

**PATRIARCHS, PADDOCKS AND THE PERSONAL:
FIVE WOMEN FROM THE WHAREHUIA/TE POPO
DISTRICT TALK ABOUT THEIR LIVES**

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There is a she
inside of me
deep, deep down
locked away
screaming
screeching
seeking a voice
some words
so she can tell
the world
the stories she knows.

Lesley Pitt

Abstract

The aim of this research was to explore and celebrate the daily lived experiences of rural women. The life stories of four women, from the rural district of Wharehuia/Te Popo in central Taranaki, were gathered in unstructured, in-depth interviews. My life story was written and incorporated as data.

I spent my childhood and adolescence on my family's sheep and beef farm in the Wharehuia/Te Popo district. Later, as a social work practitioner, I worked in rural and semi rural areas. This thesis was inspired by an awareness that life for women (and men) in these communities was unique and worthy of recognition.

The focus of the study is on women. It reflects my gender and identity as a feminist. My feminist values influenced the methodology and theoretical concepts used to add meaning to the narratives. I have included post structural ideas which are of personal interest and relevant to the stories. The five themes used to structure the literature and data are: patriarchy, private and public worlds, women and work, diversity and difference, and power.

The participants discussed the way in which patriarchal ideology had influenced their lives, affecting their intimate relationships as well as their public activities. Much of their lives have focused on the domestic realm of home and family; more so for the older two participants. The younger women were more involved in the public world of paid work. All the women worked hard and had diverse work patterns. Power issues had an impact on all aspects of their lives. The respondents talked about the way they used power to which they had access, positively and productively. There is a tension in their stories between wanting to belong and fit in and a recognition of their own uniqueness. This uniqueness reflected the diversity among rural women.

The study ends with a consideration of its relevance to social work; the use of story telling, the relationship between theory and practice, and the opportunity provided by the women for practitioners to learn from their stories.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to a wonderful rural woman, my mother.

MARGARET ELIZABETH (PEGGY) PITT
(NEE LEES)

Born: 17 February 1933

Died: 21 November 1991

Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to Gwyn, June, Marie-Ann and Margaret. I feel honoured by the trust you have placed in me and all that you shared. I appreciate your generosity, integrity and humour. Exposing your lives in a public way was an act of courage. Without your participation this research would not have been possible.

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INTRODUCTION

You welcomed me into
 your homes, your hearts and your personal worlds.
 You told me your stories
 shared your lives with me (and the tape recorder).
 I have tried to honour your stories
 to pay back the debt
 for what you gave so freely.

Lesley Pitt

OVERVIEW

In order to carry out this research four wonderful women shared their lives with me. My responsibility in this document was to honour and celebrate those stories.

This project is humble in its simplicity; it is the life stories of five women. Its purpose is to gain insight into the social realities of women living in rural Aotearoa/New Zealand, by exploring in depth the narratives of four carefully selected women. Each of these women was resident in the farming community of Wharehuia/Te Popo in central Taranaki at the time they were interviewed. They were representative of different age groups which allowed me to consider changes in daily lived experience in different generations. The fifth woman is myself; my own story is included alongside the respondents. This research approach is advocated by Jones (1992:25 & 31) who says researchers should reveal themselves as one speaker among the multiple voices being discussed rather than being a neutral outsider.

Peoples' lives have always fascinated me: the events which shape them and the way they view themselves and their environment. The concept of story telling used as part of this research is also a strategy I have developed as a social work practitioner. I

consider that in both practice and research this technique allows for connected and holistic ways of knowing. Laird (1994:180) discusses the power of story telling.

Stories in the larger sociocultural surround provide the contextual repertoire we draw upon to construct our autobiographies, the life narratives that we build and revise as we construct our autobiographies, the life narratives that we build and revise as we construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct ourselves.

As I grew up in the district where the respondents live, this project has been about hearing the 'voices' from my childhood. This study has provided an opportunity to add richness and depth to the wonderful memories I have of the women who were around me when I was a girl. My thesis has for me, been a way in which I could touch the lives of the women in my family: some, like my Mum and Nana, have passed on, but some still live in the district and neighbouring communities.

For social work practitioners and students working in rural areas the narratives shared by the respondents provide an opportunity to consider what daily life is like for rural women. By reading the stories of these women and considering the theoretical ideas applied practitioners can gain insight into and empathy for their client group. For example, issues about farm succession are explored and the patrilineal ideology which underpins the passing of land from one generation to the next is discussed.

Feminist and post structural ideas underpin this study. While recognising that it is difficult to generalise about feminism, Ramazanoglu (1989:8) says it is a combination of social theories which explain gender relations in society and consider the different life experiences of men and women. It is also difficult to generalise about post structural theory. Post structural thinkers abandon the quest for universal truth, instead they see meaning as fragmented, multiple and diffuse (Bryson, 1992:226). Therefore in this thesis I have gone in search of truth with a small 't', so that women living in a particular part of New Zealand can make public what has been a very private life style.

There are five key themes taken from the feminist and post structural schools of thought which are used in this project and form the foundation for the data chapters. They are patriarchy, private and public worlds, women and work, diversity and difference, and power. These themes were chosen because they are key concepts in feminism and post structural theory. They illustrate key aspects of the women's lives and are applicable to social work practice.

THE FIVE THEMES

Weedon (1997:1-2) defined patriarchy as "power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to those of men". Two writers, McMath and Smith, (1988:71) have articulated what this means in rural Aotearoa/New Zealand from their research on women in Eastern Southland.

While women believe that they have insight into the male world because they have been brought up to cater to men's needs and live in a society dominated by their values, they feel that men have little insight into how women see things, and are less willing to meet women's needs.

The respondents' lives were affected in various ways by patriarchal social structures both in the private world of their homes as well as in public realms such as school and work.

Private and public worlds were discussed by Cox and James (1987:1). "We all inhabit two realms, the public and the private, and they shape our lives". The division of the world into these two spheres was taken as natural when in fact it is a social construction. Cox and James (1987:3) argued that it has been taken for granted that women inhabit the private sphere focusing on home and family, while it is assumed that men belong in the public world of work and politics. There is a difference between the respondents in relation to the private/public dichotomy with the older women focusing on the domestic sphere while the younger women are more involved in public activities.

In the section on women and work there is a consideration of how the reproduction/production split affects daily life. This is the idea that a capitalist economy requires men to create goods (production) while women are reproducing the labour force. Reproduction includes housework, emotional support and childbearing and raising (Delphy & Leonard, 1992:18). All the women in this study were involved in nurturing and household tasks as well as other voluntary and paid work activities.

A celebration of diversity among rural women allows for a consideration of the uniqueness of each of the women in this study. Although the women have some similarities, for example where they live and their ethnic background, they are different in other ways; age, parental status, class, educational background and employment.

A Foucauldian view of power has been used, in which power is seen as diffuse and circulatory, not something which can be reduced to a single causal factor. This perspective contradicts some of the early structural feminist writing which identified clear power structures of domination and subordination. Acknowledgement of the

diffuse and productive nature of power has allowed for an exploration of all the contradictions that surround power issues in daily life. The women's stories showed how they used the power they had available in positive and creative ways.

GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

Very brief geographical and historical descriptions of Wharehuia, translated to mean the house of huia's, and Te Popo, meaning the lullaby (Church, 1990:35-36) are included in order to contextualise and locate the women in terms of the past and their physical surroundings.

The history of Taranaki etched on the faces of the people is a history of struggle, patience and hope. But over it all rises the mountain, a promise of unity even to those, who like myself, lived in its shadow only for a short time (Sir Paul Reeves in Dove, Hill & Smither, 1987:42).

The mountain, Taranaki (Egmont) is, as Sir Paul Reeves stated, a backdrop to the lives of residents in Taranaki, and the women in this study. It affects weather patterns, land use, and provides a readily available recreational resource (Ibid:38).

The women live in a community which is tucked away from the main road, along narrow, windy and hilly roads; this contributes to a sense of being cut off, timeless and distinct.

The Wharehuia/Te Popo district is in central Taranaki, to the east of the nearest town, Stratford. It is a rural service town with a population of approximately 5,000. It has two secondary schools, Stratford High School and a private Anglican girls school, St. Marys. The nearest city is New Plymouth which is on the Taranaki coast to the north west. Two nearby villages provide social and economic services. To the west is Midhurst and to the east, Toko.

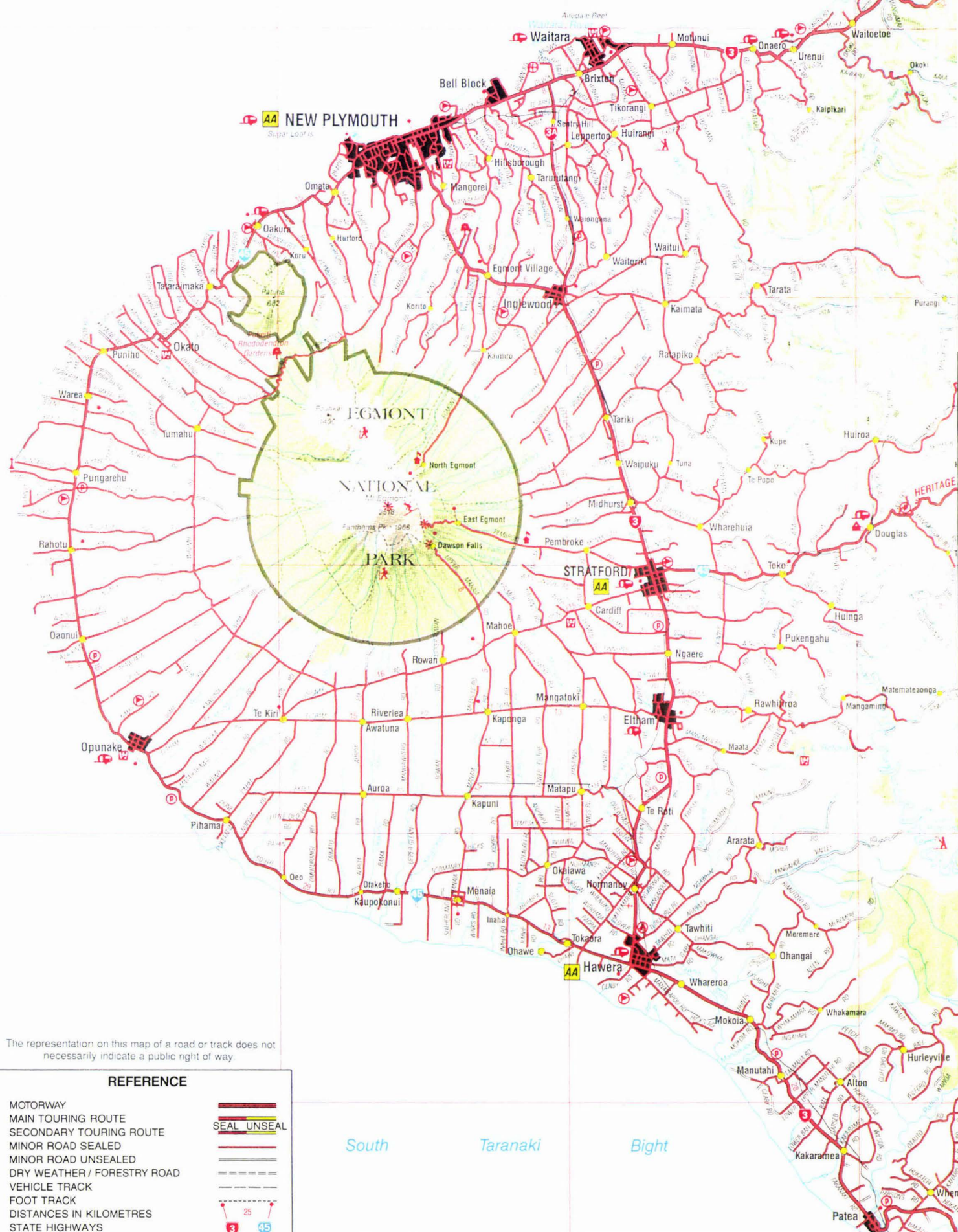
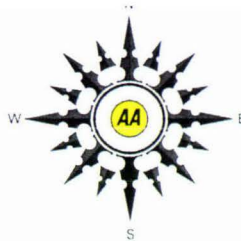
Stanley School is situated on a T junction where Stanley Road comes off Beaconsfield Road. Near the school is a small church, community hall and the remnants of a dairy factory. To the east, on Stanley Road, is Te Popo School. It is closed but the school and its surrounds, including a swimming pool are now run by local householders as a domain (Kowalewski, Hosking, Wellington, Jago, Hosking and Gibson, 1995:71).

Central Taranaki has a cold, wet climate which is beneficial for good grass growth. The weather is described by a 1940's resident, C.C. Belsey who came from the Bay of Plenty. "The continual wintry conditions of this part of our fair land were a little bewildering at first but in the course of time I grew to be quite fond of Stratford weather, particularly because it was seldom very warm and never dry!" (Ibid:34-35). The district

was originally covered in bush and pockets of it remain uncleared where it was too steep to fell.

The economic base of the district is farming, although some farmers have diversified into forestry. Kowalewski et al (1995:74) stated "Wharehuia can arguably boast some of the best dairying land in the country". Te Popo, in the eastern part of the district is a sheep and beef farming area. Oil and gas exploration has had an impact in recent years and a number of exploration wells have been drilled in the district.

On the following page is a map of Taranaki, on which the Wharehuia and Te Popo districts are named. Then there are a series of photographs; Mount Taranaki, views of the Wharehuia and Te Popo landscape, Stanley and Te Popo Schools and the Wharehuia Church and Hall.



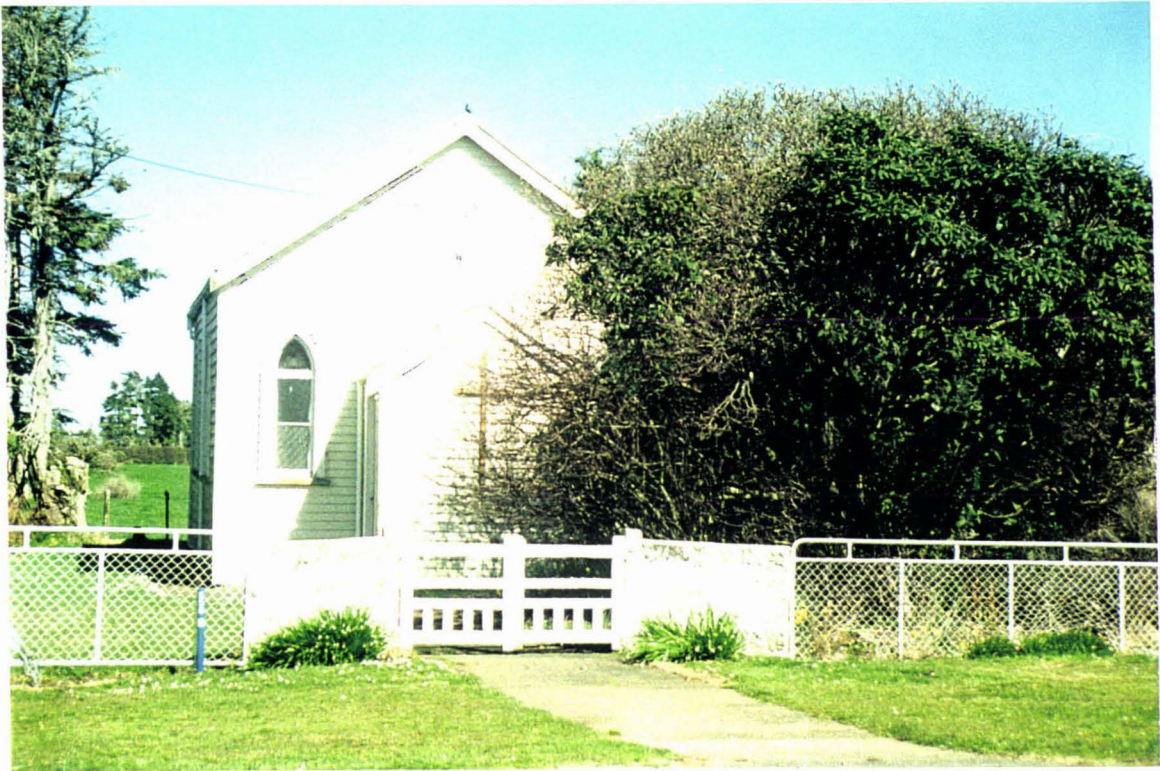
The representation on this map of a road or track does not necessarily indicate a public right of way.

REFERENCE

MOTORWAY	
MAIN TOURING ROUTE	
SECONDARY TOURING ROUTE	
MINOR ROAD SEALED	
MINOR ROAD UNSEALED	
DRY WEATHER / FORESTRY ROAD	
VEHICLE TRACK	
FOOT TRACK	
DISTANCES IN KILOMETRES	
STATE HIGHWAYS	







HISTORIC CONTEXT

The boundaries of three iwi converge on the Stratford county; Ngati Maru to the north, Ngati Ruanui to the south and Te Atihaunui a Paparangi to the east (Church, 1990:11). Tangata Whenua did not have permanent settlements in the area but “established villages amidst the forested hills as places of refuge in times of war and for seasonal activities such as bird snaring, tree-felling, eeling, quarrying and cultivation” (Ibid:11). During my childhood I was told that tangata whenua did not settle in the area because they were concerned that Mount Taranaki would one day return to his original home in the centre of the north island. Stratford county, including the Wharehuia/Te Popo district, is in the path of the mountain’s journey home. Reed (1988:46-47) tells this version of the legend of Mount Taranaki (Egmont).

In the long ago many mountains lived together in the centre of the North Island. Tongariro, not then truncated, but rearing his snow-clad form far into the clouds, was the ariki. Near him stood Taranaki (Mount Egmont), Tauhara and Puutaauaki. They were all proud and valiant warriors. The only woman among them was Piihanga, rounded in soft curves, clad in a cloak of green foliage. The male mountains all coveted this gentle female mountain and fought fiercely for her love. Tongariro was the victor. He wrapped her in soft arms of cloud, and drove the other mountains far away. They departed at night and hastily, for they knew that their progress would be arrested by the rising sun. . . Taranaki . . . said, ‘Ka haere au ki te toowene-tanga o te raa’ - I shall go to the setting place of the sun’. As he travelled away he ploughed a mighty furrow, down which the Wanganui River flows, and took up a position on the western tip of the island, where he still hurls taunts at the victorious Tongariro.

Taranaki has a turbulent past. The Waitangi Tribunal Report (1996:1) on the Taranaki land claim stated that “land conflict has continued in Taranaki with little amelioration, for 155 years”. Armed conflict over land continued over a 40 year period in the 1800’s, but has been traditionally compartmentalised into the decade of the 1860’s. The Waitangi Tribunal Report (1996:8) is clear that the “Governor was the aggressor, not Maori, and in Treaty it was the Governor who was in breach of the undertakings made in the name of the Queen”. As a consequence of the conflict, land, including the Wharehuia/Te Popo district, was confiscated although battles were not fought in the district. The Report stated “it seems almost certainly the case that the confiscations in Taranaki were unlawful” (Ibid:9). The confiscated land is now the subject of substantial land claims by Taranaki iwi.

Originally the Wharehuia/Te Popo district was bush covered. Mrs L. Wheller, an early settler, described what the district was like when she arrived: "the land was almost wholly scrub or bush-covered and the roads, as yet unmetalled, were frequently knee-deep in mud" (Ibid:34). Felling started in 1869 and logs were hauled to a saw mill in Toko, although later there was a mill in the district. After the bush was felled, the stumps were burnt and grass was planted. This process was described by an early resident in Kowalewski et al (1995:73): "development involved cutting down the big trees with axes, burning in suitable weather, sowing seed on the ashes and eventually chopping and removing the large stumps that remained - all without the aid of tractors or bulldozers". These sections were settled while the bush continued to be cleared (Ibid:70). Cows were milked by hand in the district until the late 1920's. Hand milking was a labour intensive process involving all the family twice a day, children milking before and after school. The introduction of tractors in the 1940's saw the end of draught horses in the district for use in heavy work and for transportation (Ibid:74).

By 1895 there were enough resident families for the establishment of Stanley School with a roll of fourteen pupils. The school has burnt down twice, once in 1916 and the second in 1984, both times being replaced although the second time this was with relocatable classrooms (Church, 1990:36). In 1911 Te Popo School started with thirteen pupils. It closed in 1967 when the roll fell to seven (Kowalewski et al, 1995:71 & Church, 1990:35).

In the early 1900's both Wharehuia and Te Popo had telephone and post offices and the rural delivery mail service was established in 1911. Power reticulation into the area came in 1927 (Kowalewski et al, 1995:72 & Church, 1990:35). Like most dairy farming districts in Taranaki, both Wharehuia and Te Popo had dairy factories, the former closing down in 1958 with the advent of milk tankers which took the milk to the Midhirst factory, and the latter during the second world war due to the labour shortage. The factories formed an important social function as described by Kowalewski et al (1995:77).

We have all heard how the farmers, after unloading the milk, checking their own and everyone else's tests on the board, would stand for hours talking, exchanging ideas and gossip and we have heard too, of the third degree these men were subjected to when they got home! All in all, many people were very sorry to see the factory close, and it left an emptiness in their lives.

The district therefore once had a 'thriving social life'. However with changes in transportation it is easier for residents to travel outside the district to activities and social functions. The Womens' Division of Federated Farmers (of which one of the respondents, June, is still an active member) was established in the district in 1934 as "it

was decided that rural women should have the chance to meet once a month for a social afternoon. Many of them never had a chance to have any social contact, as husbands, children and farms kept them busy from dawn till dark" (Ibid:85). The organisation is still functioning in the district in 1998. It has had a variety of functions from organising trips away for its members to knitting singlets for plunket babies.

THE RESPONDENTS

The following is a brief introduction to each of the women in this study. All the respondents gave me permission to use their names.

Gwyn

Gwyn is the eldest respondent, being in her seventies. She grew up on sheep farms in Hastings and Kohuratahi, a district further east of Stratford than Wharehuia/Te Popo. When she left school Gwyn trained as a Karitane Nurse and nursed in various places until her marriage in 1945. Her husband was dairy farming in Wharehuia and Gwyn has lived in the district since her marriage. Gwyn's husband died in 1980. She has three sons, one of whom now controls the family farm. Gwyn and her husband established a three acre garden which she now maintains herself and opens to the public.

June

June is in her sixties and has lived in the Wharehuia district all her life, attending Stanley School as a child. When she left school she worked as a hairdresser until her marriage in 1952 in the Wharehuia Church, with the reception in the local hall. June and her husband have two sons. Throughout her life June has been involved in farming, either on her parent's farm or alongside her husband. This involvement continues as she still milks cows twice a day. Throughout her life June has been actively involved in the community and is a keen gardener.

Marie-Ann

Marie-Ann is in her forties with two teenage children. As a child/adolescent she and her mother lived in various places including Nelson, Hutt Valley and Melbourne. When Marie-Ann left school she did clerical work. She married when she was young and this marriage ended in her twenties. Marie-Ann married a second time and moved to Te Popo with her husband onto a 'lifestyle block'. Her husband ran his own business as a tradesman. Marie-Ann gave up paid work when she had her two children, but later returned to the workforce and when interviewed was employed in a secretarial position.

Some months after being interviewed for this research Marie-Ann separated from her husband and left the Te Popo district.

Margaret

Margaret is in her thirties, married and has three children. When Margaret was interviewed the eldest two attended Stanley School (the primary school in the district) and the youngest attended a Stratford Kindergarten. Margaret grew up on a dairy farm in the Midhirst area, moving to Te Popo as a teenager when her parents moved from the dairy farm to their sheep and beef unit. It is this farm which Margaret currently lives on and is farming along with her husband, who simultaneously works off the farm as a self employed builder. When Margaret left Stratford High School she completed a textile and design diploma at Wellington Polytechnic, before being employed in the fashion industry in Auckland and then in Stratford on her return to the area.

Lesley

I have included myself as another respondent in the data chapter. I am one month older than Margaret and presently live in Palmerston North where I was employed as a Graduate Assistant at Massey University. I was married but separated from my husband in February 1996. We had no children although my ex husband has three sons. I spent the decade of my twenties living in Levin where I was employed as a Social Worker and Probation Officer. Prior to this I completed my undergraduate degree in Social Work at Massey University. I grew up in the Wharehuia/Te Popo district where my father was a sheep and beef farmer, a farm which had belonged to my paternal grandfather. I attended Stanley School and then Stratford High School before leaving to go to university.

ORIENTATION TO THE CHAPTERS

The following is a brief synopsis of each of the chapters and provides a short overview of what is to follow.

Chapter One, the methodology chapter, explores the research process itself and the ethical issues which arose during this project. The feminist and post structural ideas which have shaped and informed the way the research was carried out are elaborated. There is a discussion about the in-depth, non-directive interviewing techniques used, story telling and the importance of reciprocity between researcher and researched.

Chapter Two, discourse and theoretical constructions, takes the five theoretical ideas (patriarchy, private and public worlds, women and work, diversity and difference, and

power) and considers the theoretical ideas and material written about rural women focusing on these themes.

Chapter Three, patriarchy, is the first of the data chapters in which the respondents 'tell their stories'. The respondents experiences of patriarchal ideology and social structures are explored, with a consideration of both the private and public aspects of their lives.

Chapter Four, private and public worlds, looks at the separation of these two spheres. As women have traditionally remained within the private domain of home and family, this chapter focuses on the women's narratives in relation to their private lives and the intersection between private and public.

Chapter Five, rural women and work, discusses the respondents experiences of work in all its forms: from that carried out in the private sphere to public activities. The areas of their working lives which the respondents talk about are: housework, caregiving, working on the farm, voluntary work, work and leisure, and paid employment.

Chapter Six, diversity and difference celebrates the heterogeneity of rural women. In the women's narratives there is a tension between the recognition of their own uniqueness with a desire to belong and fit in.

Chapter Seven explores power and the experiences the women in this study have with power in their daily lives. A Foucauldian view of power is used in order to analyse the stories as this allows for a consideration of the contradictions in relation to power inherent in the women's lives. There are times when they are subjected to power but as the stories demonstrate the women do not perceive themselves as powerless and they use power productively.

Chapter Eight concludes by considering the relevance of this study to social work practice. The technique of story telling used in this study can also be used in social work practice. The data chapters demonstrate how theory can be used in social work to understand the daily lives of clients. The rural women in this study have provided an opportunity for social work practitioners and students to gain an insight into what life for a rural woman may be like.

CHAPTER ONE: METHODOLOGY

Margins, Marginal, Marginalisation

The page is full of writing -

AGGRESSIVE, STRONG, POWERFUL WORDS

use up the lines

but on the edges

is a smidgen of space

for us to write our stories.

Lesley Pitt

INTRODUCTION

This poem encapsulates the purpose of this study; providing the opportunity for women to tell their stories. Foucault (1980:81) referred to this process of telling stories from the margins, as the re-emergence of local or regional knowledge which had been disqualified. These knowledges are concerned with struggles and had been pushed to the outskirts of society. Laird (1994:180) stated the following about local knowledges and women.

Local knowledges - sets of ideas, explanations, and interpretations about the world - gradually take hold and may gain increasing numbers of adherents...They shape the lives of women in very powerful ways, guiding and constraining their speech and even their thoughts.

The research design was based on ideas taken from the post structural and feminist schools of thought. The use of narratives is a component of both. Through the process of telling their stories the women were able to explore the complexities and contradictions inherent in their lives. By participating in this study the respondents

have made their experiences public. Making personal troubles public issues is a goal of feminism. As Laird (1994:186) stated, the right to tell one's story places a person in the public domain from which women have been excluded.

Recently, women have begun to develop new "local knowledges" and these local knowledges, which begin with the storying of individual experiences, are, in turn, reshaping the larger public discourse (Laird, 1994:195).

The ideas which inform this study enabled women to tell about their daily lived experience as it was for them, using a style of communicating with which they were familiar. Jayaratne and Stewart (1991:93) discussed the importance of using "methods which permit women to express their experiences fully and in their own terms". Women have felt unheard when 'truth' is sought through objective, rational search rather than through intuition, self-understanding and connection (Laird, 1994:185 & Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986:6).

Qualitative techniques were used for the interviews. They were based on the women's stories using a self-structured format (Graham, 1984:118). This enabled the women to tell their stories in their own time and gave them control over the interview itself (Ibid:115). This was important to counteract the emotional safety and ethical risks for respondents when they shared intimate aspects of their lives with a researcher. Graham (1984:107) discussed respondent control in this kind of research. "The narrator knows she is providing information: the story marks out the territory in which intrusion is tolerated".

The research process was based on reciprocity which is a fundamental aspect of feminist research (Munford, 1992:85). "Reciprocity implies give and take, a mutual negotiation of meaning and power" (Lather, 1991:57). Throughout this project I have aimed for reciprocity between myself and the respondents. I wanted them to feel they got as much out of being part of this project as they gave. Respondents told me after the interviews they had enjoyed the process. They have received a copy of their transcribed interviews and will be provided with a copy of this document.

I have written my own life story as part of data gathering and it is the fifth narrative in this project. Researcher self awareness and the contextualising of self is discussed by Jones (1992:18). She emphasised the importance of researchers writing in the first person and locating their own position in relation to their work. Similarly, Reinharz (1992:258-259) discussed feminist researchers including their personal experiences in their work in addition to their own experiences of the research process. Throughout this research I have been transparent about my position. I have not separated myself from

the research and I have been subjective as opposed to objective. I have adopted a holistic approach, wanting to 'know' in a connected way (Heshusius, 1994:18).

SAMPLE SELECTION

A great deal of thought went into the sample selection in order to choose women who were representative of various life stages. The stages I used to frame my decision making were, a mother of young/primary school age children, a mother of adolescents/young adults, a grandmother and a great grandmother. The last criteria was not fulfilled, although the oldest respondent, Gwyn, is in her seventies. Both she and June have adult grandchildren. Although there is an age gap between Gwyn and June their families are at similar life stages. I decided respondents would be resident in the Wharehuia/Te Popo district at the time of interview. This reduced the potential pool of respondents in the two older age groups as it is common for farmers (along with their wives) to leave the district when they retire. In the two younger life stage categories it was difficult to eliminate potential respondents as there were a number of women who fulfilled the criteria. I purposely chose women whom I felt would understand the research process, be able to reflect on their lives and articulate their experiences.

The respondents are Pakeha and middle class, which is representative of the women in the Wharehuia/Te Popo community but not all rural women. In this sense the research could be challenged for not acknowledging difference and diversity amongst women (Stanley & Wise, 1990:30). Clearly rural women are not homogenous and this research will not attempt to 'speak on behalf' of all rural women.

Many rural women in Aotearoa/New Zealand have not identified with feminism (Begg, 1990:74). McRobbie (1982:52) stated it was important to research women outside the feminist movement in order to document their experiences. Shaw's (1993:173) work on rural women reinforced the importance of this as she discussed the frustration her respondents felt at the limited, inaccurate way they were perceived by the media. It was not assumed that rural women were not involved in feminist activities or do not have feminist values, but as Millard (1992:236) has pointed out conservative ideology is dominant in rural communities. It is important that feminist research explores the experiences of all women, no matter what their subject positions or ideological views.

THE INTERVIEWS

When I contemplated this project I was uncomfortable about asking so much from respondents in terms of their time, emotional energy and the intrusion into their privacy. Rural women are often busy with many demands placed on them. I was heartened by

the warmth and enthusiasm of the women I approached and humbled that women in the district expressed pleasure and pride that someone thought they were interesting enough to research.

Each interview was conducted in the woman's home at times convenient to them. I hoped this would minimise the intrusion into their daily activities. Marie-Ann's interview was arranged for outside her paid employment hours, June's interview was completed in time for her to milk the cows and Margaret had pre-arranged childcare to allow us to talk without the demands of young children. As a consequence of interviewing in respondents' homes there were interruptions, telephone calls and visitors 'dropping in'. When interviewing Margaret there was a break when a contractor working on the farm injured himself and came to the house for assistance. Although these interruptions were disruptive to the flow of the interviews they were part of daily life for the respondents.

Each woman's life story provided the format for the interview. Graham (1984:115) describes interviewing where respondents impose the structure. "The structure was that of a story, to which the researcher was invited - occasionally - to contribute". My role as interviewer was to provide prompts to assist the flow. I wanted the women to control their own level of exposure and set their own boundaries. At times when I felt that things were 'left unsaid', I restrained myself from probing as I felt this would be intrusive.

My interviewing strategy was as an 'insider' with a personal connection to my respondents. I surmise that the stories told to another researcher, particularly an 'outsider', may have been different from that which they told me. Before I interviewed the women for this study there was already a degree of trust. They knew me on a personal basis and knew members of my family. This links with the concept which has been described by Heshusius (1994:18) as participatory consciousness; that the way to know a world is from within it. One of the difficulties I experienced as a result of my insider position was sliding between the roles of friend and researcher. This was confusing for myself but may not have been for the women being interviewed.

Throughout the research I was mindful of my responsibility to ensure that the women who agreed to take part were validated and empowered. Lather (1991:4) said that empowerment is part of feminist research practice and provides those studied with an opportunity to analyse their own powerlessness, to know what forces oppress them and then to act to create change. In Munford's (1992:87) opinion feminist research designs should expose (in a safe way) the power structures which affect the lives of those studied to allow them to make sense of their reality. For this to occur theory

must be demystified and used in practical ways, a technique I adopted in the interviews when I discussed how theoretical ideas applied to the respondents lives.

My experience as a social worker was useful as I was able to draw on interviewing skills which I have developed in ten years of practice and to discuss my knowledge with the respondents. The interviews gave the women an opportunity to reflect on their lives. During the interviews I discussed with them themes and patterns I was able to discern from what they had told me. Together we were able to track ways of behaving and relationship styles begun in childhood which were perpetuated in their adult lives. I also suggested connections between their experiences and that of other women. I discussed the way structural factors had affected their lives. This linked their private troubles to public issues. For example, both Margaret and Marie-Ann had been affected by the economic changes of the 1980's and this was talked through with them relating their experiences to the political changes in that decade.

Each interview was audio taped. This was intrusive and one of the respondents expressed discomfort at being taped, however I felt that this was less intrusive than note taking and would result in more accurate data. By taping the interviews I was able to return to them to check information. Audio taping interviews was discussed by Owings (1993:472) who interviewed German women about the Third Reich. She said she trusted the tape recorder over written records of interviews as sometimes her memory of what people said was inaccurate.

DATA ANALYSIS

I transcribed the interviews from the tapes. Although this process was time consuming it gave me a valuable opportunity to reflect on each story and on the interview process. I felt frustrated by what was lost in the process of translating oral stories into written transcripts. The intonations, timing, silences and non verbal cues which give meaning and humour to what was said were lost.

The transcribed documents and my life story, which I wrote for this project, formed the basis of the data used. In order to arrange it for analysis five themes - patriarchy, private and public worlds, women and work, diversity and difference, and power - were chosen as they were applicable to each of the narratives. These themes explore key concepts of feminist and post structural thought and have been used to structure the literature.

In organising the data I used a different coloured highlighter for each of the themes, power for example was purple. In each transcript I highlighted the passages which

related to a theme. Passages which made relevant points in relation to other data were selected and organised into the five theme areas and these formed the basis of the five data chapters.

As I transcribed I did a small amount of editing taking out some of the space fillers, such as, 'ums' and 'arhs'. I placed limits on the extent to which I edited the data as I wanted the respondents to tell their stories in their own style. Only some minor changes were made in order that passages would flow and make sense to the reader.

STORY TELLING

In stories, data and interpretation are fused, the story-line providing the interpretative framework through which the data are constructed (Graham, 1984:120).

Story telling was a way in which women, as respondents, could be involved in recording their lives. The act of telling their stories was political, it made their lives visible, taking them out of their domestic sphere into the public world (Ibid:190).

Chaffraut-Duchet (1991:77) advocated the importance of recording women's stories.

Women's words collected by way of the life story are neither mere gossip nor words that can be treated as a set of information providing direct access to women's mentality...women's words are viewed as embedded in a narrative - that is, in a specific scheme that makes sense.

The story telling approach allowed me, as the researcher, to understand the world from the women's point of view. Gluck and Patai (1991:19) found that using life stories as a data gathering technique allowed their respondents to define and interpret their experience from their own perspective. As Graham (1984:119) argued story telling can "counteract the exploitative tendencies of social research".

My story, as it is included in this study, is a reflection of 'where I was at' when I wrote it. It encapsulates that moment in time. I may tell a different story in a years time. As I have worked my way through this study I have developed an awareness of the fluidity and changing nature of all our stories. The respondents are on their own life journey and may tell their story differently if interviewed again. That does not diminish the validity of the stories. What I have captured is true at the moment of telling and should be viewed as part of a process of evolution, not a final statement.

RECIPROCITY

Reciprocity has long been recognised as a valuable aspect of fieldwork, for it has been found to create conditions that will generate rich data (Lather, 1991:57).

Reciprocity, the idea of give and take between researcher and respondents, was integral to this study. Smith and Noble-Spreull (1986:139) stated it is a key component in ethically sound research.

Even when using reciprocal research designs researchers need to be aware of the power differences between themselves and their subjects and therefore the potential for exploitation (Wolf, 1996:24-25). A similar warning was given by Patai (1991:139) who commented on the contradictions and dilemmas of power and reciprocity in feminist research.

Feminists imagine that merely engaging in the discourse of feminism protects them from the possibility of exploiting other women, while their routine research practices are and continue to be embedded in a situation of material inequality.

Despite the limitations, Lather (1991:60) argued for maximum reciprocity in research designs. She stated research should be a collaborative and dialogic process between researcher and respondents. This encouraged self reflection by those researched and counteracted the tendency of the researcher to impose her values and understandings on the material. Oakley (1981:41) argued that the most effective form of interviewing is when the researcher is contributing herself to the process and the relationship formed is egalitarian. However, researchers need to be aware that self-disclosures can result in manipulation if the interviewers creation of intimacy and an empathetic relationship is mistaken for friendship (Wolf, 1996:20 & Reinharz, 1992:33).

In this study there were varying degrees of friendship between myself and the respondents prior to interviews. Self disclosures were made in ways which facilitated the interview process and sharing of stories. I do not believe that I used my self disclosures to have my own emotional needs met. The respondents participation in the analysis of data was sought although there were limits to this due to geographical and time constraints. Early analysis of data was discussed with respondents at their interviews.

As part of the process of reciprocity I sent a thank you card to each of the women interviewed. One respondent requested a copy of her tape which was sent to her shortly after the interview. All the women were provided with copies of their transcribed interviews and the material to be included in the final document to allow them to make comments or changes. As a result of feedback from the respondents I

have made changes to the data included in this study. One woman wanted some aspects of her story excluded and I respected this, leaving out sections of her story as requested.

PUTTING MYSELF INTO THE PROJECT

To position my own discourse is to mark a place from which to speak (Lather, 1991:8).

How much I exposed myself has been a dilemma for me during this research. A key question for me in relation to writing this document was do I write to be known or do I write to hide behind a mask of my words? I concluded that I would write to be known. I have written myself into the research in a conscious and explicit way, including myself as a fifth respondent and writing throughout the document in the first person. It is common in feminist work for writers start with their own experience, a process which Reinharz (1992:16) described as finding your own voice. The "open presence of the researcher" is intrinsic to the process of feminist research (Smith & Noble-Spreull, 1986:139).

This has been a positive and affirming process for me. Sutherland (1986:155) suggested feminist researchers use their work to connect with their personal selves and to "affirm our feelings and experiences by using it to express our real lives and those of other women". Heshusius (1994:17) stated that affirmation will take place when there is "a recognition of the kinship between ourselves and other". I felt validated as a woman through my relationship with the respondents and am enriched by having heard their stories.

Writing my own story into the research was an attempt to be transparent about my own subject position and make my private world public. I was unable to separate myself from the research or to adopt an objective position. To be separate, I felt would be to fracture myself and my work would be fragmented. To split myself in two would create a binary opposite of objective/subjective and create a distance between myself and the women in the project. As a researcher it would have resulted in rigidity in my style and thinking.

In this document I have blended formal and creative writing styles. I have used poetry and creative technique as I enjoy writing in this way and wanted my work to be engaging. My poetry has been another medium by which I have expressed the ideas arising from this project. I wanted to emulate Reinharz's (1992:259) description of feminist research. She stated that it "reads as partly informal, engagingly personal, and even confessional".

ETHICAL ISSUES

Research is a political act involving aspects of power, consequently it has the potential to exploit those studied (Wolf, 1996:19 & Finch, 1984:71). In order to counteract this I have been transparent about my own values and theoretical position. Research does not take place in a vacuum and is not value free (Stanley & Wise, 1990:38, Finch, 1986:198 & Bryson, 1979:88). Mies (1979:122) believed the myth of value free research should be replaced with conscious partiality or identification in part with the women researched. By doing this the researcher will be able to work for the best interests of women as an oppressed group. I had conscious partiality with the women researched as I grew up in the district where they reside and am connected to them through my family.

I felt humbled by the women involved in this study. When I interviewed them I felt energised and honoured by the intimacy we shared. During the transcription of the interview tapes I relived my time with them and was reminded of their warmth, strength, tenacity and humour. I have felt a sense of responsibility as I am exposing their lives to public scrutiny and cannot control the outcome. Throughout this project I have wanted to honour the women's stories and keep faith with the trust they placed in me.

As the women interviewed were open in what they shared with me trust was important (Finch, 1984:74). Through their exposure they were vulnerable. Awareness of this has been important to ensure the safety of respondents (Finch, 1984:81). The material relating to the respondents (tapes, written matter and computer software) has been carefully stored and sighted only by myself. This was possible as I transcribed the interviews. On completion of the project all material will be returned to the respondents. All information about the women on the hard drive of my personal computer will be deleted. I was aware that in my own story members of my family would be exposed publicly. My sister has proof read the material prior to completion, which served the dual purpose of checking for mistakes and gaining her agreement to my exposure of our family.

Issues of consent were carefully thought through prior to contacting respondents. In order for this study to be successful I wanted respondents to not only be willing to participate but feel enthusiastic, as a lot was being asked of them in terms of their time and self disclosure. My initial contact with each woman was in writing to ask if she would be willing to be interviewed (see appendix one). The letter outlined the reasons for my study, the expected outcome, what I wanted to know and the potential time frame for the interview. The letter was followed up with a telephone call. One woman approached was ambivalent about participating. Because of her uncertainty I did not

interview her but approached another woman, who fulfilled my criteria of being resident in the area and in the relevant life stage. It was through these phone conversations I obtained informed consent. Obtaining written consent did not seem appropriate because of my pre-existing relationship with the respondents.

Awareness of ethical issues has been part of the ongoing process of this study. After consulting my thesis supervisors it was decided the nature of this project did not require the approval of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. However, I prepared an ethical proposal (see appendix two) which was reviewed by my supervisors and their approval gained. My professional ethics as a social worker has also guided my actions and I have adhered to the New Zealand Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics in carrying out this research.

CONCLUSION

Each life story was obtained through taped interviews which were formatted on the story itself, rather than a pre-conceived structure. This enabled each woman to explore their lives and experiences within boundaries they established. I have been cognisant of the precious nature of their stories, the trust involved in sharing their intimate selves and the responsibility I have for honouring their lives. During the interviews themselves and throughout the remainder of the research process reciprocity has been important.

The greatest strength of this research, the in-depth interviewing process focusing on a small number of women, is also its weakness in that it is open to challenges about validity. Due to the nature of the project there is a lack of quantitative data and limited scope for triangulation. However I believe the stories are valid in their own right and able to 'stand alone'. Story telling as methodology has been discussed by Fook (1996b:194) who believed this approach allowed for connected, holistic ways of knowing.

Integral to this study was self-disclosure and locating my own subject position. I have done this by writing my own story and incorporating my personal self. This process has been part of the development of my own subjective knowing; the idea of truth as personal, private and intuitive (Belenky et al, 1986:54). As Solas (1995:33) postulates: "our narratives allow us to reflect on our experiences and in so doing we can sort out, make sense of and come to terms with ourselves and our world".

CHAPTER TWO: DISCOURSE AND THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTIONS

Poem for others

Deconstruct, reconstruct

pull apart; have a look

rebuild and make meaning.

Language is power.

The powerful use language

to make the world.

Elite and exclusive,

Have and have not

The powerless

absorb the words of their oppressor

and use them as their own

to give voice to powerlessness

but always reality constructed by the other

Lesley Pitt

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explore some of the theory inherent in this poem - ideas surrounding power, oppressive social structures and how discourse is used to construct reality. Theories are used to understand the world and in this study theoretical concepts from the feminist and post structural traditions are used to understand the women's stories. There are other theoretical positions which may have been used but I chose these ideas, not because I think they provide all the answers but because they make sense of my world. Relevant literature about rural women is included to link the conceptual ideas to the reality of rural women's experiences.

PATRIARCHY

In my discussion of patriarchy I have drawn on the work of Kate Millett, a writer from the early phase of contemporary feminism, who popularised the term in the book *Sexual Politics* first published in 1970. She was not the only feminist writer at this time exploring the concept of patriarchy but her work provides a solid introduction to the concept. Feminist thought has evolved since the 1970's and the position of women in society has changed, however the ideas have relevance in the 1990's and are useful in understanding the lives of the women in this study.

A literal translation of the term patriarchy from Greek is 'rule of the father' (Eisenstein, 1984:5). It is an "institution whereby that half of the populace which is female is controlled by that half which is male, the principles of patriarchy appear to be two fold: male shall dominate female, elder male shall dominate younger" (Millett, 1970:25). The traditional perspective of patriarchy is the control by a powerful elder male over an extended family or kinship network which included the domination over household economic production (Whelehan, 1995:15).

The family has been identified by Millett (1970:33) as the major social construction reinforcing patriarchal ideology and control. It is within the family that children are socialised with the 'right' attitudes about their roles and status. The need for women and children to depend economically on men was an important aspect of patriarchy at the time *Sexual Politics* was written.

The interconnected nature of power and patriarchal control was acknowledged by Millet. One way patriarchal power was imposed was through force. Millett (1970:44) argued that although force is generalised in modern patriarchies, the ever present threat of violence, particularly of a sexual nature (including rape) is used as a tool of intimidation. Other radical feminist writers have argued that rape was the secret of

patriarchy. The possibility and reality of rape reinforced male domination over women (Eisenstein, 1984:27).

Patriarchy has perpetuated women's poor self image. Women internalised patriarchal ideology and accepted the denigration of women in society, to the extent that they despised themselves and each other. "The image of women as we know it is an image created by men and fashioned to suit their needs" (Millett, 1970:46).

In a study of rural women in South Wairarapa Murphy (1989:85) found "deeply held beliefs regarding the subordinated position of women in our society". Women in her study believed that their function in life was to be supportive of their husbands and children. It was taken as 'natural' that women should serve others and sacrifice their own needs. Rural women in Northland found they got most satisfaction when their lives were focused on the needs of others, particularly those of their family (Maunier, 1984:191). These women may have experienced a sense of comfort and reassurance from fulfilling traditional expectations. This commitment to family by rural women has resulted in their vulnerability to patriarchal influence (Naples, 1994:115 & Shaw, 1993:30). In a study of gender inequality in rural Australia, Dempsey (1992:187) found that women plan their lives around the activities and needs of men. He believed this reflected the women's belief that men were more important.

Dempsey (1992:4) suggested that there are two parts to the ongoing position of male dominance:

- 1) the greater power of men, particularly material power, which resulted in the economic dependence of women, and,
- 2) the ideology of gender relations which defined men and their activities as superior, and women and their activities as inferior.

Dempsey (1992:182) found that women were often involved in ensuring that other women who were new to a rural district complied with the expectations of the dominant patriarchal ideology. He said men's derogatory discourse about women encouraged women to view other women in a negative light and reinforced the general belief that women are innately inferior to men.

It has been common practice in rural communities to locate the social standing of a woman by that of her husband (Dempsey, 1992:184-185). Women marrying into rural communities who have achieved academically or in their working lives have been shocked when their past achievements have been ignored (Millard, 1992:236). This process denied women their identity and placed them in a position of being

'somebody's wife' or 'somebody's mother'. Expectations for newcomers have been confusing, and more so for women who have moved from an urban area and who were perceived as 'outsiders' (McMath & Smith, 1988:45 & 48). Women marrying into established farming families have found it difficult to 'fit in' and meet the expectations of their 'in-laws'. Key aspects of a woman's daily life like leisure activities, community roles and where she lives (homestead or second house on the farm) have often been determined by family expectations (Dempsey, 1992:4 & Millard, 1992:236).

In rural communities patriarchal dominance has been expressed through land succession. Voyce (1994:71) describes it as a process of social reproduction:

the inheritance of a farm is not just the physical transfer of property from one generation to the next, but involves a wider process by which property relations and feelings are reproduced.

In this intergenerational transfer of male power the daughter-in-law was perceived to be the least powerful participant (McMath & Smith, 1988:67). "Patrilineal inheritance that prevails in agriculture ensures that women remain in a subordinate position in farming arrangements" (Alston, 1995:530). In farms where there are extended family arrangements, the chance of women who marry into these situations becoming legal partners is limited. There has been an expectation that women will be involved solely in the domestic sphere and not farm management when they marry into a farming family (Keating & Little, 1994:727). Women's involvement in farm decision making can be limited by complicated farm succession arrangements. It is an area where men have ensured the maintenance of patriarchal power and the ongoing economic dependence of women.

The education system also reinforced the primacy of patriarchy. Millett (1970:42) considered that the education system treated women differently in both the quality of what they were taught and the subject choices they were encouraged to make; humanities as opposed to sciences and technical subjects. Millett made a connection between knowledge and power, a link also made by Foucault. Millett believed that patriarchy ensured women remained relatively ignorant and consequently powerless. In the 1990's, with vast improvements in the education of women, Millett's discussion about education and patriarchy appears somewhat naive but in 1970 it was valid.

Millett has been criticised for the primacy she placed on patriarchy (Whelehan, 1995:16 & Ramazanoglu, 1989:36). She recognised class and racial oppression but believed gender oppression was the most important. Millett (1970:40) acknowledged that women can gain access to power through their class position but considered this to be vicarious as women were economically dependent on men. A woman may be married to

a middle class man but her class status is dependent upon her maintaining her relationship with him.

Race was not dealt with in any depth by Millett. She stated that sexism was the primary form of oppression and was more endemic than racism (Ibid:39). Black feminists have criticised Millett and other white feminist writers for creating a false universalism based on their ideas about patriarchy. By focusing on what women had in common and ignoring the diversity among women they perpetuated racism (Whelehan, 1995:19 & Ramazanoglu, 1989:129). Maori feminists have challenged the women's movement in Aotearoa/New Zealand as presumptuous for speaking on behalf of all women, ignoring racial differences and in so doing maintaining the marginalisation of Maori women (Smith, 1992:34).

Millett's advocacy of patriarchal social structures as the primary form of oppression created a hierarchy of oppression which was contrary to feminist ideas about equality (Dominelli & McLeod, 1989:5). Citing sexism as the primary form of oppression created a ladder of oppression with sexism at the top. Langan (1992:2-3) argued that in order to validate the experiences of all women, feminist writers should acknowledge the diversity of oppression which has affected women.

We need to make the bases of our differing standpoints clear, so that we can look beneath patriarchal, capitalist, and religious ideologies to see the standpoints of other women (Ramazanoglu, 1989:180).

Millett's idea that patriarchy has resulted in timeless control of women by men has been challenged (Whelehan, 1995:15). Some men have more access to power and structures of domination than others and as Bryson (1992:188) argued, non-oppressive relationships between men and women are evident in society. I am uncomfortable with the premise that men as a group oppress women and that the power of individual men should be challenged. I believe it is political, economic and cultural structures determined by patriarchy which should be challenged, not men themselves. Moving the debate from a personal to a structural level allows issues to be explored and discussed without threatening individuals.

Contemporary feminists developed the notion of linking personal life experiences of women to political structures (Firestone, 1970:44). By exploring with others their individual lives women have been able to make connections which have reduced their sense of isolation and increased their understanding of how their experiences reflect power structures (Eisenstein, 1984:36-37). A political style evolved which challenged public discourse by questioning basic relationships between the sexes. The concept 'the

personal is political' became a slogan of the feminist movement. Using this concept feminist writers have explored the dichotomy of private and public worlds.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC WORLDS

The dichotomy between public and private worlds has been based on the ideology that a 'woman's place is in the home' (Eisenstein, 1984:11). This enables men to be active in the public world of work and politics as their needs in the domestic sphere have been taken care of by women. This has been perceived as an efficient and sensible way of organising and structuring a family (Cox & James, 1987:1).

Men had become associated with what was public: the workplace, politics, religion in its institutional forms, intellectual and cultural life, and in general terms, the exercise of power and authority; women, with what was private: the home, children, domestic life, sexuality (or its repression). The split between public and private, or domestic, appeared then, as a major, even universal characteristic of how men and women, maleness and femaleness, were viewed (Eisenstein, 1984:20).

Gender norms have translated into separate roles for each sphere. The attributes associated with the public domain, competitiveness and ambition, are perceived as belonging to men. Traits considered suitable for the roles of wife, mother and housewife, such as sensitivity, caring and nurturing have been ascribed to women (Cox & James, 1987:2).

Early this century rural women welcomed the split of public and private spheres. They were keen to withdraw into the domestic world of home and family as farm work was physically demanding. "Women embraced the doctrine of separate spheres to free themselves of the burden of agricultural production" (Alston, 1991:101). Although the public/private split may have been in the interests of rural women at the beginning of this century it has resulted in a decline in their status. Contributing to the formal economy and achievement in the public world received acknowledgment whereas women's activities in the home were not recognised. Despite women's involvement in work traditionally carried out by men on the farm it was men who had the public role off the farm. Begg (1990:73) cited the limited involvement of women in Federated Farmers as an example of this.

Concepts about women and their place in the world, the private sphere, have been reinforced by various forms of media, from scientific journals to women's magazines (Eisenstein, 1984:9-10). Ideology about sex roles has been so strong that women have internalised it to the extent that they have perpetuated and reinforced it (Millet,

1970:55). Women often encouraged other women not to participate in public life and were critical of women who did, particularly those who succeeded.

The institutions which support and service farming communities have perpetuated the public/private split and reinforced sex roles (Alston, 1995:522, Naples, 1994:122-123 & Anderson, 1993:11-12). Workers in agricultural industries have assumed that women have a secondary status and were not involved in decision making. Rural women studied by Keating and Little (1994:733) and Shaw (1993:73) discussed the difficulties they had being taken seriously by rural service workers. They felt frustrated that their view of themselves as farmers was not respected by 'outsiders' and that they were treated like the 'farmers wife' whose role was to make the 'tea and scones'.

The perpetuation of women's place in the private sphere has been complex and contradictory. In some feminist writing the idea has been espoused that women have made a kind of bargain with men which enables them to have power in the domestic sphere in return for public submission. Women have implicitly agreed not to make any power claims (intellectual, economic and political) in relation to the public world, in return for control in the domestic sphere over the lives of children and the 'marriage bed' (Eisenstein, 1984:10). This provided an explanation for women remaining in the private sphere and not seeking public forms of power. It failed to acknowledge the prevalence of women's subordination in their own homes or provide any explanation for domestic violence.

Not making private troubles public has been an issue among rural women.

Farming women who have had to conform to family expectations, particularly those of in-laws, would be reluctant to share their difficulties and conflicts with even close friends. This would be considered disloyal to the family. Although rural people all help each other in time of need and are generous when it comes to supporting local fund-raising efforts, there are rules that are not transgressed (Millard, 1992:236-237).

McMath and Smith (1988:211) found that rural women were staying in unhappy relationships because they did not have the energy, support networks or other resources to leave and commented that "miserable marriages seem to be small personal hells which very few outsiders have an insight into" (Ibid:46).

The strength of rural ideology with its inherent assumption of homogeneity, has ensured that private issues remain within the home and do not get translated into public or political action (Naples, 1994:132 & Shaw, 1993:174). Rural women have been excluded from the public sphere and policy making by the hidden nature of their work

(Shaw, 1993:174). This situation is changing and Shaw (1993:92) and McMath and Smith (1988:280) believed younger rural women had more control over the direction of their lives and were more assertive and confident about their values and needs. They were more likely than their older counterparts to seek self-fulfilment and pursue their own areas of interest both in leisure and employment. In this study the two younger respondents were more confident about their public role in relation to paid work where as the respondents over 60 perceived themselves as having a support role within their families.

Rural women have been moving into the public sphere but they have continued to be “associated with the home and the area immediately surrounding it, while the paddocks and the town are defined as men’s spaces” (Anderson, 1993:11). There has been a perception that women should be the cornerstones of stable rural communities by fulfilling their traditional roles in the family (Ibid:7-8). Naples (1994:115) believed that rural ideology was based on the myth of *gemeinschaft*, a romantic notion about communities which are closely connected and supportive, particularly in times of need.

Traditionally rural women have adapted their lifestyles to fit in with their role in the domestic sphere as Murphy (1993:49-50) discussed in her study on rural women and leisure. She found that the leisure activities of her respondents were mostly home based and gave gardening as an example of an activity which can be fitted in to a rural lifestyle. Rural women have had the advantage of room to expand their garden into the surrounding paddocks. Gardening as an activity provided pleasure and satisfaction, was inexpensive, did not involve travel or childcare and was carried out in the private sphere. It “can be easily interrupted for domestic obligations” (Murphy, 1993:50). Three respondents in this study were keen gardeners, Gwyn to the extent that her garden is open to the public for viewing.

The public/private split has been damaging for women and feminist writers have encouraged women to find new ways of understanding the two worlds in order to “burst out of and journey beyond the bounds of public and private” (Cox & James, 1987:21-22). By understanding personal experiences, hidden from public view, individual oppression has been reframed as political/structural domination (Eisenstein, 1984:38). This project was about gaining insight into the private world of rural women and exploring the extent of their involvement in public life.

If personal knowledge is seen to be valid, then emancipation has both personal and political dimensions (Weick, 1994:222).

WOMEN AND WORK

The dichotomy between public and private worlds can also be seen in relation to women and work. Engels discussed this dichotomy in the 1800's saying there was a reproduction/production split between the two. He defined production as the creation of goods necessary for survival and reproduction as all the tasks surrounding the nurturing of human beings. Engels argued that women would be liberated when they achieved full participation in the work force (Bryson, 1992:70, Cox & James, 1987:8 & Hartmann, 1981:4). His analysis did not acknowledge patriarchy and women have not achieved emancipation despite the increased numbers in paid work (Dominelli & McLeod, 1989:6 & Eisenstein, 1984:19).

The public/private split was clearly visible during the second world war when women were recruited as a 'reserve army of labour' while men were away fighting (Bryson, 1992:147-8 & Ebbett, 1984:47). Womens' participation in the workforce in Aotearoa/New Zealand increased dramatically during the war, from 180,000 women in civilian work prior to the war to 230,000 during the war (Ebbett, 1984:181). This included women working in non-traditional work in rural areas such as the 'land girls' who worked for the Women's Land Service, a scheme established in 1940 and disbanded in 1946 (Butland, 1982:1).

When peace was declared and the men began to come home in large numbers, women in the workforce were in a very vulnerable position. Hundreds of situations usually held by men had been filled by women - but only in a caretaker capacity. Every serviceman was guaranteed his job back after the war. . . returned servicemen had priority and some people who had undertaken wartime employment were displaced (Ebbett, 1984:181).

This process, replacing women workers with returned servicemen, was a reinstatement of the ideology that 'a woman's place was in the home' and many women did return to their homes (Eisenstein, 1984:11).

Feminists, particularly those of the socialist/Marxist persuasion, have drawn on Marx's concept of a 'reserve army of labour'. He believed the need for labour under capitalism oscillated between expansion/recession cycles in the economy. Women provided a workforce which could be employed at times of growth and made redundant during recessions. Because of their role as a 'reserve army', and the intersection of capitalism and patriarchy, women have had a secondary position in the labour market (Whelehan, 1995:51-52 & Bryson, 1992:240). The belief that women are economically dependent

on men reinforced the perception of them as dispensable workers who can be sent back to their homes and families when no longer required. At home they would be provided for by the male head of the household whose rightful place was in the public world of work.

Rural women have been seen as a 'reserve army'. On family farms they have been expected to be available as 'on call' labour and "drop everything they are doing and go out to the farm and help when the need arises" (Murphy, 1993:42). This has not applied to large scale capitalist farms where labour was hired. On these properties agriculture has become masculinised. There has been a reduced need for women's labour as a consequence of technological advances, for example, the increased use of machinery (Anderson, 1993:25 & Alston, 1991:98). Women have then either worked off the farm to support the farm enterprise or focused on housework and childcare.

Despite their work obligations outside the home women continued to be primarily responsible for housework in the private sphere (Briar, 1992b:84 & Waring, 1988:184). Even if men increased the range of work they helped with there was a core group of activities which remained women's work: ironing, washing floors, cleaning the oven and taking children to school and the doctor (Habgood, 1992:165 & 169). The consequence of this for women was becoming fatigued and cutting back on sleep and leisure to manage the workload (Waring, 1988:185). All women in this study were primarily responsible for the management of their households irrespective of their employment.

Capitalism benefited from housework as it allowed for the care and reproduction of labour; the birth and raising of children and the availability of men as a labour force as their washing, cooking and childcare was done for them (Bryson, 1992:239 & Delphy & Leonard, 1992:55). Men in general benefited from women's labour in the household through the provision of clean, comfortable homes, meals, emotional care and unpaid assistance in their businesses or farms (Briar, 1992a:60). Working on the family farm and in the family business is an important part of the lives of women in this study.

Prevailing ideology has devalued housework and women's work, accepting the view that women do less work and less important work than men (Waring, 1988:184). It is considered that men do the work which counts in society (Delphy & Leonard, 1992:16-17). Women's role in providing housework and as carers in the domestic sphere resulted in their labour/activities being marginalised or ignored as the media, scientists and historians have focused on the public world (Munford, 1989:53-54).

Whether or not markets or governments dominated by men can face it, the fact is that an increasing proportion of agricultural production, food security, environmental protection, nutrition and animal health depends on the efforts of

women, who work the longest days, at the most activities, with the least financial rewards and minimal economic recognition (Waring, 1996:82).

Low rates of pay for women have been reinforced by the sexual division of labour: that women's work involved domestic and caring activities (Waring, 1988:199). Women's segregation into certain types of work and the lower position of women in employment hierarchies ensured that their incomes are lower than that of men (Briar, 1992a:50). The response to the current recession, the emphasis on a 'flexible' work force, with workers employed on a part time and casual basis, has contributed to the tenuous position of women in the labour market (Briar, 1992b:85).

Rural women have diverse and complicated work patterns. Due to the 'on call' nature of their lives, their work does not fit into categories of 'housewife' or 'wage labourer'. They partake in both types of work (production and reproduction) during the day, these overlapping in time and space (Anderson, 1993:18). Competing demands are placed on women for their time and labour, from the farm business, local communities, off farm employers and family (Teather, 1996:7 & Anderson, 1993:65). For rural women their home and worksite, the farm, intersect and become one. "Farming is a 24 hour a day, seven day a week operation, and seldom is the whole family not involved in the farm in some way" (Shaw, 1993:31).

Three relationships which rural women have to farm production have been identified by Keating and Little (1994:723).

- 1) Women who are based in the home and not involved regularly in farm work
- 2) Women who work on the farm regularly but have prescribed roles
- 3) Women who are in joint partnerships or sole managers

Of the women in this study Margaret is in category three, she works in a joint partnership with her husband and has day to day responsibility for management of the farm, June is in category two as she milks cows and Gwyn and Marie-Ann are in category one as they are home based.

Women have been able to move from category one to three by increasing their labour on the farm. They have been more likely to increase their involvement with the farm when there has been no other labour employed and their husbands had total control of the enterprise (Keating & Little, 1994:731). The reproductive role of women, childbirth and childcare, can constrain their involvement in farm work.

The economic changes made by the Labour Government in 1984 had instant and profound affects on the work patterns of rural women (Millard, 1992:237). Financial pressure resulted in women working off the farm or working on the farm (unpaid) in place of a paid employee to ensure the survival of the family farm (Little & Taylor, 1995:161 & Anderson, 1993:26). This changed the balance of power in families as men were dependent on women to manage economically whereas in the past they had been the financial providers. There was no balancing of the workload for women who worked off the farm. Other roles, managing the household, community involvement and farm work, have been maintained (Little & Taylor, 1995:228-229 & Maunier, 1984:173). "Women are likely to spend significantly more time on domestic work than do men regardless of the extent to which they are involved in other labour activities" (Anderson, 1993:22).

Millard (1992:260) considered the changing role for women in rural communities in response to financial pressure has changed rural social structures permanently, as women have developed and become more independent. Anderson (1993:63) also believed rural women have been seeking personal satisfaction by increasing their involvement in the public world of work. This view is refuted by other literature. Little and Taylor (1995:202) argued that off farm employment for women has been perceived by the rural community as a short term measure to save the family farm rather than a serious career choice. In Begg's (1990:43) study she found women who were employed off the farm felt forced to by economic circumstances.

Choices women made in relation to employment and promotion were often influenced by family obligations (Briar, 1992a:52). In this study two of the respondents gave up paid employment on marriage, and all the women have, to some degree, made choices about their employment to fit in with the needs of their families.

Women's role as unpaid carers in the private sphere also extended to voluntary work in the community, the boundary between home and community becoming blurred (McKinlay, 1992:74). Prevailing ideology expected unpaid work to be the preserve and duty of women, for example a woman caring for an elderly person at home or being parent help at school (Briar, 1992b:81 & Craig, 1992:112). The government relied on women's unpaid labour and developed social policy assuming women would be available as part of the 'reserve army' to provide care and an un/underpaid workforce (Craig, 1992:113). Policies about deinstitutionalisation were an example of this as they relied on care being provided in the home, usually by women. The respondents in this study discussed the work they did at the local primary school. This involved activities like going on school camps, being parent help and fund raising. Education policy such as

Tomorrows Schools reinforced this premise by assuming that women would be available to provide voluntary labour, especially in small, rural schools with limited financial resources (Shaw, 1993:144 & Bunkle & Lynch, 1992:27).

The involvement of rural women in voluntary work is discussed by a number of writers. Community work has been an important aspect of rural life. Although it involved a lot of effort it provided social contact, a sense of belonging and personal satisfaction (Murphy, 1989:23 & 60). Rural women have been expected to 'fill in the gaps' when there is a shortage of services in their communities (Shaw, 1993:137).

DIVERSITY AND DIFFERENCE

Diversity among rural women is another theme discussed in the literature. Rural women share commonalities but it is important not to place them in a category without first examining what is meant (Feldman & Welsh, 1995:32 & Nuccio & Sands, 1992:492). Although rural women are united in their gender and living environment they are diverse in terms of age, race, class, education, health status and other factors which influence their subject position (Little & Taylor, 1995:22 & Coney, 1993:283). The subject positions of the women in this study varied in relation to age, class, work history and education but were similar in terms of race and geographical location.

Post structural thinkers have made the consideration of difference a central concern. They acknowledged diversity among women and provided a framework which can be used to explore the multiplicity of women's experiences (Ransom, 1993:127 & Flax, 1990:183). Diversity, in post structural terms, encompassed differences between women as well as differences between men and women. "The factors which make us different from one another as women often create commonalities between some women and some men" (Ransom, 1993:126).

Flax (1990:183) argued that although reality will appear complex and unstable post structural processes ensure there is no one dominant and therefore oppressive voice or discourse. One way in which discourses have maintained their dominance is through the dualism of binary opposites such as man/woman, culture/nature, reason/emotion which have been hierarchical and mutually exclusive (Nuccio & Sands, 1992:491). Thinking in binary opposites resulted in a segmentation of reality into "pairs of polar opposites, one of which is always privileged over the other" (Tong, 1989:224). Post structural writers challenged this mode of thought and argued for holistic views of the world which place emphasis on interdependence.

To explore the different subject positions of women some post structural feminists deconstructed the category 'woman' stating that as a concept it does not exist (Nuccio & Sands, 1992:492 & Tong, 1989:229). The singular subject position, woman, becomes a multiple, contested site (Lather, 1991:6).

This makes it difficult to abstract, or constitute, a unitary female subject on which the coherence of feminism seems to depend. What threatens to disappear is the hook on which to hang our feminism (Ransom, 1993:126).

There has been tension between the post structural deconstruction of the category woman and recognition of diversity and the feminist movement's need for women to unify to work towards social change. "The conceptual deconstruction of 'difference' is too easily abstracted from practical politics rooted both in women's differences and in women's common interests" (Ramazanoglu, 1993:10). Rather than unifying all women and ignoring their differences women can work together around specific issues while still acknowledging their multiple subject positions (Larner, 1996:172).

Rural women have a diverse range of ages. The expectations of younger rural women vary from their elders. The former are not willing to be restricted to the domestic sphere or to accept what Teather (1996:7) describes as "a life of drudgery".

The increased opportunities that women have had in the last thirty years to work outside the home if they wished, or to participate in community affairs has led to a new type of rural woman (Boyd, 1993:91).

In McMath and Smith's (1988:280) study respondents under the age of 40 were more likely to pursue personal development than accept their role as servicing the needs of others. Younger women had more freedom in choosing the direction of their lives than did older respondents. Shaw (1993:92) argued that rural women's values have changed as a result of the influence of feminism.

Class is another social construct where diversity was evident in rural communities. Naples (1994:116) argued that diversity in this aspect of rural life became more noticeable as the gap between affluent farmers and those "living on the economic margin of the rural economy" became more apparent. Traditionally the behaviour of rural women in relation to friendships, social activities and voluntary work reflected class distinctions between farm owners, share milkers and farm workers (Coney, 1993:283).

Pressure to conform and behave in prescribed ways has been apparent in rural communities. Murphy (1989:74) discussed the difficulties this created for women marrying into a district. If they had different values or perspectives than those

prescribed by the dominant ideology they had problems adjusting which was further exacerbated by geographical isolation (McMath & Smith, 1988:57).

As well as diversity amongst themselves rural women identify themselves as being different from their urban counterparts. In Anderson's (1993:70) study respondents saw themselves as being "more community-oriented, self reliant, hard working and versatile" than town women. Shaw (1993:119) described the difference in lifestyle between town and country women, stating that rural women spend more time at work on the farm, travelling long distances to services, less time with family and more time alone.

The meaning of being rural is different for each woman. It depends on such factors as proximity to services, the nature of the community in which she lives, the occupation of her partner/husband and if farming, the type and size of the farm (Rhenisch, 1980:35).

As well as differences between women post structural writers discuss the multiple subject positions a woman can occupy at any one time (Nuccio & Sands, 1992:491). This allows for an exploration of internal complexities and contradictions (Gavey, 1989:465). Women and men may identify themselves and be 'located' in diverse and sometimes conflicting positions (Fawcett & Featherston, 1994:306 & Gavey, 1989:465). For example, a woman may have access to power because of her class position but feel a sense of powerlessness because of her gender.

Subject positions are not fixed but change and evolve over time. They are influenced by social configurations and affected by ideology, cultural and political structures and economic conditions (Larner, 1996:161). Women's subject positions "shift between different groups and identity bases (class, age, country etc.); their experiences and what makes them continually change according to these locations" (Holmes, 1993:85). The subject positions of the women in this study have changed as they have aged, changed occupations and geographical location. Three years ago I would have described myself as a Pakeha woman, married to a Maori, living in a small town and working as a social worker. Now I would describe myself as a Pakeha woman who is separated, a student and living in a city.

Post structural feminists argued that by acknowledging differences and various subject positions women can have multiple points of resistance to domination (Fawcett & Featherston, 1994:305 & Ransom, 1993:127). Foucault (1980:85) advocated this type of resistance and stated that fragmented, localised and subjugated knowledges can oppose the dominant hierarchies of knowledge. Gavey (1989:463) referred to this as "disrupting and displacing dominant (oppressive) knowledges" and Flax (1990:183)

called it decentring the world. Rather than seeking one universalised truth, understandings were developed which were culturally, socially, geographically and historically specific (Gavey, 1989:463).

POWER

Post structural ideas about power recognise the diversity of women and the complex nature of their lives (Munford, 1992:88). In this study a Foucauldian perspective of power was used to analyse the impact of power on the lives of respondents.

Foucault argued that power is circulatory. A person may experience the oppressive affects of power while simultaneously being in the role of oppressor. "Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application" (Foucault, 1980:98). A woman may have access to power in some spheres of her life but be subject to oppression in others.

Foucault (1980:99) advocated analysing power by focusing on the specific techniques of power and how those with power arrived at particular decisions. He did not consider that the exercise of power can be reduced to a single causal factor rather he saw it as being multifaceted, unstable and shifting. Power was not in the possession of any one group or imposed from above, it was everywhere and infiltrated all aspects of life. It showed itself in different ways at different levels and could be used by those who were closest to us. As a consequence of this it could be difficult to isolate and understand.

Foucault further argued that power is a productive and positive force. Acknowledgment of both the positive and negative aspects of power enabled an exploration of contradictions. In the lives of the respondents power was complex and confusing; there were some aspects of their lives where they have access to power and were able to use it positively but at other times power was imposed on them in negative ways.

The different levels of access to power rural women have was reflected in the variety of roles they had in decision making. Feldman and Welsh (1995:32-35) stated that involvement in farm decision making increased with the level of involvement on the farm. Maunier (1984:176) found that wives who made decisions about the domestic world on their own had little say in farm decision making, as opposed to couples who shared decision making in the home and on the farm. This showed a split between private and public forms of power.

Patriarchal lineage may affect a woman's power in relation to the farm. Rural women are less involved in decision making when a farm is inherited or purchased from family members as opposed to property which was bought from strangers (Anderson,

1993:27). The intersection between patriarchy and capital which occurred in the patrilineal transfer of land was a powerful force in rural communities.

Farm women experience such inequality because they usually 'marry into' farming, because of their economic dependence, and because of the ideologies that shape their existence as wives (Alston, 1995:522).

The control men have traditionally held over capital was coupled with women's limited access to public power including policy making. Rural women have been under represented on decision making bodies such as community boards, district councils, Federated Farmers and producer boards (Shaw, 1993:161-162). Rural women have been actively attempting to access these formal power structures. The Women's Division of Federated Farmers supported members to take executive positions in Federated Farmers (Teather, 1996:3).

Rural women have had power within the private sphere which they derived from the pivotal role they had in relation to the farm and family (Teather, 1996:5). It was postulated by Anderson (1993:12-13) that rural women perpetuated their lack of public power in return for private control. This counterbalanced their social and economic dependence on their husbands. As previously discussed gardening demonstrated clearly the private control rural women have had.

The garden had always been the one area in which women had total control and could legitimately please themselves about what they did. It became a form of creative expression, an extension of their identity, and a rich source of satisfaction (McMath & Smith, 1988:69).

Power issues for rural women were different depending on age. Women over 60 have had quite different experiences of power in their relationships. McMath and Smith (1988:66) found amongst respondents in this age group clear power imbalances between men and women. Husbands often had economic power and dictated what their wives could and could not do. The power of husbands was often reinforced by limiting access to the family vehicle, which is particularly isolating for rural women.

Rural women's discourses have not been given equal power with those of men. Dominant discourses, which support existing power relations, appeared natural and were often perceived as common sense. Those who determined what was considered knowledge, rural men, have excluded women from debate and discussion (Naples, 1994:115). Positivist science, based on traditional research which was considered value free and objective, has been encouraged in agriculture by capitalism (Feldman & Welsh, 1995:27). Positivist approaches to research and knowledge acquisition in rural areas

have failed to consider the complex, varied nature of farming households, and have treated the knowledge of the farmer as homogenous.

Women's story telling is a way of challenging this. Women find ways and positions from which they can speak for themselves about knowledge important to them (Munford, 1989:44). This process develops local knowledges, starting with individual stories and going on to reconstruct public knowledge (Laird, 1994:195). In this way women make the stories from the private sphere, public. "To name one's experience is to call it out of the morass of discounted knowledge" (Weick, 1994:222).

Foucault is known for his work on power and knowledge. He argued for an "insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (Foucault, 1980:81). These knowledges have been described as naive, low ranking and at times disqualified. By allowing them to re/surface Foucault believed there could be struggle against oppressive power structures.

We are concerned, rather, with the insurrection of knowledges that are opposed primarily not to the contents, methods or concepts of a science, but to the effects of the centralising powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organised scientific discourse within a society such as ours (Foucault, 1980:84).

In discussing subjugated knowledges Foucault (1980:82) was critical of structural theorising. He argued that as a consequence of globalising discourses, localised and naive knowledges have been confined to the margins of society, have not been used and have become subjugated.

Foucault has been criticised for his failure to acknowledge the different experiences of men and women (McNay, 1992:33). Flax (1990:192 & 210-212) stated that although Foucault mentions women as marginalised and subjugated, he does not adequately consider feminist discourse. Despite these criticisms, a Foucauldian perspective has been useful in this study to explore power as it is experienced in the day to day lives of individuals. The idea that a person can have a variety of relationships with power structures and use power positively allowed for an investigation into the complex and contradictory nature of power in the women's stories.

CONCLUSION

Post structural theory has been criticised for being obscure, exclusive and only accessible to academics (Bryson, 1992:229 & Tong, 1989:231). While there is validity in this point of view post structural ideas allow for an exploration of the total texture of women's lives by acknowledging complexities and contradictions.

What access to power that rural women have had has been determined by the nature of farming and the strength of patriarchal ideology. Traditional expectations about the role of rural women have focused on reproduction and the belief that women belong in the private sphere, sacrificing their needs for those of their family. However, due to economic restructuring and the influence of feminism, younger rural women are becoming more involved in the public world.

CHAPTER THREE: PATRIARCHY

The Gargantuans stand
in front of the oak door
Arms roughly folded, legs splayed

“You can’t come in” they say
“Look at you. Go away”

Blood drops out of my face
Tears surge and prick at my eyes

“But I can be like you. Play by your rules.
Please let me try”.
Despite my efforts to push it down, desperation oozes out.

The Gargantuans stare past me.
I plod away and wonder if I exist,
or if I am a trick I am playing on myself.

There is a whisper, to my left
I centre on the sound
and make out the words.

She beckons me

to pass under

the veil

into asylum.

Lesley Pitt

INTRODUCTION

This poem expresses my childhood experience of patriarchy, becoming aware that the world of girls and women was different from that of boys and men. The respondents experiences of patriarchal social structures are explored in this chapter. The sections of the stories which relate to patriarchy and daily life are presented and juxtaposed with the literature.

Patriarchy “encapsulates the mechanisms, ideology and social structures which have enabled men throughout much of human history to gain and to maintain their domination over women” (Ramazanoglu, 1989:33). Applying the theoretical ideas about patriarchy to the women’s stories has highlighted the “mechanisms in sexual relations, work and public and private life through which men dominate women” (Ramazanoglu, 1989:40).

The focus in this chapter is on the mechanisms, ideology and social structures based on patriarchal ideas, not the power of individual men. Patriarchy is the institutionalisation of male concepts and power not one individual’s power over another. The institutional structures which result from this kind of ideological thinking have negative implications for men as well as women. For example, many boys/men have not performed to their full potential in hierarchal, competitive learning environments.

In the women’s stories there was a sense of acceptance of the existence of patriarchy and the status quo, but where possible they used their own power or worked their lives around existing power structures. The idea that patriarchal control does not automatically result in negative experiences for women is discussed by Ramazanoglu (1989:181).

Patriarchy need not, then, be a wholly negative experience for women. It only becomes perceived as negative by women when the concealed power relations

between men and women become apparent, that is, when women take a critical stance towards patriarchy by standing back and seeing how the whole system works, and in whose interests.

Using the notion of patriarchy has at times resulted in contradictions with post structural thought. Post structural writers criticised discussions about patriarchy as grand theorising and seeking the ultimate truth (Flax, 1990:142). They argued that a universal concept like patriarchy concealed the contradictions in women's lives (Ramazanoglu, 1989:40).

However the concept of patriarchy has been useful in this research to explore the social structures and ideology which affect women's daily lives. I believe the stories celebrate how women work around existing structures using creativity, intelligence and the power available to them to create the best possible lives for themselves and their families.

MALE POWER

Each story showed how gender relations affected daily life. In the excerpt below Gwyn talked about the way decisions made by her father affected other family members. This demonstrated the literal idea of patriarchy as discussed in the theoretical chapter, that of the 'rule of the father' (Eisenstein, 1984:5).

I was five when we went out the back, Kohuratahi. Dad bought a farm out there. It was mud roads. My mother had never seen a mud road. She cried and cried and cried. I can still see her crying. Dad had bought a farm at Hastings and then decided he wanted to come over here to a bigger property so we came over here. We had a car but we never actually used the car because of the mud roads. It just sat and deteriorated.

Gwyn

The difficulties of geographical isolation for rural women at this time reduced the amount of emotional support available to them (Boyd, 1993:31). Often women were physically distant from their extended families and from other women who may have given them emotional support and an opportunity to reflect on their lives.

Patriarchal social structures affected relationships women had with each other as well as between men and women. Older women in rural families often had more power and were more involved in decision making due to their long standing relationships within the family, as wives and mothers. Gwyn discussed her relationship with her mother-in-law, and the impact of patriarchy and power on this relationship.

She was in town. I married the only son and there were three sisters. He was a lot younger than them, and so was I, which made it very different. I had to come up to their standards. It took a few years; they had to adjust too, the same as I did.

Gwyn

All members of the family had to adjust to the change in dynamics and relationships which Gwyn's marriage brought about. The women in her husband's family no longer had as much input into decision making on the family farm.

PATRILINEAL FARM SUCCESSION

Land succession was an important process in farming families. The patrilineal transfer of capital from generation to generation showed the connection between patriarchy and capital and was the transfer of power within a family. Gwyn talked about the successful patrilineal transfer of their family farm, where it was passed from father to son.

Then we sold the farm to Mark and Sheila. That was about four years after they were married. *(Tell me about that, when the farm changed hands)*. It wasn't difficult because Bob wasn't very well so the best thing was to sell it to Mark and Sheila. He was the only one farming, Derek was a policeman and Peter was a pilot. Mark being on the home place decided he'd buy it. They shifted the little house that was here down the farm and built round that.

Gwyn

Gwyn also discussed intergenerational family farming in the Wharehuia/Te Popo district.

Haven't you discovered how many people are related? The whole shooting box is related, the whole lot. It is quite amazing. But we're still not related. The boys didn't marry any local girls, which was lucky. It makes a difference, them marrying out of the district. When the jubilee came, we were the only ones that weren't related. So, it's quite interesting. You've got to be careful when you go out. You don't know who you're talking about. I mean you can put your foot into it.

Gwyn

This showed the importance of social reproduction inherent in the process of land succession (Voyce, 1994:71). As each farm passed from generation to generation links between families in the community were maintained.

The process of patrilineal transfer was not exclusively father to son. In Margaret's family there were no sons and she and her sister have taken over family farms along with their husbands. Margaret shared her perspective on farm succession:

I grew up watching my father farm his whole life so naturally a bond was formed and an emotional tie to family land. People stay on family farms even when they have other, better options. Land is a massive issue because of the feeling it gives you. I believe it's that little piece of the universe that you are able to do with as you like.

Margaret

It can be difficult for women marrying into farming families to understand what is expected of them. Adjusting to 'married life' was easier for June who married a 'local' and remained within the Wharehuia/Te Popo district.

I haven't moved far, only just down the road. He moved houses, he moved up the road to me. He didn't look very far. I had a good look around before that, don't worry. Had a lot of fun doing it too. I tell the kids that's the time to have your fun when you're young and then you're ready to settle down. I was married when I was nineteen, and I had two kids by the time I was 22: finish, good way to be.

June

June was already aware of the role and behavioural expectations of the community. Following her marriage her life revolved around the private domain of home and family. Prior to this she had gone to the local high school and worked for a hairdresser in Stratford, the nearest town. This gave her an opportunity to experience life outside the district in the public world and 'look around'.

EDUCATION

For many rural children leaving the private world of family, the farm and the local district was a shock. The stress of going from the security of a small country primary school to high school was raised in the stories. The hierarchal structure and discipline of the high school were based on patriarchal ideology.

I went to Stratford High. I didn't go there very long, I didn't want to go at all. You can imagine what it was like going from a thirty pupil school and there was 1,000 kids at the high school. If we hadn't had each other we'd have died. Town kids knew a lot more than we did, world wise. We didn't sort of know where we were really, so we went in and we took home craft class, cause we reckoned that was about our level. We had a lot of fun. I don't think we ever did any homework. The bus used to pick us up at eight o'clock in the morning and we used to get home at four. We had to do prep while we were waiting for the bus at school so that was

the only homework we ever did. When I went I made Dad promise me that the day I turned fifteen I could leave. In between time we did quite a bit of wagging and going to the pictures. We learnt about town things, these other girls had boyfriends and things. Didn't know anything about that sort of carry on. Soon learnt. We had boys in our class cause it was ag. and home science so it was half and half. If any teams came or anything we had to do the catering for the afternoon tea and all that sort of thing. We had quite a lot of fun. I never did any sewing while I was there, mind you, we were supposed to. We always had an excuse for not doing it.

June

Subject differentiation, girls being encouraged to take different subjects than boys, was a reflection of power imbalances in education and society (Millet, 1970:42). June's choice to take home science when she went to high school may have limited her career options and was a statement about where she saw her place in the world.

Dominelli and McLeod (1989:2 & 7) discussed the importance for feminists of deconstructing hierarchies, social divisions which reflected domination and subordination, and replacing them with structures reflecting egalitarianism. The following extract shows the hierarchal nature of discipline in education. The use of prefects, giving authority or formal power to older pupils in the school, was part of this.

I remember once we wagged school and two of the girls that we used to kick around with were from Riverlea. One of them, her sister was the head prefect. We wagged school and went to the pictures. And of course she came and said now you'll have to go back to school because you're getting me in the cart. So we thought we'll do the good deed and go back to school. When we got back to school they said you have to go to Mr A, so we go to Mr A, there was four of us. He said you know that you're not allowed to wag school. He said, I should cane you. Well, they never caned girls in those days, so I laughed. So I got the cane and the other three howled and they got nothing. He was going to tell our parents and I thought, well, mine won't worry too much, so I laughed, so I got three canes on each hand. I had the distinction of getting caned while I was at high school and I never got caned at primary school. The day I turned fifteen I left.

June

Margaret also talked about the school system and it's inability to meet her needs.

School, I never seemed suited to. It was so regimental. If you conformed to the style that was required to pass you would. That's why I think the system's actually not very good, because it's really channelled, as in; 'this is what is considered bright and acceptable'. It is hard to combat because if you don't achieve in that so called academic system you are considered a failure. Then you have to combat that later in life. Just maybe it wasn't geared up to suit you. But it takes you a long, long time. I think I should have made a big effort to conform to that

style, but it just didn't feel right. I was really happy doing my thing. Is that selfishness? I would have to be one of the minority where the system didn't suit. Well it's working and they've used it for how many years? But it's not actually the best is it? So they're saying now. Mum and Dad, I remember hood winking them a bit, saying it was o.k. when I didn't really enjoy it. I always used to pass, don't get me wrong, I'd always pass. I could have done better. But I needed to be taught differently. It was the regimental style that just didn't suit me.

Margaret

Margaret's educational experience has been discussed by Belenky et al (1986:4) who carried out research beginning in the 1970's in the United States. Although their study was not conducted in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Margaret went to secondary school in the 1970's which made it relevant. They "observed that women often feel alienated in academic settings and experience 'formal' education as either peripheral or irrelevant to their central interests and development". In their opinion traditional forms of education do not always sufficiently meet the needs of women and are based on "the male-dominant majority culture" (Ibid:5). Assessment systems in schools were often incompatible with ways of learning which were comfortable for women. Margaret, in her narrative, talked about repeating the fifth form and what this was like.

Being second year fifth you might as well go round with a label on your forehead saying I'm a nitwit. It was yuk. And then what did I do the following year, nothing different and I passed all of them. Crazy, eh, nothing different just a year older and wiser. I think maybe sometimes it was almost a year too early for me to sit school C. Cause I did nothing different and why would you turn around, fail all five, and the next year pass all five. Doesn't that seem really strange? Mind you, that depends on how they scale. I remember training myself a little bit to conform to the required style.

Margaret

This passage showed the negative consequences of a competitive learning environment in which intuitive, emotive ways of learning were devalued.

RELIGION

As well as in education, patriarchal social structures of domination and subordination can be seen in religion. Coghill and Redmond (1984:95) described Christianity, particularly the modern institution of the church today, as a patriarchal religion. They argued that mainstream Christianity has been controlled by men who have used their power to create a religion appropriate for them which ignores women's images and spiritual heritage. In a discussion about spirituality Marie-Ann raised the idea that church structures were controlled by men.

From all the things I've read, I've come to the conclusion that religion is man-made for men. To control men. Religion controls people. This is probably why I never cottoned onto any of the churches, 'cause it didn't seem right. It just wasn't what I was looking for.

Marie-Ann

FARMING INDUSTRY

The patriarchal nature of the farming industry was discussed in the literature review. Shaw (1993:56) found that women involved with farming experienced difficulties dealing with farm service personnel who had traditional views about the place of women in society. Margaret's experiences selling stock and dealing with stock firm employees illustrated the assumption of those who work in rural service industries that farming is a male domain.

Come sale days I'm almost begging Phil (*husband*) to go and he does because it is a male domain. I could handle it, but it's just like they're looking, and they say whose stock is this, and we say Te Popo Trust. Actually Phillip (*local stock agent*) is really good, he always says Margaret, cause he knows. But come sale day it automatically goes to the male. They look for him to say are you happy with that price, are you ready for it to go on the market? Sure I nod but I might as well not. I let Dad sway me cause I am insecure on the farm a bit still. It takes years though to be able to run a farm well.

Margaret

FAMILY

As well as in the public world of education, religion and farming the perpetuation of traditional, patriarchal ideas was also demonstrated by the women's experiences of family. In considering the family in relation to patriarchy it is necessary to be cautious as families are not isolated, although they are often private, but are part of a social world. The idea that men have total control within the private domain of the family universalised power and ignored the contradictions and complexity within families. It concealed the power women had, and used, within their homes.

Despite the complex nature of power within families, issues surrounding patriarchal control were raised by respondents. Marie-Ann talked about the power her father still had over her mother despite the end of their relationship.

When he used to come out and see me he'd always kiss Mum goodbye on the cheek. I thought that was really nice, it was a nice touch. The times I've spent holidays with my father we've really got talking. He said sometimes it was a bit worse than

that in the throes of getting divorced. He called in the middle of the night with a friend to surprise Mum and this fellow she was with shot off, I think he headed out the back door and over the back fence without his trousers. Dad said they rifled through the trousers, got the money and had a beer on it. He threatened Mum that if she didn't tell him the guy's name they'd take me away, so Mum said his name. It was just the turn of a name; I could have ended up living with my father. Just like that.

Marie-Ann

Marie-Ann's father's attempt to control the sexuality of her mother after the couple had separated illustrated patriarchal power in action. My father had strong patriarchal values and in the following passage I wrote about male domination in our family.

It was always tense in the house if Dad was home. Sometimes more than others, especially if he was building up to an attack. Afterwards he would be really happy. On reflection there was a pattern but at the time it was unpredictable. I guess I got used to living with fear. If I could be out of that house I would.

Lesley

This was my experience but is not universal. In the women's stories they described a variety of relationships with their fathers, and the experiences of male power in families was diverse.

As Weedon (1987:40) observed it is very difficult for "women to opt out of family life". Marie-Ann articulated her belief that women belonged in the private sphere of home and family.

I grew up with the unrealistic idea that as a woman, you left school, you had a job temporary until you got married, you left work, then you had your family. It didn't work like that and I think I was disillusioned rather early in the piece. He was very much older than me, he was about six years older than me in years and about ten in mentality. His parents used to live in Wanganui and they decided it would be a good idea if we bought a house in Wellington overlooking Cook Strait. There was a flat underneath and they sold their house in Wanganui to help buy the house and they lived in the flat. They taught me to cook. My husband's mother was an absolute sweetie, she was a lovely lady. She used to do things for me. I'm hopeless at housekeeping really, and she used to come up and do the dishes for me and things like that. And I got to the stage sometimes I'd hide the dishes in the oven because I didn't want to do them myself but I didn't want her doing them either.

Marie-Ann

Marie-Ann chose to leave this marriage which was a brave decision. At the time it was not acceptable for women to leave their husbands and their husband's family. By

choosing to live as a single woman she was stepping outside prescribed roles for women and challenging patriarchal ideals about families.

She also chose at this stage not to have children and having made this decision controlled her fertility. Fertility and sexuality "can be seen as yet another site in which power is exercised but in which it can also be resisted" (Bryson, 1992:207). Radical feminists have encouraged women to take control and claim ownership of their own bodies in order to avoid patriarchal oppression.

I asked Marie-Ann how long she was married to her first husband for.

Two years, if that, something like that. His idea was the following year I was going to leave work and have a family. I thought, I don't want a family. No way did I want kids, I thought stuff that for a joke. So I planned. If I wanted to go away I had to tell somebody what I was doing to have mail redirected and just take care of things. I told my mother; she blew the whistle and told my husband that I was going to leave him and go overseas. He was really distraught and upset and we went away to Picton for a reunion weekend. That was what he wanted. I, of course, went along with it. A few months later I planned it a little bit better. I didn't tell anybody, well I did tell a couple of people that I knew could be trusted a bit more. Over the proceeding months I'd got a lot of my heavy stuff and bits and pieces out. When he was on night shift I borrowed a friend's van, packed the last of my things and took off to my father's in Napier for a weeks holiday. I'd arranged accommodation when I came back. I felt I just had to walk and leave. I 'spose I wasn't unhappy, it just wasn't right and with the in-laws living below.

Marie-Ann

Sexuality is bound in power relations and cannot be cut off from the wider social context. It is not simply a matter of individual choice. In the following Marie-Ann described a sense of disapproval she felt from her father-in-law and brother-in-law to be when she was living in a de facto relationship.

I remember David was in the bathroom, he was having a shower and I'd waltzed in because we'd been living together for a while. It was frowned upon when we moved in together. Anyway I went into the bathroom and came out again and his brother said "you shouldn't do that". I said "I won't do it again". Of course when we got married all thaw. I was loving daughter-in-law from the father's point of view. I was always close with his mother, all the way through. She's much more understanding.

Marie-Ann

Acceptable conduct for women and traditional ideas about families were reinforced by the comments they made to her about her behaviour. Gwyn also experienced the impact of traditional gender expectations following the death of her husband.

I was reasonably young when I was left a widow. Just right when you think you're going to do different things together all of a sudden it's gone. It's very different to when you're asked out. Your whole life changes because when you're asked out you're one person, before you were two. It's quite different. (*Did people relate to you differently when you were on your own?*) At first they did. Other people are really neat and they include you in things. There was one couple, their daughter was being married and they didn't know whether to invite me because I was on my own. To me that was strange. They did invite me, but I heard back they were a bit dubious about asking me cause I was without a partner. I could have just taken my cat! That would have made a big impression, wouldn't it?

Gwyn

As a woman alone Gwyn was seen as different from when she was a married. Women were traditionally located by the social status of their husband and when single, separated, divorced or widowed were less easy to define and locate (Dempsey, 1992:184-185).

SEXUALITY

Sexuality as previously discussed was an area in which power and control issues were important. Foucault discussed the power-knowledge relationships which surround sexuality and argued that women's bodies were the contested site of a number of power interests, such as capitalism, patriarchy and the practice of medicine.

Access to, and use of, contraception was constrained by social, economic and political circumstances and prevailing patriarchal ideology (Bryson, 1992:206). Adolescence can be a confusing time for young women when they experience contradictory pressures and expectations. In the following narratives the role of mothers was important in reinforcing notions about acceptable sexual behaviour.

Until I went to Polytech I wasn't on the pill, and I used to use the cycle plan. I could not face our family doctor, that is the truth. So I waited till I got to Polytech and it was an independent doctor. They're not allowed to, but I was scared he would mention it to Mum and oh, terrible.

Margaret

Sex outside marriage was not acceptable. I remember a number of occasions when my mother made indirect disapproving noises about promiscuity aimed at me.

Lesley

In a section of Margaret's story, included here in full to honour the eloquence and integrity of this moving account, she named her experience of attempted rape, when an unknown offender attacked her in her car while she was working at night as a cleaner.

Like the time I was cleaning and the guy tried to strangle me with intentions of rape. I was disappointed I didn't report that one, but I went through all those things of I'm the guilty one, just like females do. When I was cleaning the testing station I hadn't locked the car cause it was only a five minute job. The guys were playing rugby in the gym. There were lights and cars and heaps of people. I thought well, you're pretty safe, I didn't have that eiree feeling of no one there. I remember opening the car door and I hopped in, and my coat was in the back down on the floor. I heard this rustle, and I thought, cause we had a kitten at that stage, that the kitten had got into the car. I turned around between the bucket seats of the Toyota and this Maori guy brought these numchuckers between the seats and dragged me back. It was only that I got my hand up otherwise he probably would have strangled me. I just said to him, whoa, whoa, wait a minute. I remember playing on the fact that I was just a scummy goddamn cleaning lady. Shock made me gabble, I was non-stop talking. I said to him, hey look, why don't we talk about this? He got out and hopped in the passenger seat of the car. I opened the car door cause I couldn't stand the thought of being in there. In our talking his intention was that he was going to rape me, he told me that. He said his name was Scott, which was probably bullshit. I went on to give him a lecture about how sex was far nicer with a compatible partner. I said did he have a girlfriend and no, and I said, well if you had a girlfriend having sex with someone that you care about is way nicer and more caring than raping someone. I said it is not a nice experience for anyone, for either party. He was young, I don't know how old, and I said to him, do you want some money and I can drop you off at the pub or something. This was after we had this big chat, he said no, I don't want to go to the pub. When I look back now he was way too young. He would have got asked for I.D. So, I said, well look, I've got buildings to clean and he was just sitting in the car and I couldn't get him out. I said well do you want to come and help me clean the buildings, cause I then thought well, shit, I've just said I'm going to be cleaning these buildings, maybe he's going to be lurking around MAF, cause that was my next port of call. So, I thought I'm best to have him in my sight, cause I was petrified. He said, yeah, o.k. We were cleaning the building. They've got a full length mirror and as I was picking up the rubbish basket I looked up and I had this black bruise mark all round my neck and I thought, shit. I tried to hide it so he couldn't see it. I didn't want to spark him at all. I started losing it a bit then, and I thought there's no way I can clean another place with him, but he was actually helping me clean believe it or not. In the end I said well where shall I drop you off, cause I said I'm finished now and I thought I'm not cleaning the others, I'll come back in the morning. He said, nah, I'm right. I

said you sure you don't want me to take you to the pub. I said wait a minute I'll see if I've got some money for you so you can get a beer or something. It was crazy the way I was handling it. I saw him about a week later walking down the street with a whole bunch of other Maori guys, and I looked at him and he looked at me; a funny kind of feeling passed between us. I was in the car, he was walking down the street but he spotted me and I spotted him, just like that, and we just held that eye contact for quite some time. I remember I had to sleep with my sheers, they are big dressmaking scissors, for a couple of nights and everything had to be locked up. And I thought, shit, I lived in Wellington, I lived in Auckland, I've been followed, I've been chased, I come to Stratford and I have to feel like Stratford was really safe. I had all those rugby guys around, I'll never forget it, and when that particular incident happened the place was really quiet, no lights, no nothing, it was deadly quiet. It was pretty scary, if I had reacted any other way he would have raped me. He was scared, if he hadn't raped me he would have strangled me to death. The fact that he hesitated enabled me to zoom in with non-stop gabble, and I mean non stop, it was just nerves, shock.

Margaret

Despite Margaret's shock at finding herself attacked by an unknown man, she was able to use her own resources to dislodge the power exerted by her assailant. Her narrative showed the complexity inherent in the concept of patriarchy and the contradictory power relations which exist between men and women. Margaret used empathy and talked to the potential rapist about sex, outlining for him the difference between a positive sexual experience and the abuse of sexual power. Power in this narrative was not about the powerful and powerless, but was complex and circulatory (Foucault, 1980:98), with both Margaret and the perpetrator having, and using, power. It can be postulated the man was attempting to gain a sense of power through the act of rape, but when he was unable to force his physical will, the balance of power changed. Margaret was aware of the perpetrators ability to use physical control throughout the incident as shown when she covered the bruises on her neck so as not to ignite his anger. After the attack she chose not to report it. This is a common experience for women who have been victimised in this way and feel guilt as if in some way they are responsible for the behaviour of the perpetrator. They have internalised the idea that women are responsible for male behaviour, and they must have 'asked for it' (Bryson, 1992:218).

CONCLUSION

Patriarchy has been used in this chapter as one window through which the lives of women can be understood. The impact of patriarchal ideology and social structures on daily life is illustrated in the life stories. The women in this study understood the social structures affecting them but did not take on the role of victim. Instead they accepted what they were unable to change and took control of their lives whenever possible.

These women have been influenced by patriarchal social structures throughout their lives, from childhood to retirement. So too have the men in their lives. Patriarchal ideology has formulated a view of men which restricts them to the role of provider, protector and controller of their families (Weedon, 1997:2 & 14-15). This has constrained men from fully and creatively expressing themselves.

The respondents' lives have been affected by patriarchal ideology and social structures in their experiences in both the private sphere of the family and the public world of work, education and religion. The following chapter looks at what the women said about public and private spheres of their lives.

CHAPTER FOUR: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE WORLDS

The more cheerful Mum's voice when she answered the phone

the more miserable she was.

Lesley Pitt

INTRODUCTION

The image my mother presented to the outside world contradicted her private reality. Traditionally women have been encouraged to focus their lives on the domestic sphere; to live out the ideology that 'a woman's place is in the home'. Private experiences, 'behind closed doors', are not always reflected in public as research on rural women in Aotearoa/New Zealand confirmed. Rural women believed their problems were personal business and did not want to bother people with their concerns (McMath & Smith, 1989:211).

An important aspect of writing this thesis has been to make my private experiences public. This strategy was encouraged by radical feminists who used the slogan to make 'the personal political'. This process was a way of "redefining the most intimate of human relations as political, rather than as private" (Ramazanoglu, 1989:13).

Among the women in this study there was a difference in the age groups in relation to their experience of public and private spheres. The older women based their lives around home and family where as the younger women were more involved in the public sphere. For Gwyn and June staying at home after their marriages was a practical reality due to transport difficulties and economic constraints.

This chapter starts with childhood family experiences and then moves on to look at the women's experiences of marriage, motherhood and being a grandparent. Most of the narrative focuses on the private domain although some sections consider the intersection of private and public and the tension which accompanies this.

CHILDHOOD

As well as ideology, a number of practical factors such as economic constraints and geographical isolation affected women's participation in the public sphere. June grew up in the Wharehuia/Te Popo district during the Second World War. When she was a child her family remained mostly in the private sphere as they were unable to afford public activities.

You had to make your own fun and didn't have any money to go any where. You went to town at Christmas perhaps. I always got a new dress for the Stratford Show. That was the only new dress I can remember. Dad's father used to buy the material and give it to Dad's sister and she used to make all the nieces a dress. There were about seven of us. It was all the same material but different colours. That was our go to meeting dress; we went to Sunday School and Church in that.

June

The above showed that leaving the private and venturing into the public world to go to the Agricultural, Pastoral and Industrial Show (A.P. and I. Show), a once yearly event, was an 'occasion' and required special clothing.

Idealised constructions of what the private world of family should be like did not always equate with reality. Marie-Ann discussed what life was like for her as a child in the private domain of her family.

Mum and Dad had a pretty violent relationship together, really violent. She knocked him out once with a piece of wood. I just remember the screaming fights. I have grown up hating fights, I will do anything to avoid an argument. I do anything to avoid it or go around the situation or just keep my mouth shut. Mum had a problem. She was an alcoholic, and that showed itself way back when she was quite young and this was probably the problem between my parents. Dad tried to sort Mum's problem out but it didn't work. They wouldn't have AA or anything like that in those days. She did go down to Hamner once. After my stepfather died she went to another programme in the Wairarapa but it didn't really work.

Marie-Ann

The behaviour of Marie-Ann's mother was in contradiction to the expected behaviour of women. She was not complying with the ideal of a caring, nurturing housewife and mother. To be a child in a family where your mother did not behave in ways you were told that women should, would have been confusing and isolating.

As what happened in the home remained private, Marie-Ann's mother did not receive assistance for her addiction until later in her life. By not making private troubles public issues, Marie-Ann and her family remained isolated. They 'carried on' without practical or emotional support from outsiders.

Marie-Ann's story demonstrated the cost to herself and to her family of the ideology of separate spheres. Her mother's addiction remained private which hindered her mother's ability to confront and change her behaviour. In my family, privacy was also important, which I now consider was to my detriment.

I knew how rat shit Mum and Dad's marriage was. But it was such a big secret; I don't know how I knew not to tell anyone, but I did and was too ashamed to tell. Who would I have told? I was isolated. That was how it was; tension, shame, isolation and secrets. There was no way it was to be talked about outside the house. And no one did. I wanted Mum to tell so she wouldn't depend on me so much.

Lesley

The last sentence of this narrative showed my desire for my mother to seek emotional support outside the family. As a child I felt burdened by the secrecy and private nature of our life. The ideology of a separate, private sphere for women was damaging to my mother and myself as neither of us talked publicly about the turbulence and pain in our household. In my family there was conflict at the intersection between the private and public spheres.

I got excited if we had visitors, which wasn't often as Dad was invariably rude and after they left would make sarcastic and critical comments. Mum's family visiting resulted in the most vicious verbal tirades by my father. He does not like in-laws as a matter of course. This caused great distress to my mother who placed great value on the importance of extended family.

Lesley

This showed the effort my father went to ensuring that our privacy was maintained and the boundaries around our nuclear family rigidly enforced. My father included my mother's relatives in a category of outsiders. Despite this my mother maintained contact with her family throughout her life, demonstrating that she was not powerless, and was willing to make a stand if it was a matter she felt strongly about. When women become isolated from emotional support and cut off from relatives, they are less able to

assert themselves in their relationships, particularly intimate ones. By maintaining contact with her extended family my mother maintained some control in her marriage.

MOTHERHOOD AND THE PRIVATE SPHERE

Gwyn married in 1945 and spent most of her time in the domestic sphere as it was physically difficult to go to town or visit friends.

We didn't go to town very much at all, didn't have cars. If you had a car you were quite wealthy. We had an old truck that served as going to the factory, which was just around the corner, and you could wash that down well and go off to town. We'd only go to town about once a month. Later on when the Midhirst dairy factory was made bigger they had a delivery service. You could ring up and have things delivered. That was quite good. Eventually we got a car.

Gwyn

Traditionally women have been responsible for looking after others and sustaining the household. Often women derived pleasure and satisfaction from their caregiving role and were committed to their families (Munford, 1992:94). Gwyn discussed the satisfaction she experienced in her role as a mother.

In those days you didn't send the kids off to playcentre or kindergarten. We lived in the country, maybe if you lived in town I suppose there was kindergarten, but you didn't. So the children had more home life and you had more time to spend with your children too.

Gwyn

Being based in the private sphere provided Gwyn with the opportunity to develop positive relationships with her children, particularly when they were pre-schoolers. The role of homemaker was expected of rural women in Aotearoa/New Zealand and appeared to be accepted by them (Gill et al, 1976:5). Prevailing assumptions about gender characteristics, that women were caring and sensitive, made them considered suitable for domestic, nurturing tasks (Cox & James, 1987:3 & Millett, 1970:26).

The role of homemaker, wife and mother may be isolating, especially if there is no support network to provide assistance. The experience of being a new mother coping at home was talked about by Gwyn and Marie-Ann. Both women had limited family support in the area in which they lived which made the transition to the role of mother more stressful.

My mother died four months before I was married. She was only 51. She died suddenly so I didn't have her to call on (*after having first child*). I had my mother-in-law to call on but you don't like to call on your mother-in-law, not quite the same.

Gwyn

Ramazanoglu (1989:71-73) discussed the contradictions inherent in childcare for women particularly if they experienced depression and felt isolated. When women experienced these kind of problems they were often considered personal inadequacies rather than social issues. Marie-Ann discussed her private struggle with post natal depression.

When I first took Linnea (*first child*) home I was all fingers and thumbs, I just couldn't get organised. It took me half an hour to prepare for the kid's first bath, and then I forgot just about everything. I found it hard in some ways, and in some ways I still do. I 'spose it's my upbringing, not letting myself go and getting close to people. At one stage if the kids had disappeared I would have thought, oh dear, and then not worried, which is probably not the thing that a new mother or even an older mother should even think of feeling. I was o.k. with Linnea but I got bad post natal depression with Aaron (*second child*). I thought depression, you didn't care, you were tired and lethargic. It's not like that at all. You get very, very angry, flashes of anger; it's awful, it's quite violent. I felt frightened. Aaron used to cry a lot and I got to the stage where I'd shake him. I thought there's something wrong here, I shouldn't be doing this. So I shot through to the doctor and he gave me some pills that turned me into a zombie for weeks. I thought, I can't function, I can't cope. I got myself off the pills, but it just gave me that breather.

Marie-Ann

When Marie-Ann named what she was experiencing and approached her doctor for support she was able to gain control over her situation. She demonstrated courage in making a private trouble a public issue.

As well as the difficult times, Cox and James (1987:20) stated "family life has many rewards". All four respondents expressed pride and pleasure in their children and got satisfaction from motherhood as Margaret and June articulated:

You learn so much out of having kids and bringing them up. You become fairly astute, tuned in. I feel proud of them and pleased they're very different from each other. I'm going to try and make sure I'm there to be supportive for the times when they need love, encouragement or guidance or understanding or whatever.

Margaret

We enjoyed the kids, really enjoyed them when they were little. And we always did things with them and it's brushed off, we still do things with them. The boys (*sons*) are here quite often and the kids (*grandchildren*). The grandkids have been here practically every weekend until the last couple of years. Now they're older and they're away. Apart from that we've seen a lot of them which has been good. It's nice to know they're there and see them. I'd hate them to go away overseas and not see them for years or something, which a lot do.

June

Womens' participation in the public world can be affected by their life cycle stage. When women have young children, providing care for them necessitated spending more time at home, however, this constraint changed as children grew and became more independent. Gwyn talked about becoming more involved in social activities when her children were older.

We used to have quite a good social life - parties, balls and things. We used to have cocktail parties, 5 o'clock cocktail parties. You'd dress up in all your finery and away you'd go. They were at peoples' places, your friends. We used to give big parties, about forty, which was rather nice, when they (*the boys*) were going to boarding school.

Gwyn

For some women the opportunity to move into the public sphere when their children were adults can be a rewarding and liberating experience. This was the case for my maternal grandmother. After her children left home and she was widowed, she became involved in a number of community organisations and activities surrounding sport and the church.

Nana was a public woman and functioned well in this sphere. I suspect she felt uncomfortable around her family, but in public organisations took leadership roles and thrived. She became the national president of the Womens' Division of Federated Farmers and received an MBE: I surmise this was the high point of her life.

Lesley

The Womens' Division of Federated Farmers with its objective to 'Strengthen Rural Communities' has been an important organisation for many rural women and June continues to be actively involved.

MARRIAGE

In their research among women in Eastern Southland McMath and Smith (1988:211) found that older women did not talk about private matters with those outside the family, including friends. I sensed too that the older women in this study were reticent about discussing their marriages. This can be understood in context of the ideology of keeping the domestic sphere private.

Margaret was open about her marriage which may have reflected her age and/or our pre-existing close relationship. This could also be an indication of the impact of feminism on attitudes amongst younger women who consider discussing their private lives with others to be common place. She and her husband have been married for a number of years and have three children.

I would say that we have a pretty good marriage, but matrimony is pretty tough, you've got to work at it. We definitely have our ups and downs, like everyone.
Margaret

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored some experiences of the women in the private sphere and considered both the divisions between private and public as well as their intersection. Within their homes the women have carried out prescribed roles of mother, wife and housekeeper. It is evident from the stories that these roles, particularly the care of children and grandchildren, have provided the women with pleasure, satisfaction and richness in their lives.

Marie-Ann's and my story illustrated there was pain when the ideology of the private sphere isolated women from each other and hindered them from seeking emotional and practical support. As adults we have both sought to make our private troubles public and in so doing created change for ourselves. The area between public and private is often conflictual and contradictory as women struggle to decide what personal issues to make known to others, particularly as naming personal troubles in itself can be a political act.

The older women in this study have lived their lives in the private sphere, in keeping with western patriarchal notions about family structure - father as head of the household and mother as carer of the children. They were clear about their role and place in the private sphere of their homes and work in this domain. The boundaries between public

and private were less distinct for the younger women who were involved in the public world of work, which is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: RURAL WOMEN AND WORK

How can we know our intuitive selves

When we have to use our coupon book at New World

Cook a low fat meal from China

Heave grubby clothes into the Fisher and Paykel

Care about someone else's daily trivia

Behave like a demure prostitute late at night

Eat bran while hanging out the washing

Get to work on time

Pretend to the boss that our career is all that matters in life

Input and output with the best of them

And know tomorrow we have to do it all again.

Lesley Pitt

INTRODUCTION

This poem was a reflection of my own experience as a working woman and the roles women in the 1990's were expected to fulfil. From the women's stories in this study it was evident that in relation to work they live with multiple expectations from a variety of sources although the origin and nature of the expectations has changed over time.

Work for rural women includes both activities within the private sphere and what they contribute in the public world, although as stated in the previous chapter, the working lives of the older women in this study have been mostly home based. This affirmed the production/reproduction split discussed in earlier chapters. In capitalist societies

women were involved in caring for people, reproduction, while men created the goods needed to survive, production (Williams, 1989:67 & Hartmann, 1981:11).

Work can transect public and private spheres as can be noted in relation to both voluntary work and farming. Many rural women were involved in production and reproduction simultaneously as they carried out both household tasks and farm work at the same time. A mother taking the children with her while she moves stock is an example of this.

Although work conjures up images of paid employment this forms only one part of the women's working lives. Much of the work the women did is invisible; that is, it is unpaid and not publicly recognised (Waring, 1987:125). Work for rural women was multifaceted. In this chapter the women talk about housework, farming, voluntary work, caregiving and paid work.

HOUSEWORK

An important aspect of feminist analysis developed in the 1960's and 1970's was the recognition that the activities performed by women in the home constitute "work" (Habgood, 1992:164). The nature of housework has changed over time and technological innovations have reduced the "drudgery and physical burdens of housework" (Ibid:165). When Gwyn was first married housework was strenuous and she had to manage in difficult conditions.

I had a copper that I boiled and a hand wringer. No fridge, so we used to make babies milk how we were taught at Karitane. You had safes, you didn't have fridges. We got a fridge eventually, about two years later. We had a coal range which I used to hammer: hated the thing, it never went. It was good for drying clothes and things on. This was a farm cottage and it was black stone throughout, it was dreadful.

Gwyn

All respondents, regardless of their other activities, paid or unpaid, were involved in housework, which reinforced Habgood's (1992:165) finding that despite assistance from men, women retained overall responsibility for housework. Keating and Little (1994:721 & 728-729), in research on rural women in the South Island, found that women maintained their responsibility for housework and childcare regardless of the amount of farm work they did.

FARMWORK

The women in this study had differing levels of involvement in farm work. As discussed in the literature review, Keating and Little (1994:723) outline three levels of involvement in farm production:

- i) *farm housewives who are home-centred and not expected to work regularly on the farm,*
- ii) *working farm wives who assist their husbands within a clear division of labour, and*
- iii) *women farmers who work jointly with their partners and may manage their own enterprises.*

These levels were not static and could change over time. For example, a woman may increase her involvement in the farm as her children get older. Women's involvement in farm work is affected by the presence or absence of farm labour. If workers were employed women's labour may not be required on the farm.

Gwyn saw her role as being based in the home, placing her in Keating and Little's first category. She was not involved regularly in farm work and her labour was not required as they had a full-time employee. She had this to say in relation to a question about her connection with the farm:

Well, I was interested in what they were doing. There was always a married man so that made a difference. You didn't have any part in milking cows or anything like that. I was quite happy, I'd never been used to a dairy farm so probably if it had been a sheep farm it would have been different because we were more involved in helping my father. I was terrified of cows anyway.

Gwyn

Four out of five of the women involved in this study were raised on farms. As children they were involved in farm tasks. June discussed her involvement in farm work as a child:

Dad used to say, when you've finished doing the hay, do the harrowing and all the ragwort. Then we could ride the horses. So, needless to say we used to get it done very, very fast. They used to say, now you're not to ride to the top of the hill. Might as well talk to the post, we used to race each other.

June

I was involved in farm work as a child and adolescent. However my father considered farming was men's work and controlled the type of work I did, despite my enthusiasm. I wrote about my experience of working on the farm with my father during university holidays. (The mention of a hand piece refers to shearing equipment).

I spent my first summer working on the farm with Dad. He didn't have enough work and was so slow it was incredibly frustrating. He wouldn't let me touch a handpiece (women don't do that) but was quite happy for me to be digging post holes! Such a contradiction. Finally he realised I loved the farm and offered it to me but I turned him down. I knew we would never get on and I felt I had embarked on another career. Sometimes I still grieve for the farm and that way of life.

Lesley

My work on the farm fitted into the second category outlined by Keating and Little that of working on the farm regularly but having prescribed roles. This is also demonstrated in June's story in relation to her work on her parent's farm after her marriage.

I milked for Mum and Dad if they wanted a day off or something. I used to harrow the paddocks with a tractor nursing Wayne, and John used to sit on the bottom

with his feet out past the brake and clutch. They'd both be asleep when I finished. I'd drive to the house and get somebody to lift them off.

June

June's narrative showed the overlapping nature of womens' work as she balanced the care of her children with farm labour. "The demands of farming life can put pressure on a woman...Since time is constantly fragmented, women soon become resourcefu^l and good organisers" (Millard, 1992:237). By being 'on call' to assist on the family farm June was a 'reserve army of labour'; she was available when required but returned to the domestic realm when her labour was no longer needed. June, who is in her 60's, continues to be involved with farm work. She and her husband now own the family farm.

I still milk, well Carl's here now so he helps. Good exercise. The thing that annoys me, people that I haven't seen for a while say, oh, what diet are you on? So I say, well I do three hours of aerobics every day, and leave it at that.

June

The last category outlined by Keating and Little was women who are joint partners or sole managers. Margaret was in this category. She was farming on family land, with her husband and had day to day management responsibility. Her husband had another business and worked off the farm. Margaret had three dependent children, two at primary school and one a pre-schooler, so as well as organising the farm she was responsible for childcare. This included involvement in activities related to the children's needs, such as voluntary work at their school. Margaret talked about what farming was like as a woman.

Normally I am full on: I can quite easily say from seven to eleven at night every day. But I don't do it because you have to keep your sanity; sometimes I will pick up a book. I have to work those hours and that pace every day to keep on top of things. You just cannot do it, sometimes I get behind. I like physical work believe it or not, even though you get to a stage where it's just too much, it's still healthy. You can be in a really foul mood and hop on the quad and ride over the farm and it's almost like the wind blows it out of you. You get locked into work which is good sometimes cause you just carry on and don't actually sit down and think god, look

at my life, look what I'm doing, cause you're too busy just doing it. I love the stock work, I love dealing with stock although sometimes you wouldn't think so. Those scatty little lambs! I like them to look good, I like to feel proud of them. It sounds crazy, but managing the stock is like managing a big family and having in your mind six hundred acres and the seven mobs or whatever, and just organising them, like kids. (*How do you think it is being a woman farming?*). Tough, because physically you're not able to do jobs because you're a woman. I find that, and I'm sure there's quite a few others.

Margaret

This passage illustrated the multiple demands placed on Margaret's time and labour.

THE INTERSECTION OF WORK AND LEISURE

In chapter two Murphy's (1989:49-50) study of rural women and leisure was discussed. She found that rural women often involved themselves in activities which they can carry out at home (in the private sphere) while simultaneously performing tasks ascribed to them by prevailing gender norms, such as childcare. Gardening is one such activity. Three of the respondents are keen gardeners, and Gwyn has developed her garden, called Aramaunga, into a well respected and patronised business.

The garden just grew. Sheila and I started a little nursery beside the garage and sold off these lovely azalea mollis plants for a dollar each. Big business it was. It was after Sheila was married and she lived just over there in the cottage. She used to hoot through and help me. It was big time the day we had our first customer. I remember counting the money right down to our last cent and dividing it up. It was quite fun. We did that for a couple of years and then Sheila had her family so she dissolved the partnership. I had to buy her out, and then I had my nursery on my own. Bob used to help me, very much against his will because he didn't like people disturbing his peace.

That's my life, gardening. I open to the public by appointment. I've opened Labour weekend and the Taranaki Rhododendron Festival to the public; they just come in their hordes. But otherwise it's by appointment, you've got to have certain time to yourself. (*Must be a lot of work*). No, it's not. Housework is work, whereas gardening is a pleasure, you are creating something, seeing something. It's

not work if you enjoy it, it's not. Every day is a bonus, especially when you're getting older, you think how many more years have I got to create something else.
Gwyn

Gwyn was very clear about the difference between work and leisure in the above passage, although they may overlap at other times. For example, sewing may be both leisure and work simultaneously.

VOLUNTARY WORK

Boundaries between home and community can become nebulous as a woman's role as unpaid carer in the home extends to voluntary work (McKinlay, 1992:74). Unpaid community work was an accepted part of daily life for rural women and could provide social contact, personal satisfaction and a sense of belonging (Millard, 1992:244, Begg, 1990:72 & Murphy, 1989:60). Millard (1992:238) argued that rural women receive emotional support as a consequence of their involvement in community organisations. There was both an expectation that rural women would do voluntary work and a commitment from the women themselves to their communities (Anderson, 1993:70-71 & Murphy, 1989:60).

Structural factors affected the amount and nature of unpaid work for women in the community. Shaw (1993:137) argued that rural women increased their involvement in voluntary work when there were gaps in services in the community or a reduction in services. The threatened closure of rural schools has resulted in many rural women working hard, in working bees and fundraising activities, along with other family members, to make the school in their area viable (Shaw, 1993:147 & Murphy, 1989:54). A change in education policy in the 1980's with the introduction of 'Tomorrow's Schools' has resulted in an increased input by parents to the functioning of their local school (Millard, 1992:238). In rural communities the local primary school was often a focal point for social contact. In Murphy's (1989:76) study she found high levels of involvement in the local primary school among her respondents and an expectation that

they would support school activities. The women in this study had all supported the local primary school as well as carrying out other voluntary work, particularly in relation to children's activities. Gwyn and June discussed scouting and the local school.

The children were involved in the school therefore you became involved. They used to go to scouts and I was involved in the scout committee.

Gwyn

Well, I belonged to scouts and cubs. They were in cubs to start with and then scouts so of course I was secretary. I was president of home and school and I went on school camps.

June

My mother was always willing to help out at the local primary school which included being the secretary of the school committee.

Mum was a conscientious parent and did all the right things. She was so available to go on school trips I remember asking her not to come just once so I could go in someone else's car! To her credit she honoured my request and I got to go with someone else's mother!

Lesley

Womens' Division of Federated Farmers has played an important role in the lives of older rural women in terms of education, welfare and social contact (McMath & Smith, 1988:20). June was an active member and discussed her involvement and some of the current issues, which relate to an aging membership and declining interest.

I've been president and now treasurer for ten years. I can't off load it onto anybody. We're getting to the stage where they are nearly all in town. They're old but they're still going strong, I tell you. We have a trip away for three or four days every year, we get a mini bus and go. We may as well enjoy ourselves. We didn't go last year because two or three of them had the flu. They want to go about April, when the cows are dry. We've got down to eleven of us now in our branch, as I say, they're all in town. We're more or less a social club, more than anything. We still do the things we should do for Division, the gardens at Pioneer Village for one thing and we have to do cups of tea for Federated Farmers every now and again. They wanted us to donate money for napkins for the young mothers, and we said well what's the point they don't wash them, anyway they use disposables. And they

knit singlets and jerseys and socks and things for the kids that they throw in the washing once and don't ever use again. You know how it goes. Their aim is to help women and children in the country but there's more town ones belong to it now than country ones, cause the older ones have gone to town. There aren't very many young ones joining it now. I said, well we're getting the stitch too, we're getting to the stage where we think, well, blow them, cause they're always wanting money for something, you've got to give to this and give to that.

June

The Women's Division of Federated Farmers has "suffered a loss of 30-50 percent of membership over the last fifteen years" (Millard, 1992:238-239). This was a reflection of the changing needs of rural women and their increased mobility. McMath and Smith (1988:20) considered that the activities of the Women's Division of Federated Farmers were not capturing the interest of younger rural women who were "more involved with farming skills, business management and personal development".

CAREGIVING

Women continued to be primarily responsible for caregiving, thus fulfilling their reproductive role in the broadest sense. They were expected to enjoy caregiving and it was believed women would achieve self-fulfilment and contentment while carrying out this role.

"Women, as mothers and wives in the home, are viewed as being central to the maintenance of the ideal rural community" (Anderson, 1993:4). In relation to farming, women were expected to be supportive regardless of their other activities; it was often taken for granted they would provide cups of tea and meals for visitors to the farm (Shaw, 1993:56). June took on the caregiving role at a young age and as the following shows, it was expected she would cope.

There was no entertainment, nobody had any money to do anything so Gibbonses, Downses and Mum and Dad used to take it in turns going to each others house on a Saturday night playing cards. Because I was the oldest I had to babysit all the kids.

We stayed at whichever house it was and I was 'sposed to keep them in order while the mothers were milking in the morning. You can imagine trying to keep kids in order can't you? There was seven Gibbonses and seven Downses and Valma (*sister*). I remember we were at Downses and these damn kids were getting on the wardrobe and jumping down on the bed and I couldn't blemin well stop them. I wasn't that much older than them. It was just what you had to do, that was it.

June

The caring role also included ill and elderly relatives. June assisted her father after her mother died.

When Mum died I used to go up every day and do things for him and he stayed on his own for the last fourteen years but I was up and down the road.

June

The idea that women gain some interpersonal power from providing care is discussed by Munford (1992:97) and was an example of the complex and diffuse nature of power. Marie-Ann's narrative provided an example of this. She discussed the difficulties she had caring for her mother due to her mother's alcoholism. She had a contradictory mother-daughter relationship in terms of power, with Marie-Ann taking control of her mother's finances as a consequence of her mother's addictive behaviour.

I'm the only child so I've had to sort her (*mother*) out when she was going up to Base (*Hospital in New Plymouth*) and then when she was back here. Because she still had a problem I actually got to the stage where I wouldn't let her have any money, just a bit of spending money, five dollars here and there, and I was doing all her shopping for her.

Marie-Ann

When I was twenty eight I was thrust into the caregiving role unexpectedly when my mother was terminally ill with cancer. My sister and I cared for my mother when she came home after having surgery, providing nursing care as well as managing the family home.

Barbara and I looked after her when she came out of hospital. It was traumatic but I felt I had to be strong and didn't talk about my pain. Mum was not well and the colostomy was not a success. There were lots of accidents.

Lesley

As I was in full time employment at the time the task of caring for my mother and my work were often in conflict, competing for my time and attention.

PAID EMPLOYMENT

All the women talked about their first jobs. Only Margaret and myself on leaving school, saw our participation in paid work as ongoing throughout our lives. The change in personal expectations between different generations of women was discussed by McMath and Smith (1988:280) who found women under 40 had more freedom in choosing the direction of their lives. The other women in this study perceived paid work as a temporary period prior to marriage. Marie-Ann, June and Gwyn believed they would enter the public world of work on a short term basis before withdrawing into the private sphere. Gwyn went nursing as a young woman and was in paid work until her marriage at the end of the second world war.

I went nursing, I was seventeen. I went to Te Kuiti as a nurse aid. I had always wanted to nurse. I was there for eighteen months and just loved it.

Gwyn

After leaving school June 'came home' and worked on the family farm until she got work as a hairdresser in Stratford. This kind of employment is in keeping with prescribed gender roles. Her participation in employment outside the family ended when she married at nineteen.

The day I turned fifteen I left school and came home. I milked cows and whatever for six months. I always wanted to be a hairdresser. I saw an ad in the paper so Dad took me into town and I saw the lady at the Cameo Salon. She said do you

know anything about it. I said not really, I do Mum's hair. Oh, well, I'll take you on, have a go. Well, she used to leave me in charge of the flippin shop. She was a real good sort. I had no training whatever and the bank managers wives used to come and get free hairdos so I could practice on them.

June

Margaret and I obtained tertiary qualifications after leaving school, which we were in a position to do with the financial support of our families. We both sought careers, Margaret in fashion design and myself in social work. Like June we chose paid work which reflected our femininity. Sayers (1992:151) argued that women's employment choices mirror their domestic position. The following passages discuss our experiences as students.

It was a lot of work because it's practical too. I had to produce and I probably didn't time manage very well, because of course I wanted to hoon up. I tried to do all of it. Well I did all of it, but I didn't actually do any of it really well. I passed but as we said, on reflection, you do these courses when you're young and would do them a lot better justice with a few more years tucked under your belt. When I look at the adult students that we had they coped a lot better. It was such a busy course, you thought nothing of spending your lunch time going to the art room. I remember getting sick a couple of times in the first year and that was basically because I didn't time manage very well. It was just like wow, I can't get through all this. That partying didn't help!

Margaret

Massey was the best time in my life, although it was characterised by a lot of giving. I was always there for other people when they needed support but I didn't ask for a lot in return. The group from Hampton Court was part social work students and part B.Ag's. We focused our energy on having a good time. There was lots of drinking and partying and not a hell of a lot of work. I worked out how much I needed to do to pass and did it.

Lesley

On reflection, Margaret and I would have chosen different career paths and we both felt we made choices in adolescence without adequate self knowledge. Neither of us believed we achieved our potential in tertiary education as we were distracted by other activities,

which while appropriate for our life stage and enjoyable, did not enhance our commitment to study.

The transition from the security of an educational environment to the working world was challenging. Margaret discussed her first job in the fashion industry.

I thought, I want to be a designer. When I got out into the workforce reality hit, there are only so many who can be the designers! I was way too young, I mean at Derek House the designers were our age now, thirty. I was eighteen. It was asking a fair bit. I worked at Derek House and I did first lays, a first lay is when you work out the most economical way to lay out a pattern onto the fabric. That's quite a responsible position. It was actually a good job, it was never boring, but it wasn't actually designing.

Margaret

On leaving university my first permanent social work position was in a relatively small hospital. As a young woman involved in social work I had a contradictory subject position in relation to power. On the one hand I had power in my role as a social worker, but on the other hand I had limited access to power in the organisation because of my age and gender. Dominelli and McLeod (1989:15) discussed the nature of the social work profession and stated it "reproduces the common patriarchal pattern of women making up the base of the pyramid of management with men occupying the summit". They described social work practice, particularly statutory social work, as sexist and involved in social control. This was in fact my experience when employed as a Probation Officer and it contributed to a sense of disillusionment.

So, what about my social work career, such as it was? I began at the hospital and had a supervisor who was very good for me. She gave me lots of encouragement and allowed me to be independent. On reflection I was much more comfortable when I was left pretty much to my own devices. I used professional Supervision constructively, and was happy to be accountable, but hated people watching over my shoulder, and liked to be able to call my own shots. In return I worked very hard. Possibly harder than I should have, but I was keen and wanted to please. It didn't take long and I was bored. I felt I had mastered the job and there were no more challenges. I didn't like working with the elderly which was the majority of

the client base. I now feel sad about that, I was too immature to appreciate some of the complexity of the work. Going overseas was a face saving way out. When I got back I was willing to do anything, and the choices in Levin were limited. Wi was still working at Kohitere and made it clear he didn't want to move. So I ended up in Probation, and five years later left, disillusioned and burnt out.

Lesley

The later part of this narrative indicated that women often make choices, in relation to their work, which were influenced by their commitment to the private sphere. They put their obligations to their families before their own employment (Briar, 1992a:52). This is what I did when I sought work in the town where my husband was employed despite the limitations this placed on my career choices.

Women often have long career breaks while having children and have to overcome obstacles to return to the workforce. Due to family commitments their choices may be limited in terms of location and they may have to accept downward occupational mobility. They may find "that their existing qualifications are underutilised or unrewarded" (Briar (1992a:55). Marie-Ann discussed her transition from working in the home and caring full time for her two children, to paid employment.

I didn't want to go back to work, but then again I thought I've got to do something. I'm not stimulated, four walls and the garden is just not enough. I went to Polytech to relearn my office skills. I went from an electrical typewriter to electronic. I'd never even come across a fax machine, let alone used one. The first time I used it I made a copy instead of sending the fax, very easy done. It was good at Polytech, it was safe. When the course finished and I had to go out and look for a job I was dead scared. I got one, I heard by way of mouth. My first week there, I forgot my initials, I couldn't sign my name, I had to retype letters, I was terrified. It was worse than leaving school and going to my first job. It was. There was only one person there who was older than me for heavens sakes.

Marie-Ann

As a consequence of having a career break to care for her children Marie-Ann lost confidence and felt she needed to 'relearn' skills she had when previously in paid work.

Sayers (1992:147) stated that employing organisations are inherently patriarchal and serve the interests of men. "Forces operating in the existing labour market systematically discriminate against women" (Ibid). Marie-Ann discussed this.

Bright lad, nice one too. Anyway, he wants my office. There's an old scungy office out the back, you can't really put a lawyer out there. I said I don't mind going out the back, because I like to work alone or with people coming and going but not constantly there. What they want to do is to put me in the front office with the other two girls, squeeze in so there's a back up for the telephone.

Marie-Ann

CONCLUSION

The women's stories showed that the relationship between the private world of home and family and the public world of paid employment was complex and diffuse (Munford, 1992:97). The boundaries between the two were blurred and what happened in one sphere affected the other. This was particularly the case in relation to rural women where the boundaries between the productive sphere, the farm, and the reproductive sphere, the home, were hazy (Anderson, 1993:18).

This chapter, broad in scope and content, is a reflection of the nature of work for rural women. Throughout the literature, writers alluded to the variety of work carried out by rural women and the multiple expectations which they faced. Murphy's (1989:51 & 78) study of rural women in the south Wairarapa found that work was the central aspect of the women's lives around which they organised each day. Her respondents had a "firmly entrenched work ethic" and this also applied to the women in this study.

CHAPTER SIX: DIVERSITY AND DIFFERENCE

I want you to be my mirror,
reflect my story back to me
so I don't feel alone.

I want you to tell me how
unique and special I am
so I can be separate and have an identity.

Lesley Pitt

INTRODUCTION

In this poem I tried to capture the contradictory messages about diversity and difference from the women in this study. They saw themselves as connected and similar to others but also recognised their uniqueness. Although they do share commonalities there are many differences amongst them. This study cannot cover the breadth of diversity among rural women but it does show that even women who have the same culture and who live in the same geographical area have differences worth recognising and celebrating. Diversity among rural women provides flavour, richness and depth to their communities.

There was tension between the recognition of difference and a desire to belong, to be similar to others, particularly when young. The older women in this study appeared more aware of diversity and more comfortable with differences between themselves and others.

Not only was there diversity among the women in this study, but each woman experienced differences over time. Throughout a person's life their subject position changed, depending on their circumstances, life stage and personal development. For the women in this study their subjectivity has changed throughout their lives in relation to their education, work experiences, roles within their families and their personal growth and development. Knowing the age of respondents and its influence on their life experiences was an important aspect of this study, for example, had they lived through the second world war or had they grown up after the second wave of feminism.

As well as changes over time there were also contradictions in the women's subject positions at any given time, particularly in relation to power. A person may occupy a position which gives them power, while simultaneously being subject to power. Margaret had a certain amount of power and control in managing the farm but her power was not respected by some farm service personnel. The women in this study had power over their homes, but this did not equate with the power they had (or did not have) in the public world. Weedon (1997:83) described the contradictions within an individual's subject position.

The range of ways of being a woman open to each of us at a particular time is extremely wide but we know or feel we ought to know what is expected of us in particular situations... We may embrace these ways of being, these subject positions, wholeheartedly, we may reject them outright or we may offer resistance while complying to the letter with what is expected of us.

CHILDHOOD

As a child I was aware of my difference from others but I still sought to belong and feel a part of a group. This was part of what Weedon (1987:33) described as an evolving subjectivity. I was structuring and attempting to make order of my sense of self despite the inherent contradictions.

I loved school from the start. I wouldn't admit it to other kids as it's not cool to like school. Then there was sport. Anything that was a game was me, especially if it involved being part of a team. I don't remember being particularly good, but on reflection I was co-ordinated enough to enjoy it. Being part of a team was probably better than the game itself. I still like being part of a group and try to fit in, but at times find myself on the outside and feel a sense of isolation and not belonging.

Lesley

As a child perceiving oneself as not 'fitting in' with the group of our choosing can be a difficult experience and be the start of awareness of differences. As a consequence of these experiences involving conflict between what is sought and reality, our sense of self develops. Margaret's experience at pony club, where her horses set her apart from others, illustrated this.

I remember pony club, on reflection as probably being a real learning curve in my life because I had an inferior horse in comparison to everyone else. The old peer pressure, I was wanting to be in, be accepted, but I couldn't because I had a horse

that kicked. I used to have to wear red ribbons on their tails to say that I had a horse that kicked so that people would stay away. It was yuk.

Margaret

Marie-Ann also experienced herself as separate from others as a child.

I think my mother had a bit of a snob inside somehow. She said I was starting to speak a bit slang and not very nice, so she sent me to elocution. I can remember things like daffodils, you know words with daffodils, we quoted poetry, we did all sorts of things. But now I speak like I am, and as David said, plum in my mouth, and when I'm snooty at somebody I get two plums in my mouth. Mum made sure I spoke well.

Marie-Ann

By encouraging her to speak in a way which set her apart Marie-Ann's mother encouraged her to be different from her peers.

Both Gwyn and June, who are over 60, presented as aware of the differences between themselves and others and were comfortable with this. They made statements indicating that although this may have been a source of internal conflict when they were young, it is something they now accept. For example, Gwyn, in the chapter on patriarchy and later in this chapter, talked about the differences between herself and others in the community when she first moved into the district. Although this was difficult at the time she now welcomes those aspects of herself which set her apart. In discussing her childhood June also talked in the patriarchy chapter about the difference between herself and town children which at the time set her apart from some of her peers, but was also a source of pride.

ADOLESCENCE

Identity formation in adolescence was a time when women gained insight into the complexity and contradictory nature of connectedness. During their teenage years young women began the process of separating from their families of origin and establishing an independent identity. The respondents in this study discussed seeking acceptance whilst simultaneously recognising their need to be independent and separate from others. I experienced confusion about belonging when I was at high school.

At school I was never in a 'crowd'; I used to float around and go with whatever group I felt like. Maybe I was acting out some kind of internal confusion about on

the one hand feeling isolated and the other wanting/needing people. It was a kind of compromise.

Lesley

In looking for meaning and an identity Marie-Ann attended different Christian churches.

I was so shy in those days. I was really, really shy; I wouldn't say boo to anybody. Very, very quiet. Didn't have many girlfriends. I had the odd boyfriend, that sort of thing. I went to a lot of churches but I never found anything that really gelled. I just thought, well, they're all much of a muchness. It was good on some days in the weekends, the church, the gospel one, because they went out and did things, a group of you went out together so that was nice, but that was all. (*What were you looking for?*) Just something that meant something. It all seemed shallow, didn't gel with what I felt. Looking back I always seem to have been searching for something, waiting for something to happen.

Marie-Ann

While looking for a place where she felt she belonged Marie-Ann also recognised her differences from others, and eventually decided that organised religion did not have what she wanted. Through her exploration Marie-Ann became clearer about her own sense of self and her way of understanding the world.

ADULT EXPERIENCE OF DIFFERENCES

During my marriage I was regularly confronted with diversity. My estranged husband was Maori and eighteen years my senior. While it exposed me to new experiences and perspectives it was at the same time confusing and complex.

I tried really hard to get on with his friends and fit in. I didn't. I was too young, too educated, too middle class and too pakeha. Yet again I felt like I didn't belong.

Lesley

While at times diversity created difficulties, it was also interesting and rewarding. It was part of the contradictory nature of daily lived experience. Enabling a celebration of diversity is a strength post structural ideology.

Women had diverse experiences of family life. "The complex fantasies and conflicting wishes and experiences women associate with family and home often remain unexplored and unacknowledged" (Flax, 1990:180). Diversity was an important part of my adult experiences of family. I enjoyed the social and learning opportunities made possible by the differences between my estranged husband and myself.

There were good times with Wi. He is a total extrovert and so there were often other people around. Lots of people stayed with us, from a night to a few years. He had some friends whose company I enjoyed. I remember sitting over meals drinking wine and the stories flowing. When he got involved in art it was fascinating, and I met lots of unique individuals and some of New Zealand's movers and shakers in the art world, who I would not have had contact with otherwise. The exposure to the art work itself was a learning curve and I developed a small measure of appreciation for New Zealand art, which I am grateful for.

Lesley

The term subjectivity was defined by Weedon (1997:32) as "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding the world". Margaret, in the following narrative about her sense of spirituality talked about her subjectivity and selfhood in relation to others.

If you're a strong, sound person you can deal with most situations yourself. But in the same breath I still need to talk to someone, I need support, an outlet somewhere but I think everyone does in some form. I believe in the unknown if that makes sense. It's around. I have very strong good and bad feelings, vibes towards situations and I don't know where they come from. I don't know whether everybody has that ability and some adapt it more than others or it's stronger in some. I have relied on that, and lived by them ever since I realised that it was safe and normally o.k. I don't know whether you call them spirits or what. Spirits you always sort of think of seances and I think, oh, yuk, that sort of tarnishes it, it makes it cheap. I don't know whether it is within us or around us, like an aura, or whether it's completely separate. I don't know what this is but I definitely believe there is something.

Margaret

While recognising difference Margaret acknowledged her social self and connection with others. Flax (1990:219) described this sense of self as knowing "itself to be social, to be dependent for its existence on others. Yet at the same time it could experience itself as possessing an internal world that is never exactly like any other. It appreciates the fact that others also possess such a world".

Marie-Ann also discussed her ideas about selfhood and spirituality.

That's another of my interests, spiritualism. You meet a lot of people, some you instantly get on with, others if they drop dead tomorrow you wouldn't give a shit. It's like you could have even met them before. It's the reaction with people. Like other people, like in story books, they see each other across a crowded room and instantly fall in love and that's it. It's soulmates, they've been together before.

They're destined to be together again. Sometimes you have the right people at the wrong time. But then there are lessons to be learnt.

Marie-Ann

As the narratives have shown there was a tension between our perception of ourselves as unique and separate individuals and our need to be social and interdependent. As each woman aged she appeared to become more comfortable with her separateness from others and accept differences between herself and those with whom she had contact. June, who is in her 60's, recognised the diversity amongst rural women.

A lot of our friends have died off lately. It seems to be what happens. It's life I guess. We're the older generation now, whether we like it or not. I 'spose you're only as old as you feel. (*And how old do you feel?*) About 200 some mornings! When I look around there's a lot worse off than I am. Everybody says why don't you go to town to live? I said, yeah, but you go to town, you sit down and wait to die. I'm not into morning coffee and playing bridge and golf and whatever. I'd rather puddle around and do the garden, not that I do much of it, but I get there eventually. I get more pleasure out of being out where it's quiet.

June

By acknowledging the different choices of rural women and accepting they are not the choices she would make June shows her acceptance of the uniqueness of others alongside her own. Gwyn, who is the most senior woman in the study, also acknowledged the diversity among rural women and the women who live in the Wharehuia/Te Popo district.

I found it very difficult in the district because they were all inter married and involved in their own thing. I was really an outsider, so therefore made my friends in town. Because you see I'm only three miles from town. You didn't go into any of the homes in the district, it was only one I went into, but that was all. You'd meet at the school social things, like in the hall and that was their social life.

Gwyn

The impact of differences between herself and other women in the area as a result of familial relationships was isolating for Gwyn. Women marrying into a rural district often tried hard to conform to what was expected of them in order to 'fit in' and feel they belonged (Millard, 1992:236).

CONCLUSION

Gwyn's and June's narratives showed that as the women in this study mature and develop they became more comfortable with the differences between themselves and others. The transition from wanting to belong and fit in, towards acceptance of diversity is ongoing.

By exploring differences among women in this study the category rural women was deconstructed. It was not a singular, fixed, homogenous position, rather, it was multiple and diverse.

CHAPTER SEVEN: POWER

Foucault says we circulate
 between the threads of power.
 I visualise a loom with a woman weaving
 our social fabric
 in - out, up - down, in - out
 again and again and around again

sometimes powerful
 sometimes not,
 actors and acted upon
 dominant and submissive
 oppressor and victim
 within us
 the contradiction and confusion
 mixed in to the colours of our cloth.

Lesley Pitt

INTRODUCTION

By not reducing power to a linear, hierarchal structure Foucault has challenged me to think in new ways about power and control issues. In the above poem I have tried to make sense of this. To move away from the idea of systems of domination and subordination to think about the power women have and how they have used it, has been a liberating experience. I have found post structural understanding of the diffuseness of power useful, the idea that power is everywhere and we were all "simultaneously undergoing and exercising power" (Foucault, 1980:98). It has encouraged me to reflect on power in the totality of my life, not in fragmented pieces relating to one role or subject position. This process eliminated the need for binary opposites, the right and wrong, good and bad approach in an analysis of power (Tong, 1989:224). This differed from structural analysis of power which focused on hierarchal social relations looking at the powerful versus powerless (McNay, 1992:14 & Flax, 1990:206).

Foucauldian analysis of power allowed feminists to consider the diverse nature of women's experience and to explore and discuss their different exposure to, and relationships with, power. The power relations discussed in the narratives were not seen as linear hierarchies of domination and subordination, but all aspects of power were considered, including its positive and productive aspects. Through the women's narration power was explored from the point of view of those experiencing it.

POWER IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE

Foucauldian analysis of power challenged feminists to consider the power women have, even in the most oppressive scenarios. Women can use the contradictions in their daily lived experience of power in positive ways. In the chapter on patriarchy, Margaret's ability to change the power relations between herself and the man who attempted to rape her demonstrated this. In the following narrative Marie-Ann discussed her power over her fertility.

I'm a Virgo, I like planning, I organise, I'm very organised when I've got the capabilities and facilities, impeccably so. David is Cancer, he's very close to his mother, that's his type of sign; they also get very emotional. I thought, well, if I have a boy and he's Cancer, maybe he'll be close to his mother. To have a Cancer child which is June/July you have to fall pregnant in September. I calculated it all out. I went off the pill in the beginning of August. I was very careful over the August because I didn't want anything to happen then. September he never knew what hit him, every second night he got really nice dinners; bingo! It was something I'd planned. I thought it's going to happen so I didn't think of anything else and it worked. He was ropable, I didn't tell him what I was doing. When I told him I was pregnant he didn't speak to me for about three days.

Marie-Ann

One of the difficulties of this project has been the juxtaposition of the idea of patriarchy with post structural perspectives of power. There was a contradiction between the structural conception of powerful and powerless and post structural ideas about the circular nature of power, and its productive and positive uses. Ramazanoglu (1993:5) discussed this tension stating that "the contradictions and inconsistencies of feminist thought should alert us to see that feminism is deeply contradictory because women's lives are contradictory". In the women's stories there were contradictions.

Weedon (1987:120-121), writing from a post structural perspective, believed that power in families was multifaceted, complex and contradictory. June demonstrated this in the following narrative.

I think I've always been independent, probably too independent, too bossy, so I'm told. I've got a granddaughter just the same. I laughed when she was born cause Syd (*husband*) said I hope it's not a girl, not having anything to do with girls. When Catherine was a girl, I'm not having anything to do with her. So we used to leave her in the pram in the kitchen and of course he would play with her, wouldn't he, when no one was watching. When she was about three months old she gave the show away, she waved out when Pop came into the room. When she got big enough she followed him everywhere. He used to smoke at that stage. There she is with this cigarette hanging out the side of her mouth following Pop around. And he used to spit, so she used to spit. I said, now knock that off, we don't want her running around spitting. He thought, he still thinks the world shines out of her. She can't do any wrong. If we want Pop to do something we get Catherine to ask.

June

Both June and her granddaughter found ways to use power positively and productively in their relationships with men in their family. As the youngest girl in her family, Margaret's position in a traditional, nuclear family was not powerful. However the following shows how she was in the "position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power" (Foucault, 1980:98). At the beginning of this narrative Margaret was talking about her relationship with her sister.

I was one of these people that get in, stir her up and then get out. All hell would break lose around the house and I'd be gone up the farm. It was a little bit of a power thing as a kid; it was like fighting for a bit of recognition in the family. I remember getting a hiding for her, a big hiding, from Dad with alkathene pipe, six across the backside. And it wasn't my fault. I was trying to tell Dad it wasn't my fault, but he was going to give it to me come hell or high water. I thought, oh well, maybe for all those other times I've stirred her up I should take it. Take it like a man! I contemplated running away from home after that. I did actually, (*is that when you took the chocolate biscuits and your toothbrush*), yep, and went to the back of the farm, ate the biscuits, cleaned my teeth, came home and no one had realised I'd run away. That was a bit of a non event!

Margaret

It was important to acknowledge different levels of access to power. In Margaret's narrative it was clear that all the players in her family were not equal, with her father having more access to power than she did. However Margaret found ways of exerting power within the circumscribed boundaries of her family system.

POWER ISSUES AND THE GARDEN

As discussed in the literature review, gardening was often an important part of rural women's lives. The control women have over their gardens was an example of having power within the private sphere and using it productively (Teather, 1996:5 & Ransom, 1993:129). In their gardens women expressed themselves in tangible, creative ways and felt a sense of personal satisfaction. I asked Gwyn how she perceived her control over her garden.

Oh, yes, more or less. The kids used to play football in it. I had a lovely rhododendron and they had that as their goal post. It did survive, which was remarkable. Many a time I'd come out and find the football in amongst the trees and things. There were rules to a certain extent. They knew if they went wrong.
Gwyn

Marie-Ann also talked about the importance of gardening in her life.

Mum worked and I did the garden. It was a big section, well over quarter of an acre. I used to do all the garden when I was thirteen or fourteen. When I was still at college I joined the soil association, which is an organic gardening association. It was great, I built the compost heap and it lasted years: I was quite proud of that. I've loved gardening ever since. I'm not a practical person, gardening yes, but practical like making something or that sort of thing, no. Herbs mainly, I'm not a flower person. Once when my mother-in-law was coming to visit the garden was a mess. I stripped everything out, went into town, bought everything that was flowering or nearly flowering and shoved it in, perfect. She knew what I'd done; she laughed.

Marie-Ann

Power in the relationship between Marie-Ann and her mother was diffuse, with neither of them in possession of it. This showed the complex nature of power as the relationship between mother and child was circulatory not unidirectional.

POWER IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

In the following passage June talked about the teacher who worked at Stanley School, the local primary school, during the second world war.

We only had one teacher and there were thirty of us, that's all. She was an East Coast Maori and I always thought she was pretty old but she must have been

eighteen or nineteen. She only got the job because the joker that was supposed to do it had gone to war and she was caretaking until he came back. So we had her. Well, she had everybody well organised, you didn't dare sneeze. Every morning in the winter we got a teaspoon of sugar with two drops of eucalyptus on; that stopped you getting a cold. Nobody ever got sick. We polished all the school floors, they were oiled, every week we had turns. We polished all the desks; we had the best garden you could ever see. We won the Tisch Shield for the best sole teacher school, the garden and the grounds. She taught Sunday School on a Sunday and heaven help you if you didn't go. Everybody loved her. She had all the men, Dad was the chairman of the school committee at that stage, she had them all on the QC (*under control*), they didn't dare to cross her; if she wanted something, she got it.

June

This woman used the power she had access to productively. It was important to locate this section of June's narrative within its moment. "The process of analysis involves the production of what is itself a discourse on power, which is always shaped by the concerns of the moment in which it is produced" (Weedon, 1987:111). This story also needed to be located historically as the power relations between a teacher and the community would be different in the 1990's compared to during the second world war.

The above narrative showed the relevance of power issues in the work place. In the following passage Marie-Ann acknowledged the power differences between herself and her employer and found a way to deal with it.

I can talk like with you, one to one, and talk about various things, but to talk to my boss about the problem and the solution and things like that, I find it very hard to say something in a logical sequence and get my point across. I think onto a type writer so I wrote him a letter. Very eloquent. I gave it to him and I don't know whether it's worked.

Marie-Ann

This demonstrated how individuals are vehicles of power but that power itself does not reside with any one person or group, such as employers. In the following passage Margaret explored her experience of power in the workplace.

I do remember there was a witch. Oh, god, she was a witch. She was about fifty. Anyway, I thought she was giving me a hard time, really picky. Then other people came up and said, she does that to everyone, it's her power trip. You're the new one here so she's gonna be on your back like a ton of bricks. Well, they weren't kidding. All of them said it, eh. She was yuk, so much so that they said to me no

one ever lasts long at this job. She was really picky and nasty. She got me down a bit, just now and then.

Margaret

The woman she referred to had power in her position over some staff, including Margaret, but was subject to power herself as she was in a middle management position and was accountable to her employer. The hierarchies between women in the workplace, and the different access to power which each individual had was also part of my experience. When I was fifteen I worked in a shop in Stratford during the school holidays:

As the junior of all juniors it was my job to get morning tea. In my ignorance I got the wrong shaped doughnut for one woman and she fair told me off. Even I, at fifteen, could see how petty and ultimately sad that was.

Lesley

As I have aged, my perspective of power and sense of my own power has changed. Margaret also talked about her perspective of power changing in relation to farming and in power differences between herself and others.

Ringling up the accountant, that's like water off a ducks back now. When I first started they were big issues, the bank manager and accountant were scary stuff. Now, well, they're just people too. Isn't it funny how you change.

Margaret

Margaret showed that she has taken control, essentially empowering herself.

ECONOMIC POWER

The impact of economic structures on the lives of rural women was important. Issues surrounding economic power were raised by respondents. The battle for economic control in the household illustrated the complexity of power relations. Marie-Ann's narrative demonstrated this.

Every now and again if we don't have any money David will accuse me of spending it all. That really hurts. At one stage I said right, here's the cheque book, you deal with it. So a couple of months later when it really got in a mess he more or less had humble pie and asked me to start doing it again. It's just an ongoing thing. I still deal with the money, I sometimes get annoyed that I have to do everything.

Marie-Ann

For June, economic factors shaped her childhood experiences. She was born at the beginning of the depression, when poverty was common (Martin, 1984:131). The following showed how June's mother used what resources she had available to cope with poverty.

I remember Mum saying she had me in Stratford at the maternity home. She said she made her slippers out of an old pair of trousers and her dressing gown out of an old coat; I quite believe it too. They just had nothing, nobody had anything then.

June

Margaret talked about her experience of living on a limited income while living in Auckland and the strategies she used to manage. Again, this demonstrated taking what power was available and using it productively.

The money was really tight. It was dear to live there, half my wages went in paying rent. I ended up with something like ten dollars a week spending money. Going to the pub, it was almost not an option. What can you get for ten dollars at the pub? It was tough, but I'd made up my mind that I was going into a place by myself. Financially it probably wasn't too good of a move. Like in all my life that was the tightest I have ever been with money. I had to manage it one hundred percent, I couldn't really call on Dad and say could you lend me? While I was there I brought two things just for me; a crystal ash tray and a pair of shoes. That was it for a year in Auckland. It's pathetic! Oh, I made lots of clothes, cause I constantly make clothes. It was good though, made me very frugal. I was making loaves and stews.

Margaret

Economic restructuring in the 1980's had an impact on the daily lives of rural women. Farm incomes dropped, consequently there was a reduction in the amount farmers spent. Millard (1992:240) discussed the effect this had on service industries, stating that "their livelihoods were affected before those of the farmers". Marie-Ann's husband ran a business which depended on farmers contracting him.

It was back in the eighties when the down turn in farming was really drastic and things were very, very tight. David had to go to Wellington. It ended up for about three years. He commuted home every now and again. Because there was no money here he went to work for somebody down there.

Marie-Ann

In this instance, as a consequence of economic factors, Marie-Ann's husband was affected by power structures beyond his control and made choices from the power he had available.

CONCLUSION

Power manifested itself in many different ways, from the public issues around economic restructuring and workplace hierarchies to the expression of patriarchal power in the private world of marriage and family.

Post structural thought has been used to provide a comprehensive examination of power in relation to the lives of the women. This allowed me to explore power as connected and circulatory.

Power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others. . . . Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain (Foucault, 1980:89).

The women's stories demonstrated that structural analysis does not effectively explain the power they have, and how they use it productively for the benefit of themselves and their families. By juxtaposing post structural and feminist thought, power can be comprehensively understood, its diverse and dynamic nature explored, and its affect on daily lived experience analysed.

CHAPTER EIGHT: RELEVANCE TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

I speak the words
tell the story
say how it was, for me
talk of my reality
express my feelings
about my past, my family, my childhood.

Out of silence
Force open the door
let the air and light in.

I feel a chill of fear
guilt rises
I wait for the bad thing to happen
How will it strike?
A bolt of lightening
A one way ticket to hell.

All that happens
is a wise woman saying "I know dear"

I feel a fool

I am angry

at the waste

and at the cost of the secrets.

Lesley Pitt

INTRODUCTION

I wrote this poem after interviewing Gwyn. Part of the reciprocal nature of the research process was sharing my story with respondents. This was a way of making my private world public. I discovered that despite the private boundaries around our family, members of the community, like Gwyn, were aware of my mother's unhappiness. This validated my reality. The affirmation which takes place as a result of sharing life stories has been an important part of this research and is a technique which can be used by social work practitioners.

I have chosen to end my thesis with praxis, the link between practice and theory. Freire (1985:124) described praxis as "a unity between practice and theory in which both are constructed, shaped and reshaped in constant movement from practice to theory, then back to a new practice". Action then reflection is required to make the links between practice, the doing, and theory, the contemplating. I believe that all good social work practice is informed by a relevant and sound theoretical understanding. In this chapter I will conclude my making connections between this study and social work.

STORY TELLING AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The instruction found in story reassures us that the path has not run out, but still leads women deeper, and more deeply still, into their own knowing (Estes, 1992:6).

Story telling was a crucial dimension of my social work practice and this thesis has focused on the life stories of five women. I believe the key aspects of story telling and social work practice are:

- 1) the affirmation of a person's life story
- 2) the importance of trust and care in the social work relationship

- 3) the application of theoretical ideas
- 4) the importance of empowerment
- 5) the need for practitioners to recognise their own subjectivity

In relation to the first point, that of affirming a person's story, I consider that clients in a social work relationship need to feel they have been heard. Part of the process of this research was the validation of the respondents' stories. Each woman had a forum provided in which she could talk about her life and this created an opportunity to celebrate her strengths and achievements and consider her future. Having heard the women's stories it was important to me that I affirm and honour them, as I would in social work practice. Munford and Nash (1994:241) discussed the importance of affirmation to feminist social work practice. "By validating women's lives and acknowledging their achievements social workers can work with women to recognise their own self-worth".

Trust and care are vital to a successful social work relationship. People need to feel free to tell their story without fear of judgement. If a client feels accepted, then a safe environment has been created. For this project to be effective, detailed and very personal data was needed from respondents. By using interpersonal social work skills I was able to create an environment in which the women could feel secure to share their personal selves. Respondents told me after the interviews that they had felt safe, considered they could trust me and enjoyed participating in the study.

The third aspect of story telling and social work practice is the application of theoretical ideas to the story. In the interviews for this thesis the women reflected on their lives and saw the processes which had led them to their present situation. The same strategy can be used in social work practice, clients can be given an opportunity to explore their lives as a part of an ongoing process and consider the forces which have shaped their journey.

Social work is about people's lives, the social world they live in and the structural factors which affect them. In this project theoretical ideas have been used to understand the social context and the political forces which have affected the lives of the women. Structural factors affecting the women's lives, such as the economic changes in the 1980's have been discussed with them. In this sense the personal became political, a key aspect of my social work practice.

The fourth aspect of using the life story approach in social work practice is empowerment. Stories have the potential for allowing people to grow and be creative.

"The telling of the story can be empowering, validating the importance of the speaker's life experience" (Gluck & Patai, 1991:2).

The life story approach in research and social work practice allows time for reflection and insight. Highlighting a persons' strengths and power gives them the chance to harness this for productive purposes. Individuals, after contemplating power issues in their own lives and understanding the power they have access to, are able to use it positively to create change for themselves. "Empowerment entails recognition of the rich diversity in women's lives and the many different strategies that women have used to survive" (Munford & Nash, 1994:241).

The last point is the importance of a social worker or researcher recognising their own subjectivity. In social work practice it is crucial that the practitioner is aware of the impact they have on the process of story telling, that they reflect on this and are transparent about their role. It was important to acknowledge my own influence on the story telling process in this research. The nature of the data was influenced by my interviewing technique; the questions I chose to ask, the ones I did not, the reflections I made and my silences.

What was shared with me was a reflection of how the respondents perceived me and my task. The relationship between myself and the respondents in some ways created the data. If we had a different kind of relationship, for example if we had no personal connection, the data obtained may have been different, but equally valid. I can postulate on how the data would have varied. It may have been more factual, with less emotive content and some of the more 'private' aspects of the women's lives may not have been discussed if an unknown interviewer, an outsider, was carrying out the project. However, there are occasions when an individual will share intimacies with a stranger. As a social worker, clients have told me they are willing to share their personal concerns with me because of my outsider status and the absence of any ongoing emotional connection.

Marie-Ann and Margaret both reflected on how as a consequence of their life experiences they have personally developed.

It's like they say, when the pupil's ready, the teacher will appear. At certain stages in my life things have happened, I've come across a new book, a new situation. You learn from experiences. As long as you try and not make the same mistake twice. I've always been aware and tried to think things through, and now am more aware of the spiritual learning.

Marie-Ann

That's why when something bad happens I think well this has happened for a reason, it is making me a better person, a stronger person, it's happened to me, because I can obviously handle this and deal with it.

Margaret

THE APPLICATION OF FEMINIST AND POST STRUCTURAL IDEAS

This study demonstrated the application of theory. In social work practice the same process can be used to understand the experiences of clients. It may not always be suitable to apply the theoretical ideas written about in this study, others may be more appropriate. This will depend on the theoretical perspective of the worker, the field of practice and the client group.

In this section I will discuss the following points about the application of theory in social work practice:

- 1) the demystification of structural factors which affect clients' lives
- 2) placing clients' lives in context
- 3) the assumption that clients are experts on their own lives
- 4) a celebration of diversity
- 5) the development of localised knowledge

The first point relates to working with clients as they consider how political forces have shaped their lives. In this thesis tracking the course of the women's lives allowed the power issues and structural factors which had an impact on them to be demystified. This included an awareness of economic restructuring in the 1980's, consideration of patriarchal ideology and patrilineal farm succession, an understanding of the cult of domesticity and the role of women as a 'reserve army of labour'.

In my social work practice I have used the theoretical concepts discussed in this thesis when working in a variety of settings and with a cross section of clients. When working as a Probation Officer I found ideas about power and patriarchy helpful to give a structural analysis to offending behaviour, for example, the violence perpetrated against women and children. Understanding the private/public dichotomy has been useful when working with elderly in hospital settings in order to situate the domain in which they

have spent their lives. For women this is usually the domestic sphere and for men it is the public world of work.

Secondly, in research and social work practice it is important to place clients lives in context. The women's lives in this study were contextualised in relation to their social, cultural and historical time. As this study has shown, a woman's experiences will be different depending on a number of variables. One variable is age, hence the women's experiences of work and public and private worlds were different. Margaret and Marie-Ann had more experience of working in the public world where as Gwyn and June had based their lives around home and family.

Thirdly I believe it is vital in social work practice to recognise the clients' expertise on their own life. This necessitates humility on the part of the practitioner, whose role is to provide an environment in which the client can reflect on the patterns in their life and the factors which have shaped their experiences.

The first assumption one makes is that each person is an expert on her own life. She knows better than anyone what her experience means to her and what rewards and burdens it presents (Weick, 1994:225).

Fourthly, this study has celebrated the diversity of rural women. No attempt has been made in this research to universalise the category rural women. Each women has told her story in her own way and her uniqueness has been celebrated. The differences between the respondents has been explored as well as their individual changes over time.

Likewise an acknowledgment of diversity among clients is important in social work. In the past categories used by social workers have denied the differences among clients. It is acknowledged that there are times when clients need to unite to work towards change based on common concerns, but this does not need to be on the basis of universalising categories.

Lastly the importance of developing localised knowledge has been demonstrated in this thesis. The women's stories are a small slice of localised knowledge. It is not knowledge which masquerades as universal theory and does not seek to reveal a "unique fixed essence at the heart of an individual" (Fawcett & Featherstone, 1997:8). I believe the women's stories provide an opportunity for social work practitioners to learn from women's subjective and intuitive knowledge. Marie-Ann and Margaret talk about their view of spirituality, which provides a good example of this kind of knowing.

In Aotearoa/New Zealand organisations like Women's Refuge and Rape Crisis have used women's individual stories as a starting point to create new local knowledges, which has

then reshaped the larger public discourse about rape, sexual abuse and domestic violence. Margaret talked publicly for this study about her experience of attempted rape which is a starting point from which personal troubles become politicised.

UNDERSTANDING THE DAILY LIVED EXPERIENCE OF RURAL WOMEN

This study is intended to be of use to social work practitioners who come into contact with rural women. Here, rural women have exposed their lives and the contradictions and complexity of their experiences. In doing this they provide an opportunity for others to learn from (not about) them (Rivera, 1997:143). Although there are only five women in this project, they demonstrated the diversity and the depth of the lives of rural women. By reading their stories some understanding can be gained as to what daily life is like for them. For example, by reading about the women's experiences of work an insight can be gained into the fragmented nature of rural women's work patterns and the multiplicity of demands placed on them.

For social work practitioners in rural areas it is important to understand the impact of social and economic policy in rural communities. For example, the removal of farm subsidies in the 1980's affected the women in relation to their work patterns and economic status. The withdrawal of social services in rural areas has increased women's workloads in the community and lengthened the distances rural people have to travel to access services. Rural women have been affected by improvements in transport and communication systems. When Gwyn was a new bride after the second world war she went to town once a month due to transport difficulties, however today it is common for women from the Wharehuia/Te Popo district to go to town on a daily basis as roads are tarsealed and well maintained.

If practicing social work in a rural community a thorough understanding of relevant issues and the reality of rural lifestyles is crucial to the effectiveness of interventions. In her research on rural women in South Otago, Anderson (1993:76) found:

it became clear that farm women and men appreciate and more readily accept someone who is interested in, and informed about farming. Farm people often view themselves as quite distinct from other groups in society, making it difficult for them to talk to outsiders.

I had a similar experience to Anderson while gathering my data. I was able to obtain access to the women interviewed and they willingly shared their lives with me because I had grown up in the community. My family connection was also important; Margaret is my cousin, June talked to me about my mother and Gwyn and I talked about my aunt, uncles and cousins. A social worker who was an outsider working in a rural

community may have to spend some time developing credibility and trust before clients would be willing to share their personal concerns. The time spent developing relationships, in my opinion, would be well rewarded with acceptance, loyalty and a lot of good humour.

FINAL WORDS

I feel privileged that four wonderful and wise women shared their lives with me for this research and want them to have the last say.

You've just got to make yourself do things. It's not easy, but you do, otherwise you're left sitting at home and what's the use of that. There's too many nice things to do. I travel a lot. I go on these tours with my friends. It's neat.

Gwyn

Now, when I look back, I wonder how I got to all the different things, and did all the different things that I did, but I enjoyed doing it.

June

I can look back and say I learnt that lesson. Perhaps it's tried to say that I should go in a different direction, I shouldn't do certain things. All the things that have happened to me have been learning experiences.

Marie-Ann

What do I want? Bottom line; be happy. Isn't that simple.

Margaret

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Appendix One

28 Reeve Street

Levin

Phone: (06) 368 2457

26 November 1996

Dear June

I imagine it is a bit of a surprise getting a letter like this from me 'out of the blue'. I am writing to ask for your help with a project I am working on, but please don't feel under any pressure to take part. Perhaps it will be clearest if I explain the project and what I would like you to do.

To complete my Masters in Social Work at Massey University (I have an undergraduate degree in social work) I am required to carry out a thesis or research project. I reflected for a number of years on what I most wanted to work on. People's lives have always fascinated me: events which shape them and the way they see themselves and the world they live in. Having grown up on Stanley Road and then worked as a Social Worker/Probation Officer in a rural/semi-rural location, I have often felt the perspective of country women is missing. It seems to me that rural women and children are expected to fit in with 'townies', even when their needs are quite different.

Once I had decided that I wanted to write my thesis about rural women, and tell their stories, I then narrowed the focus (making it practical) by concentrating on women who reside in the Wharehuia/Te Popo district. I have so many warm memories of women who were around me when I was a girl and I want to honour those memories: add to them to give richness and depth. It is also a way for me to touch the lives of women in my family, those who are still living in the district around about, and those like my Mum and Nana, who have passed on.

I have decided to interview four women at different life stages: a mother of young/primary school age children, a mother of adolescents/young adults, a grandmother, and a great grandmother. I am choosing women I feel would be good to interview which is why I am writing to you, to ask if you would be willing to tell me your life story and let me write about it in my thesis. It would involve up to four hours of us talking which would be audio taped. I will then get the tapes typed out and give

them to you so you can change whatever you want and tell me what you don't want written about. I will give you a typed copy of the interviews and the tapes when I have finished the project, which will hopefully be November, 1997. There will be fifth life story included and that will be my own.

This type of research is quite different to traditional ways, where the researcher is removed and objective. I will be as much of a person studied as a researcher, and I hope there will be lots of give and take. It is important to me that you feel in control; after all, it is your life, therefore precious. The things I would like to talk to you about are:

- * your family background
- * your childhood
- * being a teenager and leaving school
- * relationships/marriage
- * moving into the district
- * motherhood
- * children leaving home
- * being a grandmother
- * significant events which have created change in your life
- * how living in the Wharehuia/Te Popo district affects you life
- * your relationship to the farming industry

I am really excited about my project and think it will be fascinating. I am particularly looking forward to talking to women about our lives. No doubt you will want to think this over, and maybe talk about it with family and friends. I will be in Stratford on the weekend of the 7/8 December so it would suit me to interview you then but I will telephone you next week and we can talk about it. As I said at the beginning of this letter, I hope you don't feel pressured, and I will not be at all offended if you do not want to take part.

I look forward to talking to you soon,
Regards,

Lesley Pitt

Appendix Two

APPLICATION TO HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

1. DESCRIPTION

1.1 Justification

- Personal interest from childhood and family connections with rural life
- Professional interest - from working in semi-rural/rural location
- Limited social science research about the lives of rural women
- Growing interest in the field of rural social work in N.Z.
- A way of providing social workers in rural areas with information about the lives of women who may be part of their clientele

1.2 Objectives

- Obtain the life stories of four rural women
- Include my own life story
- Tell the stories in a sensitive and interesting way
- Draw out any common themes and discuss them
- Application of theoretical constructs, if relevant

1.3 Procedures for Recruiting Participants and Obtaining Informed Consent

- From personal knowledge
- By talking to women in my family familiar with the area about potential participants
- Suggestions from women who live in the community and others familiar with the area
- Writing (see attached letter) to the women (potential participants) I decide upon who fit the criteria - relevant life stage and resident in the area
- Telephoning them, a week after sending the letter, to obtain their consent to do the interview and arranging a suitable time
- When I arrive to do the interview gaining their consent again and letting them know what will happen to the information and the control they have over the process and information. Tell them they will see the transcripts of their interview and have the tapes returned to them on completion of the research in November, 1997

1.4 Procedure in which Research Participants will be Involved

- One or two interview sessions, of up to four hours, which will be audio taped
- Interviews to be at time and place where the respondent is comfortable, preferably in her home
- Participants will be sent copies of the transcripts to check and can make deletions and corrections, then return to me

1.5 Procedures for Handling Information and Material Produced in the Course of the Research Including Raw Data and Final Research Report

- I will keep the tapes until the research is complete, then return them to the respondents
- The interviews will be transcribed by myself or a professional typist in Whangarei - respondents to be informed of this process
- Respondents to be sent copies of transcripts to check
- I will retain copies of the transcripts - only for my own use or to be seen by thesis Supervisors if necessary
- Respondents will be sent copies of the relevant sections of the final report and any other information, or completed document on request
- Final research report will be processed like all Masters theses in the Social Policy and Social Work Department. A copy will be retained in the department
- I will provide a copy of the thesis to the Stratford library as my way of giving back to the community and being transparent about my research. Participants will be informed of this
- I will retain a copy of the completed document

2. ETHICAL CONCERNS

2.1 Access to Participants

- I will obtain access to the participants by my insider status, having a personal relationship with them and contacting them by letter, then telephone and visiting them in their homes to do the interview
- Access will also be obtained by my personal networks in the area i.e. through friends and relatives

2.2 Informed Consent

- By writing to people in advance explaining the research and what I want from them, I will give respondents time to think about what participation will mean for them
- When I contact potential participants by telephone I will ask them if they want to go ahead with the interview making it clear they are under no pressure to take part and can withdraw at any time
- When I arrive for the interview I will explain the research process again and double check their consent
- This is an oral process, which in light of my personal relationships I consider is appropriate. I feel it would be intimidating to these women to be presented with a formal, written consent form
- It is not in my interests to interview someone who is not keen about the process therefore if there is any doubt about consent I will not interview that woman

2.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality

- Due to the nature of the research the participants will be able to be identified therefore I will not guarantee them anonymity and confidentiality, however I will do all I can to protect them and their life stories. I will make this clear to them and tell them where the finished research will be placed and who may have access to it
- It is the choice of the participants whether or not they are identified by name in the research
- I will not discuss their stories with other people and not tell others I have interviewed them unless they give permission for me to do so

2.4 Potential Harm to Participants

- It is possible when participants recall their life stories 'old wounds will be opened'. While this could be therapeutic, it may also be painful. I will refer participants to appropriate professionals if issues are raised in interviews which require need to be resolved or 'worked through'. I believe I am in a good position to assess and deal with such situations due to my social work background
- Exposure of their life stories and possibly their pain has the potential to harm participants if the information is used inappropriately. I will treat the data with the respect it deserves, however I cannot control what people who read the thesis do with the information
- It is acknowledged this research is dependent on high levels of trust between researcher and participants. Trust already exists due to my personal relationships with the women to be interviewed and their knowledge of my background and family

2.5 Potential Harm to the Researcher

- The potential harm to me is through my own exposure, however I consider this will be a therapeutic process for me and I do not anticipate any harm

2.6 Potential Harm to the University

- I do not anticipate any harm to the university and believe I will conduct this research in a professional and sensitive manner

2.7 Participant's Right to Decline to take Part

- I will make it clear in the letter I send to potential respondents, that their participation is voluntary and they can withdraw at any time. This will be reiterated during a phone conversation with them and again, in person, just before the interview proceeds
- Throughout the process participants will have as much control over the material and way it is gathered as is realistically possible
- Nothing will be discussed which they are not willing to talk about, and I will respect the privacy of participants and any boundaries they establish (explicit or implicit)

2.8 Uses of the Information

- The information will only be used by myself for the preparation of my thesis. The research participants will be aware of this and what the implications are
- Information will not be used by myself or anyone else once the thesis is complete

2.9 Conflict of Interest

- I do not anticipate any conflict of interest. Although I know the participants personally, to varying degrees, there should not be any conflict of roles and I will be clear with participants when I am being a researcher as opposed to friend/member of the community

2.10 Other Ethical Concerns

- I do not anticipate any other ethical concerns

3. LEGAL CONCERNS

- I do not anticipate any legal concerns relating to this research project

4. CULTURAL CONCERNS

- I grew up in the community where I am conducting the research and feel comfortable with the cultural climate of the area. I also believe my social work background is helpful in this regard. All the participants will be pakeha women. As I share the same gender and cultural background no difficulties are anticipated in this area.

5. OTHER ETHICAL BODIES RELEVANT TO THIS RESEARCH

5.1 Ethics Committees

- This application will not be referred to any other ethics committees

5.2 PROFESSIONAL CODES

- I am a member of the New Zealand Association of Social Workers and have been assessed by them as competent to practice social work. This research will adhere to the ethics and values of the association

6. OTHER RELEVANT ISSUES

- no other issues