nonviolent politics, the principle was so strong a feature within both her personal and political life, that this distinction gains some importance.

Kelly's position on nonviolence was non-negotiable, and as such, she believed that acts of violence were inherently wrong. This was an extreme position to take, as it essentially alienated those individuals who chose violence as an option, often under exceptionally difficult circumstances. It also became more difficult as Die Grünen was afforded more responsibility for issues of security at a national level. Kelly's conviction may have been admirable, especially within the fickle nature of politics, however, it also implied a lack of empathy for the often very difficult decisions people had to make with regards to violent versus nonviolent action. In fact, Kelly felt considerable empathy towards these individuals; it was for many of them that she was campaigning which perhaps made her black and white views appear more damaging than helpful. Yet there were perhaps also few alternatives open to Kelly, as a supporter and campaigner for nonviolent action. As an advocate of this philosophy, Kelly needed to be seen as committed, since there were

so many arguments against the principle that to be less than completely devoted could be interpreted as admitting the possible failure or impracticality of nonviolence. If, like Gandhi, Kelly had argued that violence could be acceptable in certain circumstances, her credibility could appear to have been compromised. The difficulty of conceding that a role for violence could be possible in some situations created the risk of inconsistency. Thus the dilemma for Kelly was whether to attempt to maintain a consistent, moral high ground, or to attempt to create a framework which allowed for violence in certain circumstances but not in others.

Both options had advantages; to remain completely committed to a principle showed a political bravery, and demonstrated that Kelly had made a pledge to stick to her principles. However, such a principle was also rigid, and to remain convinced of it regardless of the situation may sometimes have appeared inflexible or uncompromising. It was also difficult to apply on a large scale. Conversely, a second option, where nonviolence was promoted, yet where violence was acceptable in certain instances, would allow for individuals to protect themselves or stop an advancing force, especially if that force were perpetrating unspeakable acts. However, it could also set the supporters on a logical slippery slope, on which it would be then difficult to appear consistent in condoning or condemning violence.

Given Kelly's stoic nature, which was illustrated through her long term commitment to causes, and the importance she placed upon honesty, the latter position hardly appears to be an option for Kelly. Regardless of the perceived rigidity of an unyielding position on

nonviolence, Kelly believed that any alternative would merely promote violence and would be a precursor to senseless wars as had been the case in the past.

Another criticism of nonviolence is that it is impractical to apply nonviolent principles in times of warfare. Critics of nonviolence and civil disobedience as means of defence argue that reasoning logically with the enemy and pursuing “passive” methods of resisting weapons and invading armies will simply result in a massacre of the resisting population. Examples where nonviolence has succeeded, such as the Velvet Revolution in Prague in 1989, or more recently, the toppling of the government in Georgia in 2003, only occurred peacefully due to the refusal of the army or command to retain power through violence. Thus it could be argued that it was still the decision of the ruling power to allow such uprisings to occur, rather than the power of people ensuring that it would happen.

Petra Kelly argued strongly against this. She had had the fortune to be born after World War II, and further to receive an education in the United States, which, while hardly lacking bias, nevertheless allowed her to learn about the pre-and post-war history in Germany while she was still young. It was while learning about resistance during the war that Kelly became convinced of the importance of nonviolent action, and of collaboration between resisters, especially in times of conflict or occupation. This allowed individual citizens to become empowered, by taking defence into their own hands rather than allowing an army to take responsibility for them. This expressed itself most obviously in

protests against the Vietnam War while Kelly still resided in America, however, her anti-war sentiment remained with her throughout her life.

Yet while Kelly had been acutely aware of the atrocities of the Vietnam War as well as of other wars which happened during her lifetime, and while she was vehemently opposed to the use of violence to negotiate conflicts, again, Kelly's involvement in peace activities were conducted in peaceful situations. This was very different from the violence other nonviolent protestors faced in countries where war and oppression were occurring. Thus while Kelly advocated nonviolence as a means of empowerment, for many people facing violence everyday, arming themselves with guns or other weapons may have appeared to be far more empowering in their immediate situation. When livelihood, family or one's own life were threatened by violence, many individuals would turn to violence to defend these. Nonviolent resistance may be spiritually rewarding, but seldom are individuals able to consider this when their very existence is at risk.

Furthermore, collaboration and cooperation also occurred more seldomly than did looking after one's own interests. Despite the advantages of collaboration, such as a sense of comradeship and resistance against an invading or attacking force, acts of nonviolence and civil disobedience require imagination and courage, as well as a change in thought and behaviour patterns. Kelly argued that this made nonviolent resistance a more attractive concept, since it did not rely on weapons for individuals, rather than through innovation and civil disobedience, everyone could defend him/herself. This was

a point also strongly emphasised by Gandhi, who argued that nonviolence could be practised by everyone.²¹⁴

Therefore, Kelly advocated that to consider nonviolence on a larger scale, it must be viewed as a *different* kind of defence rather than a *lack* of defence. In this regard, Kelly spoke about “social defense” as an alternative to military defence.

Social defense is a way to protect ourselves from foreign invasions or internal *coups* through active, nonviolent resistance and noncooperation, including economic boycotts by consumers and producers, social and political boycotts of institutions, strikes, overtaking facilities and administrative systems important to the opponent, stalling and obstructing, being deliberately inefficient, ostracizing, influencing occupying troops, and other forms of not complying.²¹⁵

Kelly argued that social defence allowed the individual to have a choice, as opposed to a military solution where an army takes control of the defence of the people, and individuals would have no option to defend themselves nonviolently and take responsibility for their own defence should they need to. Such an argument was seldom taken seriously by major political parties. This was not due to a lack of conviction by Kelly and other members of Die Grünen, rather the ruling political parties argued that the alternative to military defence was simply too difficult a concept to introduce. To remove an army would leave borders open to attack and citizens undefended. Social defence would be simply too risky. Consequently, a consistent nonviolent philosophy

²¹⁴ *All Men are Brothers* p 120.

²¹⁵ *Thinking Green!* p 58.

was difficult to maintain, when different situations required different solutions, and rarely, if ever, were these considered to be countered with nonviolence.

Perhaps one of the most well-known critics of nonviolence, Reinhold Niebuhr, argued in particular against the implementation of nonviolence on a grand scale as Kelly suggested. Niebuhr, once an advocate of nonviolence, became disillusioned with the principle in the aftermath of World War I, deciding that nonviolence was a romanticised ideal which was unlikely to work on a large scale. The reason for this was that “[a]s individuals, men believe that they ought to love and serve each other and establish justice between each other. As racial, economic and national groups they take for themselves, whatever their power can command.”²¹⁶ Thus Niebuhr agreed that it was possible for individuals to conduct themselves with the kind of tolerance and respect that nonviolent theory promoted. However, he argued that in a group situation, it was not possible to have the level of intelligence or restraint to promote this kind of action. There would always be individuals who held more power than others, and who were prepared to take risks in order to maintain it. Furthermore, he argued that to attempt to teach the principles of nonviolence to the wider population was pointless:

Society will probably never be sufficiently intelligent to bring all power under its control. The stupidity of the average man will permit the oligarch, whether economic or political, to hide his real purposes from the scrutiny of his fellows and to withdraw his activities from effective control. Since it is impossible to count on enough moral goodwill among those who possess irresponsible

²¹⁶ Niebuhr, Reinhold. *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, Charles Scribner’s Sons: New York 1942. p 9.

power to sacrifice it for the good of the whole, it must be destroyed by coercive methods and these will always run the peril of introducing new forms of injustice in place of those abolished.²¹⁷

Where Niebuhr accepted that nonviolence had worked, he argued that nonviolence was a less than morally acceptable means of resolving a conflict, since it relied on coercion. As the line between violent and nonviolent coercion could be vague and imprecise, Niebuhr claimed that nonviolence was therefore not as morally pure an action as it was often portrayed. Niebuhr argued that the results of nonviolent action (for example, strikes or noncooperation) could be as devastating as those which occurred through violent action.²¹⁸

Niebuhr's argument is credible, however his extrapolation is somewhat extreme when discussing results of nonviolent actions, such as Gandhi's boycott of English cotton which Niebuhr claims ultimately caused the malnutrition of children in Manchester.²¹⁹

Yet it is impossible to take any action which has no effect on others; in any case, in Gandhi's methodology, boycott, strikes, noncooperation and other such actions were in the sixth and final phase of *satyagraha*, which demonstrates that several steps of negotiations and public awareness had taken place before such a boycott was called.²²⁰

Furthermore, the coercion which is employed in nonviolent action is hardly comparable to that of coercion which is used in violent situations. Niebuhr argues that coercion is universally undesirable, however, there is ultimately a difference between the persuasion

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp 20-21.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, p 172.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²²⁰ Seshachari, C. *Gandhi and the American Scene* p 97.

of one individual by another to put down weapons and refuse to kill, and the persuasion which results from one individual threatening another with death if he or she does not comply. Kelly, Gandhi and King all argued that using peaceful, nonviolent methods were morally more acceptable than threatening violence or warfare, since through the former, the latter was less likely to occur. Niebuhr conceded that nonviolence can be successful in this sense, however, he disagreed that it was a morally just action. Thus for Niebuhr, the issue was a moral one, whereas for Kelly, the issue was one of finding a peaceful solution. Furthermore, Kelly's methods of promoting nonviolence were less consistent with coercion than with persuasion and modelling appropriate behaviour. Naturally she argued that nonviolence was the more moral choice over violence, and it is here that the bases for Niebuhr and Kelly's theories diverge. Whereas Kelly assumed that individuals are free agents who have the ability to choose nonviolence if the choice is presented to them, Niebuhr would argue that the lack of sufficient intelligence would prevent the general public from making an informed decision. Instead, Kelly, as an influential public figure, would have modelled the kind of behaviour to persuade the public to take the path which she promoted. This does not, however, resolve the issue of promoting nonviolence as a plausible means of state defence, either at a national or international level. This is perhaps the most problematic element of Kelly's stance on nonviolence: she did not allow for the distinction between nonviolence as a personal choice, and nonviolence as a stance taken by a governing body. To argue that there is no difference between the two is to ignore reality. Even the largest nonviolent movements have been organised within a state, against others in the same state. Simply on a logistical level, the approach must be

different when whole states are involved, especially in the case of threats from neighbouring states.

Such a disparity in the origin of their philosophies, coupled with Kelly's neglect to consider this important issue, mean that Kelly and Niebuhr would have had difficulty even agreeing to disagree on the reasons and possible virtues of nonviolent behaviour. Having established this, it is evident that Niebuhr and advocates of nonviolence will ultimately disagree about the justification of nonviolent theory. Thus it is perhaps more pertinent to concentrate on Niebuhr's claim that nonviolence as a social movement would fail due to the human being's "inability to conform its collective life to its individual ideals."²²¹ Naturally, Kelly and other supporters of nonviolence would argue that there is an ability for human beings to combine their individual needs with those of a larger group, and would cite the many instances where nonviolent action, whether civil disobedience, strikes, boycotts or protests have succeeded in peacefully resolving conflicts. There is thus no doubt that nonviolent action can take place and with success; the question therefore remains why it does not happen on a more regular basis.

Essentially, nonviolence requires long term commitment, imagination, courage and a willingness to collaborate with others. Like any change in behaviour, on a state level, results will be slow to achieve. It also requires, at least to some extent, organisation and leadership. Niebuhr's argument that racial or economic differences could be barriers to this has some credibility. Furthermore, for many, the struggles of everyday life, such as earning enough money to buy food and keep a roof over one's head often transcend other

²²¹ *Ibid*, p 9.

issues, even when such issues also appear relevant. It is not that individuals lack the imagination, or even the intelligence, as Niebuhr would suggest, but that action simply does not rate high enough to warrant the expense of valuable time and energy, especially when it may take weeks or even months to achieve results. For those who are unaffected by issues which would require nonviolent action, general apathy hinders involvement. Their lives are comfortable enough that they need not concern themselves with the problems of others. A potential leader, even if he or she were to overcome either the parochial concerns of one struggling to maintain an existence, or the apathy of one more privileged, then must also possess the intelligence, imagination, rhetoric, leadership skills and courage to rally others together in nonviolent action. It is evident that in many cultures, this is an extremely demanding request.

Yet despite this, Kelly remained optimistic about the future of nonviolence.²²²

Furthermore, she understood that to commit to nonviolence was to live by that philosophy. As such, she believed that a nonviolent life encompassed social justice and a long term commitment to peace and establishing enduring and honest relationships between parties.²²³ Such a view was also promoted strongly by Gandhi.

Both defenders and opponents of nonviolence agree that it is the difficult road to take. However, where they differ is that the advocate of the philosophy believes that humans, both as a group and as individuals, are able to rise to the challenge of loving their enemies, standing with courage in the face of violence, and forging with imaginative

²²² *Thinking Green!* p 66.

²²³ *Nonviolence speaks to Power*, pp 66-7.

means an end without bloodshed. The opponent argues that humans have proven time and again their predilection for violence, something which will never leave them, and which will ultimately prevail, for most of the people most of the time will turn to violence, whether or not they believe it is the moral choice. Unfortunately, history often proves the opponent right. Yet if individuals were really so convinced of the effectiveness of violence, nonviolent action would never occur. The fact is, that while Kelly and others may have been accused of blind idealism, acts of nonviolence have been highly successful. Moreover, these are memorable incidents. Kelly understood implicitly the necessity to support such movements; she understood that it was necessary not merely for the promotion of peace, but also for the preservation of solidarity between individuals, regardless of racial, economic or cultural group. It was not possible for Kelly to disregard the feeling of empowerment and joy which followed a successful nonviolent, peaceful campaign. Whereas others may have brushed this aside, for Kelly such acts were inspiring as tantamount to the capabilities of the human spirit.

In its defence, nonviolent theory has been overly criticised for its idealism and lack of practical application on a large scale. Both of these claims have merit. However, critics of nonviolent theory often have huge expectations for the theory, and when it does not deliver, declare that the theory has failed. The claim that Kelly's view of nonviolence was too idealistic may still be valid, however, while a culture which promotes nonviolence rather than violence may be less than perfect, it would at least improve on the culture of violence. This appears to be overlooked by those opposed to or unconvinced of nonviolent solutions. For Kelly, it was not enough to set goals and

achieve them; once she had overcome one hurdle, she began to plan the necessary steps to overcome the next. In promoting nonviolence as a necessity in politics and her personal life, Kelly remained stoically committed, yet this commitment was dynamic, and developed with Kelly's growing political and personal experiences. In comparison, Kelly noted that while democracy was an important objective for people to strive towards, efforts should not be lessened once democracy had been achieved.²²⁴ This meant that democracy would be constantly evolving, the result of which would encourage critical analysis of the areas which were successful, and those which needed attention. As such, Kelly's belief in nonviolence also encompassed this concept.

In this sense, Kelly's view of nonviolence is able to at least challenge the scepticism which still surrounds the philosophy. However, there remains the difficulty that nonviolence is still often disregarded as a valuable means by which to resolve conflicts, let alone as a philosophy by which to live one's life. While Kelly strongly believed in nonviolence as a solution to both these issues, as with any undertaking which falls outside of the mainstream, to maintain this commitment took great strength of character. It could indeed be argued that this was a sign of naivety,²²⁵ or that Kelly only concentrated upon or quoted that information which would help her cause. However, this criticism does not seem credible; Kelly made it a point to be incredibly well informed. It was not a lack of information which encouraged her occasionally apparent ignorance of issues, rather the knowledge that to focus too strongly on the whole issue would be to become overwhelmed by its enormity. Kelly educated herself extensively about issues

²²⁴ *Thinking Green!*, p 129.

²²⁵ Parkin, p 168.

with which she or Die Grünen became involved. By then choosing individuals to support, Kelly was able to maintain contact and bring the issue down to a personal level. This made it emotionally accessible for both Kelly and others who were involved, which was integral to the success of any campaign.

The fact that Kelly's life was ended in violence may for some have left a question mark over a life of commitment to nonviolence and peace. Yet while her death was certainly tragic and untimely, it also emphasises the message of her nonviolent philosophy, as was the case with both Martin Luther King, Jr and Mohandas Gandhi. All three died in violent circumstances, and this could finally also be used as an argument against the nonviolent theorists: even those who advocated nonviolence so strongly and tirelessly ultimately became victims of violence themselves. This argument is perhaps the most difficult for advocates of nonviolence to counter, yet they do so through their legacy. It is those who have struggled against violence and have not retaliated violently who are remembered and stand as inspiration. This is the crux of nonviolent philosophy: to inspire through model action, and to promote the best in humanity. This is a claim advocates for violence cannot hope to make, and as such, Gandhi, King and Kelly have succeeded to leave an inspirational nonviolent legacy which their violent deaths cannot diminish.

Part Four: Petra Kelly and Utopia

This chapter will discuss the concept of utopia, its literary background, and the emergence of both political utopias and ecofeminist utopias. As an introduction, two traditionally utopian literary texts – *Utopia* by Thomas More and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley – will be briefly discussed in order to demonstrate the foundations on which later forms of utopia would draw. Martin Luther King, Jr’s utopia, as elucidated in his speech, “I have a Dream” will be analysed as an example of a political utopia and one of Kelly’s inspirations. The genre of ecological and ecofeminist utopia will then be addressed, with Starhawk’s *The Fifth Sacred Thing* demonstrating an example of an ecofeminist utopia. While the inclusion of some analysis of literary texts in the chapter may appear irrelevant to Kelly’s political speeches and publications, the utopias as presented in literature are valuable, since they allow for the impossible or improbable – or even the possible and probable – to be explored in a way which is not necessarily attainable in the real world. Finally, while it is not the purpose of this chapter to categorise and define Kelly’s version of utopia into a particular genre, by discussing other utopias with similarities to that of Kelly’s, a critical analysis is more effectively achieved. The final chapter will then concentrate on critically analysing Petra Kelly’s own utopia, the development thereof and discusses the extent to which it has been realised since her death.

I. Defining and Redefining Utopia

For centuries, utopia has been a recurring theme and concept in different areas of the arts and politics and has been employed with varying degrees of success. In literature, the theme of utopia dates back as far as the time of Homer,²²⁶ while in politics, pledging to ensure a better future for the people has allowed leaders to take countries to war or to persuade a community that peace is a viable and possible option. Utopians have been ridiculed for their predictions as well as revered for their foresight. Petra Kelly did not believe that utopia was an imagined world in the distant future, rather that there was a means of achieving a better future through the actions in which one chose to engage in the present. Kelly was not alone in holding this theory, yet it still remains an alternative view to the kinds of utopia which are most prevalent in literature. Conversely, in politics, the emphasis is often on an ideal situation, which the people are either promised or asked to work towards. For Kelly, as emphasised in her theory of nonviolence discussed in the previous chapter, utopia was about empowerment in everyday life.

The word ‘utopia’ is defined as “a place or state of ideal perfection ... any visionary system of political or social perfection.”²²⁷ The word stems from the Greek *ou* meaning ‘not’ and *tópos*, meaning ‘place’.²²⁸ While the idea had been widely used in myth and fiction before the publication of Thomas More’s *Utopia*, it was the name of this text

²²⁶ Turner, Paul, from Introduction, in More, Thomas. *Utopia* Penguin Books: London. 2003 introduction, p xx.

²²⁷ A Delbridge, JRL Bernard et al (eds). *The MacQuarie Dictionary*, p 1921.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

which became widely adopted as a definition for the concept.²²⁹ Conversely, the dystopia, also common in myths and fables, depicts an anti-paradise. Both can be interpreted as a comment on the state of the present society when the story was conceived (regardless of the temporal or geographical setting of the story), as well as a prediction of how the future of that society might transpire. However, whereas a utopia promotes the possibility of a positive possible world which lacks the evil or negativity of the current one, a dystopia aims to serve as a warning against failing to correct the negative aspects by including them within the text.

Utopia, published in 1516, employs the concept of a utopian culture for the purpose of criticising the current social and political problems in 16th century England. While the novel is certainly a comment on the shortcomings of Britain at this time, it is also carefully veiled so as not to risk offending either the church or the monarchy, since Thomas More had strong ties to both. The surname of character Raphael, who relates the story of the utopian island, is “Hythloday”, which translates from the Greek as “expert in nonsense”,²³⁰ and this diminishes the criticisms he makes of the British culture. In addition, More’s lack of serious criticism or analysis of the philosopher’s arguments means that it is left to the reader to decide how possible the solutions of the government and people of Utopia would be. Furthermore, it must be noted that the imagined world which More describes was a comment on the world in which he lived, and should thus be read in context. An example of this is the differing roles of women on the island nation. Inasmuch as may have appeared possible for the period in which the text is set, women in

²²⁹ Turner, Paul, from Introduction, in More, Thomas. *Utopia* Penguin Books: London. 2003 p xx.

²³⁰ The name has also been translated as “Nonsenso” in the translation by Paul Turner, in order to better illustrate the humour More intended. (*ibid*, p xii).

Utopia have rights and are equal in many ways. Yet it is still the oldest male who runs the households, and the country is run with patriarchal figures in positions of authority and power. While some of the ways in which More demonstrates this may appear backward compared with current Western society, at the time of publication, many of these ideas which *Utopia* put forth would have been controversial and possibly unbelievable. Thus it is important to contextualise every utopian or dystopian text in order to fully appreciate the comment upon society which the author is attempting to make.

On More's utopian island, the people live in peace with each other and the environment around them. Social roles of men and women are distinct, yet More writes that both men and women work, albeit at separate tasks.²³¹ Their towns are created to take maximum advantage of the natural landscape, and all members of the society are trained in agriculture and animal husbandry, thus promoting the importance of agriculture and a respect for the land. Furthermore, through a means of centralised government, population growth is checked, and money is an irrelevant concept. The social welfare of the people and the land are paramount to the ongoing success of the community.²³²

Utopia can be analysed on many levels, both as a text and a comment on the society and culture in which More lived. However, of most interest in this instance are the elements of Utopia which More's character advocated. This is because these are the areas which More believed were instrumental to the peace of the island, and the respect for the environment, albeit as a means for human advancement, and which were perhaps lacking

²³¹ *Ibid* p 55.

²³² *Ibid*, pp50-1.

within his own culture. More disapproved of the uneven distribution of wealth which existed in his own society. Moreover, it is evident that he believed that the way in which the countries throughout Europe were governed was inefficient due to the poor leadership qualities of the monarchs and heads of state.²³³ All of these areas are addressed in *Utopia*, with examples given to demonstrate how the Utopians prevent such problems from occurring. However, whether due to pessimism on More's part, or a reluctance to offend his readers, More's narrator writes that such solutions would be unlikely to work in Britain or in fact anywhere in Europe.²³⁴

More's *Utopia* promoted the positive elements of More's society, illustrating that, while dissatisfied with parts of the society in which he lived, More still understood that favourable aspects existed. Conversely, *Brave New World*, published in 1932, depicts a cold, mechanised world in which hedonism and superficiality is valued and openly promoted. Author Aldous Huxley, writing between World Wars, appears to emphasise the negative elements of the society in which he lived, and creates a world where these negative aspects create the basis for a society.²³⁵

The two societies described in *Brave New World* are different in many ways; in particular they vary in how much emphasis is placed on the importance of the natural environment compared with the manufactured, and the roles of men and women in each society. In this culture, women hold positions in the workplace, have sexual freedom and, as reproduction is achieved through a test-tube like procedure, women are not required to

²³³ *Ibid.*, pp 20-1.

²³⁴ *Ibid* p 113.

²³⁵ Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. Chatto & Windus Ltd: London 1960 (this edition).

have children. Yet while by some standards, women appear to have an equal status, they do not necessarily have choice: they do not have positions of authority in the workplace; their choice of sexual partner is still dictated through strict cultural norms; and they are unable to make the decision to have a child since children are no longer “born” in the traditional sense. Therefore while women experience some kinds of freedom, the lack of autonomy may negate the positives such freedoms allow.

The relationship of the characters with the natural environment is also significant. So many aspects of the characters’ urban environment are artificial and controlled, that the natural environment appears frightening and primitive.²³⁶ John, the protagonist, is the only character who appears comfortable in these surroundings. Unused to the unpredictability of nature, the other characters prefer to avoid any interaction with it. The utopian aspect of Huxley’s novel, therefore, is the pursuit of happiness but also of autonomy, something that perhaps appeared to be endangered during a depression which occurred after one world war and which was to precede another. It is the discovery of the impossibility of achieving the elements of happiness and autonomy which ultimately lead to John’s suicide. In seeing both worlds for what they are, he has become disillusioned, and both now represent to him dystopia. Huxley’s criticism is of a society which may appear to contain the positive elements of progress, yet in having reached such a technological apex, it has lost its humanity.

While both *Utopia* and *Brave New World* provide a solid foundation of literary utopia, and are classic examples of the way in which utopia is used as a means of broad social

²³⁶ *Ibid*, p 100.

comment, the concept of utopia has been developed more widely into a genre through which particular issues of culture and society may be explored. Thus the concept of utopia within areas of politics, and from such perspectives as feminism and ecology, has gained momentum; this was the case with Petra Kelly's view of utopia, whose holistic approach meant that often the topics of feminism, ecology, human rights and power structures were addressed in any one discussion. It is thus constructive to address the emergence of utopian theory within these areas, in order to place and critically analyse Kelly's interpretation thereof.

Utopia within the realm of feminism is a common theme. On the second wave of feminism, and even as this wave began to subside, feminist utopias were created to explore the changing relationships between men and women and humans and the environment, both urban and natural. Often set in the future, examples include Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*, Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, and *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula Le Guin. Influenced by the growing ecology movement, ecofeminist literature also began to emerge within this genre. One such novel which addresses the issues of ecology and feminism as well as the theme of nonviolence is Starhawk's *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, published in 1993. A Canadian witch and environmentalist, Starhawk set her story in the mid 21st century. The plot describes a community in San Francisco which has been created around the concepts of nonviolence, feminism, equality and self-sufficiency, and which is struggling to survive in the face of a military attack from a neighbouring state. The conflict is based on the need for water which is such a scarce resource as to be a reason for warfare.

Like More and Huxley, Starhawk's utopia addresses issues which the author considers pertinent to her own culture. The characters in *The Fifth Sacred Thing* struggle with environmental issues which are magnified versions of those which occur at the time when the book was written. Through an uprising against a dictatorial government, the characters organised themselves into a society alternative to that which they had previously experienced, and having made this choice of living nonviolently, they also struggle with the question of nonviolent defence. When they discover that an attack is imminent, the occupants of the city must decide whether to remain committed to their nonviolent stance, or whether to fight back with weapons. Unlike their invaders, they have limited time and resources to manufacture weapons; moreover, they understand the implications of using violence against the enemy. They realise that if they were to win a battle using violent methods, they would have lowered their moral standards to those of the enemy: “ [...] what is on trial here is not just us. We stand on the ridgeline of the future, the great divide determining whether or not what we have built can survive.”²³⁷ Ultimately, they decide to fight using nonviolent methods, such as noncooperation and a form of convincing propaganda, as well as sabotage of the enemy's efforts to take over their city.

Starhawk juxtaposes the feminist community in the North, a culture which attempts to accept and celebrate diversity of sexuality, race and gender, with that of the South, where strict social control includes preventing women from working in their chosen professions, and where women are considered second class citizens in a hierarchical, racist society.

²³⁷ Starhawk. *The Fifth Sacred Thing*. Thorsons: London, 1997 (this edition) p 339.

This control is maintained through myth and threats based on religion, enough of which are carried out to ensure compliance. While the North is promoted as the utopia, Starhawk also analyses the concept of a feminist community, raising the question of reverse sexism. The community's Defence Council comprises only older women, since it is argued that younger people, especially men, are too easily influenced by their emotions and their hormones. Towards the end of the novel, the council decides to relax this rule, understanding that men and younger individuals of both sexes may have valuable suggestions and experiences which would only strengthen the group.

The ecological aspect of *The Fifth Sacred Thing* is also important as it underpins the entire novel. Environmental problems such as drought and pollution are pressing issues for all the characters, regardless of whether they live in the North or the South. However, while the novel depicts an ecological utopia, this does not happen in a rural setting, rather the inhabitants of the city have established an urban culture which encourages principles of self-sufficiency. This demonstrates that the birth of an ideal community can be in an imperfect world. While this is not a unique element of ecofeminist utopia, it is unusual in the tradition of utopian literature. *The Fifth Sacred Thing* also emphasises the importance of the achievement of happiness for the individual as well as for the community. Ruby Rohrlich, in the preface to *Women in Search of Utopia: Mavericks and Mythmakers*, suggests that this is an illustration of the differences between male and female utopias:

Not freedom, but escape from freedom seems to be the message of many male utopias. For men, utopia has often involved imposing control over the individual who is seen as a threat to the group. For women, on the contrary, utopia is a way of arriving at freedom.[...] Men seem to want to

recover an imaginary perfection through rules and restrictions. Women want to eliminate those restrictions, having been in the prison of gender for so long [...] For men, utopia is the ideal state; for most women, utopia is statelessness and the overcoming of hierarchy and the traditional split between human being and nature, subject and other, man and woman, parent and child.²³⁸

While a generalised view, it does apply in part to the literary utopias mentioned above. Characters in *The Fifth Sacred Thing* understand their relationships with each other and the environment around them and take this into consideration when deciding their actions, which are carefully designed to both take advantage of the situation at hand, while concurrently moving to change those elements which prevent their world from achieving peace. As such, it is an example of “activating utopia”.

This notion is discussed in Cathleen McGuire and Colleen McGuire’s “Grass-Roots Feminism: Activating Utopia”.²³⁹ In their essay, McGuire and McGuire discuss their attempts to promote a set of attitudes through instigating changes in their own lives. Having formed a study group which focused on ecofeminist literature and themes, McGuire and McGuire

... wanted to walk our talk and do the right thing. Our standards promoted endless debates between us on how to organize the study group most democratically. Egalitarianism, safe speech, and respect for difference – presumably also core features of a utopian society – are a few of the

²³⁸ Rohrlich, Ruby and Hoffman Baruch, Elaine. (eds) *Women in Search of Utopia: Mavericks and Mythmakers* Schocken Books: New York 1984 p xii.

²³⁹ Gaard, Greta & Murphy, Patrick D. (eds) *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism: Theory, Interpretation, Pedagogy*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998 pp 186-203.

principles we aspired to uphold. We strived to put ideals into practise here, now, today. Process matters. By acting utopian, one activates utopia.²⁴⁰

Utopias are also often used in the political arena to promote a better life or more equitable world. To some extent, this is also activating utopia, through encouraging the public to make sacrifices or choose a certain moral path. It can be an effective means of encouraging action in the community. Unfortunately, it is also often abused; prior to elections, a utopia is promoted, however, post-election reality often dissolves the empty promises made to the people. As a result, it is increasingly difficult to employ utopian rhetoric in politics without experiencing a backlash from jaded constituents. Yet there have been several incidents in history where a utopian ideal has been used with great success in political speeches, with both positive and negative effects.²⁴¹ Further, it is frequently during periods of hardship, war or struggle when political utopia is most often employed. In such times, strong leadership is demanded from the community, which is willing to embrace those individuals who choose to rise to the challenge, promoting a utopia in which the current situation could be resolved.²⁴² Martin Luther King, Jr's "I Have a Dream"²⁴³ is an ideal example of the way in which utopia can be utilised in a political context.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p 188 [original emphasis]

²⁴¹ Examples include Joseph Goebbels asking the audience, "Wollt Ihr den totalen Krieg?"; Winston Churchill's speech after the rescue of Dunkirk; John F. Kennedy's proclamation, "Ich bin ein Berliner" at the Berlin Wall; and Martin Luther King, Jr's "I Have a Dream".

²⁴² Thus even though a wider education and the ability to learn from the past are tools of today's public, the community will still accept and allow questionable policies if they perceive the threat from which they will be protected to be tangible and serious enough. An example of this is recent antiterrorist legislation introduced in several countries which allows suspects to be held without charge for long periods of time.

²⁴³ Delivered on 28th August, 1963 on the steps at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington.

In the speech, King depicts to the massive crowd his dream of a racially and socially just United States, promoting his message of hope and achievement of civil rights for African Americans through nonviolent means. The success of King's speech was due not only to his oratory, but also to his ability to promote his utopia and ensure its relevance to the audience. As with other political utopias, King's speech focused on the future according to his vision, promoting the positive results which would ensue from the adoption of his methods. This, coupled with the recognition of the hardship which many of his audience had experienced, ensured the willing acceptance of King's utopia by the people present. It should be noted that whereas a utopia in the literary tradition, such as the three novels mentioned above, roles of men, women, and the environment are clearly identifiable, whereas speeches highlighting parts of a political utopia may not encompass these roles as completely. It is important to recognise that a speech elucidates particular elements of a political stance or utopia, and therefore cannot be expected to fully address the many components which comprise the theory upon which it is based. King's speech was not intended to explain the role of the environment or women in his utopia, rather it was to motivate and capture the imaginations of those in the audience. However, while the speech is brief compared with the works of the abovementioned authors, it nevertheless captures the essence of his utopia, and does hint at the role of men and women within his vision of a better society. Notwithstanding the gender bias which was taken for granted during this time, King's utopia is inclusive not only of both genders but quite obviously of genders both black and white. For King, the emphasis was upon freedom for everyone, and as such, everyone had a role to play in obtaining that freedom, regardless of gender or colour.

The role of the environment in King's utopia plays a far more symbolic role, with the heat of the desert as a metaphor for the oppressiveness of unjust laws. The view of the environment is also romanticised, relying on previous clichés such as “sweet land of liberty” to which King realises his audience can relate. This is important since, for a political utopia to be acceptable, both the utopia and its advocate must appear credible. Thus King's speech would not have had such a reception had he not demonstrated a history of promoting the means to attain his dream through acts of nonviolence and commitment to obtaining civil rights. The speech thus demonstrates the role of utopia in the political sphere: to encourage acceptance of policies and principles in order to gain the utopian objective, and as such, it involves activating utopia through demonstration in a similar manner to that described by McGuire and McGuire, rather than merely presenting it as is the case in a fictional text.

The concept of activating utopia is evident on examination of Kelly's utopian theory. While she did not use the term “activate”, Kelly was explicit in her understanding of utopia and how it could be employed to improve situations in the present in order to create a better future. In an interview with Susanne Mayer from *Viva*, Kelly detailed how her interpretation of utopia was not only integral to the success of Die Grünen as an anti-party party, but also necessary for the empowerment of individuals.²⁴⁴ Kelly believed that a lack of a utopian ideal meant that people were unable to look at world issues in context and establish a means of alleviating them. Instead, people chose to obey the law

²⁴⁴ *Lebe*, pp 27, 28.

rather than participate in civil disobedience, and were simply too apathetic to consider questioning the status quo. Both of these elements hindered utopias.²⁴⁵

Kelly was also critical of the way in which Die Grünen had developed. She considered that as a party, Die Grünen had become “lahm und langweilig”.²⁴⁶ It had also lost the vision which it had brought to parliament, something which Kelly claimed to have maintained, even at the cost of her credibility within the party:

Vor zehn Jahren konnte man noch sagen: >>Ich möchte im Parlament für die Wale reden, weil die Wale eine Vertretung brauchen.<< Das war die Vision: für alle Lebewesen dazusein, die keine Lobby haben, Pflanzen und Tiere genauso wie Indianer und krebskranke Kinder... Wenn ich das heute sage, heißt es, die Petra ist auf ihre spirituellen Welle.²⁴⁷

The rapid transition which Die Grünen had made from a group of smaller protest groups to state, then federal government, and the appearance of a loss of direction had disappointed Kelly. Whereas she continued to believe in the importance and relevance of the beginnings of the party, in the face of regulated parliamentary rules and a more conformist Green organisation, Kelly became increasingly isolated and disillusioned. However, Kelly remained convinced of the effectiveness of her utopian theory. It offered empowerment for those who believed that, as individuals, they were helpless in the greater scheme of things. In addition, it effectively negated the excuse of postponing

²⁴⁵ *Lebe*, p 28.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p 27. [lame and boring].

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p 28. [Ten years ago, one could still say “I want to speak in parliament for the whales, because the whales need a representative.” That was the vision: to be there for all life forms which don’t have a lobby, plants and animals as well as Indians and children with cancers. If I say that today, they think: Petra is getting all spiritual.]

action until conditions were ideal. She argued that “[i]n dem Moment, in dem man anfängt, etwas zu verändern, ändert sich wirklich etwas. Wenn man sich aber immer nur sagt: Eines Tages werde ich es tun, ändert sich niemals etwas. Das halte ich für das Wichtigste. Es ist mehr oder weniger mein Motto: Tu es, fang an, und die Welt wird sich ändern.”²⁴⁸

In this sense, Kelly’s utopian theory was less specifically ecofeminist and more obviously attempting to activate utopia, as a catalyst for change such as Martin Luther King, Jr’s “I Have a Dream.” However, inasmuch as it was a part of her philosophy, it incorporated several ecofeminist aspects. An analysis of how Kelly’s utopia was more than just a political theory and instead promoted the nonviolence and ecofeminism for which she campaigned in all areas of her work and life will be presented in the next chapter. Firstly, however, the way in which Kelly’s utopia fits into a political utopian framework will be discussed.

For Kelly and others within Die Grünen, the rhetoric of utopia within the parliament was rarely well received. In fact, even some within Die Grünen argued that the party could not afford to be too idealistic within the structure of government.²⁴⁹ Russell Jacoby, in his book *The End of Utopia: Politics and Culture in an Age of Apathy*, argues that utopia in politics, in particular throughout the twentieth century, “has had bad press, often for good reasons. The traditional criticism that utopias lack any pertinence has not abated. If

²⁴⁸ *Lebe*, p 26. [In that moment when one begins to change something, something really does change. But if one only ever says, “One day I’ll do it,” nothing ever changes. I think that’s the most important. It’s more or less my motto: do it, begin it, and the world will change.]

²⁴⁹ For example, Joschka Fischer.

anything, it has intensified.”²⁵⁰ Furthermore, critics fail to consider utopians seriously. Jacoby writes that they are “viewed as, at best, benign or, at worst, irrelevant.”²⁵¹

Both Die Grünen and in particular Petra Kelly were certainly viewed in this light.²⁵²

While the major parties may have been shocked at the relatively large number of seats which Die Grünen won in 1983, the new arrivals were still a minority. Seasoned politicians from the major parties preyed on the lack of political experience some of the members of Die Grünen demonstrated. An example of their disdain for Kelly and her party’s policies can be found in the transcript of her first speech to Parliament. The speech discussed the peace movement and the importance of championing human rights, even when this meant disagreeing with countries with whom Germany had diplomatic and economic ties. While political jibes are to be expected in the House considering the parliamentary system as it exists in many governments, the jeers throughout Kelly’s speech are less motivated by a dispute of policy than by an apparent disbelief that a party so different – with a female speaker – should have found itself in the Bundestag. Kelly was asked twice within her speech what percentage of the votes the Greens had obtained, as if to emphasise the small number of seats they held, and was interrupted several times, occasionally with personal insults.²⁵³ To her credit Kelly completed her speech, even addressing at times some of those who interrupted her, while maintaining her concentration.

²⁵⁰ Jacoby, Russell. *The End of Utopia: Politics and Culture in an Age of Apathy* Basic Books: New York 1999 p 166.

²⁵¹ *Ibid* Cf Shklar, Judith: *After Utopia: the decline of political faith* Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J 1957; also Saage, Richard *Hat die politische Utopie eine Zukunft?* Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt 1992.

²⁵² *Lebe*, p 27.

²⁵³ *Lebe, als müßtest du heute sterben*, pp 49, 51, 52.

Kelly's inaugural speech emphasised that the nature of the peace and human rights movements was not restricted to borders, arguing that "[d]ie Friedensbewegung in Ost und West ist untereinander loyal und nicht den Militärblöcken gegenüber."²⁵⁴ Relations between East and West Germany were especially important to Kelly. Many members of the peace movement in East Germany had been imprisoned and some exiled and some of those who were in exile had joined with Die Grünen. In an interview in September 1988, Kelly suggested that there would be a way of promoting a 'third way' between capitalism and socialism. A utopian concept in itself, the 'third way' had gained popularity with East German writers and activists and others within the left wing movement in West Germany. Many of these individuals realised that the socialism in the Eastern Bloc had failed them, yet were unwilling to accept that the only alternative could be capitalism. The 'third way' was an ideal combination of the best of both frameworks. Having seen first hand the damaging effects of socialism in East Germany, and realising the destructiveness of capitalist consumerism in the West, Kelly argued that a compromise between the two was possible, something many Greens supported:

Wenn wir eine dritte Möglichkeit fordern, so bedeutet das nicht Sozialismus und auch nicht Kapitalismus. Es bedeutet weitgehende Selbstbestimmung ökologischer Wirtschaftsgütergemeinschaften, dezentralisierte Wirtschaft. Selbstverständlich lassen sich solche Veränderungen nicht über Nacht erreichen, aber es existieren bereits viele ökologische

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p 51. [The peace movement in East and West is loyal to itself and not to military blocs.]

Gemeinschaften, die eine alternative Republik innerhalb der Bundesrepublik Deutschland geschaffen haben.²⁵⁵

As such, the fall of the Iron Curtain and the end of the Cold War appeared to promise an opportunity for change in international relations, and Kelly and others saw the fall of the Wall especially as an opportunity for East Germany to establish a state in the model of the third way. However, as Jacoby points out, the change which seemed imminent never really came about for either the West or the East:

The West “won” the cold war, a victory that momentarily fed optimism and hope; for an instant a weak utopian breeze wafted across the globe. The fear of world communism had prompted the wealthy nations to spend billions on bombs, defense and missiles. With the demise of the Soviet Union, talk of a “peace dividend” could be heard; monies freed from military spending would flow toward education, health and community needs. For the first time in many decades, the rich Western countries could focus on global needs unhampered by Communist subversion. [...] The world threat to the Western democracies has lifted; communism has virtually disappeared; the globe seems ready for a celebration, but the temper remains dark and foreboding.²⁵⁶

Kelly had worked tirelessly with other West German activists and politicians as well as with friends and political activists in the East well before the Wall fell, and had felt great optimism for the emerging revolution. In *Thinking Green!*, Kelly wrote that she “will never forget sitting in the tiny smoke-filled living rooms and kitchens of dissident friends

²⁵⁵ *Lebe, als müßtest du heute sterben*, p 20. [If we promote a third possibility then it means promoting neither socialism nor capitalism. It means far-reaching self-determination, ecological communities, a decentralised economy. Evidently, such changes wouldn't happen overnight, but there already exists many ecological communities which have achieved an alternative republic within the Federal Republic of Germany.]

²⁵⁶ Jacoby, p 156.

in East Germany in the 1980s, where we discussed the power of the powerless, the power of ideas, and the power of the spirit, and shared dreams of a nonviolent revolution and a new society shaped by civic participation, even in the midst of great repression.”²⁵⁷

The revolution which took place was indeed the peaceful, nonviolent uprising for which Kelly and others had hoped. Despite the mass protests against a powerful state which had proven itself ruthless in the past, not a single life was lost during the Autumn demonstrations of 1989.²⁵⁸ However, as Jacoby notes and Kelly remembers, in the events which followed, the utopia which Kelly and other Germans on both sides of the border had envisaged began to fade and East Germany became consumed within West Germany, “bought” from the Soviet Union for \$8 billion, the subsumation complete as the whole country was now called the BRD, the name of the former West.²⁵⁹

The celebrations marking the “freedom” of East Germany signalled a lost chance for Kelly. In typical fashion, however, she regrouped and spoke out against the resurgence of violence against foreigners which began to escalate after the fall of the Wall. Kelly was acutely aware of the dangers of a united Germany which did not place itself within its own historical and cultural context.²⁶⁰ Furthermore, Kelly continued to promote a reevaluation of the German nation, emphasising the possibility of change if the initiative were taken:

²⁵⁷ *Thinking Green!* p 89.

²⁵⁸ Ignatieff, Michael. *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, Vintage: London, 1994 p 45.

²⁵⁹ *Thinking Green!* p 91.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp 100, 104.

At the end of the second millennium, Germany has the chance to transform itself into a country of peace, human dignity, justice, and worldwide solidarity. Our hope for a peaceful and just Germany comes from the independent citizens' rights movements that led the revolution. Now we must all learn to become dissidents, so that together we can begin to build a civil society. There is so much we can learn from those days in the Autumn of 1989 about the possibilities of nonviolent transformation of society and the threats to it.²⁶¹

Yet Kelly herself realised how difficult it was to motivate individuals to become dissidents, especially considering the rapid changes which were taking place in the political climate. Jacoby suggests that one of the reasons for the criticism of utopia and utopians in this age is that utopias can appear simplistic and boring and that “[t]he detailed plans and routines that infect many utopians may come from generalizing dubious aspects of contemporary reality. For this reason, Marx and those who followed him remained silent about the future; they believed the free society could not be foreordained. Utopia could only plan itself.”²⁶²

Theorists who do remain ‘silent about the future’ certainly avoid the problem of being proven wrong about their predictions for how the utopia will evolve. Yet to envisage a utopia without including expectations for a future appears to escape the responsibility one should accept when creating the theory. Perhaps the reason behind Marx’s commitment to detail about the future was that it was impossible to know, rather than an unwillingness to speculate upon future event or escape responsibility for what might happen, should his philosophy be embraced. Kelly was certainly less than fastidious in referencing in her

²⁶¹ *Ibid*, p 105.

²⁶² *Ibid*, p 171.

publications, and could be accused of generalising in order to make a point.²⁶³ However, for her, there is also little chance of a focus on any ‘dubious aspects’ of reality. Kelly chose obvious issues which needed attention. Her concept of the *Kinderplanet* is an example where Kelly saw a need for action, and combined it with her vision of utopia. Kelly’s *Kinderplanet* was based on idea of the world of *The Little Prince* (Antoine de St Exupéry), where the world is seen in the eyes of a young boy. Kelly had experienced with her sister the kind of frighteningly impersonal environment sick children endured when having treatment, and believed strongly in both the need for more research into children’s illnesses, and a more child-friendly environment where the focus was on the child rather than the illness. Kelly described in detail the kinds of areas which would be part of the Children’s Planet, encompassing a hospital, research laboratory, and more importantly, a place for children and parents to play, relax and forget for a time about the severity of the illness:

The play area will consist of a large, flexible hall with distinct spaces within it and a pyramid-shaped superstructure. The hall will be lit by natural light through a large number of windows to the outside world. Team games will be played in an adjacent open play area as well as in the central play/activities area. The visual impression will be of an open hall and a distinctive play and work shop. The small patients’ active involvement and participation in the Children’s Planet should help them to bear their dreadful suffering and to take an active part in their own therapy.²⁶⁴

Kelly’s focus on the environment was no less than her focus on the wellbeing of humans. Further, her utopia was ever-evolving. It was not enough to attempt to make a change

²⁶³ See, for example, *Thinking Green!* pp 28, 31.

²⁶⁴ Kelly, *Fighting for Hope*, p 96

and consider it finished. An example of this is her reaction to the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is self-evident that Kelly was pleased about the end of a regime which threatened and suppressed its people. However, she refused to view the world in a Westernised dichotomy of good and evil, which saw capitalism as the ideal model and communism or socialism as an evil to be defeated. Once the Wall had come down, there was still work to be done.²⁶⁵ Kelly was unconvinced that simply maintaining a democracy meant that the state was dedicated to the protection of human rights and justice. Her view of a utopia was that which was activated as a means of everyday life and therefore did not have a tangible end. In this sense she also avoided the difficulty which Jacoby raises: that is, whether one can plan a utopian future, or whether, as Marx and others suggest, the utopia plans itself once the necessary elements for its success have been achieved. Moreover, it emphasised the empowerment which could result by creating or activating one's own utopia: identifying the areas needing change and putting into place those changes.

Kelly's utopia thus fits into the framework of a political utopian theory and as such faced the challenge of appearing unrealistic or unachievable, as well as facing apathy from those it attempts to inspire. In this sense Kelly sought the same goals and faced the same difficulties as the literary utopias mentioned above. However, by creating her own definition of a utopia, Kelly also managed to weave reality into her utopian theory, therefore marrying the achievable with the fantastic.

²⁶⁵ *Lebe, als müsstest du heute sterben.* p 78

II. “If There Is To Be a Future, It Will Be Green”

In the posthumously published *Thinking Green!*, the final chapter presents Petra Kelly’s vision of the future and the changes which needed to be implemented, beginning with the title, “If There Is To Be a Future, It Will Be Green.” Kelly urges individuals, in particular in the United States, where the book was published, to take control of their future, especially in the political arena. Her reference to “Green” in the chapter is not only an allusion to how one should act, rather it is a call for political action “leading to a unified Green, feminist, pacifist, and ecological political platform”.²⁶⁶ Yet it was not only in this chapter where Kelly discussed her vision for the future. Kelly was constantly discussing the need for individuals and governments to become more aware of the implications for the future, should they continue to act in such a militaristic and environmentally insensitive way.

As discussed briefly above, Kelly’s definition of utopia differed from the traditional concept, which viewed utopia as a model for society or a story by which to highlight the negative elements of the culture. For Kelly, utopia was a vision of the future which evolved as one took steps to implement changes. While this may seem like a unique theory, it has previously been discussed in length by philosophers, Ernst Bloch and Karl Mannheim. In *Ideology and Utopia*, Mannheim argues that utopia is an element of society which stretches the boundaries of that society. However, because of the nature of utopia, it cannot become a part of the society, but must always remain a ideal. Such a utopia thus becomes impossible to implement in practice. Bloch’s book, *The Utopian*

²⁶⁶ *Thinking Green!* p 130

Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays discusses the concept of discovering utopia within society. Bloch discusses utopia further in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, and *Geist der Utopie: Bearbeitete Neuauflage der Fassung von 1923*. Bloch's theory of utopia, like Kelly's, relies upon the ability of individuals to find a utopia within the arts, including music and literature. It is also imperative for Bloch that one use one's imagination to connect with the concepts within the arts. Through this, one can discover one's "Heimat" and aim towards a sense of hope and utopia.²⁶⁷ As such, Bloch overcomes the difficulty which Mannheim faces, yet his utopia remains an ephemeral experience, enriching the life of the individual, and consequently, it would be assumed, the world as a whole.

The similarity between Bloch and Mannheim, and Kelly's own interpretation of utopia is evident. Yet for Kelly it is not enough to simply gain a feeling of hope from a work of art or music, or to maintain an ideal of a utopia. Where they differ is in their willingness to diverge from the concept of utopia as a "no place". Bloch and Mannheim both appear to accept that utopia by its nature cannot be achieved, but that glimpses of utopia may be gained through conduct, or imagination and the arts. Kelly realised that utopia was not achievable as a state in which to live, but she was certainly more open to redefining it as a state of mind which one could achieve in everyday life. This was not only one of her personal beliefs, it was also a fundamental part of her green politics, the foundation for "a global community without frontiers that will be founded on ecology, nonviolence, and social justice with a spiritual base."²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Bloch, Ernst. *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, Vol I-III, Suhrkamp: Frankfurt am Main, 1959.

²⁶⁸ Kelly, *Nonviolence Speaks to Power*, p 66

The issue which Bloch and Mannheim, and Kelly attempt to address is that of social transformation. Jennifer Burwell, in *Notes on Nowhere: Feminism, Utopian Logic and Social Transformation*, writes that there are several points which are raised when attempting to overcome such a difficulty:

... how do we break with existing conditions and imagine alternatives, while at the same time recognizing the way in which these conditions have constituted our hopes, our wishes, and even the nature of our resistance? [...] If the solution does not lie in a nostalgia for some older concept of unified subjectivity, this question remains: How is it possible to imagine resistance from a conception of a subject who exists merely in contradiction to dominant society, but in possession of contradictory desires and wishes that, although they are constructed by dominant discourse, are not exhausted by it?²⁶⁹

Here, Burwell describes the enduring problem for utopians: how to propose a unique direction which ultimately seems impossible to achieve. Attempts by both Mannheim and Bloch to overcome this appear to be unsuccessful. Petra Kelly's utopia too relies on ideals in the present to be put into action for a better future, and as such, faces the same difficulties mentioned by Burwell, and faced by Bloch and Mannheim. However, whereas these individuals struggled with a method to incorporate it, Kelly did not. There may be a number of reasons for this, but perhaps the most plausible is that by redefining utopia, or at least allowing for several kinds of utopia to exist, Kelly could avoid challenging the traditional concept of utopia with her interpretation. By doing so, she

²⁶⁹ Burwell, Jennifer. *Notes on Nowhere: Feminism, Utopian Logic and Social Transformation*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis 1997 p 24.

could then also escape the pitfalls which other utopian theories faced. The question this raises is whether Kelly's utopia can be considered that at all, or if it is in fact more of an ideology. Certainly, the definition of ideology, "a body of doctrine, etc., with reference to some political and cultural plan [...] together with the devices for putting it into operation"²⁷⁰ applies more to Kelly's theory of utopia than the traditional definition of utopia. However, it is likely that Kelly chose to use "utopia" rather than ideology for good reason. Firstly, "ideology" as a term has some negative connotations, as it can be associated with political movements such as fascism or communism as well as a general inflexibility. Kelly did not want to commit herself to either of these political movements, nor did she believe that the utopia she was promoting was necessarily political. In addition to this, utopia has been associated with imagination,²⁷¹ a quality in which Kelly believed strongly, and which, more than ideology, is often connected to the future. Since Kelly was dedicated to considering the implications of the future, this made utopia a far more relevant term. Furthermore, to rely only upon a traditional definition of utopia would be to disregard alternative utopian theories such as those of Martin Luther King, Jr. It could therefore be argued that by redefining utopia, Kelly and others who adopt this wider definition avoid some of the problems that others such as Mannheim and Bloch must overcome. However, this does not mean that such a utopia is completely free of difficulties.

²⁷⁰ Bernard, JRL et al p 486.

²⁷¹ Bloch is indeed one of those who focused upon the importance of the imagination, however, the reference here should also include literary utopias as have been mentioned above.

One such issue which must be addressed is the matter of the coexistence of utopias. It cannot be assumed that all individuals who have a utopian theory will desire the same future; in fact, some may have ideals which oppose one another. Kelly's examples of utopia and support of the concept presupposes that others will have similar ideals to her own: that of a green, nonviolent and socially just future. Other utopias which do not follow this path are not considered "positive".²⁷² Thus it could be argued that Kelly would only accept those utopias which fulfilled her concept of positive, and rejected others. Yet Kelly stated that she was pessimistic about convincing others of the validity and necessity of her utopia, and when asked: "Wollen Sie die Leute völlig ihren Ängsten ausliefern?", Kelly replied: "Ich will sie nicht ausliefern, sondern zu ureigenen Veränderungen anstiften. Die Menschen müssen sehen, daß sie selber vieles verändern können, wenn sie nur den Anfang machen."²⁷³

Kelly's own realisation that one could achieve much by oneself had begun with her experiences in the United States while still at university, where she not only instigated the International Day but also managed to obtain an audience with the Pope. Appealing to others who had the means to help her, Kelly was confident and persuasive. While she admitted that she was pessimistic about people listening to the Greens' call to reject nuclear power, she demonstrated that she also had the energy to continue the work of promoting nonviolence and green and human rights issues.²⁷⁴ This optimism, confidence

²⁷² *Lebe, als müsstest du heute sterben*, p30.

²⁷³ *Ibid.* [Q: Do you want to free the people from their fears? Kelly: I don't want to deliver them, but I do want to incite them to understand differences which have been around forever. People have to see that they can change a lot of things, when they make a beginning.]

²⁷⁴ *Lebe, als müsstest du heute sterben*, p 26

and belief in the power of one was to remain with her, apparently to the last months of her life.

However, it did require a great effort, and Kelly was aware of this. Another of the barriers to the success of utopia as defined by Kelly was that individuals needed to take action themselves. It was difficult to persuade those either apathetic about or overwhelmed by world problems that their individual actions could in fact make a difference, especially when Kelly and Die Grünen struggled in doing this. This is not to accuse them of having achieved nothing. In fact, both Kelly and Die Grünen achieved a great number of milestones, for example, championing human rights abuses and the cause of Tibet and introducing an “eco-tax”²⁷⁵ and other environmental laws which makes Germany a world leader in promoting and attempting to resolve green issues. Yet no matter how much Kelly tried to emphasise the potential for her utopia to be incorporated into her daily life, in some ways it remained a utopia in the traditional sense: an imagined place which could never be attained. Her perspective on the world could be viewed as rose-coloured at best, tunnel-vision at worst. While Kelly’s choice to focus on the positive aspects of an issue could – and perhaps should – be interpreted as a means of creating a basis from which the issue could be tackled, at the same time it could be seen as avoiding important elements, or simplifying the complexity of the problem.²⁷⁶ As non-negotiable as she was on nonviolence, Kelly could be as uncompromising on other

²⁷⁵ In *Thinking Green!*, Kelly suggests that such a tax would be a way of helping to reduce the amount of pollution. At the time that her book was published, the tax had not yet come into effect; it has since been introduced in Germany. The tax involves a polluter-pays system whereby those companies/individuals who create pollution are taxed.

²⁷⁶ Parkin accuses Kelly of this with regards to human rights abuses in China, claiming that Kelly would emphasise the nonviolent resistance of the Chinese against their government, but fail to mention the severe punishments which followed it. (p 168).

green issues, and this could have the result of ignoring the associated problems. Kelly believed that if people wanted a different world, all they had to do was to make changes in their lives. Furthermore, she considered that others should be as dedicated and tireless in their efforts as she was:

When I speak about green global politics and about the green movements in both Western and Eastern Europe, I recall the magnificent slogan of the French students in the May-June uprising of 1968: "Be practical! Do the impossible!" To this demand, we, the generation that faces the next century, can add the solemn injunction: "If we don't do the impossible we shall be faced with the unthinkable."²⁷⁷

This indicates a lack of consideration for the complexity and difficulties in people's lives, and that, at least in the present situation, a green choice is often only possible once basic priorities have been satisfied. While Kelly may have thought she could achieve anything she set her mind on, the reality was that for many other individuals, the impossible is sometimes simply that.

Another final difficulty with Kelly's utopia within a political model is that it is unable to fully succeed on a larger scale. Kelly may have held onto her utopia even while in the Bundestag, however, the reality of international relations and dealing with scores of different issues, personalities, and crises mean that the only successful utopia in a structured political environment must be on a personal level. In this sense, Kelly did succeed, however, she was unable to maintain the vision for the wider Green party.

²⁷⁷ Kelly, *Nonviolence Speaks to Power*, p 58

Further, the way in which the party developed was so unsuited to Kelly's view of a utopia and an anti-party party that the two versions were essentially incompatible. Despite these criticisms, it is to Kelly's credit that even after knockbacks and personal difficulties with Die Grünen as a party, she remained committed to the Green vision she had begun with, and still saw a future for the party and for herself. This is illustrated in an interview with *freundin* in March 1992. During the discussion, Kelly spoke about her role in the Green party as well as the environmental television series she was hosting, *Fünf vor zwölf*. At the end of the interview, Kelly was asked if she felt annoyed by people who do nothing for the environment. She answered, "Irgendwie kann ich es schon verstehen, wenn manche resignieren. Sagen, das hilft doch sowieso alles nicht mehr. Weil die großen Umweltsünder viel Schlimmeres anrichten..." *freundin*: "Und trotzdem machen Sie weiter?" Petra Kelly: "Das ist das Prinzip Hoffnung."²⁷⁸ This last statement by Kelly could well be interpreted as a reference to Bloch's *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, discussed above. Certainly both Kelly and Bloch emphasised the importance of imagination, and of finding utopia within the world, however, since Kelly is not explicit in mentioning Bloch in any of her other texts used in the dissertation, mention of this "principle of hope" may simply be a reference to a text which Kelly identifies with as sympathetic to her worldview.

Kelly's argument in this interview is therefore that utopias, while perhaps seemingly futile, still have a place within the world, and within Green philosophy and politics.

Russell Jacoby agrees. Despite the criticism of utopia, and his recognition of its

²⁷⁸ *Lebe*, p 40. [Kelly: I can sort of understand it when some people feel resignation. When they say nothing will help anyway. Because the large [companies] which destroy the environment do much worse... *freundin*: And you still go on? Kelly: That is the principle of hope.]

weaknesses and its failures, Jacoby believes that there still is a place for it, especially in the political realm. Indeed, it is the lack of it which propels this age of apathy and that “in an era of political resignation and fatigue the utopian spirit remains more necessary than ever. It evokes neither prisons nor programs, but an idea of human solidarity and happiness.”²⁷⁹

It is probable then that there will always be critics of utopians and their utopias, and there were certainly several who disregarded Kelly’s vision. However, as Jacoby intimates and Kelly demonstrates, it is necessary to at least suggest that there is a solution to the many problems and difficulties which arise. Further, Kelly’s call for nonviolence is illustrated in nonviolent demonstrations around the world, some examples being the success of the people in Georgia, or the worldwide protests over the recent Gulf War. Kelly’s utopia was often very easy to criticise, however, she is certainly accurate in her prediction that a green future is needed if there is to be one at all. It is possible that if Kelly were still alive, she would be impatient at the rate at which change is occurring, yet this impatience was a personality trait which she admitted. It is true that there is still much to be done, and that Kelly’s utopia may not be realised in the very way she visualised it. However, the mere fact that individuals are attempting to activate their own utopias illustrates that there has at least been some success, and that the future is turning a little greener.

²⁷⁹ Jacoby, p 181.

Conclusion

This dissertation has aimed not only to discuss the issues of ecofeminism, nonviolence, and utopia as they pertain to Petra Kelly, but also to examine how these concepts fit into her political Weltanschauung. Further, it has attempted to place Petra Kelly's own political aspirations within the framework of Die Grünen, and to analyse the success of this merging of ideas.

The first chapter demonstrated how Kelly's upbringing by strong women (her mother and grandmother) against the background of an unwavering Catholic faith, combined with her experiences in the United States, established in Kelly a strong sense of social justice and a desire to change those elements of the society – and in some cases, the world – which she perceived as unjust. Chapter Two discussed the reasons behind Kelly's decision to leave the SPD and become involved with Die Grünen. Her sister's death had fuelled an interest in the nuclear industry and Kelly's involvement in anti-nuclear protests led to political involvement on a higher level. Chapter Three illustrated that her move into party politics had mixed results for Kelly. Once elected into parliament, the resources available to members of parliament meant that she could contact and assist many more people, further away than she had been able to previously. Further, there was also an opportunity to question government policies and lobby for their amendment. In particular, Kelly and other members of Die Grünen were adamant that Germany should invest more effort in the areas of disarmament and human rights.

Yet while it was only possible to attempt to implement such changes while within the parliamentary system, there were also many constraints. The party had to conform to the regulations and formalities of the parliament. In addition, Kelly had to conform to the rules of her party. Throughout high school and university, Kelly had shown strong leadership skills, especially in organising and running campaigns and demonstrations. These were further developed during her involvement with the BBU. Yet she lacked the kinds of leadership skills necessary to lead a political party to success in parliament, particularly in the context of German politics, and of Die Grünen, with its emphasis on party, rather than individual success. To go from leader to team player was a difficult step for Kelly, and the situation became progressively more uncomfortable throughout the 1980s. Perhaps the main cause of this schism was Kelly's persistence in her commitment to causes. Many of her party colleagues had been involved in similar activist organisations to Kelly or had lobbied for change in areas of the military or the nuclear industry. As they became involved with party politics and government decision making, they also began to conform to a greater or lesser degree. This is not to say that the members of Die Grünen disregarded the political aspirations they had held when elected in 1983. Rather, many chose to take a more pragmatic approach in order to attempt to achieve more within the parliamentary system.

Kelly was not such a person. Unlike others, the passion which had inspired such fervent activism in Kelly's youth continued to do so into middle age. As such, Kelly found that many within the party had become "boring"; other members considered Kelly to be immature or unrealistic in her demands. The question thus raised in Chapter Three is

whether Kelly would have been better suited to remaining active with NGOs such as the BBU and the Grace P. Kelly Organisation rather than conforming to the rules of party politics. Evidently, it is impossible to speculate on what might have been had Kelly not co-founded Die Grünen. It is difficult to imagine Petra Kelly remaining outside of politics considering her strong political drive. Yet it was ultimately politics which caused her so much anguish. Hence it can be argued that while the party may not have been the best environment for Kelly, it still allowed her to achieve incredible results, even if these were not evident before she died.²⁸⁰ Moreover, the interviews conducted before her death indicate that Kelly was still politically driven, and, despite her negative experiences within the German parliament, was still considering her options as a politician in both German and European elections in the mid 1990s. While this raises further questions about the circumstances of Kelly's death, they are deliberately avoided, since the aim of the dissertation is to discuss the issues in which Kelly was engaged during her life.

Chapters Four and Five continued to discuss the important role Kelly's feminist standpoint played in the development of her politics. Chapter Four placed Kelly's perspective in the historical framework of feminism, establishing that she was a radical feminist who nevertheless made strong links between her feminist convictions and the protection of the environment. Chapter Five discussed the question of Petra Kelly as an ecofeminist and her disinclination to identify herself with this genre of feminism. It was thus established that while Kelly's brand of feminism was in effect, ecofeminism, she did not consider the distinction a necessity, as she believed that to be feminist was to

²⁸⁰ Examples include Kelly's suggestion of an "eco-tax" which has since been passed as law, and the fact that party members are now able to cross the floor on conscience votes with regards to human rights issues.

understand and respect the interrelationship between men and women and with the planet.

The chapters on nonviolence established that Kelly's commitment to nonviolence was inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr and Mohandas Gandhi, as well as other figures such as Dorothy Day and Cesar Chavez. The opposition Kelly and other members of Die Grünen faced when arguing for nonviolent rather than military solutions was also introduced in these chapters. Finally the arguments for and against nonviolence were examined and Kelly's position analysed to conclude that while nonviolence may still be considered by many an unrealistic position to take, Kelly's commitment was unconditional, and her logic was that only nonviolence, and not violence, would lead to peace.

Finally, the chapters on utopia firstly briefly introduced the history of utopia and employed Thomas More's *Utopia* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* as examples to illustrate the way in which literary utopia has been informed by and in turn has influenced politics. These two texts also demonstrated the difference between masculine and feminist utopia, a concept which was discussed with relation to Starhawk's *The Fifth Sacred Thing* which was analysed as an example of an ecofeminist utopia, Starhawk's *The Fifth Sacred Thing*. The political utopia as described by Martin Luther King, Jr, in 1968 during his speech "I Have a Dream" was also used to exemplify the way in which a vision of a future can motivate individuals into taking action. Both Starhawk's text and King's speech were used to juxtapose Kelly's own ecofeminist utopia. The similarities

and differences between these and the literary texts discussed at the beginning of the chapter were then examined and placed into the larger context of utopian critique. The final chapter then discussed Kelly's own vision of the future and the ways in which her idea of utopia was threatened during her lifetime. The elements of Kelly's 'green future' were then analysed and the achievements which have been reached since her death addressed, concluding that while there are many issues which continue to require attention, progress has been made in those areas to which Kelly devoted so much of her time and energy.

It is now thirteen years since Petra Kelly's death. In some ways, her legacy is evident, continuing through the Petra-Kelly-Vereinigung and the scholarship offered in her memory at the American University in Washington. However it could be argued that in many circles Kelly was very quickly forgotten. The tenth anniversary of her death, in 2002, went largely uncommemorated. Even those who held conspiracy theories regarding the circumstances of her death were noticeable for their silence. An examination of the website for Die Grünen mentions Kelly as one of the co-founders of the party and her tragic death but few other details. Kelly's conspicuousness as a natural leader worked against her during her time with Die Grünen and was one reason why she was so ostracized from the party. The irony of this is demonstrated through the way in which charismatic personalities within Die Grünen are now used to the advantage of the party, and promoted as figureheads to represent Die Grünen.²⁸¹

²⁸¹ The most well-known of these is perhaps Joschka Fischer, currently Germany's Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs.

There is no doubt that Kelly's vision for a green future, where nonviolence is standard practice, social justice is taken for granted, and a connection with the environment is emphasised as well as respected, has a long way to go, and certainly there is much of which to despair. It must not be overlooked that the Germany of today still suffers from a high unemployment rate, and that like governments before them, the SPD-Green coalition has its own political problems and difficulties. However, despite all the shortcomings of this government, and the atrocities which occur globally, and despite the fact that most power still lies with a few rather than many, there is a certain optimism which remains. It is this optimism which demonstrates that regardless of the many failures of this future, Petra Kelly's green future, her utopia, is slowly but surely evolving.

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