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Writing Ourselves ‘Home’

Biographical Texts

A Method for Contextualizing the Lives of Wahine Māori

Locating the Story of Betty Wark

D. Helene Connor

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Auckland, 2006
The University of Auckland

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Student ID: 8312287

Signature: ............................................

Date: 6 July 2006
This thesis consists of two sections. The intention of Section One, ‘Biographical Texts: Theoretical Underpinning’, is to explore and discuss the theoretical underpinnings of Māori feminism and Kaupapa Māori as they relate to biography as a research method into the lives of Māori women. Biography, as a literary genre is also examined with particular reference to feminist, women of colour and Māori biography. Section One is a wide-ranging section, encompassing a broad sweep of the literature in these areas. It both draws from existing literature and contributes to the discourse regarding Maori feminism, Māori biography and Māori research. It is relevant to but unconstrained by the content of Section Two.

The intention of Section Two, ‘Locating the Story of Betty Wark: A Biographical Narrative with Reflective Annotations’, is to provide an example of the biographical method and what might constitute Māori biography. The subject of the biographical narrative, Betty Wark, was a Māori woman who was actively involved with community-based organisations from the 1950s until her death in May 2001. Several major themes which emerged from Betty's biographical history occur throughout her narrative and provide a framework in which her story is located. One of the most significant themes was the notion of ‘home’; both literal and metaphorical. This theme is reflected in the title of the thesis, Writing Ourselves 'Home'.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beautiful, extraordinary daughter:

Carabelle Tangiora Connor

To you, my darling, I dedicate this thesis. May the story of Betty Wark and the courageous path she chose inspire you as it has me, and may you too seek to benefit your world, as Betty did hers.

Me kimihia te ara totika
hei oranga mo to ao

Seek the right path
To benefit your world (Tai, 1992, p. 29)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply indebted to Betty Wark whose generous and indomitable spirit made this thesis possible. It was an enormous privilege to work with Betty and a rare gift to become privy to another person’s life story, to encourage the telling of it, and in doing so to reciprocate the gift by enabling that person to reflect on their life in a meaningful way; to have an opportunity to clarify and make sense of their life experiences and to have their story valued, recorded and narrated. My admiration and respect for Betty’s mahi (work) and her humanitarian ideals were vastly intensified by our collaboration on her biography. I will always be immensely grateful that she shared her inspiring and courageous story with me and had the faith in me to be its keeper and to retell it so it might encourage others to draw upon their own inner strength, reservoir of resilience and depths of self-determination.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank Jim Wark, Betty’s husband, for granting numerous interviews and allowing access to private photographs. Thanks also to Jim for gifting me several of his prized orchids.

I would also like to thank Betty’s brother, Kane Mutu, and his wife, Anna, for sharing family memories, photographs and whakapapa.

I am also grateful to Annette Smith who carried out a number of interviews with Betty, various members of her family and friends and colleagues. Annette’s attention to detail and her thorough transcriptions of the audio-taped interviews were of invaluable assistance throughout the project. To all those people who graciously gave their time to be interviewed by Annette, I also offer my thanks and appreciation.

This thesis was researched and written over a period of years during which, biographical research and Māori feminist scholarship developed significantly. Maintaining a sense of these developments has involved
extensive reading and ongoing dialogue with several key people whom I wish to thank for their professional generosity and input.

Firstly, I wish to acknowledge and thank my supervisor, Dr Phyllis Herda, Women’s Studies Department, University of Auckland, whose incisive reading and constructive critiques of the thesis in progress have been invaluable. Phyllis has been remarkably patient, considering the many years this thesis has taken to come to fruition, providing consistent guidance, constructive feedback and helpful advice during the successive stages of this work. I also want to thank Phyllis for sharing her insights into the parallel journey of self discovery one makes when writing a PhD and for encouraging me to keep on going despite having to navigate through unchartered and unknown territory.

I also wish to acknowledge and thank Professor Maureen Molloy for her continued interest and encouragement. Although not directly involved in my supervision, Maureen has generously, read and critiqued various drafts at pivotal times throughout the formation of the thesis.

For obligingly, agreeing to read through the final draft, particularly with regard to the Māori content, my deepest thanks and appreciation also go to Dr Tracey McIntosh, Sociology Department, University of Auckland.

A further acknowledgement goes to Te Kawehau Hoskins, Māori Education Department, University of Auckland, who helped shape my ideas around narrative from a Māori perspective. Her innovative and seminal masters thesis, Kia Whai kiko te Korero: Constituting Discourses: Exchanges at the Edge, has been both inspirational and informative. Te Kawehau, also, very generously read the sections relating to wahine Māori, providing helpful commentary and feedback and assisted with te reo Māori components, particularly, Betty’s pepeha. I also extend my thanks to Te Kawehau’s iridescent and vivacious daughter, Te Ura Kareariki Taripo-Hoskins, who
when aged seven, assisted with writing the preliminary story in Section Two, from a child’s perspective.

For their supervisory roles in the preliminary and initial stages of this thesis, I would also like to thank Dr Kay Morris Matthews and Dr Megan Boler. Their interest in the project and their trust in its direction helped form the framework of the work and contributed to the overall intellectual maturation of the project.

In their capacity as Māori advisers I would like to thank Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Dr Leonie Pihama for their enthusiasm and passionate engagement with the politics of Mana Wahine Māori. Both of these scholars are writing at the critical edge of Kaupapa Māori and Māori feminist discourse and their work has had a considerable impact on the sections relating to wahine Māori.

For their discussions on the construction of biographical writing I also wish to thank Dr Michael King, Dr Ngahuia Te Awekotuku and Jesse Munro. Each of these authors provided valuable insights into the ways biographical writing can be approached and I am extremely grateful for their generous offerings of time and advice.

For her on-going support and wise counsel when I was battling writer’s block and needed to reconnect with the creative process, I also extend my thanks and gratitude to author, artist, psycho-synthesis practitioner, mentor and friend, Dr Juliet Batten.

Thanks are also due Dr Jane Vanderpyl, an indefatigable and loyal friend and PhD buddy extraordinaire. Jane has consistently reminded me that the daunting task of writing this thesis was indeed attainable. I am also indebted to Jane’s generosity for providing a work space when I needed it,
numerous lessons in computer literacy and for providing me with opportunities for paid employment as a research assistant.

To undertake postgraduate study at PhD level, research grants and scholarships are imperative and I would like to acknowledge the funding support from the following organizations which made this project possible:

- University of Auckland Doctoral Scholarship
- University of Auckland Graduate Research Fund
- Māori Education Trust Ti Maru Prestigious Professions Scholarship
- Taranaki Māori Trust Board Education Grant.

I am immensely grateful to Dr Love Chile of Unitec who secured an extremely generous amount of study leave for me to complete this PhD. I also wish to acknowledge the goodwill and assistance I received from my colleagues and friends at Unitec, in particular, Dr Geoff Bridgman, Dr Kensija Napan, Kate Scott and Beryl Woolford-Roa.

Thanks also to Father Bruce Bollard of the Catholic Diocese Archives and the librarians at the New Zealand Herald and News Media Libraries and also to Tony O’Brien for kindly allowing me access to his resources on narrative.

To family and friends who have given me both intellectual and emotional support I offer my upmost gratitude. Two members of my extended whanau, Kura Marie Taylor and Pam Bruce have been particularly supportive and I wish to acknowledge them formally and thank them for their continuous support and encouragement. I have drawn strength from their interest in the project and their belief in me to complete it. Aunty Pam’s lengthy telephone calls from Wellington had an uncanny knack of arriving when I most needed an inducement to keep going and discussions with Aunt Marie on auto/biography and the representation of Māori women helped to energise and motivate the project.
I also wish to acknowledge and thank my whanaunga, Dr Catherine Maarie Amohia Love for her helpful comments via e-mail and for sending me her exceptional thesis, Māori Voices in the Construction of Indigenous Models of Counselling Theory and Practice, to read when I was preparing the section on narratives.

I am also deeply indebted to my dear friend, Stephanie Buckle for kindling my interest in narrative theory and practice, for our on-going email discussions on the subject and for her generous provision of resources on narrative. I also want to extend my gratitude to her wonderful daughter, Cathy, who fortuitously happened to be in Auckland during the final months of preparing the thesis and assisted with proofing and childcare.

A special thank you goes to John for his continued support during the creation of this thesis and for his thoughtful commentary and proof-reading. His confidence in me to actually finish the project helped dispel those discouraging moments of despondency that seem to hit everyone who goes through the process of writing a PhD.

For her ongoing assistance throughout the duration of this project I give a big thank you to a very special and loyal friend, Frances Kinnaird. Despite having an incredibly busy life Frances has given generously of her time to dialogue about the project and provided constructive commentary throughout. I am also enormously grateful to Frances for bringing her impressive skills as an editor to the copy-editing process. Her ability to home in on those stylistic inconsistencies an author always seems to miss has been truly awe-inspiring! Frances also provided a sympathetic ear when I was coming to terms with Betty’s illness and subsequent death and I would like to thank her for her staunch support during this period.

Several other friends also provided emotional support during the difficult time after Betty’s death and I especially want to thank Phyllis Herda, Jane
Vanderpyl, Juliet Batten, Ali Scott, Te Kawehau Hoskins, Stephanie Buckle, Louisa Wall and Michelle Tohi.

It would not have been possible to write this thesis without the support of childcare and I offer my deepest thanks and appreciation to those childcare workers (whose work remains woefully under-acknowledged and under-paid) who cared for my daughter and provided a safe and stimulating environment so I could continue with the project. While I am indebted to all the staff at her child care facilities a special thank you goes to her primary care givers, Pam Burns and Christine Bailey of Crèche One, the University of Auckland, and Tutira Williams and Debz Ross of Ritimana Kohanga Reo, Ponsonby. Further thanks are also due to Sue Winslow, Jenny Page and Barbs Watana O'Loughlin for providing after school care. A big thank you is also due to John who dedicated much of his summer holidays and weekends to childcare during the final frantic month of preparing this thesis.

Finally, to my beautiful, wondrous, daughter, Carabelle Tangiora Connor, I offer my immense gratitude for her unconditional love and her delightful diversions. Thank you my darling for choosing me to be your adoring Mama and thank you for making it all worthwhile!
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# CHRONOLOGY OF BETTY WARK’S LIFE

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<td>Betty is born at Omanaia, Hokianga, Northland, New Zealand.</td>
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<td>June 1924</td>
<td>Betty is fostered by various members of the Te Wake whanau (family). She is known as Elizabeth (Betty) Te Wake.</td>
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<td>1932</td>
<td>Betty, aged eight, goes to live at the settlement of Motuti in the Hokianga with Mary Te Wake and her family. New Zealand was experiencing the Great Depression and the Hokianga district was feeling the full impact of this economic disaster.</td>
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<td>February 1938</td>
<td>Betty, aged fourteen, leaves the Hokianga and attends St Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College in Napier.</td>
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<td>1941</td>
<td>World War II has begun. Betty, aged seventeen, leaves school and begins nursing training at Waiora Hospital in the Hawkes Bay.</td>
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<td>1942-1943</td>
<td>Betty leaves Waiora Hospital after completing the first six months of nursing training. She takes on several jobs as a housekeeper.</td>
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<td>1943</td>
<td>Betty meets American marine Charles Turner at a dance in Napier. She has a war-time romance and becomes pregnant.</td>
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<td>1944</td>
<td>Charles Turner is killed in action at Guadalcanal.</td>
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<td>1944</td>
<td>Betty’s first son, Brian Turner (Te Wake), is born. He is fostered by Mary Te Wake.</td>
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<td>1944</td>
<td>Betty moves to Auckland.</td>
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<td>1946</td>
<td>Betty meets Henry Smith who fathers her second son.</td>
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<td>1948</td>
<td>Betty’s second son, Danny Smith (Te Wake), is born. He is fostered by Mary Te Wake who lived in the small town of Waihi. Betty moves to Waihi to be closer to her son.</td>
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<td>1950</td>
<td>Betty returns to Auckland and finds clerical work.</td>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>Betty meets Conrad, a Canadian man who becomes her first husband.</td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>Betty’s third son, Conrad junior, is born. Her husband leaves her and his infant son and returns to Canada.</td>
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1952 Betty was entitled to a deserted wife’s benefit so is able to support herself and her son. She finds cheap accommodation in a boarding house in Grafton.

1956 Betty meets Jim Wark who fathers her sons Robert and Gary and becomes her second husband.

1959 Betty’s fourth son, Robert Wark, is born.

1960s The 1960s marks a period of politicization for Betty.

She becomes involved in the Freemans Bay Advisory Committee which helped tenants affected by urban renewal which saw many old houses in the area being demolished.

She also becomes involved in the Napier Street School (now known as Freemans Bay Primary School) Committee.

Her identity as Māori becomes more important and she becomes involved in the Māori Women’s Welfare League, the Māori community centre at Ponsonby and Te Unga Waka, the Māori Catholic urban marae in Epsom, Auckland.

1961 Betty’s fifth son, Gary Wark, is born.

1966 Betty marries Jim Wark.

1969 Betty’s community work had began attracting media attention and on 8 August 1969 the New Zealand Herald writes an article entitled, ‘Like Wendy – Mother to Lost Boys’ about her work with young homeless people.

1970s Betty has begun running hostels to accommodate young Māori and Pacific Island men who were homeless. She begins receiving referrals from the courts, probation and the police. She is also involved in the Ponsonby Citizens Advice Bureau and the People’s Union and becomes interested in prisoners’ rights and prison reform.

The Wark family purchase a home in the inner-city suburb of Herne Bay. Herne Bay, Ponsonby and Freemans Bay are adjacent to one another and Betty remains in close contact with her Freemans Bay and Ponsonby networks.

1972 She helps form the Tenants' Protection Association.

1976 Betty helps organise the Tole Street Park protest which aimed to bring the plight of the homeless to public attention.

May 1976 The first of the Arohanui Incorporated homes is set up in Ponsonby and Betty takes up a position as a housemother. The central aim of Arohanui was to provide accommodation for homeless ‘at risk’ youth.
1976  Betty’s community work has begun to impact on her family life and Jim takes on more of the domestic and childcare responsibilities. Betty leaves her marriage but maintains an enduring friendship with Jim Wark.

1978  Betty is the winner of the Suburban Newspapers Limited Community Worker of the Year Award.

1981  Betty is awarded the Altrusa Silver Apple for her voluntary work.

1982  Betty travels to England and stays with Father Hollings a priest who worked with the homeless.

1984  Betty is awarded a Nuffield Scholarship to visit Great Britain to study their probation accommodation systems. She also visits China.

28 February 1986  Betty is awarded the Queen’s Service Medal for her community work. Investiture of the Queen’s Service Medal is by Queen Elizabeth II.

August 1986  At the age of sixty-three Betty stands as an independent candidate for the Ponsonby Ward. She is elected and is the only Māori woman on the Auckland City Council. She serves on the council until 1989.

August 1986  Betty and Arohanui are the subject of a television documentary *Give Me a Love*.

1989  Betty helps found the Hine Hou Kohanga Reo which initially runs from one of the Arohanui homes in Herne Bay.

October 1996  Betty is presented with the Senior Achiever’s Award in recognition of her fifty years of voluntary work.

July 2000  Betty is diagnosed with lung cancer shortly after her 76th birthday.

16 May 2001  Betty dies peacefully at 12.40am, surrounded by her whanau.

18 May 2001  As she had requested, her body is taken back to Motuti Marae in the Hokianga to await burial in her papakainga.
Section One

Biographical Texts:
Theoretical Underpinnings
CHAPTER ONE

Creating Context:
Introducing Themes, Issues and Methodology

The title of this thesis, Writing Ourselves ‘Home’, Biographical Texts: A Method for Contextualizing the Lives of Wahine Māori - Locating the Story of Betty Wark, invites several readings1. This thesis is about biography as a literary form and what might constitute Māori biography and its theoretical underpinnings of Kaupapa Māori2 and, within the context of this thesis, Māori feminism. It is also about biographical research and narrative interpretation and it provides an example of a biographical text, the narrative of a Māori woman, Betty Wark3.

The underlying premise throughout the thesis is that biographical research is an appropriate and well-suited method for carrying out research into the life stories and social histories of Māori. The literary genre of biography is apt for Māori as it provides a site or space for Māori to write about individual and group experience within tribal and social histories where whakapapa (genealogy) links can be made naturally and unaffectedly. This is an important consideration for research into the lives and social histories of Māori as the essential Māori self is intrinsically linked to whakapapa (genealogies). Whakapapa distinguishes Māori from any other ethnic group, nationality or community. It proclaims the origins of individuals and communities and can serve as a vehicle for research as well as a descriptive medium for a range of inter-generational and co-generational relationships (Hemara, 2000; Hoskins, 2001; Pihama, 1993; Smith, 1981). Whakapapa is

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1 Wahine Māori refers to Māori women. Māori are the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa /New Zealand. Aotearoa is the Māori name for New Zealand.
2 Kaupapa Māori is a Māori theoretical perspective which validates and privileges Māori knowledge.
3 For an overview of Betty Wark's life refer to the 'Chronology of Betty Wark's Life', page xv.
what connects all Māori to one another. To research and write about Māori necessitates writing about whakapapa. Biographical texts can be viewed as a literary extension of whakapapa and biographical research presents an ideal method for writing about the life histories and experiences of Māori.

Organizational Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into two substantial sections. Section One, ‘Biographical Texts: Theoretical Underpinning’, explores and discusses the theoretical underpinnings of Māori feminism and Kaupapa Māori as they relate to biography as a research method into the lives of Māori women. Biography, particularly feminist, women of colour and Māori biography as literary genres are also examined. It is intended to be a wide-ranging section, encompassing a broad sweep of the literature in these areas. It both draws from existing literature and contributes to the discourse regarding Māori feminism, Māori biography and Māori research. Section One is relevant to but unconstrained by the content of Section Two. It creates a theoretical backdrop to the biographical text of Betty Wark.

Section Two, ‘Locating the Story of Betty Wark: A Biographical Narrative with Reflective Annotations’ provides a textual context for telling the life of one remarkable Māori woman, Betty Wark. Betty (Elizabeth) Wark, (1924-2001) was of Māori and Pakeha (European) descent. She was the mother of five sons - Brian, Danny, Conrad, Robert and Gary, grandmother of ten and great-grandmother of five. Betty became involved in community work in the early 1960s. In 1974 she helped set up Arohanui Incorporated, a community-based organization which aimed to provide guidance and assistance to young persons referred from the courts, prisons, Social Welfare and independent sources. Betty is probably most widely known for her work with Arohanui Incorporated as it was the subject of significant media coverage. Betty was honoured with a number of awards, including the
Queen’s Service Medal, for her community work and political activism\(^4\). Her involvement with community organisations was extensive. She was an executive of Prisoner’s Aid, served on the Auckland Children’s Board and continued to work for Arohanui Incorporated from its inception in 1974 until her death in 2001.

Betty’s narrative is contextualized socially and historically. Each chapter has an annotated reflection which links her life experiences to the larger social and historical context in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The intention of Section Two is that it provides an example of the biographical method and what might constitute Māori biography.

**Factors which Influenced the Selection of Betty Wark as the Subject of the Biography**

Betty Wark was a woman I had admired for many years. She was someone who inspired people from all walks of life and she was an enduring and exceptional role model for Māori and tauiwi (non Māori) alike. She was well known for her community work in Central Auckland and was known as someone who was involved in community grassroots initiatives. She felt a connectedness towards those people who were treated like the pariahs of society - the homeless, street kids, people addicted to drugs, alcohol and solvents. This connectedness manifested itself as political and ethical principles and formed the basis of her sense of social justice - her 'heart politics'.

The 1960s marked a period of politicization for Betty. She became an active member of the Freemans Bay Advisory Committee which helped tenants affected by urban renewal which saw many old houses in the area being demolished, and her identity as Māori became more predominant as she

\(^4\) See Appendix ii, ‘Awards Betty was Honoured With’ for a summary of the tributes she received.
became involved in such organisations as the Māori Women’s Welfare League, the Māori community centre at Ponsonby and Te Unga Waka, the Māori Catholic urban marae (meeting place) in Epsom, Auckland⁵.

By the 1970s Betty began running hostels to accommodate young Māori and Pacific Island men who were homeless. She also became interested in prisoners’ rights and prison reform. Her community work with these groups had begun to attract media attention and she began receiving referrals from the courts, probation and the police. Her metamorphosis into 'Ma Betty' had commenced. Ironically, becoming a maternal figure for at risk youth, took Betty away from her own children and family life.

Certainly, her community work alone made her an admirable candidate to become the subject of a biography and indeed she had already been venerated for her work through a variety of media coverage⁶. For anyone interested in women’s biography and in particular, Māori women's biography, Betty's life story and what actually motivated her to do the work she did provided ample material to commend her as a potential subject for biographical research.

At the time I was contemplating putting together a proposal for a PhD on Māori biography, Betty was considering finding someone to write her biography. As a post-graduate student at Massey University, I had completed a research project, *Kura: The life history of a Māori woman educationalist* (Connor, 1992) which consisted of a biography and analytical commentary on the intersections between the subject’s life history, social structures and historical context. I was interested in carrying out further research into Māori women’s lives and, consequently, I made contact with

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⁵ Freemans Bay and Ponsonby are contiguous suburbs in inner city Auckland. Epsom is also a suburb of inner city Auckland and is located on the eastern side of the city.

⁶ Media coverage included newspapers, magazines, television and radio. Refer to section entitled 'Media Profile and Public Recognition' for specific details.
Betty. Almost immediately we felt comfortable with one another and felt we could work well together. She liked the fact that I was Māori and could claim a Catholic background as she did. These commonalities contributed greatly to the rapport and bond that developed between us and it was agreed I would undertake the writing of the biography. With Betty’s consent I developed a research proposal that incorporated both an academic and creative component which would be able to accommodate the biography and the research and academic requirements of a doctoral thesis.

**Voice and Language Considerations**

The thesis has been written with a blend of academic and creative prose. The authorial voice is quite strong, as Betty wanted me to take an active part in the telling of her story. Indeed, to do otherwise would mask the reality of the biographical process. Nevertheless, Betty’s voice resounds throughout the thesis and quotations from interview material (formatted in a traditional quotation layout) are liberally used indicating her dominant subject positioning. All of the material provided to me by Betty was obtained in a series of six initial interviews conducted in August and September 1996. We continued to meet for informal discussions over the next five years up until her death in 2001.

Māori terms and words are blended in with the English text and in-text translations are supplied the first time the Māori word appears. A Glossary of Māori words and English translations is also provided. The inclusion of both languages illustrates the growing acceptance of te reo Māori (Māori language) as an official language within Aotearoa/New Zealand. There has been a quiet revolution in academic writing over the past decade, from both Māori and non-Māori academics, in that there are many Māori words which are used in New Zealand published texts without any distinctions being

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7 Refer to Appendix i for an outline of the interview themes.
made between Māori and English (Mead, 1996). A macron has been used to accentuate the long vowel sound of ‘ā’ in the word Māori. The macron has also been used in order to privilege the term Māori and make it dominant.

Locating Myself in the Research Process

The construction of a thesis will inevitably bear the mark of the scholar/researcher who created it. My personal narrative is implicated in the creation of this work. I have a point of view that helped shape the thesis and a particular interest in research relating to wahine Māori as my cultural identity is based on my Māori and Pakeha whakapapa. My cultural identity had major implications in the writing of this thesis, as Betty identified with my mixed cultural ethnicity. She also related to my Catholic background. For Betty, and for myself, these factors were important at a personal level, and helped forge a bond between us.

On my maternal side I am Māori. Traditionally, Māori identity is located within a specific geographic location and whakapapa plays an important unifying role. Connection to the land remains very important for maintaining a sense of Māori identity within contemporary society. My papakāinga (home place) is in Taranaki, situated on the west coast of the lower half of the North Island of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The province of Taranaki takes its name from the beautiful volcanic cone, Mount Taranaki, which dominates the region. My pepehā (Māori device for introducing one’s self) locates my traditional home place by identifying the mountain, river, and marae of my iwi (tribe) and hapu (sub tribe). The pepehā names my iwi and hapu and the waka (canoe) which, tradition has it, brought the Te Atiawa (Taranaki iwi) people to Taranaki. All of these features are privileged over the individual so self introductions are the final aspect of the pepehā.

8 Linda Mead also publishes under her married name, Linda Smith.
Ko Taranaki toku maunga  
My mountain is Taranaki

Ko Waitara toku awa  
My river is Waitara

Ko Owae Whaitara toku marae  
My marae is Owae Whaitara

Ko Tokomaru toku waka  
My canoe is Tokomaru

Ko Te Atiawa me Ngati Ruanui oku iwi  
My tribes are Te Atiawa and Ngati Ruanui

Ko Ngati Rahiri me Ngati Te Whiti oku hapu  
My sub tribes are Ngati Rahiri and Ngati Te Whiti

Ko Helene Connor toku ingoa  
My name is Helene Connor

My identity as Māori is positioned in terms of physical and cultural geographies, whakapapa and my tupuna (ancestors). Through the years of whakapapa research my cousin, Kim Skelton, has carried out, our whanau (family) has been able to trace our whakapapa links back ten generations to Whiti-o-Rongomai, founder of Ngati Te Whiti (Taranaki iwi). Our great-great-great-grandfather was Ngatata-i-te-Rangi (also known as Makoare Ngatata). Born around 1790, Ngatata-i-te-Rangi was the son of Te Rangiwhetiki and Pakanga. Through his mother, Pakanga, he was an influential rangatira (chief) in the Ngati Te Whiti hapu of Te Atiawa.

He was a signatory of the Treaty of Waitangi and signed the Henry Williams copy on 29 April 1840, aboard the schooner, Ariel, at Port Nicholson, Wellington (Orange, 1990, p. 148).

My great-great-great-grandmother, Ngapei Ngatata (born circa 1811), was his fifth child with Whetowheto of Ngati Ruanui.

Figure 1.
Ngapei Ngatata
1888, aged c. 77

Figure 1.
Ngapei Ngatata
1888, aged c. 77

10 The portrait of Ngapei Ngatata was painted in 1888 in Wellington. The artist is unknown. The original oil painting measures 26 x 20 inches and is now owned by the Taranaki Museum, New Plymouth, catalogue number A66.149.
By acknowledging my own whakapapa I am declaring not only my location as Māori but I am also reinforcing the importance of whakapapa to both Māori subject and Māori author within the context of Māori biography and biographical research. Whakapapa constitutes a politics of identity which articulates particular geographic, political, social, historical, and economic relations. Within the context of colonization, whakapapa as a meaningful epistemological framework has not been erased and continues to connect Māori to one another and our tribal lands, histories, and stories (Hemara, 2000; Hoskins, 2001). This applies to all Māori, whether their whakapapa remains relatively intact or whether their whakapapa links may be fragmented and lacking continuity as was the case of Betty Wark.

Although I grew up in Auckland, I consider Taranaki as my turangawaewae (place to stand). This is the place my whakapapa links me to and this is where the emotional landscape my grandmother created for her tamariki (children) and mokopuna (grandchildren) connects me. Betty’s identity was firmly located within her own turangawaewae and, consequently, her narrative in Section Two begins with her whakapapa and her pepeha.

On my paternal side I am descended from Irish immigrants. The Irish were also colonized by the English and the remnants of this bitter colonial past remain as one of the intricate historical complexities for Irish identity just as it does for Māori identity.¹¹ The meaning of Irishness and how the Irish negotiate a path between conflicting cultures and the Catholic and Protestant traditions, the two languages of Gaelic Irish and Anglo Irish, are complicated enough for the Irish in Ireland. For those of us who are Irish in our heritage but for whom Ireland remains terra incognita, or unknown territory, a sense of being Irish is further compounded by our fragmented

¹¹ In her study of letters written by nineteenth-century Irish immigrants in New Zealand to their families in Ireland, McCarthy (2000) found that a minority sympathised with displaced Māori and saw parallels with the Land War in Ireland. However, despite the shared history of oppression, land loss and being the butt of racist jokes, McCarthy’s research found that the majority of Irish immigrants appeared to hold an adverse attitude towards Māori.
knowledge of the traditions, landscape and culture of our Irish ancestry. The location of an Irish immigrant identity within my own sense of self is intrinsically linked with the bond I had with my Irish grandmother. I was named after her, our birthdays were two days apart and we shared a deep emotional and psychological connection. My grandmother's Irishness was symbolized by her distinctly Irish form of Catholicism and her pride in her Irish roots. Her Irish identity was incorporated into her day-to-day activities through such activities as playing Irish music and baking Irish soda bread and, of course, her deference to the Priest who presided over ‘Our Lady of the Star of the Sea’, the Catholic church she attended in Howick, an eastern suburb of Auckland. The construction of a distinctly Irish form of Catholicism has been a significant aspect of Irish identity generated through the Irish diaspora. This particular type of Catholicism was possibly developed as a means of resistance to English colonization. Within this strand of Catholicism there was often a deep sense of social justice, a desire for equality, and staunch support of the Labour movement and humanitarian rights.\textsuperscript{12}

While Betty did not have an Irish whakapapa she nevertheless identified strongly with Catholicism which in New Zealand was very heavily influenced by Irish priests, missionaries, nuns and religious orders and congregations of mainly Irish origins.

In popular images of Māori and Irish, both peoples are frequently constructed as renowned storytellers with strong oral traditions and a love of language, poetry and music. While such generalisations may seem romanticised, within contemporary Irish society the storyteller continues to be highly respected and is called a \textit{seanchai}\textsuperscript{13} (T. McCluskey, personal communication, March 28, 1998). Similarly, keepers of stories within Māori

\textsuperscript{12} For an overview on the Irish Diaspora and the influence of Catholicism on the construction of Irish identity refer to Bielenberg (2000) and Whelan (1996).

\textsuperscript{13} seanchai (pronounced shanna-chee).
society are very much respected by Māori and are known as kaipurakau. My appreciation of the power of narrative stems from listening to the stories both my grandmothers told me and being taught to read as a preschooler - carefully tutored by my schoolteacher mother. Stories, whether they be oral or written, offer unique insights into our lives. As Trinh (1989) states:

The simplest vehicle of truth, the story is also said to be a ‘phase of communication’, the ‘natural form for revealing life’. Its fascination may be explained by its power both to give a vividly felt insight into the life of other people and to revive or keep alive the forgotten, dead-ended, turned-into-stone parts of ourselves (p. 123).

The biographical text of Betty Wark's life provided a vehicle for her to reflect on who she was and where she had come from. As her story unfolded that 'dead-ended, turned-into-stone part' of herself opened up, revealing deeply concealed insights into the motivation for her life's work.

**Claiming a Mixed-blood Māori-Pakeha Identity**

Identifying as having a mixed cultural heritage was another bond which Betty and I shared. Historically, interracial marriages or relationships and children of such unions have been viewed with hostility by both sides of the union.

Alice Te Punga Somerville (1998) writes about the mixed ethnicity of Māori and Pakeha in a poetic and affirming way by declaring, ‘two rivers within me flow’. I tautoko (support) her metaphor as encapsulating the reality of mixed parentage. As the American rock star Lenny Kravitz states:

You don’t have to deny the White side of you if you’re mixed. Accept the blessings of having the advantage of having two cultures, but understand that you are Black. In this world, if you have one spot of Black blood, you are Black! (as cited in Hoyles, 1999, p. 14).

Kravitz’s statement has just as much impact for Māori as it does for African Americans. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, if 'you have one spot of Māori blood,
you are Māori’. For many Māori, but by no means all, it does not mean you have to deny your Pakeha side, but it does imply taking an important political position, as identifying as Māori is a strategy of survival. Betty certainly believed this to be so and the theme of cultural survival is apparent throughout her narrative.

The theme of ‘mixed-blood’ is a relatively enduring theme in New Zealand writing. Māori writer Harry Dansey (1978) is one author who has attempted to define the general attributes and specific problems of New Zealanders of mixed-blood. Dansey distinguishes between what he terms the ‘brown Pakeha’, someone who may look Māori but accentuates the European side of her/his identity, and the ‘white Māori’, someone who is European in appearance but who accentuates the Māori side of their identity. Being neither Māori nor Pakeha, yet both, can be referred to as ‘passing’, the process whereby a person of one race, gender, nationality, or sexual orientation adopts the guise of another. The discourse of race passing traditionally assumes a black/white binary and a related class system (Ginsberg, 1996). Passing is not simply about erasure or denial, but rather about the creation and establishment of an alternative set of narratives. It becomes a way of creating new stories out of unusable ones, or from personal narratives seemingly in conflict with other aspects of self-presentation (Schlossberg, 2001).

Within contemporary Māori society, Dansey’s definitions of Māori identity have been considerably expanded upon. Contemporary Māori assert greater control over the ways in which we define our identity and represent ourselves and personal narratives. The demographic situation within modern-day New Zealand society is that many Māori descend from mixed bloodlines. This has resulted in narratives where a definition of Māori identity will not only recognize dual and multiple bloodlines, but will also struggle with ways in which a distinct culture can be maintained within an increasingly mixed-blood Māori population (Allen, 2002). Blood narratives are inevitably controversial as they often raise disturbing issues centred on
racism and genocide, and also raise questions about how to define contemporary indigenous identities (Allen, 2002). Nevertheless, the discursive power and symbolic association of ‘blood’ narratives are an integral element within constructions of viable contemporary indigenous identities. For Māori, there is a link to an enduring sense of connectedness through whakapapa. Betty’s sense of self was certainly articulated through blood narratives, and as her activism increased, so too did her recognition that she could claim an authentic indigenous status. For example, as Betty described her early association with the Māori Women’s Welfare League she talked about how she wanted to learn about things Māori and be with Māori people. She venerated the kuia (older women) who mentored her and they became role models. They validated her authenticity as Māori and reinforced her cultural identity as Māori.

Cultural categories may be used as membership categorisation devices and provide narrative resources for constructing stories of the self (Bell & Hawkes, 1987; Hutching, 1993; Marks, 1989; Shostak, 1981). A cultural category which dominates Betty’s biographical narrative is her ethnic identity as Māori. Being Māori was both a received cultural category in terms of race and a device for membership categorisation in terms of self identity as belonging to a particular ethnic group. Love (1999) raises several concerns about cultural categorisations pertaining to Māori. She argues:

Definitions of Māori based on the concept of ‘Māori culture’ are genocidal because the culture concept is predicated on a conceptualization of ‘Māori culture’ as learned, and as measurable in relation to and in comparison with Western constructions of ‘traditional (pre-European) Māori culture’. Thus, there is an assumption that one can ‘have’ or possess the culture to a greater or lesser degree (pp. 54-57).

Love (1999) proposes that “Western conceptions of ‘group based’ identity are based on conceptions of collectives of individual selves who have particular common denominators as perceived and defined by Western describers” (p.
Love’s argument raises one of the central difficulties for Māori utilising Western research methodology, namely the negotiation between Western and Māori conceptualizations and perspectives on race, ethnicity and culture.

As Betty’s narration of the self drew from her cultural category as Māori it was important to incorporate Māori constructions of the self into the overall analysis of her narrative. Jean Smith (1981) describes a ‘conventional’ Māori view of the self as being determined by inherited status, variable relationships with the whanau and hapu and also with the atua (gods). Autonomy of the self in traditional Māori society, Smith (1981) argues, was thus limited by conditions outside of the individual’s control. Paradoxically, though, the individual was something of an anathema to Māori, or more specifically, self-contained individualism was. Māori constructions and narratives of selfhood privileged the collective over the individual. In the conventional Māori view, a man/woman could only be someone inside her/his kin group, outside it she/he was no one (Smith, 1981).

Māori constructions and narratives of selfhood, Love (1999) argues, tend to be based on conceptualizations of whakapapa as the foundation of being, a conceptualization which defines Papatuanuku as spiritual mother and source of spiritual and temporal sustenance:

Whakapapa-based stories of selfhood do not rely on division, fractionalisation or learning to attain their coherence. Whakapapa-based stories are centred around themes of physical and spiritual genealogy. The emphasis in these stories is on connection and inclusion. Within a whakapapa narrative, genealogical ties determine the nature of our being and provide roles, responsibilities, purpose and identity. Within this narrative, a group that is not genealogically based, and therefore without an ultimate relationship to the land, carries no accountability to the past and no responsibilities to the future (p. 72).

Traditionally, selfhood for Māori was indivisible from land, whakapapa and the spiritual system which governed the Māori world (Love, 1999). In
contemporary Māori society, such whakapapa-based concepts of the self stemming from whanau, hapu and iwi narratives continue as the basis of Māori selfhood.

**Scope of Literature Review**

An extensive literature review was necessary due to the scope of each of the Sections. In Section One the literature review focused on the theoretical underpinnings of the research including: biography and narrative as research, life histories, personal narratives, biography, women's biography, Māori biography (and also considerations of autobiography, particularly for women of colour) as literary genres. In addition it was necessary to review literatures on biographical methods, feminist methods, methodologies and epistemologies with an emphasis on Māori feminist perspectives. Such an extensive literature review indicates the capacity of biographical research to employ a variety of analytical and interpretative material from various disciplines, particularly the social sciences and humanities:

The researcher in biographical studies in calling upon a wide range of analytical perspectives is likely, in studying selves, to be constantly reminded that they are not in a closed circle of interpretation (Erben, 1998, p. 16).

Section Two called for an appropriate analysis and interpretation of the biographical data, and again an extensive literature review was required. The biography sought to locate and contextualize Betty’s life, as a prominent Māori woman, in relation to specific discourses concerning such issues as: identity, schooling, work, cultural space and kinship. The life-course stages of childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, midlife and older age were explored, particularly as they related to women. Life-course experiences of education, marriage, mothering and work were also carefully considered and the complexities of the relationship between gender, class and race was also addressed. Consequently, the literature review focused on a diverse selection of readings including: Māori women, key events in Māori history, race relations and the social history of New Zealand relevant to Betty’s life.
span (1924-2001), notions of family, whanau, kinship for Māori, education and sociology of girls’ schooling with particular emphasis on Māori girls, paid and unpaid work for women, public and private lives of women, mothering and spirituality as it related to Betty (specifically Catholicism and Māori spirituality).

**Themes and Biographical Subjects – Audience Considerations**

The biographical researcher will invariably acknowledge the researched life or lives as emerging from a diverse collage including beliefs, behavioural practices and cultural meanings, the interpretation of which will depend on the research purpose and what is required to be accented or developed (Gluck & Patai, 1991, Hutching, 1993; Lummis, 1987). Generally, several dominant themes will emerge as being central to the narrator’s life, and historical and reference material will be determined by what themes or issues the researcher decides to focus on. The selection of the themes or issues is likely to be influenced by the narrator’s preferences, the researcher's field of expertise and research interests, and the relationship created by the two. The availability of the literature and other resources may also have a bearing on deciding which themes will be explored in depth. Several major themes emerged in Betty Wark’s biography including notions of home, cultural space and mothering, and these underpin the biographical text and the annotated reflections in Section Two.

The subject matter of the biographical method is the life experiences of an individual or individuals. Biographical research is suited to the examination of single or small populations requiring in-depth, qualitative modes of investigation such as the in-depth interview. The mode of disclosure characteristic of biographical research will be more textually extensive than that conventionally representative of quantitative procedures (Burns, 1989; Denzin, 1989; Erben, 1998). However, while the number of respondents may be relatively modest in biographical research,
the demands made upon the readers of the research will involve a degree of vicarious participation not required in quantitative research. Such research validates the participation and potentiality of eventual consensus of its merits amongst those readers and peers for whom the investigation is thought to be of relevance and interest (Burns, 1989; Denzin, 1989; Erben, 1998). There are several groups of potential readers and peers for whom the biographical research project of Betty Wark’s life could have relevance and interest. These groups include: Betty’s whanau, personal friends and colleagues, residents and former residents of Arohanui Incorporated; and readers interested in Māori women and social history of Aotearoa/New Zealand, contemporary biography, narrative and biography as research and feminist scholarship.

The Theme of Home

The theme of home recurs throughout the thesis, both literally and metaphorically. The allusion to ‘writing ourselves home’ is intended to convey a sense of how writing about lives and the lived experiences of biographical subjects can express notions of home and cultural space. Throughout Betty’s biographical narrative, her articulation of a Māori identity is intertwined with the metaphor of home. The metaphor of home is one of the most emotionally complex and resonant concepts in our psychic vocabularies. Home is associated with the most influential, and often most ambivalent, elements of our earliest physical, environmental and psychological experiences (Rubenstein, 2001). Writing ourselves ‘home’ alludes to writing the emotional space that is associated with ‘belonging and not belonging’, ‘being home’ and ‘not being home’. For Betty this was especially poignant as her early life was virtually void of a supportive family and home life. When she finally achieved a stable home and family environment in her mid-life she left this sanctuary in order to establish a positive ‘home’ environment for at risk youth, many of whom were homeless. Read within the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand, writing ourselves home
also refers to the experiences of colonization and specific Māori histories and her-stories of oppression and resistance.

**Conceptualizing Biographical Research Methodology**

The construction and analysis of biographical texts will involve the collection of data documenting an individual’s life and describing various 'turning-point' moments in that life. The biographer, whether in consultation with the subject or not, can choose to include material that reflects the underlying reason and motivation for the research or she/he can make a decision to exclude material that seems irrelevant or unnecessary. The guiding feature of biographical research is that it attempts to suit its method to a purpose. The specific purpose of the research will be the analysis of a particular life or lives for some designated reason (Burns, 1989; Denzin, 1989; Erben, 1998). The purpose for which biographical research was required for this thesis was to investigate the route by which the subject, Betty Wark, came to undertake her work with young people termed ‘at risk’. The research sought to explore the various motivational factors which underpinned her vocational choice and it also sought to contextualize her life within a cultural, historical social setting as well as personal. From the onset the research was intended as an investigation into an individual’s life experience, although collective experiences of and the metaphor of 'home' to Māori women generally were also considered, particularly with reference to Māori women’s experiences of the marae. However, the main focus was on one individual and her conceptualization of her life experiences and the various life paths she undertook.

The biographical method allowed considerable scope for analysis due to its inherent narrative component. Biographical methodology was also seen as a particularly appropriate form in which to carry out research into women’s lives. Biographical research is a valuable method for making visible the interplay between women’s experiences and social structure and exposing the “production of obscurity” (Thompson, 1997, p. ii), which argues that
women’s lives tend not to get the same attention as men’s lives do. For women of colour there is a *dual* ‘production of obscurity’ as they have been doubly written out of history due to both race and gender. For Māori women there is another layer of complexity. In pre-European times high-ranking women were included in tribal stories, waiata (song) and the like while non-chiefly women were not. After colonization both groups of women tended to be subjected to a ‘production of obscurity’ through the androcentric and racist lens of the colonial gaze.

**Telling Stories – Documents of Life**

Biographies rest on stories, narrative accounts of how something happened (Backscheider, 1999; Burns, 1989; Denzin, 1989). Stories take the forms of texts which can be studied and analysed. They consist of narratives with a plot and story line and they contain a set of justifications or reasons for its telling. The biographical method can be defined as the telling and inscribing of stories by creating literary, narrative accounts and representations of lived experiences. It is a qualitative research method studying what Denzin (1989) terms “documents of life” which describe turning-point moments in individual lives. Documents of life may include: diaries, letters, personal experience stories, personal histories, existing autobiographies and biographies, obituaries, videos, films, photographs, postcards, family trees, whakapapa, official records and oral histories. Documents of life are invariably excellent sources for women’s history and biography and autobiography. Lensink (1990) for example suggests that rich sources for autobiographical texts reside in ordinary women’s diaries.

A woman writing ‘herself’ is a recurrent theme in woman’s auto/biographical writing (Heilbrun, 1997). Autobiography has distinct features which distinguish it from biography. Autobiography pertains to the narrative account of a person’s life that she/he has personally written, whereas biography refers to the narrative account of a person’s life, as written by
another, reconstructed mainly through interviews (if the subject is accessible and cooperative) or, in the case of deceased subjects, through records and archives (Angrosino, 1989). While the central focus in this thesis is on biography, it was nevertheless pertinent to include occasional references to autobiography which has been an important genre for women’s writing, particularly that by women of colour and lesbian women who were further marginalised due to their sexuality or race.

Historically, women’s writing emerged from those forms in which a woman could write about ‘herself’ for personal satisfaction and self-discovery. Letter writing, for example, was a medium where women could declare their psychological being relatively freely (Heilbrun, 1997). Letters were a vehicle where a woman’s relationship with language could be given expression. Letters, as with diaries, however, can be misleading and are not always the most reliable proof of ‘fact’. They can give impressions of a fleeting mood and aid a biographer in the construction of a psychological profile, but it is also important to identify alternative sources of information (Backscheider, 1999).

Letters have frequently supplied authors with material for biography and they can also provide a valuable and interesting insight into the life and times of a previous era. Within the colonial context of New Zealand, the correspondence of missionaries, missionary wives and various other settlers has proved an invaluable resource for historical biographers, obvious examples being Judith Binney’s (1968) biography, *The Legacy of Guilt: A Life of Thomas Kendall* and Lady Barker’s (1870/1991) autobiography, *Station Life in New Zealand*.

The biographical data for Betty Wark’s biography was principally collected through interviews with Betty, her family, friends and colleagues, residents
and former residents of Arohanui Incorporated\textsuperscript{14}. Other primary sources included unpublished sources such as: correspondence, reports and newsletters relating to Arohanui Incorporated, letters written from former Arohanui residents to Betty, personal experience stories and photographs, Māori tribal history and whakapapa. Published sources included newspaper and magazine articles about Betty and the work of Arohanui Incorporated, and after her death, several obituaries. Other media sources such as television documentaries and radio interviews were also useful ‘documents of life’ sources.

Validation and Ethical Issues

Biographical research promotes the participation and consensus of those for whom the investigation has relevance and interest, but it must also encompass the subject. His or her approval, sanction and authorisation of the biography can be the decisive validation for the researcher (Angrosino, 1989). The biography of Betty Wark represented the life of a Māori woman who has been described as a “national treasure” by the media (Booth, 1990). The contributions she made to the community of Central Auckland are an important testament to the work of all Māori women who are attempting to provide practical and positive alternatives for a growing number of Māori youth who have found themselves living on the fringes of society as a pariah class. The importance of this work is valid enough reason for research consideration. The biographical research project also gave its subject an opportunity to present her own story, to examine what motivated her to expend so much of her emotional and physical energy on helping others and to reflect on factors in her own life which led her down the particular path she chose.

\textsuperscript{14} Arohanui Incorporated was initiated in 1976. Its main purpose was to provide accommodation for people in need. As it evolved more young people used its services, particularly street kids. Betty was one of the founders of Arohanui Incorporated and one of the first house-mothers.
Throughout the writing of her biography, each chapter was returned to Betty for comment, and she approved and authorised each chapter. The interviews provided the context for this dialogue which would occur at the beginning of each interview. Any particularly sensitive material was discussed prior to writing and decisions were made on how such material was to be presented. Dialogue between researcher and researched is characteristic of feminist research, irrespective of the research process (Smith & Noble-Spruell, 1986). As a research process, biographical research has the potential to be situated from within a feminist perspective as it achieves what Duelli Klein (1983) suggests feminist research should do: it promotes women’s visibility and it take women’s needs, interests and experiences into account.

Betty was delighted with each of the chapters she read. She commended the integration of footnotes and annotated reflections as she felt these stylistic techniques gave the reader useful reference points and further information without disturbing the text relating to her life. She enjoyed reading her direct quotations and seeing them contained within a narrative, and she was fascinated to read what other informants had said about her and her work. Ultimately the biographical researcher’s primary obligation is always to the subjects studied, not to the project or a larger discipline:

> The lives and stories that we hear and study are given to us under a promise, that promise being that we protect those who have shared with us. And, in return, this sharing will allow us to write life documents that speak to the human dignity, the suffering, the hopes, the dreams, the lives gained, and the lives lost by the people we study (Denzin, 1989, p. 83).

Betty’s biography was written with an acute sense of responsibility towards her and the greatest respect for all that she disclosed and shared. As in any research project, ethical considerations are of the utmost importance but research on women generally, and Māori women in particular, may present further ethical considerations. For example, a researcher will need to
consider whether the purpose of the research is to uphold the interests and the mana (prestige and status) of Māori women (and indeed Māori men). Preferably, research for Māori will be for the betterment of iwi, hapu and Māori communities generally and will be based on Māori models of research (Cram, 1993).

In research about women it is pertinent to consider collective as well as individual interests (Finch, 1984). In research for and about Māori women, consideration of the collective as well as individual interests is even more important. Māori are a communal people and biographical research, although usually focused on one individual, will ultimately represent more than the biographical subject. It will also represent his or her whakapapa, whanau, iwi, hapu and community. The outcome of such practices is ultimately, validation and authorisation of the project.

**Issues Around Methodology and the In-Depth Interview**

One of the advantages of biographical research is that the diversity that forms the life of the subject will guide researchers against too rigid a methodology (Erben, 1998). Too concentrated a focus on research techniques can dull the understanding of the relationship between method and the purpose of the investigation. The individual in-depth interview can be regarded as the essential research technique for biographical research into living subjects. It is, as Burns (1989) suggests, the most appropriate method for "experiencing the experiences of other" (p. 95), one of the definitions of qualitative research.

The interview can be a powerful force for revelation and disclosure (Douglas, 1985). Certainly, revelation through the interview is an advantageous outcome, as one of the aims of biographical research is to emphasise the experiences of an individual and provide an insider’s view of her or his life and culture. This is not to suggest, however, that the researcher is
somehow eliciting hitherto unknown or suppressed information from the subject without their acknowledgment or consent. Within the context of the biographical research discussed in Section Two, the interview sessions were viewed as having the potential for personal revelations that would assist in conveying some of the complexities of the subject’s life and also research into Māori women’s lives generally. The interview context with Betty was informal and sociable, with each of the interviews being conducted at the subject’s home. Other informants were also interviewed in their own homes.

It can be beneficial for the interview to take place in the natural context of the activities that are going to be discussed, as the interview discussion is likely to be more realistic and information about the context can enrich the interview (Drever, 1995). Betty’s home was also her work environment as she lived at Arohanui Trust Incorporated as a house-mother. Basing the interview setting at Arohanui was appropriate, not only assisting Betty to feel confident and relaxed in her own territory, but also allowing her to point out various activities that took place on site rather than relying on her memory and powers of description. Extraneous noise and disturbances such as being called away to the telephone by other Arohanui workers and residents, were in the main avoided by conducting the interviews in the privacy of Betty’s living quarters. All interviews were audio-taped with Betty’s permission and she was given the transcripts of each session to check for accuracy.

The interview sessions were semi-structured as a general topic outline had been decided upon in advance, in consultation with Betty, during the planning stage of the research proposal. The ethics and politics of women interviewing women acknowledge that ‘shared experiences’ can be advantageous from the point of view of the researcher (Finch, 1984). Betty and I shared several experiences, the most significant of these was our mixed identity as both Māori and Pakeha, our having a Catholic heritage, and also we were both mothers. While generational differences impacted on
the ways we experienced our commonalities, there were nevertheless enough similarities to create a feeling of connection and empathy.

The special character of the woman-to-woman interview also offered an additional dimension of a shared structural position and personal identification:

The ease with which one can get women to talk in the interview situation depends not so much upon one’s skills as an interviewer, nor upon one’s expertise as a sociologist, but upon one’s identity as a woman (Finch, 1984, p. 78).

Finch (1984) found her experiences shared by other women researchers who had reported that interviewees wanted to ‘place’ them as women with whom they could share experiences. This argument can also be developed to encompass the special character of the Māori woman to Māori woman interview, which again has the additional dimension of a shared cultural position and ethnic identification. Being ‘placed’ as a woman was certainly important to the interview situation between Betty and myself, but what was more important was being ‘placed’ as a Māori woman. Indeed, I would argue that our common bond as wahine Māori was central to conducting successful interviews. Despite our differences in age, iwi and hapu and divergent life experiences, our individual positioning as Māori gave a degree of commonality that went beyond gender. Such a positioning can be accounted for in terms of whakapapa:

For Māori women there exists a finely tuned balance between the individual and the whanau. As individuals, we each have a place in terms of whakapapa and within whakapapa we are each connected to all those past and present (Pihama, 1993, p. 37).

The connection Betty and I experienced as sharing a Māori identity was underpinned by an epistemology based on Māori tikanga (customary practices, obligations, behaviours) that took into account the importance of a collective vision and the importance of communalism and kinship to Māori.
In the context of biographical research this sense of connection and identification through whakapapa resulted in a conscious partiality:

The postulate of value free research, of neutrality and indifference towards the research objects, has to be replaced by conscious partiality, which is achieved through partial identification with the research objects (Mies, 1983, p. 122).

While identification and connections through whakapapa should result in conscious partiality for Māori women researchers engaged in research for Māori women, such identification is also likely to result in the vertical relationship between researcher and research subjects being replaced by a relationship based on Māori societal practices. In the case of Betty Wark, her status as kuia positioned her in a hierarchical position to myself, her teina (junior). Implicit in the tuakana (senior) and teina (junior) relationship within the context of Māori research is the likelihood of the tuakana becoming a mentor and providing tautoko to the teina, whether the tuakana be the researcher or the research participant. For example, as Betty’s teina I not only deferred to her as an elder, but also felt I was in an ideal position to be mentored by her and to learn from her.

Throughout the biographical research project of Betty Wark’s life, the interview situation was approached with an awareness that it provided a strategy for the documentation of Betty’s account of her life and an opportunity for promoting a sociology for women, or more specifically Māori women. That is, it made possible the articulated and recorded commentary of a Māori woman on the very personal business of being female and Māori in a patriarchal, capitalist and racist world. The interview sessions were arranged into themes that reflected this underlying kaupapa (philosophy).

Feminist Perspective of the Interview Sessions

Biography written from a feminist perspective, whatever that theoretical perspective might be, is also concerned with locating the subject’s life within a broader social, political and intellectual context. Elizabeth Wood Ellem
(1999), while writing about the life of Queen Sālote of Tonga, demonstrated the often intimate play of politics and the personal life of Sālote. There has also been a concern with exploring the everyday relationships between the public and the private and the economic and social position of women, not just those in positions of power and influence (Hannam 1997). A chronological framework can assist with such goals but the adoption of a more thematic approach to writing biography may also assist in conveying the complexities of women’s lives. The kaleidoscope image utilised by Liz Stanley (1987) is a useful method for thinking about themes in women’s lives and how these themes interrelate and overlap. The general themes of the interview structures took into account the kaleidoscopic image. There was an acknowledgment that themes would overlap and interrelate and that other themes would emerge as the interviews progressed.

While the interviews were situated within the context of biographical research, it is important to emphasise the feminist perspective that underpinned the research project. Feminist scholars have been mindful that traditional research within the social sciences was systematically male biased and inappropriate for feminist research. Biographical research and feminist research are relatively compatible. Both rely extensively on the in-depth, structured or semi-structured interview, both oppose an inflexible view of methodology and research techniques and both are committed to rigorous analysis. The key difference about feminist research and other types of research is that gender is always present as a feature of feminist research: "For feminists of all theoretical persuasions, gender is the issue. Uncovering the nature of gender relations and reconceptualising them are key concerns of the feminist project" (James, 1986, p. 18).

Gender had a crucial bearing on the research component of this thesis. The project raises specific issues about gender stemming from both my experiences as a woman and Betty Wark’s experiences. Notions of race and ethnic identity also had a crucial bearing on the research project, again
stemming from both my own and Betty’s experiences as Māori women. Constructions of gender, race and ethnicity added a further dimension to the theme of identity and provide a theoretical filter through which to view the narrative history of Betty’s life.

Issues of gender, race and ethnicity in relation to the discursive production of Betty’s identity as a Māori woman were based on her personal experiences. Discussing the personal within feminist research, Stanley and Wise (1989) state:

We believe that feminist social science must begin with the recognition that ‘the personal’, lived experience, underlies all behaviours and actions. We need to re-claim, name and re-name our experience and thus our knowledge of this social world that we live in and daily help to construct, because only by doing so will it become truly ours, ours to use and do with as we will (p. 205).

Betty’s narrative, her self-perceptions and self-identity were based on her personal and lived experience. The exploration into the personal is one of the great strengths of both feminist and biographical research. Biographical research, when informed by a feminist theoretical perspective, gives a voice to women’s lives, lives which have previously been obscured in sociological research.

Representational Considerations

As Betty’s biographer, the way I chose to represent her was affected by various historical and sociological influences. Of particular relevance was the historical and sociological impact of the Māori renaissance (Awatere, 1984; Belich, 2001). How Māori are represented within the media and literature has been of considerable concern to many Māori scholars and Māori who work within the media (Hoskins, 2000b; Pihama, 1994; Smith, 2001). Māori have tended to be constructed as the brown ‘other’ and several common stereotypes have been identified including: the comic Other, the
quintessential warrior and the Māori activist (Wall, 1995). Betty’s portrayal within the media was generally very positive and she is represented throughout the biographical narrative in a positive and indeed, celebratory manner. This style of representation was a conscious decision and reflects an underlying kaupapa of representing Māori in their best interests:

Representation of indigenous peoples by indigenous people is about countering the dominant society’s image of indigenous peoples, their lifestyles and belief systems. It is also about proposing solutions to the real-life dilemmas that indigenous communities confront and trying to capture the complexities of being indigenous (Smith, 2001, p. 151).

Representation of Māori by non-Māori writing about Māori has frequently raised concern amongst many Māori (Wall, 1995). This is not to denigrate some of the excellent portrayals of Māori subjects by Pakeha biographers, particularly Michael King’s biographies of Princess Te Puea (1977) and Dame Whina Cooper (1983). While Betty respected many Pakeha writers and biographers she felt that a non-Māori would not have the insight and cultural understanding of a Māori author. Differences in the ways a Māori or non-Māori author would represent a biographical subject are debatable, yet there is undeniably a collectivization of Māori experience that an outsider would not have access to. The experience of racism is an obvious example. Articulating such experiences through both individual and group histories can create a greater awareness of the historical and political struggles Māori face: "Documenting and analyzing past struggles through the construction of individual and group histories can lead to the development of more sophisticated long-term strategies for social change" (Cook & Fonow, 1991, p. 6).

Issues around representation of Māori are frequently political, especially for women. The misrepresentation of women by men has, through the centuries, been one of the main means of sustaining and justifying women’s subordinate position (Morris, 1993). Early feminist critiques of the
representation of women within popular culture generally identified that most women tended to be represented through stereotypes of femininity and such representations needed to be redressed by making more ‘realistic’ representations of women available (Marshment, 1997). Social movements such as feminism throughout the world, the civil rights movement in the United States and the Māori renaissance in New Zealand have employed a reflective model of representation which demands a more accurate reflection of society as a whole. Such a model also encompasses the under-represented: the working-class, lesbian and gay communities and peoples of colour (Marshment, 1997). Consideration of issues around representation are valuable in highlighting both the experiences of the individual subject and the social structure in which she/he lives(d) and also those of the biographer. Representational considerations also highlight tensions within the dominant constructions of gender, race and class.

How biographers choose to represent their subjects is complex. Typifications about masculinity and femininity, for example, are central to the biographer’s constructions. Definitions of biography need to account for such constructions and to acknowledge the huge variety of biographical representations. Biographies are more than stories in which the life of an individual is narrated. They are representations of an individual’s life, shaped in certain ways to conform to a particular genre or storyline or master-narrative. Biographies are also about the ‘times’ which moulded the subject’s life and they are culturally constitutive, documenting the processes of social and cultural change.

The Problem of Authorised Biography

Section One grapples with two streams – biography as genre and biography as ‘method’, each of which is discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters. While the practice of biography as either method or genre can be viewed as an eclectic enterprise drawing on a range of approaches, the
The biographical narrative of Betty Wark presented in Section Two is essentially an authorised biography. It is also an attempt to provide an example of what might constitute a Māori feminist biographical text. Invariably this kaupapa is problematic as it requires an approach that is both consistent with and sustaining of a Kaupapa Māori and a Māori feminist framework. For example, it is suggested that Māori feminism promotes the resurgence of mana wahine Māori by raising awareness of the accomplishments of Māori women through the use of her-stories and the like, and to uphold the interests and the mana of Māori women. Such an approach inevitably raises questions of what material a biographer will choose to privilege and what material she/he will choose to underplay or exclude if it does not contribute to the subject's mana. Such a dilemma is not necessarily confined to the production of Māori biography. As Barry (1992) argues, feminist biography has sought to redefine the meaning of being a woman and discover what masculine history has suppressed.

The emerging genre of women's biography must be based on a search for women's subjectivity, where the subject becomes known to us through her actions and her history. History becomes a dynamic active force revealed in the present, acting on the future (Barry, 1992, p. 33).

Similarly, Māori feminist biography needs to access Māori women's subjectivity in an attempt to redefine the meaning of being a Māori woman. Such a kaupapa also acknowledges the complex discursive field which has historically been dominated by negative representations of Māori and sets out to redress such representations.

The methodological approach in the biographer/subject relationship where draft chapters were submitted to Betty for her consideration could potentially have been problematic if disagreements had occurred. As Betty's teina (junior) I would have had to defer to her. Nevertheless, the
acknowledgment of this relationship was consistent with a Māori kaupapa and called for a Māori mode of working which emphasized Betty's mana and also worked within the implicit agreement of biographer/subject. It was also consistent with the practice of collaborative research endorsed by feminist research.

The drawbacks of a collaborative research approach to authorised biography include the possibility of limiting the degree of critical distance which could prevent exploration of areas to which the subject might be resistant or unaware. There is also the potential for disagreement with the subject about the way aspects of her life are represented, particularly if other people offer conflicting views. Francis and Gontier (1987) discuss such limitations in the introduction to their authorised biography of Simone de Beauvoir:

When it came to writing a biography of Simone de Beauvoir, we knew it would not be an easy task. We were aware of twilight zones and topics that were taboo. We had discovered that she had wilfully blurred some parts of her life or reconstructed the circumstances surrounding people who were dear to her. Several times working on Les Écrits she had said, 'What I am telling you should not be printed, keep it off the record.' Disturbing questions sprung to our minds: could we write an objective biography? De Beauvoir had written her autobiography in four big volumes; would she let us use facts she had intentionally omitted? Would we be free to give our own interpretation based on our research? (p. xii)

Issues similar to those described by Francis and Gontier (1987) were also apparent in the writing of Betty Wark's biographical text. Certain topics were taboo and certain disclosures were made 'off the record'. For the most part, these involved intimate details about Betty's life which were private to her. While they undoubtedly affected her life, the motivation to parade them in print appears voyeuristic. Having been privy to many of these personal details I was able to include the substance of those which were relevant without revealing personal details of Betty's life in a tabloid manner.
Despite the limitations of the double bind of writing an authorised biography informed by Kaupapa Māori and Māori feminism, the benefits of this approach outweighed the drawbacks. The intent of Betty Wark's narrative history was that it be an accurate and sensitive narrative of her life without being a sanitised version. While there may have been restraints as to the methods we employed by adhering to a Kaupapa Māori and Māori feminist framework, to take a different approach would have been culturally inappropriate.
Biographical Research as an Appropriate Methodology
For Māori Feminist Research

Chapter Two provides a general discussion on the appropriateness of the biographical research methodology for Māori feminist research. It lays the foundation for the biographical project, and should be read within the wider context of Māori feminist scholarship. It has been written with the explicit intention that it contributes to the wider kete (basket) of knowledge being produced by Māori researchers. Such a position can pose a dilemma for Māori academics, grappling with concurrent agendas - how to satisfy the academy and how to satisfy the Māori community. Ultimately however, when writing from a Māori standpoint, the Māori perspective will dominate and will come to represent the 'heart' of the work, as is the case of this chapter.

Māori feminism and Kaupapa Māori research practices form the theoretical underpinning of the thesis and Chapter Two contains substantial discussion on these areas. The chapter also locates the thesis within a research practice, method and methodology. It also explores several conceptual assumptions about biography and narrative as a research methodology, raising some of the key issues around interpreting experience and narrative analysis in biographical research.

Biographical Research and Māori Feminism

Biographical research methodology has considerable potential to be cross-fertilised with indigenous feminisms, methodologies and epistemologies. While the process of cross-fertilization ultimately creates a new hybrid of sorts, the notion of hybridity need not be viewed as problematic or corrupting (Connor, 1994). Drawing on the work of Bhabha in relation to the coloniser/colonised dichotomy, Hoskins (2001) argues:
Our rejection of hybridity suggests that we are unaware or unwilling to confront the extent to which this process has already occurred. The cultural threads which have survived, together with more recent struggles for cultural reclamation including Kaupapa/theory, suggest that, increasingly, Māori ontologies and epistemologies are claiming legitimacy in a growing number of contexts and spheres. As this process continues, Māori may be well positioned to regain Bhabha’s doubled vision as a means to both undermine the authority of dominant culture, and to engage productive potential of hybridity from a position of cultural strength (p. 83).

Weedon (1999) suggests the idea of cultural hybridity can challenge existing binary oppositions and hierarchies and can have a profound and empowering effect on the diaspora experience. She draws on the work of Black British feminist Heidi Safia Mirza to further illustrate her argument:

Cultural hybridity, the fusion of cultures and coming together of difference, the ‘border crossing’ that marks diasporic survival, signifies change, hope of newness, and space for creativity. But in the search for rootedness - a ‘place called home’ - these women, in the process of self-identification, dis-identify with an excluding, racist British colonizing culture. They articulate instead a multi-faceted discontinuous black identity that marks their difference (p. 196).

The search for 'rootedness and a place called home' are central themes in the narrative of Betty Wark and for many Māori. The metaphor of 'home' can also be extended to the context of academic research and Māori scholars are well positioned both to challenge the authority of dominant Western models of research and to engage with the productive potential of hybridity from a position of cultural strength (Hoskins, 2000a; Irwin, 1993; Mohanty, 1991). The struggles with developing research practice for Māori have centred around disrupting Western research models and legitimising Māori research models and epistemologies (Connor, 1994). Kaupapa Māori theory has been an influential contemporary philosophical perspective and many Māori scholars conceptualize it as being disruptive to Western notions of research and as validating and legitimising Māori knowledge and research. Kaupapa Māori theory as espoused by Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1997)
validates and privileges all things Māori. It is concerned with Māori struggles for autonomy and retention of te reo Māori (Māori language) and nga tikanga Māori (Māori culture)\(^1\).

Linda Tuhiwai Mead (1996) suggests that some of the key principles of Kaupapa Māori theory can be reframed in the context of research. To illustrate such potential reframing Mead (1996) outlines the principles of:

1. Whakapapa (a way of thinking, learning, storing knowledge, way of positioning for Māori in terms of iwi, landscape, creation of universe)
2. Te reo (Māori language - viewed as being absolutely crucial to the survival of Māori people)
3. Tikanga Māori (customary practices, obligations, behaviours)
4. Rangatiratanga (having control over one’s life)
5. Whanau (extended family, support structure) (pp. 210-220).

The five points outlined by Mead (1996) had particular relevance to the research into Betty Wark's narrative. Whakapapa positioned Betty as Māori in terms of iwi, and her papakainga. She identified very strongly with the landscape of the Hokianga region and this remained her literal and metaphorical home. This was despite the fact that a stable and safe home was largely absent in Betty's early life.

Betty also viewed te reo Māori and tikanga Māori as being absolutely crucial to the survival of Māori people. She was actively involved in setting up Hine Hou Kohanga Reo (Māori language nest) in 1989 and also

\(^1\) A Kaupapa Māori framework incorporates several elements of which there are six main principles for intervention and bringing about change which have particular pertinence to education. These key elements consist of: Tino rangatiratanga (relative autonomy principle); Taonga tuku iho (cultural aspirations principle); Ako Māori (culturally preferred pedagogy); Kia piki ake i nga raruraru o te kainga (mediation of socio-economic factors); Whanau (extended family/management principle); Kaupapa (collective vision principle) (Smith, 1997).
supported the Māori activist, Hannah Jackson when she was trying to initiate a Māori language day:

When I was working at the Advice Bureau Hannah Jackson came down and she was trying to make a Māori language day at the time. She used to walk the streets and say, 'Māori language day on September 14th and try and speak some Māori on that day'. And well today we have kohanga reo (B. Wark, personal communication October 4, 1996).

The principle of tikanga rangatiratanga (having control over one's life) was also an important element that Betty incorporated into her own life and also strove to teach the young people she worked with. For Betty tikanga rangatiratanga also incorporated Māori activism and becoming more aware of the Treaty of Waitangi and land issues:

I used to go up to Waitangi and protest about land confiscations and I was involved in the Māori Land March in 1975. I used to take the young people with me so they'd understand these issues (B. Wark, personal communication October 4, 1996).

The whanau was also an important element to Betty's story. Her work with youth at Arohanui Trust was essentially about creating a whanau support system albeit based on a non-kin family.

Betty's narrative can also be read as what Mead (1996) terms a Kaupapa Māori social research project as Māori cultural beliefs and values are woven throughout:

Kaupapa Māori research is a social project. It weaves in and out of Māori cultural beliefs and values, Western ways of knowing, Māori histories and experiences under colonialism, Western forms of education, Māori aspirations and socioeconomic needs, and Western forms of education (Mead, 1996, p. 208).

Biographical research methodologies draw from multidisciplinary approaches and have the potential to employ a Kaupapa Māori framework. As Mead (1996) points out, Kaupapa Māori research can 'weave' in and out
of both Māori and Western ways of knowing, and biographical research methodologies lend themselves well to such a process. At the same time, they have the potential to constitute a challenge to Western positivistic models of research. Writing about the feminist challenge to positivism, Mead (1996) advances the notion of the emancipatory potential of research for women, and discusses the importance of critiquing research methodologies and developing new methodologies and alternative ways of knowing. Central concerns for Māori feminist research have been to locate, develop and initiate appropriate methods, methodologies and epistemologies for research for and about Māori women and to acknowledge the problems of ‘voice’ and ‘visibility’ and ‘silence’ and ‘invisibility’ (Irwin, 1993; Johnston, 1998; Mead, 1996; Te Awekotuku, 1993). Research methodologies utilising biography and narrative are eminently suited to such endeavours. Biographical research gives a voice to the invisible, provides space for difference and the multiple experiences of what it means to be wahine Māori, and provides an avenue for representing our identity.

Kaupapa Māori research has four central features:

1. Is related to ‘being Māori’
2. Is connected to Māori philosophy and principles
3. Takes for granted the validity and legitimacy of Māori, the importance of Māori language and culture
4. Is concerned with ‘the struggle for autonomy over our own cultural well-being’ (Smith, 2001, p. 185).

Each of one of these four central features is incorporated into this thesis. Betty’s story is certainly related to ‘being Māori’. Her story discusses ‘being Māori’ and having a Māori cultural identity across a historical time frame from the 1930s until the beginning of the new millennium. The construction of ‘being Māori’ within differing historical and social contexts demonstrates the evolving place of Māori within Aotearoa/New Zealand, from periods of relative suppression during the years of assimilation and amalgamation
policies to the reclamation of Māori cultural identity during the Māori renaissance and beyond. Betty's story also incorporates the whakapapa links to both Māori and Pakeha tupuna (ancestors) and considers how she straddled the two worlds inhabited by those of mixed ethnic identity.

The thesis also demonstrates connections to Māori philosophy and principles, particularly with regard to an engagement with Māori feminist principles and Kaupapa Māori theory. It takes for granted the validity and legitimacy of things Māori and acknowledges the importance of Māori language and culture. Māori kupu hou (vocabulary) is liberally peppered throughout the thesis and there are several whakatauki (proverbs) in Section Two. Betty's story was also concerned with the struggle for autonomy over her own cultural well-being: "I wanted so much to learn about what it meant to be Māori. I wanted to understand what Māori was all about" (B. Wark, personal communication October 4, 1996). Her identity as Māori became one of the driving forces of her life and she also encouraged the Māori youth in her care to become more aware of their Māori identity.

Biographical research methodologies when situated in a framework supported by Māori feminism and Kaupapa Māori theory provide vehicles through which our diverse identities as Māori women can be articulated and asserted. Differences in iwi and hapu, socialisation in a variety of whanau contexts and geographic locations, sexuality, political affiliations, religious and spiritual beliefs, educational experiences, knowledge of te reo Māori and nga tikanga Māori and so on are all part of the experience of what it means to be wahine Māori. Biographical research provides the space where these differences can be celebrated while at the same time affirming our collective visions as Māori women.

Biographical methodology is a powerful research device for Māori women to utilise. Telling our stories and personal narratives constitutes a political act and is potentially transforming at both an individual and collective level.
(Etter-Lewis, 1991; Passerini, 1989; Watson & Smith, 1992). Biography and the use of personal narratives are empowering methods for telling those ‘histories from below’, the everyday histories of struggle and resistance. As with any methodology, biographical and narrative research practices have limitations. The method is best suited to small-scale, qualitative research though large-scale projects, particularly those seeking to tell collective stories, are not inconceivable with adequate funding (Erben, 1998). It would be naive to suggest that creating a space for Māori women’s voices to be articulated will automatically result in the long overdue transformation of the socio-political landscape of Aotearoa/New Zealand where Māori voices are validated and respected. Nevertheless, embedded within biographical methods are radical potentialities for making our differences as Māori women visible and for allowing us to define our lives and create our own social landscape.

Biographical research into the narratives of Māori women has the potential to reclaim and reinterpret both historical and contemporary issues of culture, gender, spirituality and conceptualisations of the self, as articulated by the biographical subject. Biographies produced by self-identified wahine Māori, women of colour and third world women challenge traditional Eurocentric theories of selfhood and sociality (Etter Lewis, 1991; Mohanty, 1991; Personal Narratives Group, 1989). Keating (1996) suggests the narratives produced in the biographies of women of colour and third world women do not focus exclusively on the development of a unified, individual self, but instead notions of collective selves are articulated which include socio-political and historical memories and generally, a spiritual dimension. Notions of a collective self including a spiritual component are also likely to occur in the narratives of Māori women. Potentially, such narratives are transformational for identity politics. The act of writing, of engaging with language that affirms and revitalises, opens up possibilities for change. Biographical writing has the potential to position its subject, the social actors contained in the text, on that threshold where a pluralized self can
evolve. A pluralized self-identity is, as Keating (1996) suggests, capable of interacting with many worlds. Writing a biographical subject as a flexible, evolving identity assumes complex speaking positions enabling points of similarity and difference among readers of diverse backgrounds. Writing Betty Wark as the biographical subject for example, enabled her to reflect on her evolving identity as a woman of mixed ethnic descent who came to position herself primarily as wahine Māori as she became more immersed in te ao Māori (the Māori world).

One of the tasks of a biographical narrative is to sort out themes and patterns, as opposed to mundane calendar events and dates (Edel, 1981). Such a task results in a struggle between a biographer and the subject to locate the concealed self and the revealed self, the public and the private and to work with these tensions with delicacy and skill. In Betty's narrative there was a focus on her public self. Yet her private self resides explicitly within the biographical text as that part of herself that motivated her to do the community work she became well known for. Other aspects of her private self are implicit and remain concealed.

Biographers can draw from those devices which have given narrative strength to fiction, such as flashbacks, retrospective chapters, summary chapters, jumps from childhood to maturity, and forays into the past (Edel, 1981). A biographer fashions their subject out of words utilising powers of observation and imagination. Language and writing style are thus crucial elements in the creative process of constructing biographical texts. While language and writing style are imperative to the textualization process, language is more than a mode of communication. Language can be viewed as a social discourse and culture. Language and narrative alter biography from a fact-neutral to value-interpretative text (Nadel, 1994). Biography from this perspective not only partakes in, but becomes a form of cultural discourse.
Biography can also illustrate ways in which the power of social values can either entrap or free the individual. One reading of Betty Wark’s biography is to study the impact of the social values attached to the cultural discourses on the meanings of Māori. For Betty, the disruption of monoculturalistic discourse brought about a re-imagined, reconstructed way of being that affirmed being Māori. In the wider context of New Zealand culture, collective discourses around race relations filtered out monocultural values and established an alternative - biculturalism.

Keating (1996) points out that the emphasis on authenticity reinforces the belief in self-contained identities and replicates existing divisions. In her view the rhetoric of authenticity associated with ethnic identity relies on unitary notions of an authentic past where previously erased cultural and historic traditions are claimed to be rediscovered. While it is certainly necessary to address the notion of authenticity and the reclamation of cultural and historic traditions as being an important means to rediscover what may have previously been erased, such an undertaking can also be problematic. Judith Binney (2001), for example, in her work on the life history of the nineteenth century Māori leader Te Kooti found that the narratives that were told about Te Kooti unearthed previously erased cultural and historic traditions and asserted Māori autonomy but were mostly “myth-narratives or chronicles of the impossible” (p. 90).

Irwin (1993) also views the notion of authenticity as being contentious. She raises the point that Māori women’s stories need to be accepted without making a value judgement as to whether or not they can be read as authentic. In Betty Wark’s narrative her ethnic identity straddled the two worlds of being Māori and being Pakeha. Yet she actively sought to create what could be viewed as an authentic Māori identity demonstrating Keating’s (1996) assertion that authentic identities are constructed.

I wanted so much to learn and be with Māori people. I wanted to know what it meant to be Māori and so I spent as
much time as I could at the Ponsonby Community Centre learning from these lovely old kuia (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Betty's narrative also draws on what could be viewed as the repercussions of creating a new positioning in terms of trying to generate a seemingly authentic ethnic identity: "I found my Māoriness. Jim didn't understand what was happening. He couldn't understand why it was so important to me" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

One of the strengths of biographical research for Māori women is that it provides a context for different voices to dialogue with such issues as authenticity and identity. Despite Keating's (1996) and Irwin's (1993) insights that an emphasis on authenticity can actually have a divisive effect on identity politics, the need for a forum to voice these and other concerns is vital.

Despite the potentially contentious issue of authenticity, biographical and autobiographical writing gives voice to the subject, substantiating and validating the lived experience (Nadel, 1984). For Māori women, biographical writing not only positions us as the subjects of our own inquiry but also provides a space for articulating our multiple lives and identities. Writing about lived experience for Māori feminists has evolved through our history of colonization and the need to subvert the social relations of dominance and subordination that came with colonization. Narratives of Māori women articulated in biographical research can demonstrate the complex interconnections between our past and present illustrating the continuous shifts in our cultural identities. As Keating (1996) argues, cultural identities have histories and undergo continual transformations in complex interactions with other categories of meaning; individual and collective identities are hybrid creations, not organic pre-existing discoveries.
While biographical research for Māori women can incorporate all of the Kaupapa Māori principles outlined by Mead (1996), rangatiratanga is the one most apparent in biographical writing. By writing about Māori subjects we exert control over the ways our/their lives are represented. In terms of a Kaupapa Māori research practice our methodologies must be informed by a collective kaupapa. For Māori feminists any theoretical underpinnings of our research must be compatible with our kaupapa. Theory, argues Kathie Irwin (1993), is a necessary part of our revolutionary equipment:

Theory is a powerful intangible tool which harnesses the powers of the mind, heart and soul: te ngakau, te hinengaro, te wairua. With the right theory as a tool we can take the right to our tino rangatiratanga, our sovereignty as Māori women, to be in control of making sense of our world and our future, ourselves. We can and must design new tools – Māori feminist theories, to ensure that we have control over making sense of our world and future (p. 5).

She suggests theories of Māori feminism could be developed from four central Māori sources of data, outlined as follows:

Māori society, both te ao hou and te ao tawhito, the present and the past; te reo Māori, the Māori language; Māori women’s her-stories, the stories of the lives of our women; and nga tikanga Māori, Māori customary practices (Irwin, 1993, pp. 5-6).

The potentialities of Māori feminist theory, as outlined by Irwin, are highly compatible with biographical research methods for making our differences and commonalities visible, giving a voice to our her-stories. Māori feminism is dynamic and evolving and hence inherently difficult to define. Nevertheless, there are at least ten principles which are compatible with and can build on Irwin’s four central Māori sources of data. These principles do not represent a definitive and authoritative theoretical model. They are offered as additional strands to weave into the collective kete and the discourses of what could constitute Māori feminism.
Ten Principles that could constitute Māori Feminism

1. *Maintains a collective vision for all wahine Māori and advocates the right to self-determination for all Māori women.*

A collective vision determining what should exist for Māori women is of paramount concern for Māori feminism. Charlotte Bunch (1983) defines vision as the process by which we establish principles or values and set goals. Her definition has particular relevance to the korero (discussion) around a collective vision for Māori women:

> In taking action to bring about change, we operate consciously or unconsciously out of certain assumptions about what is right or what we value (principles), and of our sense of what society ought to be (goals). This aspect of theory involves making a conscious choice about those principles in order to make our visions and goals concrete (Bunch, 1983, p. 252).

Actions that Māori women can undertake in order to bring about change include: writing our her-stories, empowering ourselves by revitalising te reo Māori and carrying out our research from a Kaupapa Māori perspective, (Irwin, 1993; Johnston, 1998; Smith, 1992). Self-determination for Māori women affirms mana wahine and is achieved through connection to our land, language and culture. The right to self-determination was, for many Māori women, an impossibility. For those women (and indeed men) who lived through assimilationist policies of the early twentieth century, the right to speak our own language, practice our own spiritual beliefs and live our own tikanga was frequently denied (Walker, 1990a). Nevertheless, experiences differed from iwi to iwi and some iwi such as Tuhoe, who tended to live in exclusively Māori communities in often isolated areas were not as affected by assimilation as those iwi who have had more contact with Pakeha (McIntosh, 2001).

Betty's narrative illustrates the need for maintaining a collective vision through such initiatives as the kohanga reo movement and the Māori Women's Welfare League. She also advocated the right to self-
determination for all Māori and sought to educate herself and the young people she worked with on such as issues as Māori land rights, the Treaty of Waitangi and the like.

2. Acknowledges a finely-tuned balance between the individual and the whānau.

Traditional Māori society was communal - the whānau and the extended whānau took precedence over the individual. The emphasis on kinship contrasts markedly with the liberal ideology of individualism. Although at an individual level it is important that Māori women achieve their personal goals it is also important to stress that individual success for Māori reflects on the whole whānau, hapu and iwi. Biographical research, although centred on an individual, has the potential to include the collective identity of Māori women by acknowledging the whānau, hapu and iwi and united mahi (work) of women. In the biography of Betty Wark this can be seen, for example, in her work with the kōhanga reo movement - a movement that relied heavily on the collective input of whānau, hapu and iwi.

Linda Smith's articulation of what she terms the whānau discourse is also particularly relevant to this principle and also to Betty's narrative:

> It requires the seeking of knowledge which is whānau, hapu and iwi-specific. It seeks an understanding of a specific set or foundation of knowledge and practice. It seeks to empower young Māori women by reconnecting them to a genealogy and a geography which is undeniably theirs. And it seeks to protect women by filling in the details of their identity; by providing the genealogical template upon which relationships make sense. This is a discourse which has engaged the energies of younger women. It needs the guidance of older women (Smith, 1992, p. 39).

A whānau discourse encompasses women, men, children, kaumatua (older man of standing) and kuia (Smith, 1992). Whānau and whanaungatanga (relationships) are implicit to the framework of whakapapa and are critical to encouraging and sustaining self-sufficient Māori initiatives such as Māori
feminism. The whanau discourse evident in Betty's biographical text also demonstrates that whanau are not necessarily connected by blood ties. Her way of working with youth at risk was essentially based on the concept of whanaugatanga where relationships are sustained through Māori initiatives and models and where there is a finely-tuned balance between the individual and his or her responsibilities to the whanau or collective.

3. Acknowledges whakapapa as something which connects Māori women to all those past and present despite all of our differences; and accordingly acknowledges both the earthly and cosmological domains - secular and spiritual.

Māori relationships can be defined through whakapapa. Whakapapa of humankind, or the primal genealogy, can be linked back to the children of Ranginui and Papatuanuku who became ira tangata or mortal beings once they entered the world of light (Barlow, 1993). The descendants of the first ira tangata became the ancestors of Māori people. Through whakapapa kinship ties are cemented. Knowledge of one’s whakapapa and ancestral links is at the root of Māori identity and heritage. It conveys the complexities of what it means to be a Māori woman, man or child. Whakapapa connects Māori women to all those past and present - despite all of our differences, it is the one thing that we all have in common. The importance of the principle of whakapapa to Māori feminism is based on this kinship connection and other interrelated issues. Whakapapa is an important channel through which to consider Māori people generally, as it is a culturally important concept and provides a portal of understanding about Māori society and is inscribed in virtually every aspect of a Māori worldview (Smith, 2000). In Betty's narrative she was dislocated from her whakapapa yet she undeniably had a whakapapa and in her later life was able to learn more about it. Her situation was not unique. Many Māori have little knowledge of their whakapapa, yet they still have one and it will be working at some level, even though it may not necessarily be apparent.

4. Incorporates Kaupapa Māori theoretical principles and modes of te reo Māori (Māori language) and nga tikanga Māori.
Kaupapa Māori theory stresses that Māori communities must own and actively construct theory (Hoskins, 2001; Irwin, 1993). Such a strategy implies that the incorporation of Kaupapa Māori theory into a Māori feminist perspective will result in a feminist theory that has the potential to be more meaningful and appropriate to Māori who are interested in Māori feminist practice and engaged with research that is of relevance to wahine Māori. Kaupapa theory also encourages collective theorization, as opposed to the notion of individual intellectual, and as such better meets the cultural needs of whanau groups working together to strengthen Māori communities (Hoskins, 2001; Smith, 1992). Māori feminist practice incorporating Kaupapa Māori would therefore also be well suited to collaborative research projects such as qualitative investigations into a variety of lived experiences of Māori women, such as: experiences of health, education, community development initiatives and the like. Māori feminism incorporating Kaupapa Māori theory validates all things Māori and, therefore remembers, affirms and authenticates the status of wahine Māori who in traditional society were central to Māori cosmological and historical narratives and participated at all levels of social and political affairs (Jahnke, 2002). In Betty's narrative her work at Arohanui Trust can be viewed as Kaupapa Māori theory in action. She felt very strongly that it was important for all Māori youth in her care to learn about Māori language and culture. She actively sought creative ways to teach Māori youth and to help them become literate and self-actualizing, including employing tutors in te reo Māori and Māori weaponry.

5. Recognises the dimensions of taha tinana, (physical dimension) taha wairua (spiritual dimension) and hinengaro (conscious and unconscious parts of the mind).

Systems of learning which incorporate taha tinana, taha hinengaro and taha wairua are examples of Māori re-claiming our own truths, our own knowledge base and our own methods of scholarship:
Hine (female) is the conscious part of the mind and ngaro (hidden) is the subconscious. Hinengaro refers to the mental, intuitive and ‘feeling’ seat of the emotions. Thinking, knowing, perceiving, remembering, recognising feeling, abstracting, generalising, sensing, responding and reacting are all processes of the Hinengaro - the mind (Pere, 1991, p. 32)

Taha tinana - Different forms of recreation and physical exercises are encouraged to help develop agility, dexterity, rhythm, coordination, balance, harmony, poise, stamina and the sheer joy of being human (Pere, 1991, p. 24).

Wairua is an apt description of the spirit - it denotes two waters. There are both positive and negative streams for one to consider. Everything has a wairua, for example, water can give or take life. It is a matter of keeping balance (Pere, 1991, p. 16).

Rangimarie Pere’s framework of education and learning incorporates many other aspects and concepts of traditional Māori society which she presents as a model of interconnections and interrelations. Pere’s central concept of education is that nothing stands in isolation: the physical, the mental and the spiritual actually merge into each other. A Māori feminist epistemology could include knowledge bases which incorporate a spiritual dimension although this could be a problematic and contentious area and a cause for debate (Matahaere-Atariki, 1998).

A collective epistemology which incorporates oral traditions while raising a number of issues, nevertheless symbolises a potential network for connecting Māori women with one another, a common bond, despite all of our differences. However, because of the nebulous and mystical element of spirituality, its inclusion into a collective epistemology is open to critique, from both Māori and non-Māori: "Credibility is undermined through appeals to a ‘tradition’ untainted by colonialism that resonate with a self-conscious rectitude indicative of someone privy to ‘ancient and forgotten mysteries’" (Matahaere, 1995, as cited in Platt 1998, p. 15).
Platt explores the apprehensions raised by Matahere, a Māori scholar, who is concerned with the uncritical promotion of taha wairua and an identity based on spirituality, illustrating the tensions and conflicts between Māori feminism (and indeed other feminist perspectives) and spirituality.

She [Matahaere] contends that challenging the dominance of Western epistemologies and ontologies by uncritically promoting taha wairua, prevents non-Māori from understanding or theorising about an identity based on spirituality. Further, she suggests that Pakeha can use 'positive stereotypes' (such as spirituality) of Māori against them, if they are uncritically introduced as a tool against colonialism (Platt, 1998, p. 20).

Flinders (1998), however, argues that such tensions need not be irresolvable. Writing about the reconciliation of a spiritual hunger with a feminist thirst from a Western context, she states:

Feminism catches fire when it draws upon its inherent spirituality. When it does not, it is just one more form of politics, and politics has never fed our deepest hungers. What a Gandhi knew, a Mother Teresa knew, is that when individuals are drawn to a selfless cause - the relief of human suffering, the dissolution of the barriers that separate us from one another - energy and creativity come into play that simply don't under any other circumstances Flinders (1998, p. 325).

Flinders' argument can readily be applied to Māori feminism. Māori feminism catches fire when it draws upon its inherent spirituality. Māori historical figures, such as Te Whiti o Rongomai and Princess Te Puea, knew what Gandhi and Mother Teresa would come to know - when

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2 Te Whiti o Rongomai of Taranaki was a Māori rangatira (chief) who alongside with Tohu, a fellow rangatira, built the village of Parihaka and began preaching the doctrine of passive resistance during the 1860s. For a detailed and comprehensive history of Te Whiti and Tohu and their resistance to colonial oppression see Scott (1994). For a concise portrait of Te Whiti’s life see Anderton (1999).

3 Princess Te Puea Herangi of Tainui established land development schemes and worked to re-establish the Waikato people economically and culturally (Sinclair 1998, p. 107). See also King (1977).
individuals are drawn to a cause there is a dissolution of the barriers that separate us from one another and an energy and creativity manifest, something which does not occur under any other circumstances. Māori women who were/are drawn to causes such as Komiti Wahine\(^4\), the Māori Women’s Welfare League\(^5\) and Māori feminism have generally been motivated by a desire to achieve collective self-determination and frequently the concept of Mana Wahine encapsulating the idea that women’s strength, power, influence, beauty and the like have derived from female ancestors and female deities, is an underlying kaupapa (philosophical base) for their mahi (Sinclair, 1998). This was evident in Betty Wark’s narrative. She was drawn to causes such as the Māori Women’s Welfare League partially in order to contribute to the collective self-determination of Māori but also because of her personal need to embrace the concept of Mana Wahine and to delve into her own inner strength and power.

A biography underpinned by Māori feminist thought would have to acknowledge the spiritual in some way, even if it is as elementary as honouring the subject’s tupuna. In Betty’s biographical text the spiritual dimension of her life was particularly pertinent to her life’s work as it was her Catholicism and her Māoritanga (Māori culture and perspective) that sustained and motivated.

6. Recognises that the subordination of Māori women stems from the existence of inequality based on gender, race and class.

\(^4\) Nga Komiti Wahine (tribally based Māori Women’s Committees) grew out of the Kotahitanga movement (the movement for a Māori Parliament) when, in 1893, wahine Māori asked for the right for Māori women to be included among the electors of the Māori Parliament and to be eligible to stand as candidates (Sinclair 1998, p. 105). See also Ballara (1993).

\(^5\) The Māori Women’s Welfare League was formed in 1951 as a response to Māori urbanisation and the perceived need to assist Māori settling into the cities and towns, with housing and health (Sinclair 1998, p. 107). Whina Cooper was instrumental in the formation of the Māori Women’s Welfare League. See her biography by Michael King (1983).
Within the umbrella of what might constitute Māori feminism, many Māori women activists have been concerned with revealing inequalities based on gender, race and class and have established networks to identify strategies for change where Māori women can create/recreate space to exercise autonomous agency (Hoskins, 2000a).

Various Western feminist theoretical perspectives, such as liberal and Marxist feminisms, have also grappled with gendered and class inequalities. The issue of race remained an uncharted territory until Black women, such as bell hooks in the United States, critiqued white feminist theory and practice for obscuring the experiences of women of colour (hooks, 1984). hooks argues that it is essential that Black women recognize that a position of marginality enables a perspective from which to criticize the dominant racist, classist, sexist hegemony and then to envision and create a counter-hegemony (hooks, 1984). hook's argument is also applicable to Māori women and, indeed, many Māori women have also been critical of Western feminist thought for locating gender as the primary and universal site of oppression, while largely ignoring factors of class and race. Māori women’s status as tangata whenua (people of the land) situates Māori women in a much larger reality than that of ‘women’s rights’ (Hoskins, 2000a; Lummis, 1987; Mohanty, 1991; Swindells, 1989).

An analysis of the subordination of Māori women which identifies the existence of inequality based on gender, race and class must also take into account the impact of the State’s structural dimensions on our struggles. Linda Smith (1992) positions such an analysis within what she terms the State discourse:

This analysis locates political and Pakeha-dominant structures at the core of the struggle. The current material conditions of Māori women need to be seen not only against the background of colonization but also against the construction via various manifestations of the State, of Māori women as an oppressed social and economic group. These manifestations include the State education, social
welfare and justice systems, as well as other bureaucracies involved in economic and social planning (p. 44).

In Betty’s narrative, struggles with the State are frequently articulated. One of the main reasons for her activism and involvement with local politics was to try to transform social, political and economic realities for all Māori, not just wahine Māori.

7. Recognises that colonization has eroded Māori identity and actively promotes the resurgence of mana wahine Māori.

Colonization impacted upon both Māori men and women in different ways. Māori women were subjected to a restructuring process which eroded our mana in far more insidious ways. Prior to European contact, Māori women’s status and role in society was determined by the hierarchical structures of the iwi, hapu and whanau. Highborn women, for example, could own land and would not lose it upon marriage. These structures were eroded with colonization and, consequently, there was also an erosion in mana wahine for those women (Connor, 1994).

Weedon (1999) argues that the narratives of colonialism, particularly the narratives of civilisation and Christianization, demonstrated an overwhelming lack of respect for difference. She suggests that both Western and so-called third world feminisms continue to be profoundly affected by the legacy of colonialism and she argues it remains an issue which needs to be confronted and explored. For Māori feminists the colonial history of Aotearoa/New Zealand has served as a force against which an anti-colonial Māori identity as been defined, based on traditional constructions of selfhood and dependent upon ‘difference’. Implicit in Māori feminist politics is the confrontation and exploration of colonialism. Māori biographical subjects’ self-conceived constructions of the self will in some way be affected by colonial constructions of Māori. Biographical research can be conceptualized as an agent of decolonization, confronting negative
stereotypes and offering positive constructions of selfhood and collective Māori identities.

One of the most insidious ways colonization has impacted upon Māori women has been through the notion of embodied oppression where the differential ciphering of the Māori body, through racializing and sexualizing discourses, transformed gender roles and relations, eroding and destabilizing Māori women’s bases of power (Hoskins, 2001). One of the agendas of Māori feminism is to re-inscribe the Māori female body and re-establish bases of power for wahine Māori. Discourses around the body as articulate and transforming are situated within notions of decolonization (Hoskins, 2001). Biographical and autobiographical texts have the potential to counter negative discourses about the Māori female body and to reinterpret and reconstitute the colonized body which rendered Māori women as being too short, stocky, unattractive and unfeminine (Bell, 1992; Hoskins, 2000a). A vivid example of such a contesting discourse can be seen in the autobiographical text, *My Journey*, authored by Māori politician, Donna Awatere Huata:

I have warrior thighs. I am descended from women who fought in battle with taiaha (long weapon), patu (short weapon) and mere (club), and I look like it. My legs are solid, with flat feet for gripping the ground. [My body is] a fighting machine (Awatere Huata, 1996, p. 28).

Biographical research into both historical and contemporary Māori figures can demonstrate the impact of colonization on Māori women's lives so that the often abhorrent events of our colonial past are not forgotten. It can also promote the resurgence of mana wahine by raising awareness of the accomplishments of Māori women and providing revisionist her-stories which demonstrate the power and status of Māori women prior to colonization. One example is *The Old Time Māori*, originally written in 1930 by Makereti Papakura, a rare example of an ethnographic text researched and authored by a Māori woman of that era. Reprinted in 1986
with an introduction by Māori scholar, Dr Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, it is now celebrated as a classic reference for information on traditional Māori society, particularly with regard to matters pertaining to women such as childbirth, menstruation, marriage and child rearing.

Discourses of decolonization have actively promoted the resurgence of mana wahine Māori and have challenged the ways in which Māori women are positioned in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Pihama, 2001). The controversial 1993 Māori women’s claim to the Waitangi Tribunal in which prominent Māori women asserted the necessity of women’s representation in decision-making relating to Māori economic and cultural development is one example (Rei, 1998).

Māori women have always had mana. The historical experiences of colonization with its tiers of patriarchy, racism and capitalism resulted in a temporary suppression of mana for many Māori women, but by no means for all. The resurgence of mana wahine Māori evident in contemporary society is indicative of decolonization and the collective resistance of all indigenous people who are attempting to dismantle power structures that marginalised and eroded our cultural identity. Biographical research offers a method that makes it possible for Māori to reclaim cultural identity and mana. It offers a vehicle through which to represent the thoughts and experiences of people who have been colonized and dominated and characterized as being primitive and inferior. Biographical research provides a space for reclaiming an indigenous voice and vision within the arts, humanities and social sciences and a place for what Battiste (2000) terms "unfolding the lessons of colonization" (p. xvi). As Betty's narrative unfolded it became evident that the theme of 'home' could be read as one way she sought to reclaim her cultural identity and mana. The remnants of colonization had stripped her of her language and culture in her early life but as matured she reclaimed these taonga (treasures) and consequently felt at 'home'.

8. *Seeks to create its own theories and discourse*
The term ‘Māori feminism’ is problematic for many Māori women (Pihama, 2001). Nevertheless, it is a term that signals a particular standpoint and expression of feminism. Māori feminism can be grouped under the umbrella of feminist theoretical perspectives of women of colour - a body of scholarship which refers to the rich and vast literature from indigenous women, ‘third world’ women and women who have experienced a history of colonization and slavery. Women of colour have challenged white, middle-class, feminist theory as being ‘race’ blind and have been critical of white feminists for overlooking the experiences of non-white women:

Black feminism has provided a space and a framework for the articulation of our diverse identities as black women from different ethnicities, classes and sexualities, even though at times that space had to be fought for and negotiated. To assert an individual and collective identity of black women has been a necessary historical process both empowering and strengthening (Parmar, 1989, p. 58).

Parmar’s comments have relevance for Māori feminism which has sought to provide a space and a framework for the her-stories of Māori women, even though at times that space had to be fought for and negotiated. Biographical research complements the goals of Māori feminism in this aspiration and gives space to Māori subjects and biographers.

In order to find relevant ways to explain the nature of Māori women’s experiences within contemporary contexts, it is crucial to utilize an analysis that is positioned in te ao Māori (Jahnke, 1997). For many Māori, mana wahine expresses what counts as feminism. It is a term that is positioned within te ao Māori and incorporates Māori women’s identity, philosophy and value system based on whakapapa and the origins of the geographic space of Aotearoa/New Zealand, (Irwin, 1993; Jahnke, 1997; Pihama, 2001).

The concept of mana wahine contains two key components (Pihama, 2001): ‘mana’ which, according to Pere (1991), can be conceptualised as meaning control, prestige, power, vested and acquired authority, influence and also
psychic influence; and ‘wahine’, which means women. Pihama (2001) breaks the term of wahine into two parts. ‘Wa’ relates to notions of time and space and ‘hine’ relates to the female essence, across the life cycle from kohine (girl) to whaea (mother) and on to kuia (older woman). Pihama (2001) asserts that Mana Wahine theory is a particular form of Kaupapa Māori theory that validates the mana of Māori women:

The term Mana Wahine theory serves as an overarching term for a range of Māori women’s theoretical approaches each of which have the fundamental belief that to engage issues from a Māori women’s viewpoint is both valid and necessary. Drawing on the notion of mana wahine as a means of naming Māori women’s theories makes explicit the approach and intent. It affirms that Māori women have mana, a belief that early writers have undermined in the insidious ways in which they have described our tupuna wahine. It affirms also a movement of uplifting the position of Māori women in a context where our roles and status have been systematically dismantled (Pihama, 2001, p. 255).

Mana Wahine theory, as Pihama suggests, affirms Māori women's mana and uplifts the status of Māori women. The biographical narrative of Betty Wark has unashamedly set out to embrace this kaupapa. From the outset it has been intended as a celebratory work, affirming Betty's life and her mana as a Māori woman. Judith Binney's (1996) book, Nga Morehu, The Survivors, in which she tells the life histories of eight Māori women is another example of biographical narrative affirming Māori women's mana. The stunning photographs by Gillian Chaplin of the women also enhance the dignity and mana of the women, adding a visual discourse to the text. The whakapapa of each woman was also included in order to honour the tupuna of the women and again enhance the mana and status of the women.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1992) has also engaged with the concept of Mana Wahine and identified four strands of a Mana Wahine discourse:

1. the whanau discourse
2. the spiritual discourse
3. the State discourse
4. the indigenous women’s discourse.

These strands have already been referred to except for the indigenous women’s discourse which has particular relevance to this principle. The indigenous women’s discourse is concerned essentially with locating our struggle as Māori women within an international context.

Indigenous, minority populations do not all share the same interests. But where they do, for example, in attempts to preserve the language, they need to speak to one another in the same way that sovereign nations do. Having at hand analyses of indigenous issues should help us develop international links with people whose interests are similar to ours. We can draw strength and creative ideas from the experience of women whose history of oppression extends centuries beyond our own (Smith, 1992, p. 47).

An indigenous women’s discourse which is concerned with locating our struggle as Māori women within an international context is compatible with what Julia Emberley (1993) terms ‘a feminism of decolonization’: "A feminism of decolonization, produced upon the articulation of feminist and decolonial critical practices, may provide a critical theory that enables a reading of Native women’s writings" (p. 4).

Māori feminist research and writing also contributes to the discourses of feminist decolonization, and alongside other indigenous women's work is particularly compatible with Native American women's writings6.

Māori lesbian feminists have also been influenced by the theoretical perspectives and writings of women of colour lesbian feminists. For lesbians of colour, there can be conflicts between integrating identities of lesbianism,

6 Indeed, many Māori feminists have been influenced by a number of Native American feminist writers, including: Lee Maracle (1996) of the Stoh'lo Nation and Marie Battiste (2000) from Potlōtek first Nations in Unama'ikik, Nova Scotia. Another influential indigenous feminist writer who has been influential among Māori women is Haunani-Kay Trask (1993, 1991), a Hawaiian scholar.
womanhood and being a person of colour. Understanding the nexus of racism and heterosexism demands vigorous exploration and analysis (Leslie & MacNeill, 1995).  

9. Acknowledges the need to incorporate both mana wahine and mana tane into its philosophical base.

Māori feminist research is concerned with privileging mana wahine and women's experiences. Mana tane, (Māori men) our relationships with Māori males at both personal and public levels, and issues concerning Māori males are part of our experiences as Māori women. Working with and alongside Māori men is a key element that sets Māori feminist theorising apart from most other modes of feminism (Pihama, 2001).

Betty Wark worked extensively with Māori males. For her it was essential that Māori men and women worked together for the collective benefit of Māoridom. Yet in her early days as a community worker she was feisty and at times aggressive: "I used to use a stick. I didn't know any better but I thought I could bash some sense into those boys. But it didn't work – it didn't work" ((B. Wark, personal communication, September 2, 1996). Eventually she realised she had to promote the concept of mana tane by encouraging the men she worked with to feel good about themselves through the self-development and education programmes offered at Arohanui Trust.

10. Actively promotes research methods which complement the kaupapa (underlying belief systems) of Māori feminism.

7 Ngahuia Te Awekotuku has written extensively on Māori lesbian feminism and passionately proclaims: "My challenge is this: to reconstruct tradition, reinterpret the oral history of this land, so skilfully manipulated by the crusading heterosexism of the missionary ethic. For we do have one word, takatāpui" (Te Awekotuku, 1993, p. 288). The term, takatāpui, meaning having a lover or special friend of the same sex, has become a marker of self-identity for many Māori lesbians and gay men. The reclaiming of this traditional concept demonstrates one way in which Māori lesbian feminism is seeking to create its own theories and discourse.
The final point offered in the base definition for Māori feminism, advocates that research methods which complement the kaupapa (underlying belief systems) of Māori feminism should be promoted. Biographical research, story-telling and narrative analysis are all examples of research methods which complement the kaupapa of Māori feminism. A strength of biographical research methodology is that it offers possibilities for centralising the experiences of Māori women whose lives have been erased from the social and political landscape. Betty's life story has certainly been centralised within the biographical text and a Kaupapa Māori perspective is evident throughout as her identity as Māori is privileged and validated. On one level Betty saw the telling of her story as a political act and potentially transformative for its readers. She envisioned that for individuals who have experienced abuse as she did, her story could be inspiring. She also saw her story as having an impact for the collective, demonstrating what can be achieved for the greater good when people work together to create a whanau which is supportive and affirming.

Summary

The ten points identified in the base definition for conceptualising Māori feminism are intended as a foundation from which to theorize. There will be agreement as well as contention around each point. Nevertheless, theoretical conceptualizations are a necessary part of our revolutionary equipment. As Irwin (1993) argues Māori feminist theories must be designed in order that we have control over making sense of our world and future. Developing methodologies which are appropriate and compatible with Māori feminist ideals will ensure we have control of our own research projects and will enable us to make sense of our own worlds and future.

Within the context of this thesis the principles of Māori feminism were developed in order to create a foundation from which to theorize about
biographical research as Māori feminist research and also to apply the theories to a practical project. Each of the principles has some relevance to the biographical text, as does Kaupapa Māori theory. A major consideration for including such an extensive theoretical perspective in the thesis has been to demonstrate the necessity of creating or synthesizing a research method that is appropriate for Māori.

The biographical method has also been recognized as a research methodology that lends itself to the notion of hybridity and cross-fertilization which Weedon (1999) argues can create a space for creativity, the resurgence of cultural survival and notions of 'home'. These themes can also be applied to Māori in general as a colonized people wanting to create a space for creativity and articulating difference. The hybrid approach to the biographical method provides a tool for such aims. It is a Western method which can readily incorporate Māori theoretical perspectives such as Māori feminism and Kaupapa Māori theory. The preceding discussion has examined this hybrid approach while drawing from existing literature and contributing to the discourse regarding Māori feminism.

To simply write Betty Wark's narrative from a purely Western approach would not have been appropriate. She identified primarily as Māori. She wanted to incorporate a Māori flavour in her narrative and she was affirming of a method which included Māori perspectives. The biographical method provided Betty with a space to korero (speak) about her sense of cultural identity and provided a mode of self-representation that was compatible with her sense of self. Cultural survival and searching for that 'place called home' are themes that resonate throughout her narrative. She was excited about the ways in which autobiographical texts for Māori can be viewed as literary extensions of whakapapa and how they provide spaces to speak about coming 'home'.

Korero kia rongo i to reo rangatira
Speak so that we may hear the divine essence in your voice (Tai, 1992, p. 43).
CHAPTER THREE

Biography as Genre and a Form of Cultural Reproduction

Biography is a form of literary production, but it is also a form of cultural production as biographical texts reflect social reality and also help create it. Biographers recover the society and culture of the subject in their narrative through the textualization of events:

In this way biography embodies the discourses of a culture, preserving (but also rewriting) a past culture while enacting a new one through certain choices of style, valuation and presentation. A biography cannot isolate its subject from its culture: the conventions of birth, education, career, and death (Nadel, 1994, p. 74).

Chapter Three considers biography as a literary genre and also as a form of cultural production with reference to women generally, to women of colour and in terms of this thesis, to Māori women.

Crossing Genre Boundaries: Issues around Defining Biography as Literature and History

Biographical writing has emerged from two traditions of academic inquiry: the historical and the literary in its simplest sense. The genre of biography (and also autobiography) represents a life: an urge to tell the self and to offer an explanation of the sociological and historical landscapes of that life and the significance of these external forces to the processes of self-construction. Biography is generally defined as that form of narrative life writing which is produced by someone else other than the subject, while autobiography is a narrative produced by a person writing about her or himself. A biography is a relatively full account of the subject’s life which involves an attempt by the author to set forth character, temperament and milieu, as well as the facts of the subject’s life experiences (Abrams, 1981; Hutching, 1993; Lummis, 1987).
Biographers attempt to represent their subjects through the flair of language and the dramatic sweep of narrative; to illuminate universal truths about humankind through the triumphs and sufferings of a single human being (Backshcheider, 1999). Similarly, the authors of autobiographies typically narrate those events which have affected their sense of self and where some kind of inner transformation has occurred.

The fundamental difference between biography as a branch of history and biography as a branch of literature is in the construction of biography. James Clifford (1962) argues that biography should conform to the guidelines of ‘craftsmanship’ or history as an ‘objective science’, in order to be taken seriously:

Is writing a life a narrow branch of history or a form of literature? Or may it be something in between, a strange amalgam of science and art? The difference between a craftsman and an artist is obvious. The one knows exactly what his product will be. He works with specific materials and uses traditional techniques. His skill comes as a result of serious study and long practice. The other works intuitively, evolving each move that he makes, and not certain until the end just what his work will be. Originality and genius are more important than practice. Is the life-writer one or the other, or both? (p. ix)

While there may be divergent views as to whether the construction of biography is a form of literature or a branch of history, there is likely to be less controversy regarding the assertion that biography is also a form of cultural production. Biographers can, indeed, highlight the society and culture of their subject and can emphasise specific cultural experiences (Gluck & Patai, 1991; Hutching, 1993; Lummis, 1987).

While the emphasis in Chapter Three is on biography as cultural production, autobiography is also discussed as it has been a very important genre to
women and peoples of colour as an expression of political activism and an invaluable literary form for providing a space for the voices of the unheard, the sublimated and the invisible (Heilbrun, 1997; Maracle, 1996; Morris, 1994; Smith, 1987).

Representations of Women in Biography
In women's biography the exclusionary lines drawn by genre theory have been especially problematic, marginalizing it in relation to dominant literary discourse. Yet biography has the potential to represent the female experience by bringing women from the margins to the centre of analysis. Women's biography can challenge existing patrifocal renditions of the past and bring to light the lives of the previously 'obscure' (Gluck & Patai, 1991; Personal Narratives Group, 1989; Williamson, 1999).

Liz Stanley and Kathleen Barry are two of the leading theorists of women's biography as well as writing biographies on women themselves. In connection with some of the biographical work she has carried out, Liz Stanley (1992) has constructed a feminist biographical method that incorporates three key elements influenced by feminist epistemology and feminist sociology. In Stanley’s first element she argues that biography should be treated as being composed by textually located ideological practices and that these practices should be analytically engaged with. In Stanley’s biography, (with Ann Morley) of Emily Wilding Davison (1988) the ideological practices of feminism are both textually located and analytically engaged with. As the first feminist biography of Davison, it also provides a commentary on the various histories of the Edwardian feminist movement.
In Stanley’s second element of what might constitute a feminist biographical method she stresses the importance of the labour process of the biographer as researcher in reaching the interpretations and conclusions she/he comes to. Stanley (1992) calls this process "intellectual autobiography" (p. 117) and again it is evident in the biography of Emily Wilding Davison as she outlines why and how the book was written (Stanley, 1992). Stanley’s third element suggests that the informal organisation of feminists through friendship can be as important as formal feminist organisation in understanding the dynamics and complexities of such women’s lives. In Emily Wilding Davison’s biography, this element is apparent in the way her patterns of comradeship and her closest colleagues are traced out. Similarly, in Stanley’s work on Olive Schreiner (2000), feminist social networks are also apparent. Rather than the spotlight approach which focuses on one single person Stanley views the concern with groups, networks and collectives of women as being one of the most interesting and exciting directions that biographical writing could move in (Stanley, 1992).

After completing Susan B. Anthony’s life story Barry (1992) developed a theory of women’s biography which moves in a progression from the phenomenology of daily life to the structure of history. This theory is meant to force the anomalies, distortions and eclipses of masculinized history into a new clarity. Barry (1992) suggests that feminists must look at history from a woman’s perspective and create a subjective history which privileges women’s lives and looks at women’s documents such as letters and diaries. Subjective history for Barry begins with the life story and a return to narrative and then moves from narrative into interpretation. Discussing her biography of Anthony, Barry (1992) states:

Anthony would have remained a distant object, a model with whom I identified but did not know, until I went one step
further and began to interpret the facts of her life by deriving the actual meaning she attributed to those facts. The research into her papers and documents allowed me to reconstruct the objective conditions of situations in Anthony’s life. From them I was able to interpret the meanings that she attributed to her interactions both with herself and others (p. 226).

Barry asserts that only when the object of a biography has become a subject, someone that the biographer is ‘involved with’ and has come to ‘know,’ can true biographical work and interpretation begin. Verification of that interpretation is vital to this process:

As I progressed in my involvement with Anthony as a subject, I began to find myself almost automatically predicting her response or her course of action in particular situations; from the information in her letters or other documents, she would verify my interpretations. This is what sociologists call saturation when studying collective life histories; it is the point that one reaches when a certain predictability intervenes and becomes verified (Barry, 1992, p. 27).

Finding and revealing a woman’s subjectivity differs from identifying with her, and Barry (1992) suggests the biographer must transcend personal identification with her subject. Identification, Barry claims, is a kind of heroine worship and ultimately an objectification of the other which denies that inter-subjective interaction is possible. Although I was able to transcend personal identification with Betty, we certainly acknowledged aspects of a common identity and I was able to maintain an inter-subjective interaction where I was ‘involved with’ and ‘came to know’ Betty at a level which allowed for the possibilities of interpretation beyond the superficial.

Women’s biography must be a new reading of history, which demands the rewriting of all history:
In lifting women’s biography from its imbeddedness in essentialism, women’s history can be found through biographical interpretation. This enters into the historical complexity and multi-dimensionality of women’s lives that has been made all the more complex by their exclusion from history (Barry, 1992, p. 33).

Implicit in Barry’s view of what constitutes feminist biography is the complete rewriting of history as ‘her-story’. Williamson (1999), while sharing Barry’s view that feminist scholarship needs to remain aware of the impact of a patriarchal past on women’s lives, also urges a more fully integrationist approach to life stories. She suggests women biographers need to celebrate the diversity and complexity of their subjects, allowing ‘lost’ voices to be heard in a manner which promotes an inclusive gender studies integrating women into the mainstream. As Williamson (1999) points out, the emphasis on female repression ensures the perpetuation of the ‘them versus us’ dialectic which has characterised much feminist scholarship in the past, and it is counterproductive to present women’s history in terms of what they could not/did not/were not able to achieve because of men. Rather, it would be more worthwhile to emphasise what women have achieved in spite of men and, in some cases, alongside men.

Writing women’s biography from a feminist point of view enables a critical view of society that asserts the historical meaning of women’s struggle toward becoming fully developed individuals and cannot overlook the vision and revision of woman’s condition in history (Gutiérrez, 1992, p. 54). In ‘A Room of One’s Own’ Virginia Woolf (1929) explicitly asks for a vision and a revision of woman’s condition in history when she states: “Let us imagine, since facts are so hard to come by, what would have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith, let us say” (1929/1988, p. 46).
Woolf’s vision was that women would be given the space and opportunity to write and the intellectual freedom of which great literature is born. In the life of Judith, Shakespeare’s fictional sister, she describes women’s historical past and sketches out futuristic possibilities:

Shakespeare had a sister, but do not look for her in Sir Sidney Lee’s life of the poet. She died young alas, she never wrote a word. Now my belief is that this poet who never wrote a word and was buried at the cross-roads still lives. She lives in you and in me, and in many other women. She lives: for great poets do not die: they are continuing presences; they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh. If we have the habit of freedom and the courage to write exactly what we think, then the opportunity will come and the dead poet who was Shakespeare’s sister will put on the body which she has so often laid down. Drawing her life from the lives of the unknown who were her forerunners, as her brother did before her, she will be born (Woolf, 1929/1988, p. 108).

Sixty years after Woolf’s death her vision has come to fruition for her white middle-class sisters. Indeed, in all likelihood, Woolf’s vision was only ever intended for those white women who shared her class and attitudes. Critics of Virginia Woolf have frequently represented her as elitist, malicious, snobby, anti-Semitic, racist and classist (Lee, 1995). Extracts from her writings demonstrate the basis for such criticism:

The fact is the lower classes are detestable. Went to the Peace Conference, by way of a joke, yesterday, and saw several baboon faced intellectuals; also some yearning, sad, green dressed negroes and negresses, looking like chimpanzees brought out of their coconut groves to try to make sense of our pale white platitudes (as cited in Lee, 1995, p. 147).

These offensive excerpts would certainly qualify as ‘hate speech’ in contemporary society and reveal what Lee (1995) describes as "the unacceptable face of Virginia Woolf" (p. 134). However, as Lee (1995) suggests, class and racial prejudice must be considered from both a
biographical and historical approach. To sanitise Woolf’s prejudices in order to make her life and politics ‘acceptable’, is to diminish the biographical process and misrepresents Woolf’s life. Virginia Woolf, as Lee comments, was no worse than anyone else in her time and class; she could not help using the word ‘nigger’ or having a cook. Prejudice inheres not wholly in any individual but is some indefinable property in the social atmosphere (Lee, 1995). Implicit in this view is the concept of ‘Other’. When Virginia Woolf and her contemporaries of the upper middle-class Bloomsbury Set defined themselves, it was in opposition to other classes and other races. More than fifty years ago when Simone de Beauvoir (1953) first defined woman as Other to a male norm she was referring to a universal woman, undifferentiated by ethnicity or class, yet she also drew attention to other others:

No group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself. To the native of a country all who inhabit other countries are ‘foreigners’: Jews are ‘different’ for the anti-Semite, Negroes are ‘inferior’ for American racists, aborigines are ‘natives’ for colonists, proletarians are the ‘lower class’ for the privileged (p. 52).

Representation of the ‘Other’ Other – Women of Colour Biography and Autobiography

The assumption that gender will unite all women has been increasingly challenged by women and indeed men, who have been othered because of such categories as ethnicity, class, occupation, criminalization, sexual identity, disability, or age (Johnston, 1998; Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1996; Mohanty, 1991; Smith, 2001). For many women of colour biographers and autobiographers the idea of ‘otherness’ is central to their work offering alternative and revisionary ways of reading inscriptions of race, class and gender (Anzaldúa, 1987; Davies, 1994; Etter-Lewis, 1991). Woolf’s vision that women need ‘rooms of their own’ is now being extended to those women her prejudices would have excluded.
Women have been defined as ‘Other’ to a white, middle-class, male norm, (de Beauvoir, 1953). As Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1996) argue, ‘Otherness’ has been projected on to women by, and in the interests of men, with women being constructed as inferior or abnormal. One of the key focal points for women’s attributions of Otherness is the maternal body and its reproductive capacity. Such a focus constructs Otherness only in terms of gender and obscures the various dimensions of how women have been othered. Representations of women that imply a homogeneous category of Otherness render invisible the divergence and varied experiences of women. All women need a room of their own regardless of assigned labels.

Women of colour have been constructed as Other to a white, middle-class norm. The category ‘women of colour’ itself is a device of Othering, referring to Black women, indigenous women, ‘third world’ women and women who have experienced a history of colonization and slavery (Mohanram, 1999; Mohanty, 1991; Trinh, 1989). While the categories of ‘women of colour’ have been created largely in resistance to the universalizing tendencies of white feminist theory this category may or may not be accepted by those women so labelled. Notwithstanding, the category ‘women of colour’ is useful for situating, collectively, those women whose experiences have been overlooked by white, (and mainly middle-class) feminism. Women of colour writers experience the double oppressions of race and gender, and in many instances, class as well. For women of colour intellectuals and writers, one of the major struggles has been to find a voice and ways to cope with, and transcend the confines of, race, class and gender oppression (Collins, 1991). Increased literacy amongst women of colour has provided new opportunities for such resistance as women of colour writers use the full range of their voices as a means to articulate a self-defined standpoint. The genres of biography and autobiography are but two examples.
Women of colour auto/biographical writing is not a fixed, geographical, ethnically-bound category of writing. Nevertheless, major themes exist concerning loss of identity and reconstruction of identity; exclusion and marginality; migration and diasporic perspectives and dislocation (Davies, 1994). Black autobiography, for example, originated in the slave narratives which not only stand as testimonials of the inhumanity of the slave system but also as testimonials of dislocation, exclusion and marginality. The slave narratives written by men and women share many common characteristics; they tend to relate their trials as slaves, their flight to freedom and their dedication to helping others flee slavery (Morgan, 1999). Aside from these commonalities, gender differences are evident in ways men and women devised strategies of coping. Black male narrators frequently emphasised the right to political autonomy, stressing the importance of literacy while female narrators emphasised the need for autonomy in relationships and told their stories in terms of their relationships. Harriet Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) is structured around her network of relationships, the most important of which were with her grandmother and children. Testing relationships are also detailed, including her relationship with God and her dealings with the slave owners:

I now entered on my fifteenth year - a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl. My master began to whisper foul words in my ear. Young as I was, I could not remain ignorant of their import.... I was compelled to live under the same roof with him where I saw a man forty years my senior daily violating the most sacred commandments of nature. He told me I was his property: that I must be subject to his will in all things. My soul revolted against the mean tyranny. But where could I turn for protection? (Harriet Ann Jacobs, as cited in Ker Conway, 1994, p. 10).

Unprotected by law, Jacobs knew that slave women could not be accountable to conventional sexual morality. Yet, when she became pregnant she felt disgraced and wretched, fearing how her grandmother would react: “My self
respect was gone!” (Harriet Ann Jacobs (1861), as cited in Braxton, 1989, p. 33).

By addressing the then taboo subject of the sexual exploitation of slave women, Jacobs was able to explain to her predominantly female audience how the institution of slavery created conditions for female slaves in which any slave-holding home could become contaminated by sexual impurity. In effect she offered a critique of slavery that appealed to northern, middle-class, white, women who saw the home as a separate sphere in which women were the dominant moral force (Watkins, 1998). A Black male would have related a different narrative.

Jacobs’s narrative illustrates what Collins (1991) describes as the objectification of Black women as Other. Jacobs did not have the right to define her own reality and establish her own identity. She was not a subject in her own right: she was an object and her reality and identity were defined by others. The treatment Jacobs was afforded as a female slave exemplified the most extreme form of objectification. Slavery dehumanised, commodified and objectified Black women as the ‘Other’, to be viewed as object, to be manipulated and controlled.

With the birth of her first child, motherhood became an avenue to identity and a vehicle for the retrieval of Jacobs’s lost self-respect, notwithstanding, the contradictions and contested terrain that mothering under slavery automatically invoked. Braxton (1989) suggests Jacobs’s narrative reveals what she terms "the outraged mother archetype" (p. 38) and asserts that the ‘outraged mother’ appears repeatedly in Afro-American history and literary tradition, sustaining themes of family and survival. The archetypal outraged mother sacrifices and improvises to ensure the physical survival of her children and she tries to impart to her child a sense of identity and belonging.
Jacobs exemplified the outraged mother when she learned her children were to be ‘broke in’ as field slaves on the plantation, and became determined to secure freedom for herself and her children.

Davies (1994) suggests that the historical construction of Black women as the ‘great mother’, negatively embedded in the ‘mammy’ figure, has resulted in motherhood and/or mothering becoming central and defining tropes in Black female reconstruction. Collins (1991) also discusses this construction in relation to othering. She states:

During slavery the breeder woman image portrayed Black women as more suitable for having children than white women. By claiming that Black women were able to produce children as easily as animals, this objectification of Black women as the Other provided justification for interference in the reproductive rights of enslaved Africans (Collins, 1991, p. 76).

Jacobs’s narrative illustrates Collins’s analysis:

Southern women often marry a man knowing that he is the father of many little slaves. They do not trouble themselves about it. They regard such children as property, as marketable as pigs on the plantation; and it is seldom that they do not make them aware of this by passing them into the slave trader’s hands as soon as possible, and thus getting them out of their sight (Jacobs, 1861, as cited in Watkins, 1998, p. 117).

Jacobs’s reality was that she and her children were marketable commodities to be bought and sold as if they were animals. Her narrative demonstrates she is well aware that Black women and their children were objectified and dehumanised as the Other. She knew her survival depended on her having a strong reproductive body. Sidonie Smith’s (1993) reading of Harriet Jacobs’s narrative sites her body as being the constitutive subject of the autobiography. Bodies, for Smith (1993), bear multiple marks of location, and position the autobiographical subject at the nexus of culturally specific
experiences of gender, race, sexual orientation and health. For Smith, Jacobs becomes the Black slave with an African body subjected to the white male gaze which objectifies and ‘others’.

In Maya Angelou’s *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970), the body can also be read as bearing multiple marks of location which position and constitute the autobiographical subject. In Angelou’s autobiography, her body represents the marked category of oppression and racism. Skin colour exposed Angelou and her family to potential racial violence. The body is literally encased within a marker of oppression and is consequently located within a terrain of fear and unpredictability. This is well illustrated in the terror of lynching which constituted a real danger to Blacks living in the Deep South of the United States prior to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. “High spots in Stamps were usually negative: droughts, floods, lynchings and deaths” (Angelou, 1970, as cited in Braxton, 1989, p. 181).

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is the first in five volumes of autobiography written by Angelou and spans her early childhood to age sixteen. Representative of autobiographies written by Black women in the post-civil rights era, it demonstrates an awareness of the political realities of Black life in the South and her determination to live her life with dignity and self-respect despite the destructive realities of racism. For Angelou, the writing of her autobiography represented a conscious assertion of identity. It also presented an alternative version of reality seen from the point of view of the Black female experience in which a Black woman can emerge as a formidable character through the outcome of struggle and survival (Braxton, 1989).
The conscious assertion of identity and oppositional constructions of identity to dominant racial discourse can also be seen in the auto/biographies of Aboriginal women of Australia. The Aboriginal people of Australia have been forced to endure the status of people systematically categorised as "naturally inferior" (Brewster, 1996 p. 2). Marginalised and othered, Aboriginal people were sidelined to the peripheries and their stories constituted an ‘invisible’ presence from the time of European settlement in 1788 until the 1960s when Aboriginal activists organised campaigns to improve living conditions and to regain traditional lands (Brewster, 1996). Aboriginality, a term used to describe Aboriginal people’s united identity, is an effective counter-discourse to the dominant white Australian discourse which constructed Aboriginal culture as inferior and lacking (Brewster, 1992). Aboriginality, as a concept of identity politics, has evolved as a way of marking out difference and articulating a sense of self. Aboriginal versions of their own history are gradually being articulated, though the most prolific form of Aboriginal writing is that of women’s autobiographical narratives (Brewster, 1996).

In Sally Morgan’s (1987) *My Place* her sense of her Aboriginality is intricately tied up with her family, particularly in the relationships she has with her mother and grandmother. One of the central narratives in *My Place* is the quest narrative, where Morgan searches for her ‘roots’ and reclaims her past. The brutality of the colonial encounter for Aboriginal people is reinscribed in her family’s her-stories/histories (Brewster, 1996). Morgan’s grandmother, Daisy Corunna, and her mother, Gladys Milroy, were removed from their Aboriginal mothers. Daisy was brought up in a white family and Gladys, Sally’s mother, in a children’s home. Both Daisy and Gladys felt ashamed and fearful of identifying as Aboriginal. They hid their Aboriginal identity from Sally to ensure she was not removed from Gladys, ensuring they could continue to mother her. Sally Morgan had no knowledge of her Aboriginality until her mid teens and *My Place* is as much about the
excavation of her personal family history as it is about the collective stories of ‘lost children’, those Aboriginal children taken from their parents under the Aborigines Protection Acts. Sally Morgan’s mother and grandmother sacrificed their Aboriginal identity in order to preserve their maternity. Yet as Zonana (1996) argues, in asserting their maternity and their values at the expense of Aboriginal identity, they simultaneously stood for and claimed Aboriginal identity in the form of their Aboriginal spirit.

Daisy’s account of being taken from her mother when she was fourteen demonstrates the appalling attitudes towards Aboriginal peoples. Othered as uncivilised, demeaned and dehumanised, they were treated as if they were incapable of human emotion and feeling:

> When I left, I was cryin’, all the people were cryin’, my mother was cryin’ and beatin’ her head. Lily [her sister] was cryin’. I called, “Mum, Mum, Mum!” She said, “Don’t forget me, Talahue [Daisy’s Aboriginal name].” They all thought I was coming back. I thought I’d only be gone a little while. I could hear their wailing for miles and miles. ‘Talahue! Talahue!’ They were singin’ out my name, over and over. I couldn’t stop cryin’. I kept callin’, ‘Mum! Mum!’ (Morgan, 1987, p. 332)

In Morgan’s My Place, being the Aboriginal Other is articulated through the racialized disempowerment and shared experiences of women losing their children. Paradoxically, Aboriginality as a shared identity is also located through Otherness. Morgan is representative of Aboriginal women writers who have created a space to name themselves; to speak of their difference, their uniqueness and their Otherness. The autobiographical texts of Morgan and other Aboriginal women affirm their otherness as a way of consolidating and constructing their own identity. As Brewster (1996) states:

> Insisting on a constituency’s difference means highlighting its ‘otherness’, which can be neither elided nor appropriated by dominant discourses (here of patriarchy and imperialism)
because the ‘other’ by definition resists being known or represented (p. 39).

When the Other resist definitions of their Otherness and define their differences from their own perspectives, they are perceived as subversive. Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (1993) writing autobiographically on her experiences as a Māori lesbian, demonstrates such ‘subversive’ resistance. Te Awekotuku writes from a space where she is ‘othered’ as both a woman of colour and a non-heterosexual woman, defining her ‘difference’ from her own perspective, drawing from Māori tradition:

My challenge is this: to reconstruct tradition, reinterpret the oral history of this land, so skilfully manipulated by the crusading heterosexism of the missionary ethic. For we do have one word, takatapui1. And ironically, this word is associated with one of the most romantic, glamorized, man/woman love stories of the Māori world, the legend of Hinemoa and Tutanekai. Tutanekai, with his flute and his favourite intimate friend, his hoa takatapui, Tiki, and Hinemoa, the determined, valorous, superbly athletic woman - my ancestress - who took the initiative herself, swam the midnight waters of the lake to reach him, and interestingly, consciously and deliberately masqueraded as a man, as a warrior, to lure him to her arms. Is that not another, intriguing way of looking at this story? And is that not a way which we, our community, and tradition, have been denied? (Te Awekotuku, 1993, p. 288).

The alternative reading to this well-known love story, put forward by Te Awekotuku is indeed intriguing, certainly thought provoking and likely to be perceived as subversive. It also illustrates Māori determination to claim our own histories and to take control of the ways in which we are represented: “Māori are no longer prepared to be Othered. The claims for Māori control, for Māori self-determination of what counts, are being voiced in the education

1 Takatapui refers to intimate same-sex relationships.
system, the political system, in research, and in policy” (Johnston, 1998, p. 32).

Johnston’s claim is well illustrated in the writings of Te Awekotuku. Her writing is imbued with an attitude of pride and confidence in her sexuality and ethnicity. She writes from the perspective of a woman who has determined her own self: not as someone who is Othered.

Auto/biographical methods, as Clarke (1998) argues, can provide a powerful platform for advocacy for the oppressed and marginalized as well as contributing to the destigmatizing of sexually-stigmatized groups. This process is evident in the autobiographically-influenced collection of essays, *Mana Wahine Māori* by Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (1991). Reflecting on her identity as a Māori lesbian, she writes:

> As a Māori lesbian, I am often compelled to consider the colliding urgencies of my life. Frequently, the contradictions of my life are harrowing, but I refuse to reject any one facet of myself. I claim all my cultures, all my conflicts. They make me what I am: they will shape what I am becoming (Te Awekotuku, 1991, p. 21).

In the auto/biographies of Māori lesbians such as Te Awekotuku, her-stories demonstrate their resistance to both the hegemony of heterosexual and Pakeha-dominated lifestyles. Auto/biographical texts must, as Clarke (1998) argues, be interventionist, to allow the stories of those who have been denied a voice, opportunities to articulate both cultural and sexual identities.

The condition of Otherness enables women to stand back and criticize the values, practices and norms of the dominant culture (Tong, 1992). From this viewpoint, Otherness becomes a way of thinking and speaking that allows for diversity and difference; it becomes a mode of re-negotiation, where those
who have been othered as the ‘other’ Other can re-negotiate and reclaim the
their experiences and identities (Firth,1997).

The issue of Othering and the representation of the Other highlights an area
of research as being one of the key issues in contemporary feminist theory
and practice. Carabine (1996) maintains that Other is generally imbued with
social significance and that particular meanings are embedded in the notion
of Other along with a set of power relations. She asserts that, in practice, the
positioning of Other is not usually positive, and that those positioned as
Other frequently become objectified and de-humanised.

Within the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand, Māori have been positioned as
Other to a Pakeha norm. Embedded in this notion of Māori as Other is a set
of power relations where Pakeha are privileged. Such negative positioning is
by no means fixed and, indeed, the experience of being Othered can be viewed
as being cathartic for those Māori who have sought to transform this negative
positioning into a positive identity. The claiming of Other as a positive
identity means individuals and groups may redefine themselves through new
discourses and new relations of power through resistance. The following
chapter explores ways in which biography and, indeed, autobiography written
by and for Māori, can be viewed as one means through which Māori can claim
the position of Other as a positive identity, challenge the predominantly male
Pakeha perspective that has been evident in much biography of Māori, and
re-voice and re-represent the Other as author.
CHAPTER FOUR

Māori and Auto/Biography: Writing Ourselves 'Home'

The notion of home and the articulation of Māori identity and cultural space have been taken up in a range of writing by Māori authors of both fiction and non-fiction. The following list provides a modest sampling of such authors: Donna Awatere Huata (1996); Jacq Carter (1998); Helene Connor (1994, 1997, 2004); Mihipeka Edwards (1990, 1992, 2002); Patricia Grace (1994); Te Kawehau Hoskins (1997, 2000); Witi Ihimaera (1998); Huia Jahnke (2002); Leonie Pihama (2001); Linda Smith (1992, 1993, 1999); Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (1993); Jenny Te Paa (1998).

Notions of home and the ways in which we constitute cultural space were recurrent themes throughout Betty Wark’s life, the subject of the biography which is presented in Section Two: ‘Narrative with Annotative Reflections’. Betty’s biography is also referred to throughout this chapter to illustrate the articulation of Māori identity and its interdependence with the metaphor of home.

Narrating Cultural Space: Māori Identity Before and After the Written Word

The term cultural space has multiple meanings. It can be viewed from the perspective of the geography of identity with anthropological and ethnographical underpinnings. Within the context of this thesis, cultural space also refers to that branch of cultural studies largely derived from the study of literature which includes biography and autobiography. For Māori, narrating cultural space and writing ourselves ‘home’ raises the question: are there traditional modes of narration from which to draw and develop contemporary models of what might constitute Māori auto/biography?
Traditional methods of narrating cultural space for Māori were either oral or through the visual arts. In his impressive work on the carvers and the carving styles of the Rotorua region Neich (2001) discusses the ways in which the visual arts provide a medium for communication. Neich regards art as a sort of language, a system of signification on a par with verbal language. In order to understand the art form there needs to be an understanding of the system of signification used to denote meaning within the piece.

Wharehuia Hemara (2000) argues that mana reo (prestige of the language) signifies the power of language and communication. To emphasise the importance of language to Māori he provides the following whakatauki which expresses the view that without language, prestige, land ownership and culture will cease to exist: ‘Toi te kupu, toi te mana, toi te whenua. Hold on to the word, the mana, the land.’ (p. 79).

Barlow (1993) suggests that Māori viewed te reo Māori (the Māori language) as sacred because it was given to tupuna by the atua and it is through language that Māori are able to know the will, mind and power of the atua. From this perspective, language is seen to have a life-force, a living vitality and a spirit and a mauri (life principle). As Barlow (1993) points out, in traditional Māori society, the Māori language had several forms. Reo rauriki was the sacred language of the Sky Father, Ranginui, and imbued prayers with divine essence. Reo reiuru was the sacred language of the Earth Mother, Papatuanuku, and gave humankind the power to communicate with the offspring of Papatuanuku, the various species of birds, fish, animals and trees. Reo reiuru was also the sacred language of women which enabled

1 Rotorua is located in the centre of the North Island of New Zealand.
women to communicate with the spirit world when performing the karanga (welcome call) on the marae.

Te Kapunga Dewes (1981) asserts that te reo Māori continues to be the most essential feature of Māori culture. In Dewes’ view Māori oral arts provide continuity and inspiration for written literature. He classifies Māori literature as being prose and poetry, though he states there is fluidity between the two.

**Narrating Cultural Space: Post-Literacy**

With the arrival of missionaries and the establishment of missionary schools in the nineteenth century, the Māori language became a written language. Paradoxically, while the move to a literate society ensured the preservation of the indigenous language, colonialism was also responsible for its decline. In 1887, the Native School system was established with an overt agenda of assimilation. A recent and comprehensive publication is *Nga Kura Māori, the Native Schools System, 1867 -1969* (Simon, 1998).

With the establishment of the missionary schools, a large proportion of Māori became skilled at writing and reading te reo Māori and at one point during the mid-nineteenth century there were more literate Māori than Pakeha (Barlow, 1993).

**Experiences of Colonization and Spaces We Call Home**

Rutherford (1998) uses the word ‘home’ as a means of making sense of self and identity, and as a motif for cultural values and diversity. Home for Māori, and a sense of self and identity, has been irrevocably changed with the experience of colonization. Home as a motif for cultural values and diversity,
although altered by colonization and consequently fragmented, can also be read as a site where irreversible change has occurred. While ‘home’, in the sense Rutherford uses it, has become a contested site for Māori, it would nevertheless be misleading to suggest that Māori identity and culture have been subsumed under the impact of colonization. Contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand is not a mono-culturalistic, homogenous Pacific Britain. Rather, the experience of colonization represents change, transformation and hybridity. This reconstituted home space, though contested and far from ideal, nevertheless represents a space where Māori can confront our fragmentation as part of the construction of a colonized world where we can re-inscribe who we have become while at the same time never forgetting who we have been.

**Colonization and Disruptions to Māori Identity**

From the onset of colonization Māori became the alien and the Other. The site of our difference to our Pakeha colonizers was articulated in a repository of the colonists’ fears and anxieties. For the majority of colonizers, Māori were constructed as disruptive and unsettling. We were marginalised within the hierarchical language of binaries: civilised/savage, white/black, superior/inferior, cultured/uncultured, rational/irrational, Christian/heathen (Connor, 1994; Hoskins, 2001; Mead, 1996). Biographical portraits and sketches about Māori of the nineteenth century written by the European explorers and colonists demonstrate such constructions. In Angas’s (1847) *Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand*, for example, the word ‘savage’ is emotively used in the title to portray the indigenous peoples of Australia and New Zealand while the text contains several sensationalized sketches of the ‘savages’ he encountered:

At this place I met Nga Tata, the chief of Pipitea and Kumototo. This man is the father of E Tako, the chief of Port Nicholson, and in former days was an atrocious cannibal. He
boasts of having roasted slave children alive, and then partaken of their flesh; and is notorious for his sanguinary deeds of cruelty. His eyes have a blood-shot appearance, and his character is borne out by the expression of his countenance. He has six toes on his left foot, a peculiarity that characterizes Rauparaha and several other chiefs (p. 10).

The colonial gaze that created images of the savage Other can be viewed within what Le Fur (2001) has termed "the voyeuristic theatre of the exotic" (p. 46). These representations reflect the construction of a racist discourse and the creation of the primitive savage stereotype.

One counter-representation of a nineteenth century Māori by a Māori scholar, which seeks to understand and analyse the impact of colonial power on Māori cultural identity, is Grace Smit's historical thesis on her tupuna, Ihaka. Smit (1997) was interested in exploring the complex issues of shifting authority, Christianisation, land sales and various other factors that profoundly changed Māori lives throughout the colonization period. The reconstituted home space Smit investigated focuses on the East Coast of the North Island of New Zealand, and attempts to understand how Māori adapted to the immense changes in that region. In the case of Ihaka, he adopted the outward forms of colonial power by supporting the Government forces against Te Kooti. Smit argues that his support for the colonists should be viewed within the context of a man trying to maintain his own mana and prestige. His allegiance to the colonists can also be viewed as someone trying to re-inscribe an identity that was being threatened by an ethnocentric external culture and in so doing, becoming a captive of the colonizer's hollow promise of equality.

**Juxtaposition: When Pakeha became Māori**

For many colonists, the rugged, untamed landscape of Aotearoa/New Zealand of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century represented a
metaphorical cultural desert. For other colonists, however, this metaphorical
desert was also a space that confronted Pakeha ethnicity and identity. It was
a space which marked out a margin between the habitable and inhabitable,
the hospitable and the inhospitable. When Māori and Pakeha collided with
one another at the point of contact, both peoples found themselves astride
two worlds in one landscape. Many of the early settlers became what Bentley
(1999) has termed 'Pakeha Māori' (p. 9). Runaway convict sailors such as
James Cavanagh, George Bruce and Jacky Marmon are amongst the first of
the Pakeha Māori (Bentley, 1999). Their stories offer compelling images
where Otherness, usually sought after for its exoticism and adventure, was
inverted and the hitherto unmarked category of ‘white’ became marked as
Other. Stories of Pakeha Māori can be read as a metaphor of uncertainty
where identity was usually disrupted voluntarily.

There are, however, stories of some Pakeha living involuntarily as Māori.
For example, Bentley (1999) cites the case of Caroline Perrett who was
abducted as a child by Māori in 1864. She lived for over 50 years with Māori
and eventually considered herself to be Māori. Also there are reported cases
of Europeans being enslaved (Bentley, 1999). Their stories can also be read
as coming from sites of oppression and discrimination into spaces of
resistance as many of the Pakeha Māori were convicts and renegades. For
these reasons the auto/biographical stories of these Pakeha Māori offer an
interesting insight into the multiplicity of subject positions and potential
identities which centred on the threshold of the pre-colonized/colonized
landscape. That place called 'home' was lived in a state of in-between-ness,
belonging neither to the Pakeha world nor the Māori world, but attempting to
straddle both:

Pakeha Māori were the foreigners who became part of the
tribe and were treated by Māori as Māori. Some were kept as
exotic curiosities or trading intermediaries. Others were
designated traditional roles as slaves, artisans and fighting men. A handful became white chiefs and priests. During the 1920s, Pakeha Māori came into general use as a descriptive term for resident traders. Pakeha Māori never fit neatly into categories and the term was also applied to whalers and early settler farmers living among the tribes (Bentley, 1999, p. 10).

The auto/biographical narratives of Pakeha Māori, as Bentley (1999) suggests, intrude on our consciousness to remind us of our inter-cultural past. They are part of the motif of our cultural diversity and represent one of the initial sites of disruption to Māori identity, as they produced a significant number of mixed-race children.

**Blurring of the Lines: Claiming the Whakapapa of Two Worlds**

Cultural interaction and the blurring of the lines between Pakeha and Māori has been an enduring theme in the process of finding a 'home' in auto/biographical writing. Identity for Māori who also identify as Pakeha is frequently represented as fragmentary and contradictory as the excerpt from Māori novelist and author, Alan Duff (1999), demonstrates: "I grew up with contradiction, I was born of two races, two opposite sides of the intellectual and cultural fence, two oppositely behaved parents, of white and brown, passivity versus volatility and violence" (p. 20).

Duff’s struggles for identity and a sense of coherence are centred on the portal between the Māori world and the Pakeha world:

I moved between the European world and the Māori with ease and hardly gave it a second thought. I spent a lot of time at Whaka, where my mother’s brother, Uncle Tupu, Aunty Baby and our five Raimona cousins lived, along with many other relations. Whaka, pronounced ‘woka’ and short for Whakarewarewa, was Rotorua’s main tourist destination (Duff, 1999, p. 63).
Duff's Māori identification is located within the landscape of his turangawaewae and his papa kainga. Connection to traditional land remains very important for maintaining his sense of Māori identity:

Dotted all over this uneven, steaming landscape were houses, some of them falling down having succumbed to the steam, the constant damp, the sulphur. They perched on hillsides, atop hill rises. Many had traditional carved gables, and some had old-style verandas where older women sat weaving or smoking a pipe, or just watching the world of tourists and locals go by – people so different to each other and yet the same human species enjoying the same wondrous landscape of hiss and roar and bubble (Duff, 1999, p. 67).

In Condliffe’s (1971) biography of Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck), he emphasises Buck’s affirmation of his mixed parentage:

He was both Māori and Pakeha and lost few opportunities to point out that he was a half-caste - a true New Zealander, he would boast to his friends.... In a brief sketch of his parentage he claimed, ‘I am binominal, bilingual and inherit a mixture of two bloods that I would not change for a total of either. I mention this brief family history to show that from my birth I was endowed with a background for the study of Polynesian manners and customs that no university could have given me. My mother’s blood enables me to appreciate a culture in which I belong, and my father’s speech helps me to interpret it, inadequate though the rendering be at times’ (pp. 20-21).

In Fingleton’s (1982) biography of internationally recognised Māori soprano, Kiri Te Kanawa, the cultural motif of a mixed Pakeha and Māori identity is also raised, although relatively superficially. One of the few times Kiri’s sense of her Māori self is related is when she speaks of Johnny Waititi of the Māori Trust Foundation. The foundation was set up to provide further education for any Māori child who had academic promise. In Kiri, Johnny Waititi saw musical promise and actively promoted her. Kiri’s gratitude is expressed in a budding sense of Māori selfhood: ”Because of Johnny, I came
to feel more Māori myself and was proud of it" (Kiri Te Kanawa, as cited in Fingleton, 1982, p. 27).

Weeks (1998) argues that identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. He suggests that identity gives you a sense of personal location and is also about your social relationships. According to Weeks, each of us lives with a variety of potentially contradictory identities, which battle within us for allegiance but at the centre of our identity are the values we share or wish to share with others. The expression of identity for many Māori in auto/biography is as Weeks suggests, the expression of belonging and affirming what is shared with other Māori and what differentiates Māori from Pakeha. For those Māori who also identify as Pakeha the quest for identity is potentially contradictory:

> Identities are not neutral. Behind the quest for identity are different, and often conflicting values. By saying who we are, we are also striving to express what we are, what we believe and what we desire (Weeks, 1998, p. 89).

**The Articulation of Cultural Identity**

What is evident in our self-definition as Māori in auto/biographical work is that there is an active negotiation between the objective notions of ourselves as Māori women, Māori men, Māori middle-class/working-class, Māori professionals/non professionals, Māori heterosexual/non heterosexual and so on, and the subjective experiences of colonization, alienation and otherness.

In order for a conception of cultural identity to play a critical role in post-colonial struggles, it must reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes within a stable, unchanging and continuous frame of reference and meaning (Hall, 1998). In post-colonial New Zealand society the resurgence of a Māori cultural identity reflects Hall’s definition. The common historical experiences of colonization and the fragmentation of Māori identity
have been positioned in nostalgic narratives of the past. In auto/biographical work the re-telling of the past functions as a means of rendering and figuratively repairing the lost past by transmuting its pain.

The following excerpt taken from the biography of a Tainui woman, Heeni Wharemaru, illustrates the production of Māori cultural identity in what Hall (1998) has termed "acts of imaginative rediscovery" (p. 224):

My father brought us all into the world. It was September 22, 1912, when I was born in a mud-floor ponga house in Kamate, just south of the family cemetery. After a baby was born, the umbilical cord would be wrapped in several layers of material and immediately taken away and buried. It was given back to the earth, and its burial place was considered very special. Up and down the land, and all along the coast down there, there would be special sort of tapu [sacred] places where cords were buried. And that is why there is such a fuss about Māori land (Duffié, 2001, p. 31).

Similarly, in King’s (1983) biography of Whina Cooper her Māori cultural identity is articulated through the act of imaginative rediscovery and the re-telling of the significance of Panguru Mountain for her people:

Whina was born into Te Rarawa Ki Hokianga – the Rarawa people on the shores of the Hokianga Harbour. Te Rarawa Ki Hokianga were also born under the shelter of Panguru Mountain, and they venerated that peak. The mauri of Hokianga was contained in the mountain. Its presence and its importance were embodied in chants and whakatauki. These ancient and sacred words were a means of transmitting knowledge about the importance of Panguru mountain from generation to generation. And they were an affirmation of identity for the people whose lives were dominated by the proximity and the sight of the mountain (p. 18-20).

In King’s (1977) biography of Princess Te Puea, the act of imaginative rediscovery serves to emphasise both cultural identity and the importance of land:
At one level Te Puea’s identification with the land could be described as mystical. Speaking to Judge Acheson in 1939 she said, ‘The land is our mother and our father. It is the loving parent who nourishes us, sustains us... When we die it folds us in its arms’ (p. 148).

In his autobiography, Reweti Kohere (1951) expressed his Māori cultural identity in terms of his attachment to traditional land and concepts of home:

We can truly sing, ‘Home, Sweet Home, there’s no place like home.’ At any rate, I am confident that the life that my wife, our children and myself live here at the East Cape is the proper life for a Māori family to live if they wish to be happy (p. 122).

While Māori cultural identity may be expressed in the re-telling of the past and may emphasise common points of similarity, such as attachment to the land, it is also important, as Hall (1998) points out, to recognise that there are critical points of deep and significant difference in the ways in which cultural identity is constructed. For Māori, concepts of cultural identity must acknowledge the ruptures and discontinuities of colonization. As Hall (1998) argues, cultural identity is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’:

It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending the past, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like every thing which is historical, they undergo constant transformation (p. 225).

The colonial experience positioned Māori as different and Other within the categories of Western knowledge, but like everything historical, constant transformation has re-framed the place of Māori as the Other. While ‘Other’ was once thrust upon us from outside, our Otherness is now self-inscribed. Our cultural identity as Māori is what makes us different from tauiwi and that difference is affirmed, even in those of us who possess what might be
termed bicultural and multicultural identities. To reiterate what was stated in Chapter One, identifying as Māori is a strategy of survival. It does not mean denying Pakeha whakapapa, but it does imply taking an important political position.

The Personal is Political in Māori Auto/biographical Texts

A range of writing and speaking positions, demonstrating the vast differences as well as similarities in Māori self-identity is evident in Witi Ihimaera’s *Growing Up Māori* (1998), a collection of thirty-six pen portraits of Māori.

Growing up Māori has come to mean growing up and across the fractures in time and space within our culture as well as finding oneself and one’s location in the pastiche that is the post-modern world (p. 15).

Jacq Carter, one of the contributors in *Growing Up Māori*, critically considers the politics of constructing Māori identity. She states:

The fact is there is no unitary Māori reality, no one Māori identity, no single way of growing up Māori. All of us have been subjected to colonization and colonization has affected us all in different ways. Some of us identify as ‘part-Māori’ and others lay claim to being ‘full-blooded’ Māori. Some of us grow up speaking te reo Māori and some of us grow up not even knowing we’re Māori. Indeed, such is the legacy of colonization that ‘growing up Pakeha’ is one of the ways in which many Māori ‘grow up Māori’ (Carter, 1998, p. 259).

In Carter’s (1998) autobiographical experiences of growing up Māori, the contentious issue of authenticity is raised when she asks: "How valid is - and who legitimates - my way of being Māori?" (p. 256). Similarly, Margaret Stewart-Harawira (1993) raises the issue of authenticity when she writes about her experiences of being Māori growing up Pakeha:

Can I, a fair-skinned, blue-eyed person, whose Māori genealogy is uncertain, claim myself to be Māori, have the
right to speak as a Māori? Colonization succeeded in assimilating my fore-bears into the race of ‘the Britons of the South Pacific’. On the basis of upbringing and genetic determination, I am unhesitatingly constructed by the majority as being non-Māori. Nonetheless, identifying myself for most of my life as a non-Māori whilst experiencing within myself an ever-increasing sense of being Māori, of being recognised by other Māori, of being haunted, if ‘haunted’ be the word, by dreams, by visions, by my unquestionably Māori tipuna from the other world, I too have found it difficult to survive in either world (p. 33).

Auto/biographical texts of Māori represent both the individual and the group and are sites for politicizing the collective self. One of the most well-known Māori women writers of autobiography is Mihipeka Edwards. Paraha (2000) views this work as an autobiographically annotated account of the conflicts that arise out of growing up in one culture while being trained to access and function successfully in another more dominant cultural area. Paraha (2000) suggests that the motivation for Edwards to write her autobiography took the form of resistance writing, both future-orientated and reflective of the past.

Mihipeka Edwards’ (1990, 1992, 2002) autobiographical texts can be read as acts of cultural intervention. She represents Māori identity during this period in our history when Māori cultural identity is enmeshed in a variety of issues related to Māori rights: land rights, the Treaty of Waitangi and the right to develop educational facilities informed by Kaupapa Māori. Writing from the perspective of a Māori woman who was politicised during the Māori renaissance of the 1960s and 1970s, her story tracks how her identity as Māori was shaped within the frameworks of colonial, assimilationist and towards her late mid-life, Māori nationalist discourse:

I hope to return the dignity that has been lost to us; to take away any shame that might still be there through the loss of te reo, that may have beset my people as it did me; to give back the mana, the kawa, which is quite lost to a lot of Māori people. I would like to bring back the respect for the
kaumatua, which seems to be lacking today. I think I will have the wairua support from my own tupuna, who have long departed. They will help me. I know they will, if needed. I don’t see them, but they’re around me as I write. They are here now, especially my kuia (Edwards, 1992, p. 190).

Auto/biographical writing for Māori women represents both the individual and the group. For Māori it could not be otherwise. Māori are a communal people and auto/biographical texts offer the possibility of articulating notions of our collective selves which include cultural, socio-political and historical memories. Auto/biographical writing by or about wahine Māori aimed at raising the visibility of the lives and work of Māori women can also be viewed as a project of collective identities in resistance to Western ethnocentrism (Paraha, 2000).

A recent autobiography of a Māori man which can be read as a site for politicizing the collective self is Matt McCarten’s Rebel in the Ranks (2002). Matt McCarten is of Nga Puhi and Irish descent. His autobiography can be interpreted as a counter-narrative derived from his personal experiences of coming from a background of under-privilege and overcoming difficulties not of his own making. From this perspective it is an autobiography from the margins and the marginalised: a record of his personal attempts at subversion which undermine dominant ideology on Māori and working-class and which paradoxically will resonate with others in similar positions. Raised in children’s homes, his primary identity as a child was his Otherness as a ‘homie’.

At school I was soon recognised as one of the ‘homies’. I realised I was different from the other kids, but it didn’t worry me. Since living in institutions was all I had known, I never felt I was missing out on anything (McCarten, 2002, p. 12).
McCarten’s identity as Māori reads as a racialized sub-text throughout the autobiography. He did not meet his Māori mother until he was fourteen and, consequently, he experienced an inevitable dislocation from his Māori whakapapa. As a child he knew he was Māori at an intellectual level but what this meant at a cultural, spiritual and emotional level was something that was external to his early experiences, as is apparent in his description of his initial meeting with his mother: "How could I relate to this stranger? I had had no experience of being Māori - no Māori teachers or church elders or adults in the Home - even though there were some Māori kids" (McCarten, 2002, p. 31).

Nevertheless, being Māori and challenging stereotypes about Māori has been an important component of his personal journey of selfhood, the construction of his public self and his work towards social justice through the trade union movement and left-wing politics. Discussing his campaign for the Auckland mayoralty in 2001, McCarten reveals how being Māori was not only important for him personally but also to other Māori as a collective:

One of the real positives for me that came out of the mayoral campaign was the support given to me by Māori. They held a special function for me at Te Puni Kokiri in Ponsonby Road. Willie Jackson and John Tamihere convened it and it was MCed by Dale Husband, who was very supportive of my campaign. Many of Auckland’s leading Māori were there, such as Ranginui Walker and June Jackson. I was very humbled by that, and it was a very moving thing for me. I was told that they liked the fact that I was a Māori who was prepared to put himself out there. I said to Willie and John afterwards about how really moved I’d been that they did this for me. They said, ‘Matt, they support you because you are Māori. You have been working behind the scenes for other people for years and now you’ve stepped out there. Māori are proud of you standing’ (McCarten, 2002, p. 193).
Auto/biographical work can make Māori women and men’s lives visible and it can make our differences visible. The diversity of our lives as Māori must be taken into account when our life histories are researched and, as Irwin (1993) asserts, they must be accepted without judgement.

Re-reading Colonial History: The Case for Māori Biography

Critical re-reading of colonial history by both Māori and tauiwi has been motivated by a need to understand the discursive underpinnings of colonization:

The genealogy of colonialism is being mapped and used as a way to locate a different sort of origin story, the origins of imperial policies and practices, the origins of the imperial visions, the origins of ideas and values (Smith, 2001, p. 149).

A re-reading of colonial history by post-colonial and cultural studies scholars can provide a much more critical approach to history and can disrupt narratives of white imperial figures, adventurers and heroes who sought to bring ‘civilization’ and ‘salvation’ to the ‘natives’ (Smith, 2001). Biographical narratives of Māori subjects are well positioned to create differing origin stories and ways of re-reading colonial history. Māori literature, including biography, can be characterized as post-colonial literature and is in synch with ‘The Empire Writes Back’ discourse (Brewster, 1996; Davies, 2000; Talib, 2002). Post-colonial literatures have emerged out of the experience of colonization, where writers have asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. Post-colonial literature assumes that the centre does not necessarily have to be located at the imperial centre, and argues that the centre can be moved, ideologically, recreating histories (Smith, 2001). It has been argued that colonized peoples have appropriated the language of the colonizer to their own advantage (Emberley, 1993;
Mohanty, 2003; Smith, 2001). This is one of the ironies for many Māori writers who are more comfortable writing in English or who are simply not conversant with te reo Māori.

One Māori scholar and author who has been at the forefront of post-colonial writing is Ranginui Walker. Walker’s seminal works (1987; 1990) on Māori and Pakeha race relations have provided revisionist histories of our colonial past where a Māori voice and perspective have been unashamedly privileged. Walker’s biography of Apirana Ngata, *He Tipua: The Life and Times of Sir Apirana Ngata* (2001) is an immense work of scholarly rigour and research. In the convention of ‘The Empire Writes Back’ discourse, Walker writes in the language of the colonizer, although Māori language is liberally used throughout the text and a comprehensive Māori glossary is provided. Walker’s hero is proudly Māori and the subject matter centres on Māori cultural revival and promotion of all things Māori. Walker’s biography of Ngata was the first full biography of this major Māori leader. It is a substantial work of 443 pages and includes numerous photographs, references and footnotes. Walker represents Ngata as one of the most influential Māori leaders Aotearoa/New Zealand has known. He details the huge impact Ngata had on the social, cultural, economic and political landscape of New Zealand. His extraordinary accomplishments reveal a man who strove to create a path of reconciliation between Māori and Pakeha while instrumental in building an enduring Māori cultural recovery. Walker’s biography can be viewed as emerging out of the experience of colonization as he emphasises the different assumptions Māori have from the imperial centre. One of the colonial discourses prevalent during the period Ngata lived was that of Māori being a dying race. Ngata had a mission to restore the balance of Māori and Pakeha and Walker captures this mission in text, both literally and metaphorically. Like Ngata, Walker has a mission too. He
has sought to restore the balance between Māori and Pakeha representations of our past and this is exactly what he has achieved.

**What Constitutes Māori Auto/Biography? A Summary**

For an auto/biography to be considered Māori auto/biography, the auto/biographical subject must identify as Māori. The issue of authorship, however, is more complex. Can Māori authors writing biography about non-Māori subjects be considered to be producing Māori biography? Does being Māori bring a certain perspective to writing that legitimizes the categorization of Māori literature? Issues of subject and authorship are problematic as not only are these issues subjective, they are also open to divergent opinions.

My personal view on what might constitute Māori biography takes the position that in order for a biography to be considered Māori biography, the biographical subject must identify as Māori. While I feel that Māori authorship of Māori biography is desirable as an act of cultural reclamation and self-representation, I acknowledge that there are numerous biographies of Māori subjects written by non-Māori that are not only excellent, erudite representations but are also sensitive and insightful examples of how ‘outsiders’ can mediate between two cultures in order to produce representations of indigenous peoples that are distinctive and compelling. Examples include: Michael King’s biographies of Princess Te Puea (1977) and Dame Whina Cooper (1983), as well as Anne Salmond’s biographies *Amiria* (1995), and *Eruera: The teachings of a Māori elder* (1980) and Judith Binney's *Nga Morehu* (1996).

For biography to be regarded as Māori biography, the question of language must also be considered. To qualify as authentic Māori biography, does the
biography need to be written entirely in te reo Māori? Certainly, there will be some Māori who would answer in the affirmative. The retention and revival of the Māori language has been central to the Māori Renaissance:

The Māori language is viewed as the very basis of Māori culture and its distinctive identity. There is a Māori saying that the taproot of Māori culture is the Māori language – a gift from God. An understanding of the language is indispensable for the Māori to have access to their cultural heritage (Vasil, 1988, p. 12).

As discussed, te reo Māori is viewed as sacred because it was given to tupuna by the atua and is imbued with a living vitality and a spirit and a mauri. Mana reo signifies power and prestige for Māori (Hemara, 2000). Within contemporary Māori education, Māori language development is considered essential to ‘intellectual growth’ and the transmission of Māori cultural values (Hemara, 2000). The recovery and revitalisation of te reo Māori necessitates publication of texts written in te reo Māori. A recent biographical text, written in te reo Māori is *Eruera Manuera* (2002). Written by Onehou Phillis, this biography is about Eruera Manuera, of Ngati Awa. Manuera was skilled as an orator and it is fitting that his biography should be written entirely in Māori, the language he was most comfortable with.

While it is desirable that more biographical texts be written completely in te reo Māori, there are obvious limitations as to readership. Despite the growth of the kohanga reo movement, it is estimated that only twenty five percent of the Māori population are able to read, write and converse in the Māori language (Ministry of Māori Development, 2001). Texts written entirely in

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1Eruera Manuera was published by Huia Publishers, a publishing company specialising in books of interest to Māori. It was awarded a Montana New Zealand Book Awards, Special Award in 2002. Refer to: http://www.huia.co.nz/publishers/full.php3?ID=237

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the Māori language are also likely to be restricted to the New Zealand market, limiting prospective overseas sales and the potential to raise awareness about Māori issues to a foreign audience.

Biographical texts written in Māori with English translations and commentary are more likely to reach a greater audience and have the added bonus of appealing to people fluent in te reo Māori. One example of a Māori biography which is written in Māori with English translations is Evelyn Stokes' *Wiremu Tamihana* (2002). Stokes' representation of Wiremu Tamihana is both sympathetic and astute, revealing how his influence as a peacemaker in the context of the nineteenth century was systematically undermined by government agency. Stokes reconstructs Tamihana's previous representations as a rebel as she depicts him as someone with an entirely valid vision, for Māori – that of having autonomy and control over our own society and destiny, while participating in the benefits of Pakeha settlement.

Biographies of Māori subjects written entirely in English must still be considered Māori biography, simply because they are privileging Māori as subject and are frequently written from a Māori perspective by Māori authors who are not conversant with te reo Māori, or who prefer to write in English in order to reach a larger audience. The biography of Dame Rangimarie Hete, who was one of New Zealand's most renowned Māori weavers, is such a text. *Rangimarie: Recollections of her life* (1993), written by her cousin and friend Rora Paki-Titi, imparts an insightful tribute to this remarkable woman, artist and cherished kuia, and although it is written in English, it provides a singularly Māori perspective on the subject's life. The biography links the subject to her whakapapa and explores aspects of her upbringing where she was schooled in Māori tikanga and it discusses the ways in which a Māori approach to harakeke (flax) incorporates spiritual and environmental
elements as well as the practical business of utilising this much esteemed plant for weaving.

My personal view on language within Māori biography is that the use of English is appropriate, but I also feel that the text should contain Māori vocabulary and provide a Māori perspective. The issues raised in relation to Māori biography (particularly academic Māori biography) are also applicable to Māori biographical research. However, there are several theoretical underpinnings to Māori biographical research which also need to be considered. Māori biographical research needs to be positioned with a research perspective that privileges Māori knowledge such as a Kaupapa Māori research framework. A biographical researcher researching Māori lives may or may not be Māori but they must be pro-Māori, be culturally sensitive and have their research involve the ‘mentorship’ of elders and the Māori community (Smith, 2001). Kaupapa Māori research is located within the wider project of Māori struggles for self-determination (Smith, 2001). Biographical research for and about Māori has the potential to contribute to the struggles for self-determination. It is a research methodology that can argue for the importance of the whanau, can privilege Māori conceptions of the world, and can represent Māori in a positive and culturally safe manner.

Biography of wahine Māori can be underpinned by Kaupapa Māori with or without the further dimension of Māori feminism. The biography of Betty Wark is located within a Kaupapa Māori and Māori feminist framework as this reflected both my own and Betty’s areas of interest and consciousness. Betty’s biography has also been influenced by Western theoretical perspectives, particularly feminist and women’s biography. Nevertheless, these elements have been woven in to the overall text to create as culturally sensitive a model as possible.
The literary genres of biography and autobiography are appropriate and fitting methods for Māori to utilise as both the individual and collective experiences of Māori can be researched and written about within whakapapa, tribal and social histories. The importance of whakapapa as a source of connection for Māori and as a distinguishing feature of Māori culture can be explored within auto/biographical texts, and such texts can be viewed as a literary extension of whakapapa, providing an ideal method for writing about the life histories and cultural experiences of Māori.

Nevertheless, while the significance and centrality of whakapapa in the writing of Māori biography can be regarded as paramount it is also problematic. The remnants of colonization and urbanization have resulted in many Māori becoming dislocated from their iwi, hapu and whanau. Many young, urban Māori are unable to identify with an iwi and do not know their own whakapapa. In Betty Wark's narrative her relationship to her whanau and her whakapapa can be read as being estranged and disconnected. She was abandoned by both of her biological parents and was a casualty of the whangai (adoption) system. Having a Māori whakapapa did not sustain or connect Betty to her extended whanau and hapu. Conversely her narrative suggests that given how important whakapapa is to Māori identity and interrelatedness, when this connection falls short there will need to be some kind of recompense for its failure. For Betty this took place in the formation of non-kin relationships. As a young girl boarding at St Joseph's Māori Girls' School she experienced the re-creation of whanau with the nuns who she saw as her non-kin family. Her work with street kids duplicated the re-creation of a non-kin whanau in a similar manner to the urban marae movement. In the absence of connection to whakapapa she sought to recreate such beneficial elements as whanaugatanga (family ties and support) and manakitanga (care).
Discussions on what might constitute Māori auto/biography will certainly encompass whakapapa and position this pivotal structuring principle of Māori society as central to Māori identity. However there will also need to be acknowledgment that for some Māori, whakapapa is a contentious and complex issue.
Section Two

Locating the Story of Betty Wark

A Biographical Narrative with Reflective Annotations
INTRODUCTION TO SECTION TWO

Locating the Story of Betty Wark: A Biographical Narrative with Reflective Annotations

Section Two consists of a narrative history with annotated reflections on the life of Betty Wark. Betty’s narrative history is divided into four chapters using a metaphor of the totara tree to tell her story. Constructing Betty’s life story around the metaphor of the totara provided a useful literary device for organising aspects of her life into various themes. A brief outline of the tree symbolism used in each of the four chapters is provided in the introduction to each of these sections. The idea of dividing aspects of Betty’s life into four chapters based on the symbolism of the totara tree was discussed at the onset of the research project. We both felt it would not only provide a useful literary device but would also characterize the biography with distinctive Māori elements.

Since trees can outlast generations they have often been used as genealogical reference points, and in many cultures genealogies have been depicted in images of family trees. As the totara tree is a very significant tree for Māori it is also an ideal symbol for whakapapa. The totara can be viewed as symbolizing life and continuity of blood lines. It reaches down to the earth and Papatuanuku and up towards the sky and Ranginui. When the totara is carved it can serve as a visual representation of ancestry and historical and mythological events. The totara can also be perceived as representing a connection between the past and the present. Within the context of Betty Wark’s narrative history, the totara represents whakapapa and as such can be viewed as an ancestral tree. It is a fitting and powerful symbol not only for Betty, but for Māori biography generally, as, if there is one overarching feature of what constitutes Māori biography, it is whakapapa.
Section Two begins with a Prelude in which a preliminary story is told in order to set the scene for what is to come. The story is told from a child’s perspective using interview material in which Betty discussed her early childhood. Following that, there is a short introductory piece, ‘Embracing Papauanuku’, in which several key themes are identified and discussed. The narrative history begins with Chapter Five.

Chapter Five commences with *Nga Aka - The Roots* in which Betty’s childhood and early life are explored. Chapter Six contains *Te Katua - The Trunk: The Woman Sustained*, in which Betty’s spiritual beliefs are examined. In Chapter Seven, *Nga Kaupeka – The Branches*, Betty’s early working life, her relationships with men and her experiences of motherhood are told. Then in Chapter Eight, *Nga Hua Rakau – The Fruits*, her community work and her heart politics are recounted. Each chapter begins with a proverb about the totara tree and each chapter has a visual image showing a part of the totara tree.

The narrative history concludes with an Epilogue entitled *Learning to Receive*. The epilogue centres on Betty’s courageous battle with lung cancer and how she came to terms with this illness, which eventually claimed her life.

Reflective annotations in the form of essays are linked to each of the four chapters of the narrative history. The reflective annotations are essentially an analytical commentary on the intersection between Betty’s biographical narrative history and relevant social and political structures that impacted upon her life. The reflective annotations contextualize her life within a specific social and historical context covering the period of her birth in 1924 to her death in 2001.
The North Hokianga Region

Figure 2. Map of the Hokianga Harbour, Northland, North Island, New Zealand.¹

¹ http://www.hokiangatourism.org.nz
## Chart Showing Betty Wark's Tupuna

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rahiri</th>
<th>Maui</th>
<th>Tangaroa</th>
<th>Puna Te Arini</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rahiri</td>
<td>Maui</td>
<td>Tangaroa</td>
<td>Puna Te Arini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaharau</td>
<td>Te Huaki</td>
<td>Te Rangi</td>
<td>Kohine Mataroa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waimirangi</td>
<td>Tamatea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Rahiri = Whaka Ruru (second wife)
- Kaharau = Houtaringa Kohine Mataroa
- Taurapo = Ruaki Whiria
- Tupoto = Kauae (Tawa Keiti)
- Waimirangi = Kairewa
- Tamatea = Tiari
- Kiringarahu = Aorare
- Maruwhenua = Marino
- Kurupa = Tataia
- Tungutu = Nau
- Tarutaru = Ruapounamu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tungutu</th>
<th>Nau</th>
<th>Kahi = Kaimanu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wai</td>
<td>Pakapaka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awa</td>
<td>Tahukai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Te Tore Kohiparu = Ihenga

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1 Chart showing Betty's tupuna, kindly supplied by Anna Mutu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Māori</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ko Tamatea te maunga The mountain is Tamatea</td>
<td>Ko Tamatea te maunga The mountain is Tamatea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Hokianga te moana The water/harbour is Hokianga</td>
<td>Ko Hokianga te moana The water/harbour is Hokianga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Hokianga te turangawaewae Hokianga is the place to stand</td>
<td>Ko Hokianga te turangawaewae Hokianga is the place to stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Motuti te papakainga Motga is the home place</td>
<td>Ko Motuti te papakainga Motga is the home place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Nga Puhi te iwi Nga Puhi is the tribe</td>
<td>Ko Nga Puhi te iwi Nga Puhi is the tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Ngati Temaara te hapu Ngati Temaara is the sub-tribe</td>
<td>Ko Ngati Temaara te hapu Ngati Temaara is the sub-tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Te Wheao te Tangata Te Wheao is the name of the ancestor</td>
<td>Ko Te Wheao te Tangata Te Wheao is the name of the ancestor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Tamatea te marae Tamatea is the marae</td>
<td>Ko Tamatea te marae Tamatea is the marae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Whaea Betty Wark tenei Introducing Betty Wark</td>
<td>Ko Whaea Betty Wark tenei Introducing Betty Wark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Nau Rini Te Wheao raua ko Cyril Chapman ona matua Nau Rini Te Wheao and Cyril Chapman are Betty's parents</td>
<td>Ko Nau Rini Te Wheao raua ko Cyril Chapman ona matua Nau Rini Te Wheao and Cyril Chapman are Betty's parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Omanaia, Hokianga tonia wahi whanau Her family were from Omanaia, Hokianga</td>
<td>Ko Omanaia, Hokianga tonia wahi whanau Her family were from Omanaia, Hokianga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Hato Hohepa tonia kura tuarua She went to St Joseph's Māori Girls' College</td>
<td>Ko Hato Hohepa tonia kura tuarua She went to St Joseph's Māori Girls' College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko Jim Wark tonia tane. He tane pai ia Jim Wark is her husband. He is a very good man</td>
<td>Ko Jim Wark tonia tane. He tane pai ia Jim Wark is her husband. He is a very good man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokorima ona tama tane She had five sons</td>
<td>Tokorima ona tama tane She had five sons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He kaha ia ki te mahi Her work gave her strength</td>
<td>He kaha ia ki te mahi Her work gave her strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He mahi iwi Māori tonia Her work was for Māori</td>
<td>He mahi iwi Māori tonia Her work was for Māori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko ia te tino Kaiwhakahau i Te Arohanui She was a leading force at Arohanui</td>
<td>Ko ia te tino Kaiwhakahau i Te Arohanui She was a leading force at Arohanui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He tino awhina ia ki te hunga rangatahi She gave support to young people</td>
<td>He tino awhina ia ki te hunga rangatahi She gave support to young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kua hinga he Totara nui o te wao-nui-a-Tane The mighty Totara has now fallen</td>
<td>Kua hinga he Totara nui o te wao-nui-a-Tane The mighty Totara has now fallen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takoto mai e kui Rest peacefully, respected kuia</td>
<td>Takoto mai e kui Rest peacefully, respected kuia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takoto, takoto, takoto, e te rangatira, e te whaea Lie in peace, cherished, esteemed mother</td>
<td>Takoto, takoto, takoto, e te rangatira, e te whaea Lie in peace, cherished, esteemed mother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I’m lying on my tummy up on this maunga (hill). I call it my secret maunga. The grass is nice and soft and the sun warms me. I look at the sky and watch the birds and the clouds and what sort of patterns are there today and it makes me almost fall asleep and forget.

Today I see a crocodile and a blue-tongued lizard and a bear. I can see a girl with a hat on, running away in fright, just like me. My fingers are like birds, like in a group and they are flying around in circles playing tiggy with each other.

My eye lids begin to droop and I feel so sleepy. I want to just drift away like the clouds. I feel so lonely - so alone. I keep watching the birds hovering above me and I wish I could fly away with them. I know I’m not supposed to tell anyone. I don’t know why - I just know I’m not supposed to tell. I’m lying on my secret maunga, sinking into the soft grass - the sun is still hot but now I feel cold. I’m frightened and lonely. I want to tell someone but there’s no-one to tell.¹

¹ Many thanks to Te Ura Kareariki Taripo-Hoskins (1997) who, when aged seven, helped write the preliminary story from a child’s perspective.
Embracing Papatuanuku - Symbolic Mother and Home

An Introduction to Major Themes

The secret maunga in the preliminary story was both symbolic mother and home to the young Betty Wark. Her secret maunga was a place of sanctuary and respite: a haven where she sought refuge and where she felt at home. Betty described her secret maunga during the interview session on her childhood. In order to try and recapture these reminiscences from a child’s perspective I asked a seven-year-old girl to assist me. The idea behind this strategy was to evoke an image of Betty as a young girl who was not only self-reliant but also resourceful. Despite a life fraught with difficulties she was able to find refuge in a secret and beautiful place. The preliminary story alludes to a child who lives with discord and unhappiness. Clearly, all is not well in her world. She is lonely and frightened and something is troubling her. The first chapter in the narrative history explores some of the more painful aspects of Betty’s early life. Her experiences as a child are central to understanding what motivated her in adult life to commit so much of her personal energy to the community work which brought her public acclaim and prominence.

Betty’s story is an inspiring tale of courage and perseverance, illustrating the classic theme of the triumph of the human soul in the face of adversity. Coming to terms with what happened to her as a child has not been easy, yet with hindsight these experiences have strengthened her and made her a survivor:

Looking back at my life I had a hard life but if I hadn’t gone through that I wouldn’t be surviving today. So it has balanced off. I still get a bit sad about some of the things but I don’t use it as a crutch (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

On a symbolic level Betty’s early life can be read as a young girl’s search for home and a search for belonging. Indeed, notions of home and family and
the ways in which we constitute space are recurrent themes throughout Betty’s life. On another level, however, these themes can also be read from the perspective of the dislocation of Māori in a colonized world. Betty did yearn for a literal home, but she also had a deeper longing for a spiritual and cultural home - a search for her papakainga, her turangawaewae.

Another central theme in Betty’s life story is that of the motherless child’s search for her mother, or rather, the idealised mother. As Betty’s story develops the search for a maternal figure is internalized and ironically the motherless child becomes identified with the universal mother-figure she once so actively sought. Similarly, this theme can also be read from a cultural perspective - the desire to be reunited with Papatuanuku. These parallel themes are explored within the context of Betty’s life history as her narrative unfolds.
CHAPTER FIVE

Nga Aka - The Roots

Totara manawa kaha,
tu pono ki te tika.
Ruia, taitea kia tu ko
taikaka.

Stout hearted totara,
standing straight and true.
The sapwood surrounds the heart-wood beneath
(Tai, 1992, p. 36).

Figure 3.
Totara tree roots¹

Chapter Five consists of a brief introduction to the symbolism of the roots of the totara tree and the narrative text, with annotated reflections which explore Betty's roots, her whakapapa, her childhood and her schooling, approximately spanning the years from 1924 to 1937.

The totara, *Podocarpus totara*, is an indigenous tree to New Zealand and is highly regarded by Māori. The mature totara will grow up to 30m (100ft) high. Its roots must reach far into the depths of Papatuanuku. It is the roots of the totara that anchor it to Papatuanuku and it is the roots which literally hold the land in place.

The roots of the totara represent connection to the land. For Māori, the totara is a very special tree, brought into being by Tane Mahuta, the atua of the forest. It has been the preferred wood for large carvings and waka taua (war canoes). Waka taua, capable of carrying 100 warriors, are often hollowed out from a single totara log. Symbolically, this very important tree can be viewed as representing everything that roots us, anchors us, identifies us and locates us in the Māori world.

¹ Totara roots image from: www.homepages.ihug.co.nz/~xhayward/photo2.htm
The roots in the symbolism of the totara mark out a genealogical reference point and tie us to nature. Our roots, our whakapapa, lead us to forge identities and bonds within our whanau, hapu and iwi. The symbolism of the totara as a symbol of rootedness to that place called home, for Māori, has become a symbol of nostalgia in a mobile society. For Betty, this symbolism was significant. As a child she recalled planting a row of six totara. The trees marked her territory and they represented shelter and protection and a sense of belonging. As a symbol of nostalgia they provided her with feelings of belonging and being rooted in the Hokianga, the place of her birth and the place where she wanted to be returned to at her death.

*Figure 4. Totara tree*²

² Image of the totara tree from: www.nz-photos.com/gallery/Peel-Forest/totara
Betty Wark’s Whakapapa
Her Background and Childhood
1924-1937

Betty Wark was born on 6 June 1924. She knows very little about the circumstances of her birth: "I was told that I was born under a plum tree at Omanaia\(^3\) at around 9.00pm and that a big black dog happened to come along and was my mother’s sole support throughout her labour" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Betty is not sure why her mother found herself in a position of having to deliver her own child unsupported, in an orchard, in an isolated area of Northland. It is quite possible she had planned to give birth in one of the maternity hospitals in the area or with the assistance of a midwife or whanau and that the baby had simply come early. However, it is also possible that no support had been made available to her and she had been left to cope on her own:

My mother was not married to my father and when she became pregnant she was kicked out of home - it was very strict in those days - usually if you were young and unmarried and had a baby you had to go to work and somebody took over the child. I had quite a few people looking after me. So it was expected that she give up her child and go to work, but she must’ve known the people who fostered me.

I met my mother when I turned twenty one. I had this yearning to meet her. She lived in Auckland so I had to meet her at the railway station. I didn’t know what she looked like but when I got off the train I saw two women talking together and one of them turned out to be my mother. My mother lived in Ponsonby and I found out she’d been in hospital a few times because she had had TB. She had another family of two boys and two girls but they had ended up in Howick at the convent there when she was in

\(^3\) Omanaia is a small settlement in Southern Hokianga, Northland, North Island, New Zealand.
Betty’s mother was Nau (Mabel) Rini Te Wheao and was of Nga Puhi (Northland Māori tribe) descent. In the summer of 1923, Nau was working as a domestic for the Chapman family at Kohukohu in the Hokianga and it was one of the sons of this family, Cyril, who was Betty’s biological father. Betty knows very little about her father. He was of both Pakeha and Māori descent but tended to identify as Pakeha:

I went looking for my father when I was about twenty seven. All I wanted to do was see him. He knew he had a daughter but he thought I had died so it was quite a shock! I found out where he worked when I went back up north and I rung him to meet him. I was going back to Auckland and I arranged to meet him at the bus stop. We kept passing each other until this man came up to me and said, 'Are you waiting for somebody?'. I said, 'Yes' and he said, 'I think I’m the person you’re waiting for. I’m your father'. So we just looked at each other and probably hugged each other and I never saw him again for a while. But I was satisfied I’d met him. He didn’t mean anything to me at that particular time. Between my mother and father I have thirty-two half brothers and sisters. I was the first. I’m close to some of them, more so to my mother’s side. It was only in the late 1970s that I met my father’s side. I’m quite close to my half-brothers, Henry and George, but there are a lot of younger ones. My father’s last wife was younger than I was (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

As a child, Betty did not know the identity of either of her parents. She remembers that she had an overwhelming desire to meet them and created a fantasy around these unknown figures: “I had one wish as a child - I wanted to meet my birth parents” (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

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4 According to Louise Noble Campbell (personal communication, September 23, 1997) the Sisters of Mercy would look after girls at the Orphanage attached to Our Lady of the Star of the Sea Convent at Howick and boys would go to the Takapuna Convent.
Figure 5. Betty’s biological mother, Nau (Mabel) Rini Te Wheao, (n.d.). Private collection of the Wark whanau.

Figure 6. Betty’s biological father, Cyril Chapman, (n.d.) Private collection of the Wark whanau.
Betty was raised as a tamaiti whangai (foster child) and was known by the name of one of her initial foster families, Te Wake. Te Wake is a well-known and influential whanau in the Hokianga area of Northland, one of its most famous members being Dame Whina Cooper. Dame Whina’s father was Heremia Te Wake, a chief of the Ngati Manawa hapu of the Te Rarawa tribe (King, 1983). Betty was unclear as to her mother’s exact connection to the Te Wake whanau but there must have been one for her to be fostered into this particular clan. Fostering was a customary extension of the Māori practice of the extended family and communal living and was a relatively common occurrence for many Māori families (Meihana, 1994; Metge, 1995; Webster, 1973). Betty’s memories of her early childhood with the Te Wake whanau were patchy and fragmented. She was eventually taken in by Hau Te Wake, older brother of Dame Whina:

I’m trying to remember whether Māori was ever spoken. We had to say prayers in Māori, standing at the foot of Hau Te Wake’s bed every night for evening prayers. Hau Te Wake was a very strict man and he had very little to do with the children because he was out in the forest most of the time. We only ever saw him at night. I don’t know how I came to live in the Waipoua Forest with Hau Te Wake. Before that I was with a man called Jimmy Maxwell. That was in Waimamaku, which is on the south end of the Hokianga. I could have been five - I could have been younger at this place, Waimamaku. I remember a big pine tree and a white house and I remember chasing some calves, but I only had a red jersey on that just covered my navel. Then the next time I remember I was in the Waipoua Forest with Hau Te Wake, his son Dan, his daughters: Mary, Epsie, Christina and the eldest daughter Regina - they had a raupo house. There was a stream at the bottom of the garden. We had to wash there every night. We children always ate separately to Hau Te Wake. I remember going down to the beach on horses. I remember going into the paddocks, cooking mushrooms on an

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5 Dame Whina Cooper (1895-1994) in the words of her biographer, Dr Michael King, was a woman of extraordinary vision and energy who accomplished a great deal: the introduction of land development into the Hokianga, the launching of the Māori Women’s Welfare League, the building of Te Unga Waka Marae in Auckland and the organisation of the Māori Land March (King, 1983, p. 7).

6 Traditional styles of Māori housing used raupo, a type of bulrush as wall coverings (Best, 1974, p. 245).
iron plate. The house was a very big place and the chimney was very big and there were seats around it where we sat around to get warm. Bread was made in a camp oven, buried. You dug a part by the open fire place and you put charcoal on the top. Jane Te Wake, the wife of Hau, was a very good horse woman and we often would go out to the beach and put up a tent and collect kaimoana (shellfish), mussels and paua and then they were dried in the chimney back at the house. Then I remember Hau Te Wake dying. He went back to Panguru⁷ where they had a family house. He was very ill there. I remember the date he died - 2 December 1931. It was big event. He was a very well known man and a very strong man. Everyone gathered at the house and then they moved him to a marae called Waipuna⁸. We sat around with the body there and they put pennies on the eyes to close them. I sat there as a little girl and I had no fear whatsoever of it. It was all part of life (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

After Hau Te Wake died Betty went to live with his son Dan:

I liked Dan and his wife, Polly. They had a son called David. I remember the cowshed - lots of mud. I used to help milk and get the cows in but most of my milking days were done with Dan’s sister, Mary, just over the hill at Motuti (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Betty lived with Dan’s family for about three years until Dan became seriously ill:

I remember Dan going to hospital and his head being wrapped in a green cloth. Shortly after he died. When Dan got sick I moved to Waimamaku with Tilly, who was the second eldest daughter. Tilly was working at the Opononi Hotel and had to spend more and more time at her job so I went to live with another sister, Mary and her husband at Motuti (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Motuti is a remote settlement nestled at the tip of one of the northern arms of the Hokianga Harbour. The nearest sizeable village is Rawene which could be reached by boat. Supplies such as flour, rice, sugar and tea could

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⁷ Panguru is a tiny settlement in the Hokianga region. Refer to the map of the Hokianga, Figure. 2, p. 106.
⁸ According to Michael King (1983), Waipuna Marae was established by Heremia Te Wake and his brothers. It is situated in the Panguru village.
be purchased there. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Motuti still remains isolated and remote. An unsealed road leads into the settlement and is frequently in disrepair. Visitors to the region must still travel to Rawene and then by ferry link to Rangiora before making the long drive to Motuti.

Betty was eight years old when she came to live at Motuti. As with the other settlements she had lived at in the Hokianga district, Motuti was surrounded by bush land and hilly terrain. Mangroves grew rampantly in tidal creeks providing an ideal habitat for flounders and eel. Famed for its kauri and gum digging in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the area had attracted a large number of Pakeha immigrants particularly from the Yugoslav region of Dalmatia and many had intermarried with local Māori:

Mary’s husband was Yugoslav and one of the few Pakeha living in the area. He was a hard worker and a good provider. He built us a house out of nikau9 just below the mountain in Motuti called Tamatea (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

When Betty went to live at Motuti it was 1932, the country was in the grip of the Great Depression and the Hokianga district was feeling the full impact of this economic disaster (King, 1983; Simpson, 1984; Sinclair, 1980). Māori, in particular, faced extreme hardship and poverty. Most of the more productive farmland had been sold into European hands and income from farm development and produce had diminished considerably. By the 1930s, most of the accessible timber had been milled, the kauri gum industry had collapsed and little casual work was available (King, 1983). However, while there were few employment opportunities it was still possible to subsist from the land and sea:

We ate mostly vegetables and fish and every now and again we had meat or poultry which had to be slaughtered from your own farm stock so it wasn’t an everyday thing. We would sometimes have pig or beef or a chook but I don’t

9 Nikau is a type of indigenous palm tree.
remember having mutton or lamb. Where we lived there was an inlet from the Hokianga Harbour and we were able to gather oysters and pipis and we also caught eels. I don't like eel now as they were so much a part of our diet. I can also remember going down to about an acre of land and stripping the corn for maize and putting the pumpkins and water melons into mounds. We also had our own eggs and milk. Those survival skills were all part of life then and we didn't know any different but I think learning all those things has made me better able to cope today (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

The Catholic Church had a strong foothold in the northern Hokianga district. There was a solid Catholic community at Motuti as missionaries established a station in northern Hokianga in 1838 (King, 1983). Betty recalls Father Richard Bressers, a Mill Hill Priest saying mass in Latin at the lovely little church which was the centre of spiritual life:

Mary was a practising Catholic and I was raised a Catholic. The Catholic Church was a big part of our life at Motuti. I was instructed in the Catholic catechism and was taught how to pray. Sometimes I think that all that got me through was my prayers. I would pray the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory Be and I would pray to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Sometimes I would just pray to die even though I knew it was a sin (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

![Figure 7. Saint Mary's Church in Motuti, Hokianga Harbour](image1)

![Figure 8. Interior of Saint Mary's Church, Motuti.](image2)

Betty's reminiscences are revealing regarding the private misery she endured as a child: "Sometimes I would just pray to die even though I knew

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10 According to Michael King (1983), Richard Bressers was posted to New Zealand in 1897 and remained until his death in 1955 at the age of 84.
11 The Mill Hill priests were actually members of the Saint Joseph's Foreign Missionary Society which had been founded at Mill Hill in London. Its first priests arrived in New Zealand in 1886 (King, 1997).
12 Photos courtesy of Stuart Park, New Zealand Historic Places Trust.
it was a sin" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996). These are desperate thoughts indeed for a little girl to carry around with her but in the context of her early life they are understandable. The ideal of the tamaiti whangai system (fostering system) provided networks where children could belong to the whole whanau and be raised in a warm and positive environment but as can so frequently happen, the ideal may not always be upheld as was Betty’s case. In the early part of her childhood she found it very difficult being moved around between the various branches of the Te Wake whanau, never forming any close and lasting bonds, particularly with mother figures:

I was never mothered. I was always unwanted when my mother was pregnant and it carried on all the way through. But you didn't question it and when I was moved it was just something you did. Whatever happened you moved (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Mary was the closest figure to a mother Betty was to know in her childhood. She stayed with Mary and her family at Motuti for five years but she never felt wanted or part of the family:

I used to blame myself - that it was my fault that I wasn't wanted. I used to sleep out in the shed where they stored the potatoes and my mattress was this springy grass - like a tumbleweed - I think it was called patiti. The rest of the family slept inside so I was very lonely. Sometimes I would sit up on this hill just watching the birds hovering above me, feeling very lonely and sorry for myself. It was very hard. But then life was very hard for everyone. No-one had any money and we all had to work hard just to survive. I was more or less like a slave; always working, catching eels, carrying wood on my back, picking puha (sow-thistle), washing clothes with a washboard at the outside tub, working in the garden, milking the cows. I went to the little Motuti school,13 but there were always chores before and after school. I was expected to earn my keep (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

13 Motuti Native School was established in 1908 and functioned as a Native or Māori school until the abolition of separate State Māori schools in 1969 (Simon, 1998).
Betty’s feelings of being unwanted were further intensified by the stigma of her illegitimacy. Betty was born at a time when society condemned sexual relations outside of marriage. Children born to unmarried women bore the mantle of societal disapproval. Although such sanctions were generally absent in traditional Māori society, by the time Betty was born attitudes towards premarital sex had changed. In a predominantly Catholic culture, such as the Hokianga, there was considerable censure towards unmarried mothers and their offspring. Unmarried mothers were seen as unfit, depraved and sinful and their children were frequently tarnished in the same way. Some priests would not even baptise children termed illegitimate:

I was told I was a bastard and should never have been born. I was always unwanted and it carried on all the way through. It's there all the time - it's there all the time. I was always being told I was bad - that my mother was bad - that her family were crooks - that Māoris were no good - that a no-good Māori bastard like me was fit for nothing (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Sadly, for Betty, much of the emotional abuse she endured came from the family who had fostered her, particularly Mary’s Pakeha husband. He was relentless in his criticism and cruel torments. Ironically, for a man who had married a Māori woman and who lived in a Māori community, he appeared to hold a deeply ingrained prejudice towards Māori, considering them to be dirty, lazy, sexually promiscuous and potentially criminal. Certainly, such attitudes seem somewhat contradictory and difficult to reconcile. He may have entered the marriage simply because there was no Pakeha woman available. Or as was common in marriages between Māori and Pakeha in the colonization period and early part of the century, the prime motivation may have been acquisition of land or some other economic advantages (Harré, 1966; Ritchie, 1998). However, speculation about the reasons for this marriage are futile and we can only surmise that such attitudes would obviously be problematic and lead to conflict in the relationship with Mary,
their children and other kinsfolk. For Betty, the attitudes held by Mary’s husband manifested as racism:

He was always telling me that I came from no-good Māoris who were nothing but jailbirds; that I was bad. Sometimes I just wanted to drift away. I would sit up on this hill and watch the clouds and I’d feel very sorry for myself. I thought about drowning myself - when you’ve got no-one it’s easy to feel sorry for yourself. I used to get quite a few hidings and I ran away once to an Aunt - it was about seven miles away and Mary came down with a stock whip to get me. There was this thing that you didn’t interfere and so I went back (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Without any intervention to prevent further mistreatment there was little respite from ongoing psychological and physical abuse for Betty and her feelings of being alone and alienated intensified. In all, she suffered years of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. She describes herself as feeling different and not belonging; of living a type of cat and mouse game wondering when she was going to be pounced upon. Such feelings are not uncommon in abuse survivors (Walker, 1992). Eventually, the layers of abuse Betty experienced were compounded with sexual abuse:

I remember Mary going away - I’m not sure where - and he interfered with me and then he gave me a banana. When Mary came back I told her and he knocked me out. I was no good, I was somebody’s bastard, I was evil. I didn’t understand - I didn’t understand what it was all about but I knew I wasn’t to tell. Soon after this happened I had to walk to Panguru which was over the hill to get some flour and sugar and I stopped at this woman called Martha’s house. She gave me a cup of tea. It’s funny how you remember a little kindness (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Obviously, the physical, emotional and sexual abuse Betty experienced was deeply traumatic, systematically eroding her childhood into a grim struggle for survival. As is very common with survivors of abuse there was an enormous amount of self-blame14. "I would wonder what I had done to

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14 Lenore Walker (1994) in a discussion on the dynamics of abuse states: "One of the major goals of healing is to help the girl or woman understand that she is not to
deserve being treated the way I was. I never felt I was a good person” (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Betty, as with all children, was intrinsically less powerful than the adults who were entrusted with her care. She was not in a position where she could exercise choice and leave the situation. She was at the mercy of adults who abused their power and violated her. Looking back at that period has been extremely difficult for her, re-opening wounds that have never healed:

Sean, an Irish man I met, knew of my hurts and he gave me a book and he said to me, ‘what you do is you go back to those places and throw them back’. And I did that - I went back up North but I never got rid of them. Never got rid of them. You remember them (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

When the man who abused her died she went to view his body:

The priest said to us, ‘Now anything you’ve got, anger, anything about this man lying there, give it all back to him’. And I did that again. And it’s been much easier on me but it’s still there all the time (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Although Betty’s early years were difficult and multiple layers of abuse were a dominant feature of her childhood experience, there were nevertheless some happy times. From a young age she was a survivor. She learned to be self-reliant and self-sufficient and participated in the everyday school and social life of her childhood friends:

My last primary school was Motuti which was a Native school and there would have been 50 or 60 of us there. I used to enjoy the singing even though I’ve got a terrible singing voice and I used to like playing basketball (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

blame for the abuse. The abuse was not her fault, no matter what her behaviour” (p. 97).
Betty would also enjoy retreating to her secret maunga where she could sit peacefully and feel the sun on her face and the breeze in her hair. Cocooned in the crevices of her comfortable sanctuary overlooking the Hokianga inlet, she would watch the clouds and the birds and allow her mind to imagine a different life where she felt wanted and loved. She had an ongoing daydream that her real parents would come looking for her and they would all live happily ever after but even as a child she knew this was just a fantasy and would never happen. Sometimes her mind would let the secrets in and then she would be overcome with sadness and shame; these were the times when she would contemplate drowning herself just so she "could drift away" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996). Betty’s yearning to ‘drift away’ eventually came about in an unexpected form when in 1938 she received a government scholarship to attend Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College in Napier: "I was lucky enough to get a scholarship - in those days they called it a Proficiency test and if you passed it you were chosen to go off to boarding school" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

The scholarship enabled Betty to ‘drift away’ from a life that no child should have to endure, but even so, leaving the Hokianga was not an easy transition for the young teen. However Saint Joseph’s gave Betty a fresh beginning and a new chapter started in her life.

![Motuti Parish Hall](image_url)

*Figure 9.* Connor, D.H. (1997). Motuti Parish Hall. The population of Motuti has dwindled considerably since Betty’s childhood. The Parish Hall built in 1938, the year Betty left the Hokianga, has become derelict. Private collection of Helene Connor.
In February 1938 at the age of fourteen, Betty left the Hokianga to attend Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College\textsuperscript{15}.

I went off to Napier to Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College boarding school in 1938. That kind of upset my life a bit because I had never been away from the Hokianga area or been out on my own. There was a lot of travelling. You had to get a car to go up to Motukaraka, then go by launch over to Rawene, and then by bus to Otiria, from Otiria to Auckland and then down to Napier by train. It took nearly three days to get to Napier (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Contrary to the often negative stereotyping of Catholic boarding schools, Betty’s experiences of Saint Joseph’s were positive and affirming. For the first time in her young life she felt safe and was able to enjoy the frivolities of youth. Saint Joseph’s gave Betty a new beginning. The nuns nurtured her and gave her a new sense of identity. They taught her: "being Māori was something to be proud of and they taught me that all children are pure in the eyes of God" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

The initial settling in period, however, presented a few teething problems for Betty. At first she was intimidated by the nuns. Dressed in their traditional habits they appeared formidable and severe and it took some time to become accustomed to them. Betty also found that she missed Motuti and her special hill. She became quite nostalgic for Mary, her old home and her friends and she felt very alone:

I was like any girl at boarding school. I didn’t like it at first. I used to cry all the time. I was quite homesick - even though I never felt like I’d had much of a home it was the only home

\textsuperscript{15}Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College was founded in 1867 by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, refer to van der Linden (1990).
I’d known. There were lots of things I didn’t miss of course but there were lots of things I did miss. Anyway, eventually I got used to it and I did well at school. Saint Joseph’s was run by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions. The nuns became my parents - they gave me a different part of myself. They were dedicated and committed to their vocation. They were good women - they had true commitment - they owned nothing and asked for nothing. Every time I hear the name of the school I get a little flip in my heart because they were good to me (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

The religious atmosphere of Saint Joseph’s stressed service to humanity as a spiritual path, and the nuns provided Betty with strong female role models. She considered them to have been one of the main influences on her life. After a while, the discipline of boarding school life began to suit Betty and she settled into her new environment, enjoying the relative stability of the daily routines of prayer, domestic chores and study. The nuns exuded an aura of composure and equipoise which Betty found comforting and secure. For a short time she considered taking the vows of Holy Orders herself: "I wanted to be a nun in my first year because I felt that was the life I should lead but as time went on I changed my mind" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Betty enjoyed the special character of Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College and she enjoyed meeting other Māori Catholic girls from different parts of the country:

There would have been about ninety young girls from all parts of New Zealand, from the South Island, the East Coast, up North. I had friends that came from Taupo: Rose Raukura, Erina Kepa, Marie Barton. Iwa Keenan who was from the South Island - there were quite a few girls from the South Island - the Styles sisters, Marianne Jacobs. I made some really good friends during my four years at Saint Joseph’s. I wasn’t what you would call a bright scholar but I enjoyed being down there because I got a lot of loving from the nuns. They were very good to me and really not having an actual family they became my family. Even after I left school.
I was confirmed down there and given the name of Cecilia\textsuperscript{16}. Saint Cecilia is the Saint of Music which I thought was funny as I'm not the least bit musical. I was given a little prayer card and a picture of her which I still have. I also took my first Holy Communion\textsuperscript{17} down there (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Betty attended Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College from February 1938 until December 1941. The curriculum for girls at this time had a heavy emphasis on domestic and clerical subjects. Betty recalls being taught sewing, darning, knitting, tapestry, crochet, housekeeping, cooking and flower arrangement. She also learnt typing and shorthand and in addition to the core subjects of English and maths she was also taught French. The Māori language was not taught at this time despite the fact it was a school specifically for Māori girls. Religious education was, obviously, a predominant feature of the school and there was strict adherence to the Catholic calendar with the celebration of special events such as Easter and significant feast days:

On March 19th we would celebrate Saint Joseph’s Feast Day with a special Mass and then there would be a picnic and we would go for walks and swims. We always got a piece of cake and some fruit as a treat. I also remember praying for the dead on All Souls Day, the 31st of October and then praying to all the Saints on All Saints Day, the 1st of November.

I stayed at boarding school for four years. My first two years I did the usual course - the general course it was called, and then the nuns wanted me to stay on. There was no money for me to stay on though so in the mornings I did kitchen duties until lunch time and then I did commercial in the afternoon. I was taught sewing but I wasn't very good at that. I wasn't very good at darning either. We had to wear black stockings with our gyms and we had to darn our own stockings. I didn't mind cooking and I didn't mind the typing. I can't remember

\textsuperscript{16}Traditionally at the time of Confirmation one is given a saint’s name. Saint Cecilia, Virgin and Martyr, is the Patroness of Musicians. Her Feast Day is November 22 (Hoever, 1955, p. 483).

\textsuperscript{17}The Sacrament of the Eucharist or the ceremony of the Holy Communion takes place during the Mass, the Catholic Church’s central act of worship. It is a time to gather together, celebrate and give thanks. It was a special occasion for Betty and she was pleased that this Sacrament and the Sacrament of Confirmation took place in the presence of her new family and friends.
having Māori there. I remember we did a lot of singing but not in Māori. My mother’s family are all good singers but I haven’t got an ear for singing in tune - I can never sing a song on my own – just haven’t got it. Some of the priests could sing really well. There were a lot of different priests - I think we even had a Mill Hill down in Napier just like the ones that were influential in the Hokianga. I think he came from Wanganui. One priest came from New Plymouth and he was a great singer. I think it was him who took us to see the Vienna Boys Choir (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

The school also encouraged the girls to play sport:

I was very good at basketball, very good at basketball! And basketball was mostly what we played down there. We played against other local teams and also against another Māori Girls College. It was an Anglican one called Hukarere18 (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

The girls also did a great deal of walking:

We did a lot of walking - mainly because we had no vehicles. Some Sundays we had to make the long walk down Meeanee Street to the Saint Mary’s Church - it seemed to take for ever19 (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Hostel life was relatively regimented and the nuns set strict standards regarding neatness and cleanliness, and strict routines were adhered to:

We would get up each day at 5.30am to light the boilers and the fire if it was our turn, otherwise we would get up at 6.00am and then we would wash and prepare to go to Chapel. We always went to Chapel before breakfast and before bed. The dormitories were beautifully kept. We girls starched all the linen and would make sure the initials SJC could be clearly seen in each corner of whatever it was we were folding.

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18 Hukarere is a secondary school for Māori girls located in Napier. It was established as a joint venture between the Anglican Church and the Department of Native Affairs in 1875 and was formerly known as Hukarere Native School for Girls (Jenkins & Morris Matthews, 1995, p. 15).

19 Lynne Darroch and Kathrine Frame (personal communication, April, 19, 1997) who both grew up in the Hawkes Bay confirm Betty’s memory of these long walks stating that it usually took the Saint Joseph’s girls over an hour to walk to the Meeanee Road Church.
We would press our gyms under our mattresses. The nuns were strict about our personal appearance. We had to be well groomed, neat and tidy and we had to have good manners. We were taught how to set the table properly and how to arrange flowers for the Chapel. We would also have to scrub the floors and keep them polished. And we would help to keep the Chapel immaculate. We were well fed and we were taught how to cook and to bake. We had a fairly light breakfast, a good lunch and quite a big dinner at night. We always had brown bread, and we used to all steal the brown bread from the kitchen and shove it down our gyms and it used to leave crumbs all around. The nuns always found out who had the bread or not! We all used to steal apples as well (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

During her four years at Saint Joseph’s Betty would return to the Hokianga during the Christmas Holidays.

It used to cost £3.2p to get to Napier by train from Auckland and then there were the bus and boat fares to get back to Motuti so I could only afford to go back at Christmas. When I’d go back my job was to get the cows in and do the milking - I used to lead two different lives. Most of the girls went home during the other holidays but as I wasn’t able to I stayed back with the nuns around the hostel. They knew that I had come from people that really couldn’t afford all the niceties. Sister Crescentia gave me some shoes once. I was her pet - she used to give me sweeties. There was a dear old nun there called Sister Athanasius. She was very kind and if she liked you, or if you played up to her, or did things for her you’d get a sweet from her too. They were good to me (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Sister Crescentia was Principal of the College from 1933-1959 (Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls' College Centenary Committee, 1967, p. 26). Sister Athanasius worked at the College for over 70 years. She was awarded the MBE in 1956 (Saint Joseph's Māori Girls' College Centenary Committee, 1967, p. 28). Betty spoke about both these nuns with enormous affection.
There were no socials with boys but occasionally there would be contact with the boys from Te Aute College on sports days: "I don't remember having much social contact with boys. Sometimes we would play sports with the Māori boys from Te Aute College" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

At the end of 1941 Betty was seventeen years old. World War II had begun and it was time to leave school and find a job: "When I left school, Sister Crescentia got me a job in the Wairoa Hospital. It was the beginning of the war and you became a nurse or a teacher or something like that" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996). It was difficult for Betty to leave Saint Joseph's and the nuns who had been so kind to her, and she started her new job with some trepidation, uneasy about what the future held for her: "I felt lost and I felt like I was being thrown out into the big wide world!" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Figure 10. Betty (on the right) and Puia Okeroa in their school uniforms, Saint Joseph's Māori Girls' College, c. 1939. Private collection of the Wark whanau.

20 Te Aute College is an Anglican school for Māori boys in Central Hawkes Bay. It opened in 1871 (Jenkins & Morris Matthews, 1995, p. 120).
Annotated Reflections Chapter Five

A Survivor

To say Betty Wark was a survivor is an understatement. She not only survived the persistent undermining of her cultural identity and experienced extreme racism, but she also survived physical, mental, emotional and sexual abuse and a childhood virtually devoid of stability and love.

While in the middle of writing this piece I happened to see a car bumper sticker with the words:

THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE

As with all synchronous events, I reflected on the significance of seeing something that so closely paralleled my thoughts at such a crucial point in the process of gathering the material for this section. It was a simple and concise message. There is no excuse for abuse. No matter how we might try and make excuses, or attempt to deny or discount or judge or analyse or understand abuse, at the end of the day there is absolutely no excuse for abuse. There simply is not.

Seeing this particular car bumper sticker brought into sharp focus the dilemmas I faced over writing about this aspect of Betty’s life. It was extremely difficult to commit to paper. I struggled with writing about it, procrastinated and avoided. For weeks I could not even write the words - sexual abuse. I used euphemisms or I alluded to it in veiled language. Every time I started on the piece I would become overwhelmed with the classic symptoms of anxiety: hyperventilation, palpitations and sweaty palms. I would be right back with Betty in the room where she first told me about the monstrous defilements she endured as a child. I would see her composure desert her, the dignified face of a mature woman of mana
crumple into that of a helpless, vulnerable, frightened and confused little
girl. I would see the tears roll down her cheeks and feel my own tears. I
was like an emotional sponge soaking up all this pain and hurt and I would
feel furiously angry about what had happened to Betty and to all those
children who have been abused.

The confidences Betty shared with me were entirely unexpected for both of
us. Betty was not of the ‘therapy generation’. She was of a generation that
believed work is the best cure for heartache: "You simply soldiered on. You
didn't talk about your hurts. I don't recall even hearing the word incest or
abuse as a young person" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12,
1996).

Historically, conviction levels for incest in New Zealand were low. Such acts
were traditionally not reported to, or prosecuted by, the police, perhaps from
an archaic belief that nobody should interfere too much in the affairs of a
man and his family. Consequently, up until the 1950s there were seldom
more than 10 incest prosecutions recorded each year (Newbold, 1992).

The historical context of the isolated rural community of the Hokianga
Harbour district would also have had a major bearing on the abuse Betty
experienced. When Betty was a child in the mid-1920s and 1930s there
were fewer limits on masculine opportunism and men could more readily
assert their power and authority over family members and transgress
taboos. In Betty's case her relative isolation placed her at high risk of abuse
and the protection she should have experienced as a tamaiti whangai was
seriously undermined.

Betty was not explicit in stating how many times she experienced sexual
abuse. Clearly, it was not a one-off occurrence but happened several times.
What was more evident however, was the ongoing emotional and
psychological abuse she experienced in terms of her general neglect and the feelings of being unwanted and unloved.

Much of what Betty shared with me had rarely been told to anyone else. I felt privileged that she trusted me enough to talk about her experiences of abuse but at the same time I felt accountable to Betty. I am not a therapist but Betty needed me to listen to her story in the way a therapist would: compassionate yet detached. There were no difficulties in being compassionate but detachment was not possible. I suggested that Betty could seek professional therapy as there are a number of issues around her experiences that remained unresolved. She was not open to the suggestion at the time but assured me that just talking about her experiences had been therapy in itself.

We agreed that we could not leave the story of her abuse out, but at the same time Betty did not want the main focus of her story to be that of an abuse survivor. Nevertheless, it is crucial to her narrative and provides an insight into what motivated and drove her to commit so much of her personal energy to the community work which has brought her public acclaim:

Looking back at my life I had a hard life but if I hadn’t gone through that I wouldn’t be surviving today. So it has balanced off. It has balanced off. I still get a bit sad about some of the things but I don’t use it as a crutch. I don’t use it as a crutch. And that’s why with the young people at Arohanui I know how they feel because a lot of them have been through exactly the same kind of thing. For young men I think it might have been a bit different. But for a woman it’s harder (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Male victims of abuse may refute Betty’s assertion that ‘for a woman it’s harder’, but they would probably agree that women and girls’ experiences of abuse differ from those of boys and men. Definitions of what might constitute abuse however, could be applied to both genders:
Although there is not one universally accepted definition, child sexual abuse is often defined as any touching of a child's genital or other body areas that has a sexual or seductive connotation or any coerced touching by the child of an adult's genital areas. Showing children pornographic movies and pictures, coercing a child to pose for such pictures, or telling sexual stories is also considered sexual abuse (Walker, 1994, p. 87).

The abuse of children, sexual or otherwise, is fundamentally related to the disparity of power in the adult-child relationship. The disparity of power between Betty and the adults in her life was certainly evident and she has also observed similar inequalities of power in many of the street kids she has supported over the years who have also experienced abuse in all its many-faceted forms.

For female victims of sexual abuse by men the disparity of power can also be viewed as perpetuating heterosexist relations where the male is dominant and the female submissive (Maynard & Winn, 1997, p. 189). In Betty's case there is also a need to be aware of how the prejudices of racism compounded her experience of abuse, leaving her uncertain as to whether her feelings of unworthiness were related to the abuse or to the racism, or to both.

Betty survived the secrets of her childhood and she survived the telling of those secrets. The hurt and damage to her psyche manifested for many years as intense anger, but throughout these years she was always

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21 According to Maynard and Winn (1997, p. 188) 97-99% of all reported cases of sexual abuse in Britain and the USA are by men and 1-3% by women. Similar figures are likely to be in existence in New Zealand. From June 30 2003 - June 30 2004, Child Youth and Family (CYF) received 43,414 notifications of child abuse. That was an increase of 10,212 cases, or 30.8 per cent, on the same period 12 months earlier. Of those cases, 36,066 required further action by social workers. For social agencies, the most worrying aspect has been the rise in the number of suspected critical cases - those where CYF was required to act within 24 hours. Those numbers were up dramatically in every part of the country. Nationally, critical cases were up by 41.1 per cent. The figures cement New Zealand's reputation as one of the worst countries in the world for reported child abuse (Child Abuse Reports Soar Nationwide, 2004).
sustained by her Catholic faith and her Māoritanga - a meeting place of spirituality between the Northern Hemisphere and Southern Hemisphere.

E kore au e ngaro
te kakano i ruia mai i Rangiatea

I am never lost;
I am a seed sown at Rangiatea

Rangiatea is the sacred home - the heart land of the human spirit (Tai, 1992, p. 4).
Māori Identity and Whakapapa

Māori are a lot like harakeke with its deep root system and consequent interconnection to surrounding harakeke bushes. For Māori there will always be an interconnection with other Māori due to shared roots and whakapapa. Whakapapa in traditional Māori society was traced back to Io through 21 phases down to Ranginui and Papatuanuku (Irwin, 1984). In this context, whakapapa was viewed in a spiritual sense and goes beyond differences in iwi and hapu.

As a child, Betty did not feel a connection to other Māori or to her whanau. She did meet her biological parents until her early twenties and she was not familiar with her whakapapa until her mid-life. She was not raised as Māori and speaks of lacking a sense of cultural self during her childhood: "I had no identity! I knew nothing Māori and I think that was the part I was looking for" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Betty’s statement of her sense of dislocation as a child reveals both an individual and a generational loss of cultural identity. Born in 1924, in an era when the government of Aotearoa/New Zealand encouraged the amalgamation of Māori and Pakeha, it was also a time when it was commonly believed Māori were doomed to extinction (Moorehead, 1968; Sorrenson, 1977). Growing up in such a climate it was inevitable that Betty’s sense of ethnic identity would become eroded. She knew she was of Māori descent but as a child, her knowledge of things Māori was not only limited but clouded in prejudice. Although she grew up in the predominantly Māori area of the Hokianga, and was exposed to Māori language and culture in a peripheral way through such things as having karakia in Māori and attending functions at local marae, the dominant culture was Pakeha.

Her identity as Māori was further eroded by discourses of racialization which constructed Māori and persons of mixed origin in negative ways.
Betty was frequently called ‘half-caste’ and felt she did not belong to either Māori or Pakeha. She was in some 'Never Never Land' in between. Betty’s whakapapa locates her ethnic identity as both Māori and Pakeha. How she locates herself on a personal level, however, is more complex. External constructions she absorbed as a child were negative and confusing. She was frequently tormented with racist remarks and felt ashamed of being part-Māori. To some extent the feelings of shame were counterbalanced by feelings of pride when she attended Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College and experienced the camaraderie and solidarity of being part of an in-group; in this instance, Māori or part-Māori, Catholic girls living together at a boarding school.

The label ‘illegitimate’ further compounded her sense of not belonging and occupying a space of nothingness. She was often called ‘bastard’ and ‘no-good Māori bastard’ and in her child’s mind she associated being Māori as being bad. Her mother, she was told, was bad, and so, too, was she. This is what she was taught. She was subjected to a process of ‘othering’ and indeed perceived herself as the ‘other’ although she was unable to articulate this. “I didn't belong and I had no identity”, is how she describes her feelings of alienation; of being ‘othered’ (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996).

Her sense of Māori identity was complicated by her marginalization as a ‘half-caste’ and her marginalization as being illegitimate. Living within the outer margins impacted upon her emotional self and burgeoning sense of identity as a child and resulted in a multi-faceted layering of her cultural and personal identity which cannot be underestimated. The issue of identity is a complex one and is subjected to multiple factors, both external and internal:

Identity when construed as unidimensional, rather than as composed of shared attributes and part of social relations, leads to a marginalization of those who do not fit the categories ‘x’ and ‘not-x’. The concept of identity not only
marginalizes those categories taken as not fitting a norm which confers sameness, but excludes all those individuals and families of ‘mixed’ descent or affiliation (Allen, 1997, p. 99).

Although Betty’s early childhood experiences of what it meant to be Māori were contradictory and negative, these experiences were contested and challenged when she went away to boarding school. Indeed, the evolution of her Māoritanga can be tracked back to the time when she became a pupil at Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College in 1938. Māoritanga, for Betty, meant feeling connected to other Māori. It meant feeling complete and this is how she felt at Saint Joseph’s. The irony of such an assertion is, however, that the Māori boarding schools of the era in which Betty attended (1938-1941) have been highly criticized for undermining a Māori cultural identity by promoting a policy of assimilation (Simon, 1998). Indeed, such criticisms are well-founded, particularly when an examination of the original motivation for establishing the Church boarding schools reveals the ‘civilising’ mission that underpinned the establishment of such schools:

The passing of the Ordinance encouraged the further establishment of industrial boarding schools, which it was believed would be more successful in changing Māori ways by ensuring regular attendance and Christian habits (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974, pp. 43-45).

Sir George Grey, Governor of the colony of New Zealand in 1845, was the main instigator of educational policies in the mid 1800s. A key figure in the early period of colonialism in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Grey clearly held the view that Māori were to be ‘civilised’. He was known as "the great dictator, the great pro-consul, and the great Māori-tamer" (Sinclair, 1980, p. 82).

Grey’s legacy to education was an interventionist programme seemingly for the well-being of the Native population. The outcome was a hidden

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22 In 1847, an Education Ordinance was passed by the Legislative Council for promoting the education of Māori and Pakeha youth in New Zealand (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974).
curriculum where the dominant Pakeha group could benefit the most from Māori labour. In the 1930s and early 1940s when Betty attended school educational policy for Māori still reflected attitudes of colonization:

It is not to be wondered at then that the official policy of the Native Affairs Department explicitly stated that ‘the future of the Māori, his material existence, his economic, physical and social welfare, is indubitably bound up in the soil. The policy today is to assist the Māori to develop and farm his lands, to train him in those branches of agriculture most suited to his needs’. For the Māori to realise the full benefits of civilisation, ‘we should provide fully a type of education that would lead the lad to become a good farmer and the girl to become a good farmer’s wife’ (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974, p. 209).

The apparent contradiction between the evolution of Betty’s Māoritanga within the context of a post-colonial schooling system that sought to assimilate Māori into the dominant Pakeha culture is complex. One reading is to give the nuns credit for allowing space for their Māori pupils to affirm their Māori culture within the confines of a curriculum that actively suppressed it. Certainly, Betty felt affirmed as Māori even though Māori language and tikanga were not taught in any depth at the school. At Saint Joseph’s Betty realised she could identify as both Māori and Pakeha and that she could move between two worlds.

A further key period in her evolving identity as primarily Māori came later, during the Māori Renaissance years of the 1960s. Betty became involved in the urban Māori movement. She was an active member of the Ponsonby branch of the Māori Women’s Welfare League and it was here she found a deep connection of spirit and mind. Although not necessarily connected by kinship she felt a real sense of whanau. She developed very deep and special bonds with many of the kuia at the centre:

I used to go up to a place in St Marys Bay Road where the meetings were held. And there were a lot of beautiful elderly women there. Mrs Edmonds, Mrs Tai, Mrs Ruby Smith. They kind of supported me, taught me, and they knew where I was coming from and they were very, very supportive in
teaching me, not so much to speak Māori but to understand what Māori was all about (B. Wark, personal communication October 4, 1996).

Betty’s sense of Māori identity and connection to her whakapapa came about through an evolutionary process akin to an apprenticeship. She had to learn about the history and traditions of her people from the place of an outsider. Perhaps it could be said, however, that she had always had a deep emotional and spiritual connection to the land and to her tupuna. As a little girl, lost, frightened and alone she would instinctively retreat to her secret maunga and lie in hidden little crevices until she felt revitalised. Reflecting back to that time, it is as if she was being ‘guided’ to experience the wairua of the earth, of Papatuanuku. In traditional Māori society the invisible world was an accepted part of life:

The Māori of old accepted the responsibilities of his supernatural ancestry that made him guardian priest of the deities that controlled the relationships among the human, animal, vegetable, insect, reptile, fish, bird, mineral and spirit worlds (Sinclair, 1981, pp. 86-87).

Tapping into the spiritual world is an inevitable aspect of an evolving Māori identity. Yet, it is something that is infrequently talked about for a variety of reasons. Christianization on the whole was intolerant to Māori spirituality; consequently many aspects of Māori spirituality were either suppressed or lost (Ward, 1978). Also, traditionally, much of the sacred knowledge was kept secret and only the tohunga tuahu (high priest) had access to it (Irwin, 1984). As a child, Betty knew very little about concepts of Māori spirituality. In fact, Māori spirituality had been subsumed by the Catholic faith in the Hokianga area where she grew up (King, 1997). Nevertheless, she was given glimpses of other dimensions just as her tupuna experienced in their slower-moving world where the material and spiritual worlds were more compatible with one another.

For Betty, there were a number of powerful and frequently contradictory forces which helped forge her identity as Māori. Throughout childhood she
had experienced considerable shame and alienation and what Scheff (1994) refers to as the shame/pride loop in terms of her cultural sense of self and her emotional self. Her basic temperament and nature, however, were strong enough to transcend that place of powerlessness and vulnerability she experienced and she was able to contest and overcome the negative stereotyping and spurious criticisms she had been subjected to. Indeed, Betty not only survived these difficulties, she triumphed over them.

Identity Formation and Connections to Land

Māori identity is positioned in terms of physical and cultural geographies, whakapapa and tupuna. Notions of turangawaewae and papakainga and connection to traditional land remains very important for maintaining a sense of Māori identity within contemporary society. Whakapapa connects the tangata whenua to the land. Tangata whenua are literally people of the land. They are also the local people, who by descent or association have a situational identity with a particular marae (Tauroa & Tauroa, 1993). As Cheater and Hopa (1997) state: "Self-identification with the land is crucial to Māori identity - tangata whenua means ‘people of the land’" (p. 211). Connections to the land are articulated in a language of place, through the device of the pepeha: ‘Ko Taranaki toku maunga’ - My mountain is Taranaki; ‘Ko Waitara toku awa’ - My river is Waitara.

Māori, as with other indigenous peoples, cherish a distinct culture and identity and we consider ourselves to be ‘first peoples’ as our tupuna were the original inhabitants of Aotearoa/New Zealand prior to colonization by tauiwi. For Māori and other first peoples, the earth is sacred and considered a precious gift. In the Māori language it is no coincidence that the word, whenua, means both land and placenta. The land offers both nourishment and sustenance just as the placenta does to the developing foetus (Pere, 1991). After a child is born and the whenua is expelled, it is returned to Papatuanuku as a sign that the child will continue to grow and develop just as he or she did inside the mother’s uterus (Barlow, 1993).
traditional Māori society, the whenua would be buried in a specific area of land which served to legitimise the child's turangawaewae within their iwi (Sinclair, 1998). From a Māori perspective, the land and the people are intimately connected. "Te whenua ki te whenua. The body and the land are one. There is no separation" (Potiki & Kahukiwa, 1999, p. 62).

For the tangata whenua the land is much more than a piece of real estate:

The Māori loved his land and identified with it. His close, spiritual relationship with the land stemmed from his traditional concept of the basic origin of mankind deriving from the loving union of the Earth Mother, Papa-tu-a-nuku, with the sky-father, Rangi-nui-e-tu-nei (Sinclair, 1981, p. 86).

The land is at the heart of Māoritanga. In traditional Māori society, Māori spirituality acknowledged the environment and respect for the land augmented one's spiritual strength (Durie, 1985). The power associated with connection to the land was referred to as mana whenua:

The concept of 'mana whenua' is often contemporarily interpreted as the mana or authority of people over the land and territories. It is however the land that bestows mana upon the people. A people's cultural, social and economic needs are nourished and dependant upon the mana of the land. The status of being a people who have the right to belong to the land is one which requires the fulfilment of the appropriate reciprocal relationships and guardianship of the land (Hoskins, 2001, p. 22).

Mana whenua implies a reciprocal arrangement - the land takes care of the people and the people take care of the land. Implicit in the concept of mana whenua is the procreative power of Papatuanuku, the Earth Mother. Nature and land are symbolised as the embodiment of the feminine principle: Papatuanuku produces life and gives sustenance, provided she is adequately nurtured and cared for. Māori conservation methods were intricately connected with spirituality:

It was because of these ancestral and spiritual relationships that Māori fished, hunted and cultivated only to the degree
necessary to secure his well being. The land was regarded as the sacred trust and asset of people as a whole. Laws of tapu were invoked only to protect well-defined areas of land, lakes, rivers, waterways, or stretches of the seaside from human exploitation or defilement (Sinclair, 1981, p. 86).

Kura Taylor, who grew up in Waitara in the 1930s, recalls gathering kaimoana (seafood) from the reefs and how Māori methods of conservation operated:

> It was a monthly moon and tidal thing - you only went two days before or after the full or new Moons - if there was a Moon and spring tide the tide went out much further so the reefs and what was available were more plentiful and often fatter - we used to get paua and kina - you only ever took as much as you required to eat and you never ever ate it on the beach (as cited in Connor, 1992, p. 5).

Not eating on the beach ensured debris was not left to pollute the remaining shellfish.

There are two fundamental aspects to a Māori world view; whakapapa and the personification of natural phenomena. It is the personification of land as Papatuanuku, and the supernatural qualities bestowed her, that differentiate Māori attitudes from European attitudes towards our natural resources. The relationship between Māori and land is a familial one, and one of kaitakitanga (guardianship) (McKinley, 1998). In the traditional Māori worldview all natural resources were birthed from Papatuanuku and belonged to her. Humanity could harvest her bounty but did not own these resources (Marsden & Henare, 1992).

**The Marae as Metaphorical Home**

Barcan and Buchanan, (1999) argue that space is imagined - called into being by individuals and the cultures of which they are part. Cultural space for Māori is that space which is imagined as home and home is Mother Earth, Papatuanuku. The land personified as Papatuanuku is a geographic space and an emotional space. It has been called into being by our tupuna
and represents not only our ancestral links and whakapapa but also the culture of which we are part.

Our sense of cultural identity is intertwined with our relationship and rootedness in the land. The terms we use for home and homeland such as turangawaewae and papakainga, act to territorialize our identity. Traditional demarcations of space and territory were conceptualized in iwi and hapu relationships to certain patches of whenua, to the areas of Papatuanuku which became 'home', and to the central focal point of every permanently inhabited village - the marae. The marae is a symbol of tribal identity and solidarity. Traditionally, the marae proper was designated as the open area of land directly in front of the whare maihi (sacred carved house), and was known as the marae atea (the land directly in front of the sacred carved house). In contemporary society all the buildings associated with a community facility are collectively known as the marae. The marae consists of a carved meeting-house, a dining hall and cooking area, as well as the marae atea. A recent innovation has been the establishment of marae in urban areas including school, polytechnic and university campuses (Barlow, 1993).

Betty was very involved in the pan-tribal urban marae. She was closely aligned with Te Unga Waka Marae, established originally for Catholic Māori, and she also spent a lot time at Hoani Waititi Marae in West Auckland. She also attended many hui (meeting) at marae throughout her activist years:

I remember attending several hui about the land issue. During that time I went out to Mangere marae and listened to different people talk and everyone seemed to be hitting the wall. We had many meetings before we ever got the land march going. We had to really look at what we were doing and why we were doing it and to get people together to do this march.

I became like the scout and my job was to go ahead. Before that they had to work out how many stops we have a day
and where one would go and rest and sleep. So that was part of my job to do that. I went with another girl called Elizabeth. We travelled particularly up north to Whangarei. We had a van lent to us. It was interesting calling into the different marae and the different tribal areas. Not everyone liked what we were doing, particularly being led by a woman23 (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

For Māori, identity formation is closely connected to the land and tribal territory. The marae epitomizes this attachment:

As a New Zealander who is bicultural I have an emotional attachment to a marae in my tribal territory. To me, that marae is home. It is intimately connected with the ceremonial experienced in life crises such as birth, death and marriage. To return to the marae from the brashness of urban life is to return to a simpler time, to a place of enduring human values (Walker, 1981, p. 30).

Ranginui Walker speaks of the marae as a metaphorical home and a space for cultural practices. Notions of home and cultural space have been articulated as key issues in the process of decolonization throughout the world (Davies, 1994; hooks 1984). The marae represents a metaphorical home and a space for Māori cultural practices to continue within the context of post colonization, modernity and urbanization. The marae is a place which affirms a Māori way of being and reaffirms Māori identity and connection to a particular iwi and hapu. The marae provides a sense of home and belonging:

The marae is that chiefly place where the heights of Māoridom and its values are expressed. Only in such a special place can the high levels of wairua (spirituality), mana (prestige), and tikanga (customs) be practised in their true setting. The marae is the place where people may stand tall. Here they are able to stand upon the Earth Mother and speak (Tauroa, 1993, p. 18).

23 The woman Betty was referring to was Dame Whina Cooper who led the historic Māori Land March of 1975. The Land March began in the far north and ended at Parliament in Wellington, dramatizing a national Māori determination not to lose further land to Pakeha or Crown ownership (King, 2003).
For Tauroa (1993) the marae atea is a representative of Papatuanuku: “Marae atea, representative of Mother Earth, we share life and death with you. Marae atea, you could never be for me just a piece of clay or dirt, or grass. You are, indeed, a sacred place” (p. 23).

Tauroa speaks of the marae as home and a place of belonging. He describes the whare tupuna (ancestral house) overlooking the marae atea at his tribal marae, as his spiritual home. The personified spiritual home is intricately linked to the land:

And I know that your feet are firmly planted on Mother Earth, as are the feet of the children of Tane Mahuta, the trees. You stand now, as did Tane Mahuta then, keeping the Sky Father, Ranginui, separated from the Earth Mother, Papatuanuku, so that we may have light and life (Tauroa, 1993, p. 26).

The local cultural space/place of the marae in the formation of Māori identity and connection to iwi and hapu is important for both men and women.

**The Marae as Women’s Space/Not Women’s Space**

In terms of Māori women’s identity and space, the marae has been a place of subordination and limitation. As Hoskins (1997) argues, the restriction of speaking rights for women on the marae has caused it to become a site of struggle and contestation for Māori women:

Marae, in my experience, can be extremely unsafe places to be if you are a woman.... I have seen women stopped by men in the middle of their mihi [speech] and lectured on what a woman can and cannot, should and should not acknowledge/speak of in her mihi. Not only is this kind of behaviour totally oppressive, but to the many, often impressionable, tauira [student] who attend wananga [place of learning], this is an affirmation of male dominance and sets an example to Māori men and women that these kinds of behaviours are legitimate and acceptable in our culture (pp. 36-37).
Betty Wark was a strong and staunch wahine Māori and she felt the need for the reassessment of traditional roles on the marae so that the leadership potential of Māori women could be realised. In November 1977 she was part of the first-ever Māori women's conference, Huihuinga Wahine Māori Anake, which took place at the Freemans Bay Day Care Centre which gave a space for Māori women to voice their ideas and concerns and struggles and to korero about issues such as speaking rights on the marae. Betty spoke compellingly about a number of issues at this hui including her belief that excessive alcohol consumption was a major problem for Māori:

Most of the women who were staying the night showed some enthusiasm in having a social get together at the Centre; however, from one very strong woman came the objection that we should not have liquor on the premises. This woman is well-known for her years of really hard work rehabilitating and counselling Māori youth, and urban social causalities, and she believes the basis of our problems is booze. During the afternoon sessions, she spoke most forcefully on the Māori prison populations, tenants’ rights, and other very real issues; we had agreed to support her, but she felt that by indulging in drinking at the hui we were effectively defeating, i.e. cancelling out, everything we had said and felt and thought about that afternoon. After nearly four hours of discussion with her in a small and intimate group, we eventually persuaded her to accept the wishes of everyone there, or of the vast majority present, on the booze issue. For a while many of us were feeling uneasy and divided: we had to examine our attitudes very closely indeed, but the idea of sociable drinking in moderation won out (Te Awekotuku, 1991, p. 56).

The rendering of the marae as site of struggle raises the issue of whose identity we are referring to when we talk of the marae as a home place for Māori. Betty viewed the marae as a site of struggle for wahine Māori but she also saw our collective struggles as Māori in terms of the erosion of our identity and addictive behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse and so on.

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24 Although Betty's name is not mentioned explicitly Dr Te Awekotuku informed me that the woman she was referring to regarding this episode was in fact Betty Wark (N. Te Awekotuku, personal communication, 7 October, 1996).
Marae or spaces that imitated the marae were 'safe' 'home' spaces to debate these issues openly and honestly.

Massey (1994) suggests there are very different ways in which reference to place can be used in the constitution of identity. For both Māori men and women, the marae may provide stability, a sense of home, belonging and security. Reference to the marae to which our whakapapa locates us is used in the constitution of our identity. Having membership of particular hapu and iwi will connect us to a significant place/cultural space. Nevertheless, the point Hoskins makes about the marae being a potentially unsafe place for women is a valid one and links into both western and indigenous feminist debates on space and place and the construction of gender. As Massey (1994) argues space and place are important in the construction of gender relations and in struggles to change them. Symbolically, the space of the marae can be read as transmitting a gendered message in which women are constructed and understood as being consigned and confined to particular places and roles on the marae which limit identity and mobility. The status of Māori women, as Irwin (1993) points out, has remained static, immobile and inflexible, whilst Māori culture, including the development of the marae, is rapidly changing:

In such a context, where it is accepted that Māori culture is being transformed to accommodate the needs of a vital, changing culture, legitimate questions can be raised about why it is that the rights and roles of Māori women remain unchanged? When a Pakeha man, who is tauiwi, not a speaker of the language, or tangata whenua in a Māori sense of this word, is allowed to stand and whaikorero [formal speech-making] on the marae atea simply because he is a man, then Māori women surely have cause for concern (p. 17).
Ironically, though, the current head of the Kingitanga movement is a woman and potentially has the power to act as a liberating force and positive role model for Māori women. Te Ariki Tapairu Piki, who was bestowed with the title, Queen Te Atairangikaahu, after the death of her father, King Koroki, the fifth Māori King, may address her people on certain parts of the marae but not necessarily the marae atea. However, as Irwin (1993) points out the marae atea is not traditionally an area where women whaikorero (formal speech-making), as it is considered the domain of Tumatauenga, the god of war:

In areas where women do not traditionally whaikorero, the gender division of cultural practices is related to the power of Tumatauenga over this site and the need to protect Māori women, and the generations they carry, from the potential danger of forays onto it. However, inside the wharenui the power of Rongo, the god of peace, prevails. Here, in theory, all are safe to speak in any form. So, the argument used to determine male and female speaking rights outside, on the marae atea does not hold inside, according to Māori culture (pp. 17-18).

Because Queen Te Atairangikaahu remains reliant on her senior male orators, her role as Queen is fraught with ambiguities and contradictions and consequently some Māori women may perceive her as reinforcing patriarchal values:

Te Arikinui is always strengthened by the presence of her orators. They are with Te Arikinui on her home marae of Tainui and go with her wherever she travels in Aotearoa or Te Ao Whanui. The power of oratory descends through families...Her ear is tuned to the subtle phrases, the mythological and genealogical references and the ringing invocations of the work and words of the ancestors. The karanga and waiata which the senior ladies provide at the ceremonies enhance and add grace and dignity to the whaikorero (Turangawaewae Marae, 1992, p. 30).

25 Tamehana Te Rauparaha and his cousin, Matene Te Whiwhi, began promoting the idea of a Māori king in 1853. They travelled through central North Island districts, persuading tribes that a king would protect their lands and give the tribes unity. In 1858, Te Wherowhero of Waikato was installed as the first Māori King. (Orange, 1990).
Rubenstein (2001) suggests the notion of home is among the most emotionally complex and resonant concepts in our psychic vocabularies. Home, she argues, is associated with the most influential, and often most ambivalent, elements of our earliest physical environment and psychological experiences. Rubenstein’s argument is well illustrated in the conceptualization of the marae as a metaphorical or spiritual home. For Māori, the marae, especially the home-base marae, is an emotionally complex space. For those of us raised in a Māori societal context it can represent our earliest physical environment and psychological experiences, while for those of us raised in an urban context dislocated from Māori traditions and culture, the marae may be entirely absent from our realm of experience or it may be a space we enter as adults. For women, this emotional space is associated with ambivalence. It is home and not home. It is a cultural space that symbolizes belonging and not belonging. Ripeka Evans (1994) articulates the powerlessness that is generated from such an ambivalent and emotional space as the marae:

For many years I have debated the issue of women speaking on the marae - amongst Māori women, with men, with the odd inquiring Pakeha and, more fruitfully, with many indigenous women. I have often wondered at times whether the exclusion from speaking on the marae has become a deeply internalized acceptedness of powerlessness. If oppression is the negation of liberation, I wonder if Māori women are unwittingly entrapped in the negation of the negation - acquiescence in our own oppression? If we remember that speaking on the marae is a metaphor for our status and power relations in wider society, then if we ignore the need to speak out and to challenge, we continue to acquiesce (p. 65).

Nostalgic Renderings of Marae and Home
Home has often been constructed around an idealized place and a stable mother-figure (Massey, 1994). For Māori, the marae has frequently been constructed around an idealized place, derived from our past and nestling in the embrace of Papatuanuku, metaphorical mother. Dyer (2000) argues
that our desire for ‘origins’, for ‘home’, for ‘points of connection’ is mediated through past experiences, through nostalgia. Dyer’s (2000) reading of nostalgia is that it is a process, constantly in a state of flux, touching off new responses and new desires in different contexts: “Despite the fact that we may desire to return to a ‘home’ we once knew, we never will: locations and people change over time” (p. 154).

The desire for a cultural space and ‘home’ uncontaminated through colonization is mediated through nostalgic renderings of our past. Rubenstein (2001) defines nostalgia as the expression of yearning for an earlier time or place or a significant person in one’s past history, the significance of which or whom contributes to the sense of self in the present moment. The yearning for a place and cultural spaces that are authentic and real is a recurring theme of decolonization. Such nostalgic yearning, though, is problematic. Looking back in time and space to a pre-colonized Aotearoa is an impossibility and is likely to render a distorted, romanticized version of our past experiences. As Hoskins (1997) points out, Māori culture prior to colonization was not static; it was dynamic and changing. Our cultural life did not suddenly cease with European contact in the late eighteenth century; it was forced to negotiate with the forces of colonialism and imperialism:

Discourses espousing an authentic reclamation are problematic too because they tend not to consider that, having internalised 160 years of colonial experience, it may be nigh impossible to retrieve and reconstruct the worldview our tupuna lived within. However ‘de-colonized’, however critical we believe ourselves to be, we cannot escape the immutable fact that our world and experience is a vastly different place from that our tupuna inhabited (Hoskins 1997, p. 28).

Reclamation of the remnants of our pre-colonized past are, nevertheless, necessary for our cultural survival. As Hoskins (2001) argues it is only within Aotearoa that Māori language and knowledge are mobilised and find their fullest relevance and meaning; it is only through re-membrance that
our culture will be revitalised. Hoskins recognises the futility of trying to recreate a glorified past, and instead advocates that Māori negotiate a space which will create change within a colonized context by reclaiming and affirming our distinct knowledge and culture. As she states: “The past is laid out in front of us barricading journeys back into the future, invoking (subjugated) knowledges, memories and kaupapa, (re)membering, (re)claiming, (re)interpreting, (re)positioning” (Hoskins, 2001, p. xi).

**Re-negotiation of Space**

The Kohanga Reo movement and the Waitangi Tribunal are examples of Māori negotiating space to both bring about change and to reclaim and affirm Māori knowledges and culture. Te Kohanga Reo came about through a desire by Māori communities to regain or hold on to Māori language and cultural knowledge, and the Waitangi Tribunal provided a forum through which Māori could legitimately voice concerns and have land claims heard (Mead, 1996).

Matahaere-Atariki (1998) argues that effective programmes for decolonization must reject the notion of a home that will protect Māori from the effects of colonization. For Matahaere-Atariki, home is a romantic myth that conceals the continuing impact of the colonizing process. Her argument lends itself to the problematic aspects of yearning and nostalgia and the conceptualization of an idealised home and cultural space. However, to reject the notion of home as merely being a romantic myth is also problematic. As Rubenstein (2001) states: “Home matters” (p. 1). Home, longing and belonging matter. While we can recognise that a nostalgic recreation of our past is futile, it is nevertheless important to re-member and affirm that past and to re-negotiate home spaces within contemporary society. Pan-tribal, urban marae are one example of such re-negotiation.

Writing on the power and the appeal of home as a concept, Martin and Mohanty (1986) state:
‘Being home’ refers to the place where one lives within familiar, safe, protected boundaries; ‘not being home’ is a matter of realizing that home was an illusion of coherence and safety based on the exclusion of specific histories of oppression and resistance (p. 197).

The ways in which Martin and Mohanty define ‘being home’ and ‘not being home’ can be read within the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand, as meaning, that notions of home changed with the experience of colonization and decolonization. The memory of home as that place which was familiar and safe was based on the exclusion of specific histories of oppression and resistance. Such a reading is applicable for both Māori and Pakeha. For example, Parihaka, the nineteenth-century village of peace built by Te Whiti and Tohu at the foot of Mount Taranaki was a place remembered as home to a movement of passive resistance (Scott, 1994). Many Pakeha who farmed in the district of Pungarehu where Parihaka was erected were either ignorant or oblivious of the history of local resistance by Māori to the acquisition of their land by European settlers. Until fairly recently, the fact that 2000 soldiers marched in to destroy the village, expel the inhabitants and exile its leaders had been expunged from national memory (Riseborough, 2002). The revitalisation of Parihaka and the publication of its history of resistance have had the effect of disrupting all memories of this region as a safe, familiar home for Pakeha. For Māori who site their place of origin in the region, their memory of this home place as being familiar and safe was severely disrupted in the nineteenth century. While the uncovering of further histories of oppression and resistance has caused more pain, there has also been an upsurge in what Mohanram (1999) sees as a rise in Māori nationalism. Mohanram (1999) argues that there must be recognition that notions of home have changed with the experiences of colonization and decolonization, and reads such changes as being located within the context of Māori nationalism and the resurgence of Māori cultural identity.

Rubenstein (2001) suggests that in its literary representations, nostalgia functions as a means of rendering and figuratively repairing the lost past by
transmuting its pain. For a number of Māori authors, particularly, of fiction\textsuperscript{26}, nostalgia is expressed through a preoccupation with the lost landscape of ‘home’ and displacements of and from ‘home’. Within the context of Māori biography (and also Māori autobiography), expressions of an essential Māori cultural identity are frequently located within the contested terrain of ‘home’.

\textsuperscript{26} For example, \textit{The Sky People} by Patricia Grace (1994); \textit{Tangi} by Witi Ihimaera (1974).
CHAPTER SIX

Te Katua – The Trunk:

The Woman Sustained

Totara manawa kaha,  
tu pono ki te tika.  
Ruia, taitea  
kia tu ko  
taikaka.

Stout hearted totara,  
standing straight  
and true.  
The sapwood surrounds  
the heart-wood beneath  
(Tai, 1992, p. 36)

Figure 11.  
Totara tree trunk¹

Chapter Six consists of a brief introduction to the symbolism of the trunk of the totara tree, followed by the narrative text, with annotated reflections. 'The woman sustained' focuses on two key narratives that gave meaning and sustenance to Betty's life — Catholicism and Māoritanga. This chapter is not specifically anchored to any chronological period of Betty's life narrative. Rather its intention is to provide an overview of her spiritual and cultural identity.

The trunk of the totara is stout and sturdy with rough reddish-brown bark that comes off in strips. The trunk of the totara symbolises life and growth. It reaches down towards Papatuanuku and up towards Ranginui at the same time, forming a link between the two primal parents, separated by Tane, the Atua of the forests. When the trunk of the totara is carved into poupou (posts) for a whare, it continues to form a connection between Papatuanuku and Ranginui, with its base in the earth and its tip reaching up through the rafters towards the sky.

¹ Image of totara trunk from: www.godzonehymns.com/mp3%20page.html
The totara is regarded as a noble tree, being the child of Tane Mahuta and the forest goddess Mumuwhango (Neich, 2001). Before a totara could be felled, permission had to be sought from Tane via appropriate ritual and karakia (Irwin, 1984). Such rituals are indicative of the great respect Māori have for the domain of Tane. Both literally and metaphorically, the totara offers sustenance. In the whakatauki which introduces each of the four parts to Betty’s narrative, the totara is represented as standing straight and true, its sapwood surrounding the heart-wood beneath. An exploration of the concealed heart-wood within each of us symbolises the pilgrimage on which we can all set forth. By turning our awareness to the heart-wood concealed within our being there is opportunity for spiritual growth and personal transformation. Chapter Six delves into Betty’s personal explorations of the concealed heart-wood and provides an insight into the inner-life which sustained her.

North Meets South: Catholicism and Māori Spirituality

Chapter Six examines the ways in which Catholicism and Māoritanga not only gave meaning to Betty’s world and provided her with a personal identity but it also looks at how she was able to create something positive and productive within the continual tension of these two seemingly contradictory traditions.

The inclusion of narratives which are constructed around the spiritual or invisible worlds are frequently viewed as risky subject matter and indeed tend to be represented as ‘irrational’ narratives (Postman, 1995). However, it would have been inappropriate to leave out such an important component of Betty’s life. In traditional Māori society, spirituality played an intrinsic role in every day life as it did in the history of Western spirituality. When the Northern Christian traditions met the indigenous traditions of the Southern seas, there were boundless possibilities for an amalgamation of each culture’s spirituality, offering opportunities to pilgrimage to the heart-wood within and to explore the grandeur of each culture’s spiritual practices.
History tells us however that these opportunities were missed - particularly by the colonial settlers (Ward, 1978). While many Māori explored Christianity and eventually converted, few Europeans examined Māori spirituality as a valid spiritual belief-system. Māori spirituality tended to be viewed as a quaint and superstitious religion based on mythology, and while many Europeans studied it from a purely anthropological perspective there was an underlying paternalistic attitude that Māori should be converted to Christianity and be ‘salvaged’ by the ‘One True God’ (Best, 1954). Indeed, this particular aim was clearly articulated as one of the goals of colonization:

In 1837 the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Aborigines claimed that the purpose of colonization was to carry civilization and humanity, peace and good government, and above all, the knowledge of the true God, to the uttermost end of the earth’ (Pratt, 1992, p. 28).

Such attitudes are understandable, however, when they are considered in historical and social context. As Michael King (1997) points out, the emissaries of Europeans who came to Aotearoa/New Zealand as both missionaries and colonizers believed that their culture and technology were superior to that of the indigenous Māori and that this equated with spiritual and moral superiority. Māori were regarded as heathens and pagans who needed to be enlightened in spiritual matters to obtain God’s grace for eternal salvation. However, as King (1997) also points out, these commonly held views by the colonizers obscured the fact that Māori did have a very rich spiritual life prior to European contact. Māori religious beliefs harmonised the workings of the mind (hinengaro), the physical (taha tinana), and the spiritual (wairua) (Pere, 1991). According to James Irwin (1984), Māori cosmology formed a three-tiered structure made up of the Realm of Ultimate Reality, in which Io the supreme God, and the various other atua\(^2\) or deities resided: the Realm of the Human, where concepts such...

\(^2\) Cleve Barlow (1993), provides a comprehensive summary of the atua or gods in Maori spirituality. He states: “The atua are the gods responsible for the creation of the universe, the planets, stars, the sun and every living thing on the earth
as mana, tapu and noa\textsuperscript{3} (profane) existed; and the Realm of the Dead, where deities of the underworld resided. As there was such a sophisticated spiritual system in place and Māori already believed in atua, it did not require a large movement in faith for many Māori to accept the possibility of one God (King, 1997). Indeed, the supreme god Io in Māori cosmology could be viewed as one God and the various atua as manifestations of the one God.

For Māori converting to the Catholic faith, the transition could have been assisted by some of the aspects of Catholicism that have parallels in Māori spirituality. For example, the saints who are predominant features of the Catholic Church can be likened to the atua. As there was a different saint for practically every aspect of life, so, too, was there an atua. Similarly, as there were various blessings and prayers for a number of aspects of everyday life in the Catholic Church so, too, were there prayers or karakia in Māori spirituality.

Catholicism became particularly deep rooted in Northland. It was there that many of the first Irish Catholic settlers to New Zealand made their homes including Thomas and Mary Poynton, who are considered to be the mother and father of Catholicism in New Zealand (King, 1997). Thomas Poynton offered the Catholic Church land in the Hokianga region and on 10 January 1838, the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Pompallier arrived to take up this offer. Jean-Baptiste Francois Pompallier came to Hokianga as a young bishop. He moved to Auckland in 1850 after a four year visit to Europe. He was a charismatic preacher and teacher but received considerable criticism regarding his financial management (King, 1997). By 1872 the Church had two Irish bishops and there were fewer French clergy coming to the colony including mankind” (p. 11). He provides a list of some of the major atua connected with nature. These include: Tangaroa (sea, lakes, rivers), Tane (forest and birds), Tawhirimatea (wind), Rongomatane (kumara), Haumia (fernroot and wild berries), Ruaumoko (volcanoes and earthquakes), Tumatauenga (war), Whiro (evil).

\textsuperscript{3} Rangimarie Pere (1991) provides concise summaries of these concepts. Briefly, mana can be described as divine right, influence and prestige, noa as ordinary, neutral, free from restriction and tapu as religious or secular restriction.
(King, 1997). From 1873 to 1880, the Catholic Church virtually abandoned its missions in the northern Hokianga (King, 1983.). However, Māori Catholics, such as Heremia Te Wake (father of Dame Whina Cooper) kept the faith alive by instructing children in the beliefs and prayers of the Church. The northern mission was re-opened in 1880 by Father James McDonald and in 1886 he was replaced by John Baptist Becker. German born John Baptist Becker arrived in New Zealand in 1886. His mission among Māori was unprecedentedly long. He lived on until 1941, fifty-five years after his arrival in New Zealand (King, 1983). Becker who was known as Pa Hoani is credited for establishing a firm Catholic foundation in the Hokianga. A priest ahead of any other role, he was primarily concerned with spiritual matters and did not attempt to interfere with the specifically Māori aspects of the community in which he became an accepted member (King, 1983). A member of the order of Saint Joseph’s Foreign Missionary Society generally referred to as the Mill Hills, Becker and later Mill Hill priests became proficient in the Māori language and lived with and identified with their Māori congregations (King, 1997).

By the time Betty was born in 1924, Catholicism had practically become an integral element of Māoritanga in the Hokianga region:

I’m Māori and I’m Catholic. In my early years it was the Mill Hill priests who were the main influence on my faith but it was the nuns at Saint Joseph’s who were my role models. I used to be quite emotional. If I did any wrong or thought anything wrong, I’d race to the chapel to be forgiven! I learned the answering of the mass in Latin. I tried my best to please them - to be a good Catholic (B. Wark, personal communication, September 2, 1996).

**Catholicism: A Basis for a Social Conscience**

Being Catholic for Betty meant having a social conscience, having honesty and integrity. The religious atmosphere of Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College nurtured these virtues and stressed service to humanity as a spiritual path. Betty did not describe herself as a strict Catholic and had on
occasion veered away from the teachings of the Church. Nevertheless Catholicism, with its ancient traditions and rituals, provided her with a faith that sustained her throughout her life and gave her an ethical and spiritual framework to draw upon.

Betty credited the nuns at Saint Joseph's with giving her a strong moral base and pride in herself as a Māori Catholic woman: "The nuns were all strong women and I've found a lot of women that have been to Catholic colleges are very strong women. They had a basis for a good life – they were given a good foundation" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 2, 1996).

In her book Convent Girls, Jane Tolerton discusses the impact of Catholic schooling on the lives of a number of prominent New Zealand women. She states:

If the Catholic schoolgirl's world was a world of women, it was of a particular type of woman, who felt they had a vocation, had become 'brides of Christ', had dedicated their lives to the service of God and the Church, and were, in varying degrees, what might be called 'unworldly'. If the nuns were not seen as role models, they certainly meant to be. By all accounts the nuns played a big role in the upbringing of their charges (Tolerton, 1994, p. 14).

Tolerton interviewed seventeen 'convent girls' for her book which presents a frank oral history of convent education. For many of these women, the nuns provided strong role models as they did for Betty:

The nuns at St Michael's School were Sisters of Mercy. They were magical. They were strong, they were confident, they were gracious. They had an amazing blend of serenity and strength which I always associate too with my grandmother and my kuia (Te Awekotuku, as cited in Tolerton, 1994, p. 126).

Like Betty, many of the women interviewed spoke of their Catholic schooling as giving them a social conscience: "That’s what made me so
radical. The Church teaches you about injustice. It gives you a social conscience and an awareness" (Te Hemara, as cited in Tolerton, 1994, p. 65).

The Church not only gave Betty awareness and a social conscience but it also taught her about self-discipline, a skill she tried to instil in the numerous young people who have stayed at Arohanui Trust homes over the years:

I insist that everyone develops the self-discipline to have an order in their daily routine: to get up in time for breakfast, to get off to work on time. I insist that everyone keeps their room clean and tidy and the beds are made just like the nuns taught us at Saint Joseph’s (B. Wark, personal communication, September 2, 1996).

Several priests have also acted as staunch role models for Betty's Catholic social work. Her work with the homeless, for example, was inspired by a visit to England in 1982 when Betty along with seven others stayed with Father Michael Hollings:

The seven of us there shared everything with Father Hollings - meals, dishes, bathrooms - and in the mornings, everyone made sandwiches and soup to give out at lunch-time and in the evening. It's a very old church with a school and presbytery attached and all sorts of activities are run there during the day. There was counselling, Alcoholics Anonymous, a room for cups of tea - especially after Mass. My room was just along from Father Hollings and I noticed that he was up all hours of the night reading and typing letters. He's going all the time, visiting hospitals and people in the area. He said, 'why live in a big empty building when you can share it with people and have laughter and warmth?' He's very balanced. He doesn't just let people say, 'This is what the church should be doing'. He always asks them 'What are you doing?' (B. Wark, personal communication, September 2, 1996).

Betty shared Father Hollings' conviction that there should be no under-used properties and that every human being should have a permanent dwelling: "People need a permanent place; there's nothing worse than being temporary" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 2, 1996).
One of the key focuses of Betty’s work in the community was housing. She had an abhorrence for living space that remained empty while men, women and children spent nights in bus stations and under viaducts: "A house without enough people in it is a sad place, but an empty house is a scandal" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 2, 1996).

Betty was also influenced by the Catholic social centres that have attempted to meet the needs of both their congregations and the wider communities. Te Unga Waka, the Māori Catholic urban Marae in Auckland, is one such centre. Te Unga Waka was an initiative of Dame Whina Cooper in the 1960s. According to Michael King (1997), Dame Whina felt the Church was still treating Māori like ‘errant children’ and so decided to set up an Auckland Māori Catholic Society which would cater specifically for Māori. The Society eventually raised enough money to build Te Unga Waka Marae in Epsom. This marae has a number of facilities including space for sleepovers and hui, a large kitchen, office space and tutoring rooms where young Māori are taught a variety of skills under the umbrella of TOPs. In addition, there is a spacious chapel for worship. The Auckland Catholic Māori Women’s League meets regularly at Te Unga Waka Marae and Betty was at various times an active member of this organisation.

Betty also visited a variety of Catholic centres on her numerous trips abroad. On the trip to London in 1982 where she met Father Hollings, she also renewed an acquaintance with Jamaican nun, Sister Monica. Sister Monica was based at St Mary of the Angels in the London suburb of Bayswater at the time:

Sister Monica showed me quite a slice of Catholic action. We went to Mass at the Caribbean Catholic Association Centre, (it reminded me of Te Unga Waka in Auckland) celebrated by Cardinal Hume, and we went to lunch at a convent. We visited a Catholic social centre where old people came for

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4 TOPs stands for ‘training opportunities provider’. TOPs is currently administered by WINZ - Work and Income New Zealand.
hobbies and dinners during the day. There was a play school for young children and people teaching skills like writing and there was a programme run by visiting religious sisters (B. Wark, personal communication, September 2, 1996).

The type of Catholicism that Betty aligned herself with was connected to working with other people who had been driven by their Catholic principles in the quest for social justice and equity. Other national Māori figures driven by such principles include Manuka Henare and Tipene O'Regan (King, 1997). Nevertheless, although the Church provided a number of important role models for Betty and was a place of sanctuary it was also a place of struggle and tension. As with many other Catholics, she participated in debates on the role of women within the Church and the question of clerical celibacy. She also lamented many of the changes that have gradually eroded such traditions as the celebration of a full Latin Mass. However, despite these conflicts and having to adjust to all the changes that have taken place in the Church, Catholicism remained a deep part of Betty's psyche and personal identity. Her feelings about her faith were reflected in the following motto of the Auckland Catholic Māori Women’s League: ‘Te Whakapono, Te Tumanako, Me Te Aroha. Have Faith and Trust in Love’.

*Figure 12. The Māori Madonna and Child (image used by the Auckland Catholic Māori Women’s League)*
Annotated Reflections to Chapter Six

A Tale of Two Narratives

The purpose of a narrative is to give meaning to the world, not to describe it scientifically. The measure of a narrative’s ‘truth’ or ‘falsity’ is in its consequences: Does it provide people with a sense of personal identity, a sense of a community life, a basis for moral conduct, explanations of that which cannot be known? (Postman, 1995, p. 7).

For Betty Wark, there has been a play of two key narratives within the context of her life: two seemingly contradictory traditions, Catholicism and Māoritanga. Using Neil Postman’s (1995) definition of a narrative, it is apparent that the purpose of each of these narratives has been to give meaning to her life. In addition, each of these narratives provided her with a sense of personal identity - a sense of community life and a basis for moral conduct.

Narratives serve to give our lives meanings and purpose. However, when they are constructed around the spiritual or invisible world they are frequently represented as an ‘irrational’ narrative, viewed with scepticism and ridicule. Frequently, such narratives are represented as stories, myths and illusions and are consequently invalidated as they cannot be subjected to scientific scrutiny. No quantitative, empirical evidence can be produced to authenticate the ancient ways of knowing of our tupuna or, for that matter, the beliefs of the early followers of the Catholic faith and its various factions. Nevertheless, the ancient spiritual beliefs of both Māori and European provided ‘truths’ to be reproduced and recounted, representing each people’s histories in a light that was acceptable to them. Renaming such narratives as myths cannot undermine their power:

The mythology of a people, that is the structured collection of their myths, is a description of the world, the past and the future as they see it. If a sceptic regards as ‘mere myth’ which a believer presents as factual truth, then that sceptic
will place himself outside the world of the believer (Knappert, 1991, p. 10).

A myth is by definition collective, shared by an inter-generational group beyond the limits of space and time (Passerini, 1990). In contemporary New Zealand society, the long process of secularization that commenced in eighteenth century Europe with the Enlightenment has not diminished the sacredness of myths held by both Māori and, indeed, Catholics. The traditional Māori narrative of Ranginui, the Sky Father and Papatuanuku, the Earth Mother, for example, lays claim to a discourse that conveys the history of creation symbolically. Although there may be variations between iwi, the Māori creation narrative generally begins with nothingness (Te Kore) and evolves to a series of nights (Te Po) and eventually after aeons of time Ranginui and Papatuanuku sprang forth from a series of forces and produced offspring. Their children constricted by the close embrace of their parents decide to separate them. Tane Mahuta pushed his father, Ranginui up and away from his beloved wife, Papatuanuku. Once the primal parents were separated, light and knowledge were filtered into the world - a precondition for the growth and development of human kind (Patterson, 1992).

The creation narrative of Ranginui and Papatuanuku may be scientifically inadequate but it nevertheless expresses important spiritual values and introduces the concept of collective responsibility. The Sky Father and the Earth Mother give birth to the ancestors of all the life forms on Earth. Their son, Tane-Mahuta, ancestor of the trees and the birds, fashions a female form out of red earth and breathes life into her. The pair couple and produce the first human ancestor. In this narrative of creation every thing and everybody is linked: "There are certain inbuilt obligations that the individual feels towards his/her Divine Parent and the way s/he should interact with and inter-relate to everything that has been created" (Pere, 1991, p. 26).
The collective responsibility that such strong ties generate is known as whanaungatanga. Based on ancestral, spiritual, historical and traditional ties the concept of whanaungatanga reinforces kinship ties and a sense of belonging and identity (Pere, 1991).

Within traditional Māori society, the main purpose of the creation narrative was obviously to tell the story of our origin yet it provided more than this. The narrative of the divine parents and the offshoots of this narrative constructed ideals and prescribed rules of conduct; provided a source of authority and sense of continuity and purpose. With the arrival of colonization and the missionaries who introduced Christianity, those Māori who converted to the religions of Europe rejected many of the traditional Māori narratives as not being sufficiently credible. Some who converted, for example in the Hokianga district where Betty grew up, created a synthesis of Māori spirituality and Christianity. Others rejected Christianity outright. While colonization eroded many of the traditional Māori narratives, the Māori Renaissance of the 1960s and 1970s has been instrumental in reviving them and there has been a resurgence in Māori spirituality and greater acknowledgment of traditional mythology in recent years. A return to ancient mythology is not an uncommon response when a society is in transition as with contemporary Māori society and its movement of cultural reclamation:

Whenever society is in a state of breakdown and breakthrough - what I have called whole-system transition - it often requires the new social alignment that myth can bring. The myth does not have to be new; it can be a very old myth seen in ways that mediate and refocus the issues of the time (Houston, 1996, p. 101).

Within contemporary Māori society traditional mythologies have provided a comprehensive narrative with which to mediate and refocus a number of very important issues for Māori. Land claims in particular have heightened awareness of the Māori attitude towards land as a sacred treasure, and
reference to the great creation narrative of Ranginui and Papatuanuku has been one way this has occurred.

The new social alignment that myths can bring can be seen at both a collective and individual level as traditional narratives permeate our consciousness again. At an individual level there is frequently an adaptation of the traditional and modern:

As a child I see the purity of wairua; as an adult, being colonized and going through a lot of modernization I see how spirituality has been bred out of me and something else bred into me. But now in my older adult life I'm beginning to marry these two together and understand how people believe their wairua to be. For me this is mine. I make my house the place of my temple, because physically this house is the refinement of Papatuanuku: everything that is in my house - from plastic to steel to wood - relates to me a refinement of the Earth Mother. So I beautify this house and it becomes a temple (Kohu, 1997, p. 39).

The synthesis of the modern and the traditional is one way Māori can reclaim what has been taken away from us for as Hoskins (1997) states: "We cannot escape the immutable fact that our world and experience is a vastly different place from that our tupuna inhabited" (p. 28). Māori, as a colonized people, have had to fight against annihilation of our culture and language, but as Hoskins (1997) so rightly points out:

We must remind ourselves that culture is dynamic and changing; Māori culture prior to colonization was not static, nor obviously is it today. Our cultural life did not cease around 1769 or 1840, it was forced to negotiate the forces of colonialism and imperialism. It has been negotiating these forces and relationships ever since (p. 28).

Cross-cultural interconnections had to be forged between Māori and tauiwi as a response to colonization and one response for many Māori was to step outside of received spiritual traditions and borrow what they needed from alien spiritualities. Māori Marsden (1981) gives a number of examples of how Māoritanga and Christianity have become synthesized in such rites as
the tangihanga (funeral) and iriiri (baptism). He also offers various explanations of why Christianity was so readily accepted by many, including a discussion on parallel sacramental systems. While this interpretation may be partially valid it leaves little space for other possibilities. Conversion to Christianity or the incorporation of some of its observances and disciplines may simply have come about because of its availability. For as Carol Lee Flinders (1998) has remarked: "we live in a time and place of unprecedented movement back and forth across religious borders" (p. 316). As a people Māori have been steadily remaking ourselves along cultural, political and ethnic lines since the first contact with tauiwi. New forms of spirituality have been inevitable. The meeting point between Māori and Pakeha spirituality, however, is somewhat blurred. Within contemporary society there may be movement back and forth across spiritual borders but there also needs to be a meeting point between the spiritual traditions where both commonalities and differences can be honoured. Juliet Batten (1995) has grappled with these tensions in her innovative book on celebrating the Southern seasons. She has engaged with the narratives of Māori spirituality, Pagan Europe and Christian Europe with particular emphasis on Celtic traditions and suggests various rituals which celebrate the seasons within the southern hemisphere:

We meet at the sacred place of ritual, the meeting-point. The roots of the oak touch the roots of the pohutukawa in sacred soil. We nourish our connection: we nourish our respect. And from here, action arises; we may begin the healing that makes partnership possible (Batten, 1995, p. 21).

Batten argues that both Pakeha and Māori need to reclaim our respective spiritual heritages - to find our own place of spiritual belonging and discover just what that means for us. In effect what Batten is advocating is a construction of a narrative that will give life meaning and provide sufficient credibility, complexity and symbolic power to enable us to organise our lives around it. Postman (1995) describes such narrative as great narratives and argues that we can not do without them: "We are the god-making species.
Our genius lies in our capacity to make meaning through the creation of narratives that give point to our labours, exalt our history, elucidate the present, and give direction to our future" (p. 6).

For Postman (1995), the great narratives may not necessarily be constructed around the spiritual and he cites examples of what he terms the three catastrophic narratives: the gods of communism, fascism and Nazism, each of which "held out the promise of heaven but led only to hell" (p.6). Postman’s (1995) point is that through the medium of narrative, life has a purpose whatever that narrative may be. Whether that narrative can stand up to critique is irrelevant as long as it continues to provide purpose and meaning. The ‘irrational’ narratives of traditional religions which relied on faith and dogma have not been replaced by the great narrative of science. For example, as Marina Warner (1990) states in her discussion on Acheiropoietoi images in the Catholic church that "although it seems pathetically childish to believe such tales, they nevertheless perform a crucial function that should not be mocked as believers are given an all-important lifeline - a belief in the miraculous and the provision of images and relics to excite piety and religious emotion" (p. 292).

Postman (1995) asserts that the fundamental assumption of all the great religious narratives is that there is an order to the universe. The most comprehensive of these narratives are to be found in such texts as the Old and the New Testaments, the Koran and the Bhagavad Gita, all of which have endured for centuries. While these narratives may be perceived by some as ‘myth’ or ‘storytelling’, they have through the ages created histories and futures and given meaning to the lives of those who accept them as providing an explanation for that ‘which cannot be known’.

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5 Acheiropoietoi images were those images believed to have been painted by angels and therefore untouched by human hand.
For Betty Wark, as a member of the international Catholic community (of which there are over 659 million throughout the world), the religious landscape enclosed at its very heart the powerful and most beloved figure of the Virgin (Warner, 1990). The narrative of the Virgin Mary incorporates four dogmas which must be believed as articles of faith: her divine motherhood, her virginity, the immaculate conception, and her assumption, body and soul, into heaven. As Warner (1990) argues, a myth of such dimension is a collection of stories reflecting a people and the beliefs they produce, retell and hold. One of the main functions of the Mary narrative has been to create an ethical code for its adherents. Mary represents piety, subservience and goodness. She is the epitome of maternal love and charity. Yet for all her virtues the Church did not hesitate to stress the subordinate role of Mary to Jesus, nor was worship of her to detract from the dignity and efficacy of Christ. Thus, we find a narrative within a narrative: women are subordinate to men just as Mary remained inferior and subordinate to Jesus. Further, if women transgressed the ideal model of womanhood as portrayed in the Virgin Mary they were likened to Mary Magdalene or Eve and viewed as both corrupting and corruptible. The dichotomies of the two Marys, and of the Virgin Mary/Eve had a powerful effect upon constructions of womanhood and ultimately formed the basis of a theology of subordination (Ruether, 1987). The theology of subordination positioned men as being superior to women, and viewed a patriarchal social order as divinely created and natural:

Male headship is thus regarded as rooted in the intrinsic nature of things and willed by God. This notion that male headship is the order of creation usually carries with it the hidden or explicit assumption that God is male or at least properly represented by symbols of paternal authority (Ruether, 1987, p. 208).

The patriarchal standpoint of the Catholic Church has obviously been problematic for women, particularly those who consider themselves as feminist women. How to reconcile a spiritual hunger with a feminist thirst has been a central issue for many Catholic feminist women who have
consciously explored the conflicts and tensions between feminism and spirituality (Flinders, 1998). Many women have simply left the Church or created a theological synthesis out of Catholicism and other religious narratives. Indeed, the eclectic approach to one’s spirituality is becoming more common place as we move back and forth over religious borders. For Betty, a synthesis of her Māoritanga and Catholicism was a natural result of her exploration between the apparent conflicts and tensions within each tradition. What she found was that for her these two narratives were not only compatible, they were mutually necessary for her personal spiritual sustenance. Each of these narratives is steeped in tradition, symbolism and ritual that were significant for her. Both are part of the culture she inhabited. Ultimately, it was Betty’s decision to either accept or reject specific elements of both traditions. She did not have to provide a rationale for her decision. She was able to create a balanced life through a connection with both narratives out of which grew a strong social voice and a deep commitment to responding to the critical issues facing at risk youth.

While there are clearly differences in each narrative there are also commonalities. They share similar principles, for example: whanaungatanga (social responsibility), mahaki (humility) and aroha (empathy and compassion). Within each narrative there are powerful rituals to access that inner guidance and give us inspiration. To participate in a Catholic Mass can be just as powerful and dynamic as going onto a marae. The ritual of entering the sacred space of a church, crossing oneself with holy water, genuflecting towards the main altar and so on all help to direct the mind to the ideals of the Catholic narrative just as the karanga at the powhiri (welcome) awakens our emotions and directs our awareness to both the physical and spiritual worlds before we go onto a marae. For Betty, neither narrative represented a higher measure of ‘truth’ and ‘meaning’ than the other. It made little difference to her that each of these two narratives either individually or together could be represented as irrational.
They both in their separate ways gave her life meaning and led her to a spiritually fulfilling life.

However, while Betty synthesized two narratives that gave her life meaning she was all too familiar with the consequences of not finding a narrative to give life meaning:

> What happens to people when they have no gods to serve? Some commit suicide. There is more of this in the United States, particularly among our young, than in most other places in the world. Some envelop themselves in drugs, including alcohol. Some take whatever pleasure is to be found in random violence. Some encase themselves in an impenetrable egoism. Many, apparently, find a momentary and pitiful release from dread in commercial re-creations of once powerful narratives of the past (Postman, 1995, p. 11).

Betty saw the consequences of living without a ‘god’ to serve; of living without a purposeful narrative to give life meaning and she responded by taking action:

> Of course by gathering all these young people up to protect them, well, I did take on a job! I did take on a job! All I thought, well let’s give them a lot of loving care and a place to sleep and good meals. That was it. I mean, they were maimed before I even got them. And I took on a big thing then and I couldn’t stop because it was there – it was there (B. Wark, personal communication, September 2, 1996).

The overlay of key themes and key narratives are the essential elements that will ultimately shape the meaning system that governs and informs someone’s life story. Women’s words need to be viewed in a specific scheme that makes sense of them. One approach is to see the words collected by way of the life story as embedded in a narrative:

> The narrative dimension refers to the fact that the life story aims, by means of a coherent and global process, to account for the whole of the informant’s life experience until the moment of the interview. This means that the narrative encompasses not only the temporal and causal organisation of facts and events considered significant, but also the value
judgements that make sense of this particular life experience (Chanfrault-Duchet, 1991, p. 77).

Chanfrault-Duchet (1991) suggests several narrative models which give an axis of meaning and coherence to the life experience and to the self. These models borrowed from literary forms are the epic model, the picaresque model and the Romanesque model:

The epic model reveals an identification with the values of the community, the Romanesque model expresses the quest for authentic values in a degraded world and the picaresque model reflects an ironic and satirical position in relation to hegemonic values (Chanfrault-Duchet, 1991, p. 80).

For Chanfrault-Duchet the importance of these narrative models lies in the fact that they convey a particular vision of history. In the early part of Betty’s narrative, her quest for values conforms to the Romanesque model: ready to face the world alone in the quest for authentic values in a degraded world she steps out of the cloistered walls of her convent school into her first job. While the seeds for Betty’s work as a catalyst for social change were sown by the nuns at Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls College it was to be some time before they would germinate and flourish. When she first ventured into the world beyond the convent walls she had no sense of vocation or destiny. From school to work was a very difficult transition for her to make: "I felt lost and I felt like I was being thrown out into the big wide world!" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996). While Catholicism always remained a significant spiritual narrative for Betty, as she matured and eventually found her ‘vocation’ as a community worker, it was her Māoritanga that sustained her in her everyday mahi.

Māoritanga - an Alternative Vision
Māori, as is the case with other indigenous peoples, cherish our own distinct culture and identity and consider ourselves to be first peoples as our tupuna were the original inhabitants of Aotearoa/New Zealand prior to colonization by tauiwi. For Māori and other first peoples the earth is sacred and
considered a precious gift. The land is at the heart of Māoritanga. In traditional Māori society, Māori spirituality acknowledged the environment and respect for the land augmented one’s spiritual strength (Durie, 1985). As a little girl, Betty possessed an inherent respect and love for Papatuanuku. This is where she felt safe and content. Indeed, her evolving sense of Māori identity went hand in hand with an increased awareness of Māori spirituality and an even deeper attachment to the land. Many Māori elders maintain that without access to traditional or tribal land Māori are subject to poor physical, mental, psychic and spiritual health (Durie, 1985). As a child, Betty’s ability to access the land was certainly one way in which she was able to combat the effects of the abuse she was subjected to and retain a sense of well-being. As an adult with a growing sense of her Māoritanga, the healing process was further enhanced by an awareness and acknowledgment of taha wairua.

Without a spiritual awareness the individual is considered to be lacking in well-being and more prone to disability or misfortune. A spiritual dimension includes religious beliefs and practices but is not synonymous with regular church-going or strong adherence to a particular denomination. It acknowledges man’s limitations over his environment and the need to humble oneself to the elements. Belief in God is acknowledged in prayer, both formal and informal but spiritual well-being also implies a spiritual communion with the environment; land, lakes, mountains, reefs have a spiritual significance quite apart from economic or agricultural considerations (Durie, 1985, p. 483).

While Betty’s evolving sense of Māoritanga and Māori identity demanded an acknowledgment of the spiritual realms of her tupuna it was nevertheless a difficult process to reconcile Māori spirituality with Catholicism, her primary faith as a child and adolescent. While not always at a conscious level she negotiated her way through the tensions of these seemingly contradictory traditions and found a place that was personally satisfying for her. As illustrated, her sense of Māori spirituality and Māori self-determination was nourished by the kuia who mentored her at the
Ponsonby branch of the Māori Women’s Welfare League during the late 1960s and early 1970s. She spoke lovingly about these women:

There were a lot of beautiful elderly women there. Mrs Edmonds, Mrs Tai, Mrs Ruby Smith. They kind of supported me. There was another dear old lady, Aunty Hopi who also taught me and it was through her I got more of a sense of my Māoritanga and Māori spirituality. I remember we went to a tangi down at the Māori community Centre with John Waititi and Robert and Gary who were very young then. Aunty Hopi taught me how to do the welcome when they brought the casket in (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Through her association with the kuia at the Māori Women's League and sporadic contact with her mother, Betty's command of te reo Māori also improved:

When my mother and I got together she didn't speak English very well. She spoke Māori all the time. I guess I picked up a lot of Māori from her and when I joined the Māori Women's Welfare League they used to speak to me in Māori (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

As Betty became more comfortable with te reo Māori she would use Māori karakia and became familiar with Māori protocol: "I know sometimes it's quite possible that I tread on a lot of Māori protocol. But it's all through making mistakes that I learned" (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

The tensions inevitably remained and resurfaced but Betty found a spirituality that gave personal meaning to her life and allowed her to feel interconnected with both her Māoritanga and her Catholicism. She would have agreed with Durie that without a spiritual awareness an individual is lacking in well-being and that key aspects of Māori spirituality include a spiritual communion with the environment. Similarly, she did not equate regular church going with spirituality nor a strong adherence to one denomination in spite of the fact she had a strong attachment to Catholicism. For Betty, Catholicism and Māoritanga were two separate
cultures but at the same time they were two sides of the same coin. At times she felt conflicted, but nevertheless the apparent inconsistency between Papatuanuku and ‘Our Lady of Perpetual Help’ was a non-issue for her. The differences of these two traditions are apparent and may for many be incompatible, but for Betty they were both equally necessary. Both traditions gave her life meaning and both were cathartic in nurturing the strong social voice for which she gained public prominence. Catholicism and the nuns at Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College were instrumental in giving her a social conscience whereas her Māoritanga provided an alternative vision — that of self-determination.

Indigenous peoples throughout the globe have become increasingly active in seeking self-determination, preservation of ancestral land and traditions and reviving cultural and spiritual practices (Allen, 2002; Connor, 1994; Hoskins, 2001). Betty was an active participant in the movement for self-determination for Māori, particularly with regard to protests seeking to have the Treaty of Waitangi honoured. She was also active in seeking self-determination and control of schooling for Māori, health care and care for youth at risk.

Betty recognised at both a personal and collective level that one of the key elements of self-determination is cultural survival. She continued to learn about her Māoritanga and encouraged her whanau and the youth at Arohanui to do so as well. She also recognised that the rich symbolic representations of Māoritanga help individuals to make connections and keep in touch with the traditions of our tupuna and also help bring the sacred into everyday life. Throughout the Arohanui Trust home that Betty lived in for many years, evidence of such symbolic representations were manifest in the many contemporary carvings and images that were displayed. Notices to visitors and guests of the house were written in both English and te reo Māori. Betty also managed to bring together aspects of her Māoritanga and her Catholicism into her home environment. Alongside
a carved Māori figure you were likely to find a crucifix or a representation of the Virgin Mary. These symbols were not only symbols of her own self-identity but they also reflected the traditional Māori worldview that the sacred and the secular are not separated but are parts of the whole (Irwin, 1984).

The values, attitudes, concepts and language embedded in beliefs about spirituality represent, in many cases, the clearest contrast and mark of difference between indigenous peoples and the West. It is one of the few parts of ourselves which the West cannot decipher, cannot understand and cannot control yet (Smith, 1999, p. 74).

While there are clearly marks of difference and contrasts between Māoritanga and Catholicism, Betty nevertheless synthesized aspects of both and created something positive and personally satisfying. Such a synthesis highlights the state of contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand as a great melting pot of diverse traditions, languages and religions. As first peoples, Māori have had to fight to retain our language and culture yet at the same time we have had to integrate with tauiwi. Within this continual tension, however, universal themes of spirituality have the power to take us beyond the limitations of our heritage and personal identity and to 'make the pilgrimage home':

Ka tu au ki uta
kia whakatane au i ahau

I stand upon firm ground,
 manifested myself to a physical form.

A spirit enters the womb and manifests a human form.
We are spiritual beings experiencing a human existence (Tai, 1992, p. 8).
Chapter Seven consists of a brief introduction to the symbolism of the branches of the totara tree, followed by the narrative text, with annotated reflections. Chapter Seven focuses on Betty’s transition from school to work, motherhood, marriage and family life, covering the decades of the 1940s to the 1970s. These segments represent the ways in which Betty branched out after leaving school.

1 Image of totara branches from: www.ccc.govt.nz
When grown in the open, the young totara bears branches and leaves right down to the ground. The leaves are stiff and prickly to touch. The branches of the totara can be viewed as representing the various paths open to the children of Tane. This metaphorical interpretation of the branches renders them as celestial branches, symbolising the baskets of knowledge. Māori mythology relates that Tane obtained the three baskets of knowledge for human kind: the basket of virtues, the basket of ritual formulae and the basket of evil (Best, 1974).

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 14.** Betty aged about 18 years old c. 1942
Private collection of Wark whanau.

**Entering the Labour Force**
Within the framework of the female life story, the biographer must not only deal with the relation between the narrator and the social sphere, but also with the social construction of women and the collective representations of women as they have been shaped by the society (Chanfrault-Duchet, 1991).
In Betty’s case there is also the added dimension of having to deal with collective representations of Māori women and their social sphere. When Betty left school at the end of 1941 there were relatively few career opportunities open to women. Middleton (1988) argues that girls in the 1940s and 1950s experienced contradictory and changing attitudes towards ‘working women’ at a time when the ideology of domestic femininity was clearly embodied in the thinking of the educational policy-makers. Indeed, many women viewed paid employment as a temporary measure between leaving school and getting married: "When I left school Sister Crescentia got me a job in the Wairoa Hospital. It was the beginning of the war and you became a nurse or a teacher or something like that" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Betty entered the workforce at a time when the war was modifying what was appropriate work for women. Industrial conscription or 'man-power' was introduced by regulation in 1942 and initially covered all women born in 1922 and 1923 (Montgomerie, 1992). Born in 1924, Betty was not eligible for registration at this time, although by the end of the war she was. While women were employed in a vast number of non-traditional female occupations during the war years, the government attempted to accommodate conservative notions of ‘women’s work’ and, as far as possible, to avoid challenging the sexual division of labour in the workplace (Montgomerie, 1992). Most women who were ‘man-powered’ were employed in industries that traditionally employed large numbers of women. These included: footwear manufacturers, woollen mills, clothing factories, knitting mills, hospitals, the linen-flax industry and teaching (Montgomerie, 1992). Although both Pakeha and Māori women were eligible for industrial conscription, there is some evidence that the National Service Department officials were willing to send Māori women into jobs considered unsuitable for Pakeha women and also that there were some attempts to segregate living arrangements (Montgomerie, 1992). For example, poor conditions had driven a Pakeha woman off a farm and a departmental officer suggested,
by way of solution, that a Māori girl might suit instead. Another example is
given where a Māori woman was directed to a brothel and found that her
duties included checking servicemen and their escorts into their rooms
(Montgomerie, 1992).

Sister Crescentia, however, pre-empted the National Service Department by
securing Betty in a job in nursing which embodied both the military
narrative of serving one’s country and the domestic narrative of feminine
self-sacrifice. Nursing offered work that was simultaneously conceptualized
as a service rewarded with well-earned pay, while at the same time offering
strict supervision to trainee nurses who were expected to live in the nurses’
hostel. This was an important consideration as it was unheard of for young
women to go flatting in the 1940s and 1950s. If they had to leave home to
get a job they would live in hostels or board privately where they could be
“guarded” (Smith, 1991, p. 68).

The gender division of labour is one of the most significant divisions in
shaping femininity. This division affects women’s experiences,
circumstances and expectations of work (Matthews, 1984). Betty’s
expectations of work reflected not only the structural determinants of the
sexual division of labour but also the occupational segregation determined
by race and class within Aotearoa/New Zealand in the 1940s (Davies, 1993).
Had the war not been a factor in determining women’s employment at this
time, it is probable that nursing, or nurse aiding, could still have been a
possible option for Betty. While the occupational ideology of nursing
constructed nursing as a profession, many aspects of the nurse’s work such
as cleaning and hygiene became identifiable with domestic labour
(Gamarnikow, 1978). However, for trainee nurses and nurse aids, the
subordination structures within the profession and also within the nurse-
doctor relationship characterised the specific tasks and job allocations they
received. Within this model, domestic labour occupied a central position in
their training and work. Betty was inducted into nursing at Wairoa
Hospital in Hawkes Bay in 1942 and was set to work cleaning bed pans. The work was hard physically and emotionally:

I did six months nurse training at Wairoa Hospital but I didn’t complete my training. I was quite good at the theory but I wasn’t very good at the practical. I didn’t like to see people hurt. If I saw anybody badly injured I’d pass out. And I didn’t like all the dirty jobs and all the cleaning. I didn’t like giving enemas and cleaning bed pans. Anyway I left nursing and got a job as a housekeeper to a Doctor Harvey (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Betty’s decision to leave nursing is understandable. She was relatively young and was expected to engage in work that required maturity and life experience. Nursing during this period still adhered to the military model and many young nurses found this difficult. There was an expectation that junior nurses would stand to attention with their hands behind their backs and take their orders from the senior nurses. For Betty and many others such formalities were irksome and unnecessary. The ability to maintain the detached approach to patient care was difficult for some junior nurses.  

Similarly, the demanding physical and domestic labour was challenging for many aspiring nurses who simply lacked the stamina to work the long shifts that were demanded of them.

Having decided nursing was not for her, Betty returned to the nuns at Saint Joseph’s. Sister Crescentia was initially disappointed in Betty’s decision but helped secure her a job as a live-in house keeper/cook to a Doctor Harvey. Betty lived with Doctor Harvey and his daughter Elizabeth who was then in her twenties, for about one year.

Doctor Harvey was a radiologist. I was quite good at cooking. I used to make gems and I can remember the gem

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2 Wairoa Hospital in the Hawkes Bay was opened in 1887 after council voted that £83.00 be used for the erection of a hospital building (Wilson, 1968).

3 Several oral histories on nursing training in the 1940s discuss some of the difficulties encountered by young nurses. For example see Alister Doyle’s account of her training in Fyfe (1995).
irons and I remember his garden. He used to grow asparagus (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

The fact that Betty’s most vivid memories of her work as a housekeeper are centred around food demonstrates that this was a central key task in her job description, and it also demonstrates the extent of her cultural construction as female. Women tend to identify and express themselves with food and "food is frequently a metaphor through which many women speak of their lives" (Herda, 1991, p. 144).

While at school, Betty had learnt about planning meals, food preparation and cooking. These skills were viewed as a basic requirement for both Māori and Pakeha girls to prepare them for their expected role as housewife in the family unit. There was an assumption that once Māori girls learnt to bake and cook like their Pakeha sisters they would be afforded entry into Pakeha society, although not on an equal basis. Māori girls in the earlier part of the twentieth century were certainly schooled as domestic workers for a middle-class, Pakeha market, as is evidenced in the curriculum of the native schools (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1975; Simon, 1998). An occupation of housekeeper/cook provided Betty with an income, work experience and a home. She viewed it as merely a "means to an end. I stood it because I had no place else to go" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

An undeniable yearning for a home to call her own was paramount in Betty’s thoughts as she went about her chores. As with many young heterosexual women of the time she wondered whether she would meet a dashing soldier and become a war bride. In the meantime though, she had support herself and she continued working as a housekeeper, leaving Doctor Harvey’s employ after a year or so and then moving on to another family in Napier:

I moved to another place with a very Scottish family, people called the McFarlanes. That was further along the hill. The McFarlanes had a very big place. They had a tennis court
and things like that. It was a very, very Scottish building. They don’t have porridge the way we do. They had like gruel. I think it was very heavy stuff, and when they finished dinner, they went into the smoke room. I came up to Auckland a couple of times with them (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Betty did not recall being impressed by the wealth she encountered at the McFarlanes. There was another woman working in the household and they both went about their duties with little thought to the social inequities between rich and poor. On her evenings off Betty would attend dances and like many other young women she found the American servicemen attentive and exciting. The Yanks, as they were called, introduced a Hollywood type of glamour into small-town New Zealand and women fell for them in their droves:

There are many, many myths about ‘the American invasion’, but there is no doubt that heads and hearts were turned momentarily and permanently. The year after their arrival there was a bulge in the statistics. The birth rate of children born out of wedlock rose significantly. There was an almost parallel rise in the rate of deaths of women from septicaemia as a result of backstreet or illegal abortions (Fyfe, 1995, p. 14).

Betty met American marine Charles Turner at a dance in Napier. He was her first love and Betty relished every moment with him and the escape he represented from the daily drudgery of her work. She was attracted initially to the uniform and the romance the Americans represented. She enjoyed the American ‘lingo’, the accent and their generosity. Soon after meeting Charles she left the McFarlanes and went nurse aiding so he could visit her more easily:

I went to Pukeora Sanatorium in Waipukurau where I did nurse aiding for people with T.B. It was a big lovely place and it was the first place I’d ever seen snow. It was lovely — lovely. Charles would visit me there. Then I moved down to Wellington and I remember living in Riddiford Street in a rooming house with the Salvation Army and then I got a job
in Base Records which was part of the army (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

The job at Base Records was to be Betty’s first clerical position and she found she quite enjoyed the work:

I think in those days, if you had a secondary education you were quite sure to get a job. I found it interesting because I think I did mostly filing and I’d know a lot of people that had come from up north that were overseas (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Charles continued to court Betty and they became engaged, and, as was frequently the case with wartime romances, Betty became pregnant.
Yearning for a Place to Call Home:
Ties of Motherhood, Relationships with Men

The gender ideology prevalent in the 1940s condemned and punished all modes of sexual expression for women except within the institution of marriage, which was a deeply embedded desire for the majority of women (Matthews, 1984). Marriage and motherhood were crucial sites regarding the construction of femininity. Motherhood was viewed as every woman’s potential biological destiny and was seen as a necessary social duty for married women (Matthews, 1984). Morally and economically, single motherhood was a contradiction in terms, and until the 1960s a woman giving birth to a child outside of marriage was constructed as being an unfit mother (Matthews, 1984). When Betty found herself single and pregnant in 1944 she was frightened and totally unprepared for such a responsibility. She had the option of contracting a hasty marriage as nearly 1,400 New Zealand women did (Bioletti, 1989). Unfortunately, fate intervened — at the young age of 22, Charles Turner became another wartime statistic, tragically killed in action at Guadalcanal. Betty was devastated. Charles was her first love and she was looking forward to a future with him in the United States of America as his wife. Over fifty years later, Betty found it very difficult to talk about this period of intense sorrow:

I don’t know how I got over that death. I was so sad. I couldn’t believe I would never see him again. I thought about how his parents in America would never see him again and thought about all of our boys who had died or who were going to die. Later after Brian was born I was so sad to think Charles would never see him (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Base Records where Betty had been working found her a place to stay until the baby was born:
Base Records found a place for me where young women went when they were pregnant. So I stayed there. Then I had my son in St Helen’s Hospital in Wellington. It was the most difficult time. It was terrible. It was terrible! I had no one. I didn’t know anyone and to go through all that - it was terrible. The whole thing - and having a baby (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Many girls became pregnant to American servicemen. Some married their lovers, some did not. The figures for illegitimate births in New Zealand show that there were "1,120 in 1939; by 1944 the total had risen to 1999" (Bioletti, 1989, p. 77).

Betty did, however receive some support from the army. They helped her with clothes for the baby and wrote a letter to Mary.

I was scared to contact Mary but the army contacted her and I got a telegram saying bring the baby home. The army paid for my fare back - picked me up and put me on the train, gave me some money and sent me up north. I was scared. I was still scared. When I got back up there everyone forgot about me and made a fuss of the baby. He was a beautiful baby and well, they really made a fuss. Then Mary said she would look after him and I would have to go and look for a job and that’s what I did. I went down to Auckland (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

It was a lonely and difficult time for Betty. Not only did she have to cope with her own personal losses but she also had to cope with the effects of war. Betty describes herself as feeling very bewildered at this time. She had lost Charles and lost her baby. She had moved to a city she was unfamiliar with and was still recovering from the physical and emotional effects of pregnancy and birth:

I boarded or had rooms. There were lots of rooming houses around, and I don’t know whether I was very happy because as a rural person coming to the city, I found it very hard. I guess I understand why these young people who come from the rural areas find it hard to live in the city. I didn’t find it exciting. I found it a little frightening (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).
Leaving her newborn son with her foster mother inevitably brought up all the old insecurities of childhood. The feeling of being unwanted and irrevocably alone: "I felt they wanted this beautiful baby boy, but they didn’t want me" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Betty had to push her feelings of despondency aside and look for employment. "I got a job at Auckland Hospital for a little while as a ward’s maid. I was also a waitress for a while" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Wartime, however, was a time when people lived for the day because no-one knew what was going to happen next. Almost as an act of denial of her grief, Betty began going to movies and dances with other young people: "I remember going to this big theatre and it was so beautiful with all the stars and going to the pictures" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Movie houses and dances, diverting as they were, could not heal Betty’s aching heart. She yearned for a home to call her own and she longed to feel a sense of family connection. Instinctively she went in search of her birth mother:

I knew my birth mother was in Auckland and I went to look for her. I didn’t know about her big family though and it felt strange. I didn’t want to be part of it. The whole thing was like a picture thrown in front of me and I didn’t know where I fitted in. I belonged through blood but there was no bond. When my mother ended up in hospital with T.B., I tried to be part of it but there was no bonding. I was really a loner (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Although Betty’s reconnection with her mother was decidedly unsatisfactory, it nevertheless provided a means through which to put her past into perspective. The siblings she had not known existed (Kane, Nellie, Pauline,
Bobby, Barbara and Katie) were an unexpected bonus as she eventually became close to some of them. The feelings of being abandoned and unwanted subsided as she gained a deeper understanding of why her mother had had to give her up. Indeed, she was able to empathize with her mother having also been forced to give up her own son as there were no social welfare benefits available to assist unmarried mothers: "In those days, if you were young and unmarried you had to go out to work and somebody took over the child" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

To keep her baby would have been extremely difficult as there were no social welfare benefits available for unmarried mothers at this time. The Domestic Purposes Benefit was eventually introduced in 1973 (Morris, 1999).

Betty continued to live in Auckland and when the war ended there were further job opportunities: "I got a job filing at the Farmers Trading Company for a few years. Then I worked for a restaurant that catered for the sea planes that flew to Australia" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

She maintained intermittent contact with her son Brian in the role of an aunt. She never wrote to Charles’s parents to inform them of their grandson. Whether they would have wished to have contact or not can only be left to conjecture. Life went on and eventually Betty began dating other men: "Life wasn’t serious at this stage. I felt like a bird out of the cage" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

A second significant relationship for Betty was with an Englishman, Henry Smith: "Henry was a gentle man. He was a kind person. He wanted to get married but I didn’t. I didn’t want to be pinned down. He wept when I wouldn’t marry him and he went back to England" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Henry fathered Betty’s second son, Danny, who was born in 1948:
Mary’s mother took Danny. They lived at Waihi. It was rather a funny thing. You know it’s only recently, it was like, okay, we will look after you until you have your baby, but we have your child. We have your child. And I lived in Waihi with the people who fostered my child for about two years. I got a job down there and then I came back to Auckland. And see it was rather funny that those families didn’t want my children to know who I was. I was Aunty Betty because they were afraid I might take them away. And you know, it’s only recently I thought, yeah, that’s what they did! That was like a gift to them for looking after me. It seemed to be the natural thing (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Betty has deep regrets about missing out on the lives of her first two sons. There was little alternative to either having them fostered or put into an institution as she would not have had the economic or emotional support to care for them on her own. However, she remains ambivalent about the placement of her sons, particularly in the case of her eldest son who was cared for by people who, paradoxically, had been less than nurturing towards her as a child. It is difficult to explain this contradiction. Obviously, Betty felt that both sons would be adequately cared for and she was able to maintain relationships with both. It was not an ideal situation but in the long term it was a practical solution. However years later when she began working with youth at risk, she wondered whether being deprived of one’s mother had lasting detrimental effects:

With a lot of young people I have here, the nannies were looking after them, or an aunty or something like that, and I don’t think that can work. Well it could do if they lived in the community where whanau stuck together, eh? But a lot of young people have missed out on being with their family or being with their birth mother (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Betty was only twenty when she had Brian and twenty four when she had Danny. Although she missed both sons terribly at times she was like any other young woman of the time - eager to have fun and forget about the war years. Having stayed in Waihi for two years following Danny’s birth, Betty returned to Auckland in 1950 and found lodgings and a clerical job. She
began socialising with other young people and one of her favourite pastimes was going to the pictures at the Civic Theatre in Queen Street. Opened in 1929, the Civic was one of Auckland's grandest and most popular theatres (Johnson, 1991).

Remnants of the American invasion such as dancing the jitterbug still remained after the war. At such a dance Betty met the man who was to become her first husband:

I got married to a Canadian in 1951, I think it was. We met at a dance doing the jitterbug. We got married in a Registry Office which upset my mother. She said, “It wasn’t right!” All my sons were baptised Catholic though even if I never had a Catholic wedding. I was wary of getting married - getting married wasn't such an exciting thing. We had a son called Conrad after his father. I was to go to Canada to live in Vancouver but I got scared. When I look back I was scared all the time (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Betty’s son Conrad, a baby born into what has been termed the baby boom period, was born in 1952, the year New Zealand’s population passed the two million mark (Brooking, 1998). When Betty decided not to emigrate, her
husband\textsuperscript{4} went back to Canada alone, leaving his wife and their infant son behind.

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Betty in 1952, with infant son, Conrad. Private collection of Wark whanau.}
\end{figure}

Betty was entitled to a deserted wife’s benefit so was able to keep baby Conrad with her. She found rooms in a boarding house in the inner Auckland city suburb of Grafton and set about making a home for herself and baby Conrad. During the early 1950s, Grafton was a busy and bustling residential and commercial area with a strong sense of community identity. However, as there were plans for a motorway to be constructed through the Grafton Gully, the area had begun to decline and became a well-known Bohemian area of the city. Many of the houses were turned into boarding houses or divided into flats for students at nearby Auckland University or for nurses at Auckland Hospital. As a solo mother on a low income, Betty needed somewhere cheap to live and somewhere where she felt accepted. Grafton with its social reputation and low rents was ideal.

Understandably, there were considerable difficulties for Betty in such a situation. A boarding house with its communal kitchen and bathrooms was more suited to single people. The advantages, however, were that Betty got

\textsuperscript{4} Betty requested her first husband be referred to only by his Christian name, Conrad.
to meet other people and she was within walking distance of the little shops which lined Park Road, Symonds Street and Karangahape Road. This was the time before the advent of the supermarket and people would shop at speciality stores such as the dairy, the butcher, the fishmonger, the greengrocer and the like. Where the University of Auckland’s Medical School now stands in Park Road, there was once a well known bakery called Miss Aikenhead’s and many of the local residents would congregate there for a friendly chat. Betty relished the occasional treat at Miss Aikenhead’s, particularly one of her pies, and then she would enjoy a stroll with baby Conrad through Auckland’s Domain which adjoins Park Road.

Betty’s lifestyle was relatively frugal and spartan, but it was not without its compensations. Her greatest challenge at this time, however, was learning to be a mother and coping with a baby on her own:

I didn’t know what being a mother was as I’d never had one. I didn’t enjoy being a mother. There were no mother networks that I felt I could belong to and I sort of struggled along the best I could (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

During this period Betty continued to have intermittent contact with her mother and her family but her feelings of separateness remained. Her existence had been as much a surprise to her siblings as theirs had been to her. One brother, Kane Mutu, was aged fourteen when he first became aware of Betty. He was living in the Saint Joseph’s Catholic Boys Home in Takapuna (while Nau, their mother was in hospital) when Betty came to visit him: “I was stunned and fascinated to think this beautiful woman was my sister” (Kane Mutu, personal communication, February 10, 1997).

Betty came to know Kane and later, his Danish wife Anna, reasonably well. Anna and Kane cared for Nau in her final years until her death in 1973 and their home became a central focus for the whanau.
New Zealand was still very much an outpost of the British Empire in the 1950s. For most it was a time of economic comfort and full employment. Those who were ill, injured or in a situation such as Betty's, were looked after by a benevolent State welfare system (Barnet 1987). The 1950s also marked the beginning of a more permissive society. Attitudes towards relationships between men and women were changing. When Betty lived in Grafton she had the opportunity to meet a number of unattached men. She enjoyed male company and she became friendly with a young Englishman who was to become her second husband and the father of two further sons:

I didn’t get divorced for a long time. Then I met Jim. He was a good man. He was a good man. We were very good friends. He would help me with Conrad and treated him as his own son. He wanted to get married but I was wary of getting married. I was I suppose, forward thinking for the time. I was against getting married at first. I just wanted us to live together. Jim eventually paid for my divorce and we got married in about 1966. I wanted children but I didn’t want to get married. Jim was a good provider and he shifted us from Grafton to Newton and then we decided to buy a
house in Freemans Bay. Our son Robert was born in 1959 and then Gary in 1961. I was depressed after each birth. I remember crying a lot but they were easier to have. I guess I felt secure with Jim. He was a good father (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Jim Wark provided the security Betty craved for and together they created the home Betty had yearned for all her life. After a number of moves they finally settled in Albany Road, in the inner city suburb of Herne Bay in the early 1970s. Herne Bay, Ponsonby and Freemans Bay are adjacent inner city suburbs and Betty remained in close contact with her Freemans Bay and Ponsonby networks.

*Figure 18.* Betty and Jim Wark c. 1958
Private collection of Wark whanau.
In the early days of their relationship Betty and Jim were happy together, but by her late thirties Betty was growing more into what she termed 'her own person'. She became more involved with her community work and there was an inevitable conflict between her family life and her public life.

Jim was a good man but I had to go look for myself. Also, I think what I wanted to do perhaps was to hurt my men, because I'd been hurt by my foster father. We stayed together as a family unit until I found my Māoriness. I got involved in the Māori community Centre during the 1960s and the time of the urban renewal. Jim didn't understand what was happening, although he was very sympathetic towards Māori and knew a lot about Māori history and things like the Māori names of native trees (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).
Betty and Jim have maintained an enduring partnership for over forty years but they have lived apart for much of this time. While Jim was supportive of Betty’s work he was nevertheless uneasy about the amount of time she was spending out of the home. He viewed her work as being detrimental to her relationship with him and their sons as it began to encroach on family commitments. Betty was also aware that she would have to make a choice:

There was a lot of conflict between my family life and the work I was becoming involved in. I made a choice. I left the boys with Jim and moved into Tole Street Park. I imagine my boys would have been highly neglected looking back at it now. They thought I had deserted them (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Betty’s decision to move in with the Tole Street protestors reflects her growing political and social consciousness. The Tole Street Park protest occurred in 1976. Its intention was to raise public awareness of housing needs. Her definition of responsibility was changing. It was no longer enough to be a responsible parent, looking after her family and having dinner on the table at a certain hour. She had become aware of a collective responsibility and realised that ordinary citizens can make a difference through political movements and protest. Betty’s two youngest sons were in their mid-teens when she initially left the family. However, she carried her guilt for leaving them throughout her life. The notions of family that she and Jim had seemingly shared were challenged in ways that neither initially thought could be resolved. While no new role definitions were systematically worked through, the family unit evolved into a type of role reversal where Jim took major responsibilities for domestic labour and child care. Throughout the period in the 1970s that Betty lived in the family home in Albany Road there would be homeless people staying or children in need so it was a very busy home and at times a very stressful home.

Out the back of the house we had a two bedroom sleep-out and one extra bedroom in the main house. I had three young men in the sleep-out and two inside. That was very hard, very hard having people live in your own home. You no longer were in control of it and my husband, Jim, found it
very difficult because of his own upbringing. He was from the British Navy and he had quite set rules. Then I had some pretty heavy lads there, you know, alcohol was very ripe at that time. And they just didn't know how to treat a house and Jim wasn't quite used to this kind of thing. He found it very difficult to live with - that they were out, coming home drunk, stealing, burgling. He found it very difficult. And it was very hard on my boys (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

As Betty became more involved in her work, she became more estranged from her husband and children. She was criticised for neglecting her own family and she experienced what Roiphe (1996) terms 'mother guilt' (p. 74). Roiphe asserts there is inherent in motherhood a continual giving up of self, and few of us take to that without resentment, which in itself creates a river of guilt (Roiphe, 1996). Betty exemplified 'mother guilt'. She experienced considerable conflict between her maternal feelings and self-preservation. She found motherhood absorbing and stimulating, but she also found it was not enough to satisfy her own needs. In her own words, "I needed to find myself" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996). She had fulfilled her biological destiny but it had not fulfilled her.

Betty had actively wanted to be a mother but she was not blind to the difficulties of mothering generally. She had found, as generations of mothers had before her, that children's needs are endless, consuming and frequently tedious. Motherhood was survived through a combination of delight and depression; exhaustion and exhilaration. She was also fully aware that she had a number of unresolved issues around her own mother and her lack of being mothered as a child. To some extent the kuia who mentored her at the Ponsonby Māori Community Centre became mother figures, just as the nuns at Saint Joseph's had, but motherhood remained a relative mystery. "I didn't know what being a mother was as I'd never had one" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996). Similarly, when Betty became a grandmother, she experienced the same sense of inadequacy:
When my grandchildren come out to say hello to Nanna I'm not sure who Nanna is because I'd never had grandparents. Never had parents. And I find it hard to be whatever a grandmother's supposed to be. Nanna's supposed to carry sweeties around in her handbag, supposed to spoil you and have lots of money, buy you this and buy you that (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

Jim had become the dominant figure on the domestic front when the children were younger and he also became the more accessible grandparent. Jim remained in the family home in Albany Road and it was there that the family celebrations were often held and the grandchildren congregated. In his retirement he began growing orchids and these exotic blooms were prolific symbols of his domestic competence and enjoyment of the home he and Betty had set out to make together in the 1960s.

Betty had yearned for a place to call home throughout her childhood and her notions of home were underpinned by the model of the nuclear family. Initially, her marriage to Jim and the family life they made together sufficed. However, as her notions of home changed to include more of a Māori whanau-based family unit which included kinship connections that were not necessarily blood links, it became increasingly difficult to maintain a home with Jim. For Betty the concept of ‘home’ came to mean more than a geographic location where one’s domestic life was lived out. Home came to mean a place of ‘belonging’.

In 1976 when Betty left her marital home and moved into one of the Arohanui Trust hostels as a house-mother she felt a deep sense of ‘belonging’. Ironically, however, her position as house-mother created a public identity that was at odds with her own self-perception. Having struggled with issues around her lack of being mothered and her own experiences of motherhood she was to find herself being cast in the role of a ‘Mother Teresa’ figure. ‘Ma Betty’ had been created and an excursion into ‘heart politics’ had begun. Yet this construction can also be viewed as the central paradox of Betty's life. As her political activism grew along with her
mothering of Auckland's street kids, Betty gradually became an absent mother to her own children. For Betty, as with many other activists who are also mothers, parenthood took second place to her political commitment. It is a dilemma that goes to the heart of the problem of activism for women who are mothers. Gillian Slovo, the daughter of the South African activist Ruth First, discusses this dilemma in her memoir, *Every Secret Thing* from the child’s perspective:

She was the kind of role model our generation was searching out, a beautiful, well-dressed woman who had made an impact on the world and who was fighting for a cause that was indisputably just, but she was also our mother. She was both the best of mothers and the worst. When she turned the full light of her attention our way, she could dazzle. And yet, so often, her mind was elsewhere. When my younger sister Robyn was eleven, she launched an offensive to try and get Ruth to be like other mothers, to be there at breakfast and at supper too. Robyn soon gave up. What Ruth did was so obviously important – how could our petty needs compete? (Slovo, 1997, p. 117-118).

Betty’s sons resented her absence from their family home and found it difficult to understand her activism and compulsion to work with people no-one else seemed to want to know. Yet, over time they became very proud of her heart politics and her commitment to her causes. As with Ruth First’s daughters they came to view her work as making an important and valuable contribution and resigned themselves to the fact that their needs appeared petty and inconsequential in comparison. Indeed, her youngest son Gary eventually joined his mother in her work - the child came to understand the context of his mother’s absences as they worked together.

Having desired her own home and family so fervently and having had to foster out her first two sons it was ironic that this desire, once achieved, did not fulfil her. Yet it was also a logical progression that she would create a non-kin whanau with at risk youth, modelling herself on the sisters of St Josephs’ Māori Girls’ School she had so ardently admired. Yet when Betty eventually left her marital home in 1976 her three younger sons were no
longer overly dependent on her and Jim. Indeed, Conrad was aged twenty-four and had already left home; Robert and Gary were aged seventeen and fifteen respectively. She may have absented herself during much of their adolescent years but she did not become fully absent until they were near maturity. She was also secure in the knowledge that Jim's presence compensated for her departure from the family home. She certainly remained an integral part of their lives, living in close proximity to them.
Post World War II – Urban Migration and Employment Opportunities for Māori Women

Post World War II was an era of domestic replenishment and redevelopment. After the horrors and uncertainty of the war, returning servicemen were motivated to find employment, establish secure careers and build families in which women stayed at home and raised children (King, 2003). Wartime had been an extraordinary period which had modified contemporary domestic ideology. Both married and single women had been man-powered to work in areas of employment that, while essential, were often unattractive, poorly paid and low status occupations. When man-power controls were lifted, wives of ex-servicemen were the first women to become free of man-power control and were able to leave the industries they had been assigned in order to set up home (Montgomerie, 1992). Many women had resented man-powering and were pleased to return to their homes. However, there were also women who wanted to remain in the jobs they had been assigned for financial reasons and, consequently, were piqued and upset to be replaced by returning servicemen (Montgomerie, 1992).

The man-powering regulations, together with the Māori War Effort Organization, also opened up a variety of manufacturing and labouring jobs for both Māori men and women (King, 1981). The request for Māori to be man-powered inevitably resulted in Māori moving from the rural sector into urban areas. After the war urbanization of Māori further increased as many Māori families moved into small towns and cities to find work. "In 1935, there were only 1,766 Māori living in Auckland. By 1945 this figure had risen to 4,903 and by 1951, there were 7,621 Māori living in Auckland" (King, 1981, p. 283). The process of urbanization continued to intensify and by the 1960s, Māori had become a predominantly urban people. The consequences of the urban relocation were economic as well as social and cultural. Subsistence farming and collective ownership gave way to regular
hours of work, wages, and frequently, inequality of opportunity (King, 1981). Urbanization of Māori inevitably brought closer contact with Pakeha as the two peoples began to encounter one another in ‘contact zones’ of the rapidly expanding post-war suburbs and consequently to challenge myths of an egalitarian and racially harmonious society (Woods, 2002).

The increasing urban presence of Māori in the post-war years resulted in severe housing problems as invariably many Māori congregated in cheaper, dilapidated and frequently overcrowded houses (Sorrenson, 1977). The first Labour Government (1935-1949) was faced with these housing problems and undertook a housing scheme that provided over 1500 new houses by 1940. However, as late as 1951 over 30 percent of Māori were inadequately housed (Sorrenson, 1977). Another measure undertaken by the Labour Government was the Māori Social and Economic Advancement Act of 1945, which provided for the appointment of Māori welfare officers and Māori wardens, the election of tribal committees and the appointment of tribal executives (Sorrenson, 1977).

Māori leaders, such as Sir Apirana Ngata, Sir Peter Buck and Princess Te Puea, recognized the problems of urbanization in the 1940s. They realized there would be a need to develop appropriate institutions to address the various issues that urbanization had raised for Māori (Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, 2004). Forerunners to urban marae, such as the Ngati Poneke Club in Wellington, and the Akarana (Auckland) Community Centre, are two examples of Māori initiatives that sought to assist Māori adapt to the urban environment (Sorrenson, 1977). In 1951 the Māori Women’s Welfare League was founded by Māori Welfare Officers, and, under the leadership of Whina Cooper and later Mira Szazy, it became an influential body which concerned itself with many of the social and economic changes that characterized the post-war years. It was also the first to provide Māori women with a forum in which their concerns could be aired, brought to a wider national audience and placed before the policy-makers of the day (Rogers & Simpson, 1993).
A new government under the National Party was formed in 1949 and in accordance with its policy of encouraging individual property ownership, it subdivided some of the larger land development schemes into farm holdings for Māori families. In the towns Māori who rented State or Māori Affairs houses were granted loans to purchase these homes (as were European tenants of State houses) (Sorrenson, 1977).

Much of the National Government Māori policy was based on the assumption that increased urbanization would lead to more intermarriage and an integration policy sought to combine Māori and Pakeha elements to form one nation (Sorrenson, 1977).

With the rapid growth of the Māori population and increasing urbanization multiplying the frequency of contact between Māori and Pakeha, care must be taken to ensure that race relations do not deteriorate. In several places there are signs of mounting tension but, fortunately, there is also evidence that responsible members of the community are aware of the need for action (Sorrenson, 1977, p. 38).

Within the post-war context of urbanization and an explicit government policy on integration, there was a complex intertwining of class, race and gender relations. Young Māori migrated to the cities and towns in search of work, income and a desire to enjoy the leisure and entertainment opportunities offered by urban areas. However, participation in the paid labour force for Māori equated to low status and low paid jobs, defined by class, race and gender. Most young Māori women migrants entered domestic employment and young Māori men became manual labourers. Advertisements encouraging young Māori women to work in domestic positions such as ward maids, waitresses, kitchen assistants and the like frequently appeared in the Department of Māori Affairs periodical, Te Ao Hou (Woods, 2002).

In 1942, when Betty decided not to continue with her nursing training, it was predictable that she would be steered into domestic work. Nevertheless,
it was unusual for a young Māori woman to find a live-in position as a housekeeper in a private home as many Pakeha, especially women, were not keen to have Māori women live in their homes (Woods, 2002). In Betty’s case her employer was a widower although his daughter also lived in the house and possibly they were liberal enough to allow a young Māori to work and live in their home. Another possibility is, that, as part Pakeha, Betty may have ‘passed’ as looking Pakeha-enough to be accepted. The issue of Māori passing as Pakeha or identifying with Pakeha has not been overly pertinent to ethnic discourses in Aotearoa given the high level of intermarriage (McIntosh, 2001). However, Māori passing as Pakeha, whether this is something that has occurred consciously or subconsciously, is frequently present in identity narratives for people of mixed Māori and Pakeha ethnicity. Many Māori who have fair complexions are frequently questioned and challenged as to the authenticity of their claims to self-identify as Māori (McIntosh, 2001). As a young woman, Betty lived in a culture where Māori were being encouraged to integrate with Pakeha, to become one homogeneous group identifying as New Zealanders. It was not uncommon in the 1940s for Māori, particularly those of mixed Māori and Pakeha descent, to simply pass themselves as belonging to the dominant Pakeha culture and Betty was very much aware that identifying as Māori in the 1940s was fraught with ambiguity and uncertainty.

When Betty eventually migrated to Auckland in 1944 after the birth of her son Brian, she did what hundreds of other single Māori women did. She found domestic employment as a ward maid at Auckland Hospital and later she found work as a waitress. Woods (2002) suggests that around 35 percent of all young Māori women migrants were employed in domestic work in the late 1940s. The manufacturing sector also enjoyed a period of sustained growth after the war and many young Māori women also found employment in factories (Woods, 2002). Office work became an increasingly appealing employment option for young Māori women with institutions such as the New Zealand Post Office actively recruiting young Māori women to
become telephone exchange operators (Woods, 2002). Betty had enjoyed the clerical work she did at Base Records in Wellington and after the war ended she followed the trend of Māori women to find office work, eventually obtaining a job filing at the Farmers Trading Company.

Throughout the post-war years and into the 1960s, housing and accommodation continued to be problematic for Māori migrating to urban areas. The protection of young single Māori women was a matter of anxiety to the State and institutions such as the National Council of Women, an organisation that had historically been concerned about the welfare of women. The organisation’s dominion secretary wrote to Peter Fraser, Minister of Native Affairs in 1947, stating they were concerned about the safety and well-being of single young Māori women migrants and requested that the government provide hostels for those young Māori women living in large centres, away from parent and elder supervision (Woods, 2002). Fraser and Native Affairs had already been apprehensive about the plight of young, single Māori migrants and in fact had established hostels for Māori women in Auckland and Wellington (Woods, 2002). By the early 1950s, the need to provide accommodation for young single Māori migrants had risen considerably. In May 1951 cabinet approved a pound-for-pound subsidy scheme under which religious and welfare organisations were able to establish hostels for young Māori and be eligible for up to 50 percent of the establishment cost (Woods, 2002). Betty lived in several hostels when she first migrated to Auckland and found them safe and relatively inexpensive. Hostels were not too dissimilar to the boarding school situation she had been accustomed to and she had also lived in the hostel for trainee nurses. In later years when she began her community work, she was to draw on her familiarity with the traditional hostel once again. With its supervision of young people and its provision of domestic assistance via preparation of meals and the maintenance of rooms, she felt hostels offered a useful transition space for young people adapting to life in the city.
Throughout the 1950s and 1960s Māori migrants continued to grapple with the ‘urban industrial complex’ while attempting to avert integration by forming community organisations where a sense of Māori identity could be articulated (Harris, 2002). Voluntary associations such as Māori churches, sporting and cultural groups, Māori councils and the Māori Women’s Welfare League were instrumental in developing community groups built around Māori identity, values and culture (Harris, 2002). The Māori hostel environment also fostered a sense of Māori community, where young Māori migrants would breakfast together, commute to work together, and then socialise together. Betty was to find a sense of Māori community at the Māori Community Centre in Ponsonby and also with the Māori Women’s Welfare League and the Māori Catholic church and marae, Te Unga Waka.

Māori community developments continued throughout the 1960s and expanded into the suburbs. In West Auckland, for example, Peter Sharples formed the cultural group, Manutake, a group that continues to perform in the present day (Harris, 2002). West Auckland Māori also began discussing the idea of building an urban, pan-tribal marae in the 1960s. The marae was to be a place where Māori could create a space to bring meet and create whanau ties within the urban context. A marae committee was formed in 1967 to develop the project and fundraise and in April 1980, the Hoani Waititi Marae was opened (Harris, 2002). Hoani Waititi Marae was the end result of decades of Māori community development. It can be viewed as a prototype of modern, urban marae where Māori not related by blood, can nevertheless build whanau links.

Hoani Waititi Marae and other urban marae also mark the starting point for a new wave of Māori development where Māori education initiatives such as kohanga reo and kura kaupapa (Māori schooling) found a legitimate space to teach Māori children about their own language and culture (Harris, 2002). Māori women, such as Betty Wark and Letty Brown, a prominent Māori leader in West Auckland, were fundamental to the various voluntary
organisations that were responsible for Māori community developments, ensuring Māori identity and culture were sustained within the urban landscape. Letty Brown’s main concern was for children. Her vision was to develop a Māori community where tamariki could grow up together and feel part of a Māori social order (Harris, 2002). For Letty’s own tamariki, mokopuna and the many other children she has taught, her vision has become a reality. She has passed down the knowledge she learned as a child growing up in a close-knit Māori community on the East Coast, and she has cultivated a strong sense of what it means to be Māori in those children (Harris, 2002).

Betty’s kaupapa was also connected with children and young people for whom urbanization had been alienating and demoralizing. Her vision was to help them construct a sense of identity and a community where they could feel at home.
CHAPTER EIGHT
Nga Hua Rakau – The Fruits

Totara manawa kaha,
tu pono ki te tika.
Ruia, taitea
kia tu ko
taikaka.

Stout hearted
totara,
standing straight
and true.
The sapwood surrounds
the heart-wood beneath
(Tai, 1992, p. 36).

Figure 20.
Totara tree fruits

Chapter Eight consists of a brief introduction to the symbolism of the fruits of the totara tree, followed by the narrative text, with annotated reflections. Chapter Eight focuses on Betty’s heart politics; her work with Arohanui Trust and her work as an Auckland City Councillor and covers the decades from the 1960s to the 1990s. The annotative essays to Chapter Eight examine her media profile and Māori women in politics.

Fruits, in tree symbolism, represent maturity, fertility, offspring and nourishment. The bright red fruit of the totara tree were a valued food in traditional Māori society. The fruits are sweet and juicy with a slight pine flavour and are only produced by the female tree (Crowe, 1992). Chapter Eight represents the fruits of Betty’s life, the culmination of her life’s experiences and life’s work.

Heart Politics
Betty spoke about her desire to find a secure place to call ‘home’. Yet she had ambivalent feelings about the notion of ‘home’. Her early memories of home were fraught with loss and conflict and ultimately there was a tension between her desire for a home and the possibilities of creating new forms of community and ‘home’. Betty strove to create a sense of stability and ‘home’

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1 Image of Totara fruits from: www.forest-bird.org.nz
for troubled youth who, as she had in her early life, lacked these essentials. As Betty’s evolving political activism surfaced, there was a concurrent evolution of identity. Such developmental shifts can be construed as a politics of change and a politics of identity, and they can be visualized as a configuration of identity, home, and community.

Throughout her early public life, Betty was recreating herself, and her narrative at this point had come full circle. She was home, but not home. Her desire for a place to call home was challenged by the realisation that her internal struggles – “I had to go look for myself” (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996) – would impact upon the nature and structure of her home and family life.

Betty first became involved in ‘heart politics’ when she was living in Freemans Bay in the 1960s. The term ‘heart politics’ is used provocatively. It is a term which denotes courage and challenge; overcoming one’s fears and taking risks. To become involved in heart politics is to become involved in community, grassroots initiatives with a one-pointed commitment to social transformation. Heart politics also means having a feeling of connectedness with the people or the cause you are fighting for. American political activist Fran Peavey elaborates on this with regard to her own heart politics:

Later in my work I began to think of connectedness as a political principle. Even some of our seemingly noblest efforts have a kind of delusion at the centre because they lack heart. If we aren’t connected to the people we think we’re fighting for, there’s an emptiness, a coldness that’s at the heart of prejudice - the coldness of separation (Peavey, 1986, p. 8).

Peavey’s sentiments can be applied to Betty’s work. She felt a connection to both the architecture and the community of Freemans Bay, and this connection prompted her entry into heart politics. Indeed, Betty’s narrative
politicizes the geography, demography and the architecture of the Freemans Bay and the Ponsonby communities:

When I was living in Pratt Street, Freemans Bay, I became involved in a group called Freemans Bay Advisory Committee. It was an adviser to the Auckland City Council and one of its major roles was to represent the interests of Auckland City tenants in negotiations, overall rental policies and housing policies generally. In the early 40s and 50s Freemans Bay was very run down - there were a lot of immigrants living there - you had the Irish and a lot of Māori who had come from country areas - it was very much a working class area. The houses were all run-down and it must've been late 1969 when the Council worked on a thing called urban renewal\(^2\) where Freemans Bay had to be renewed. Old houses were pulled down and Council promised the people would be allowed back there after they cleaned it up. But it didn't happen. We lost our house. We weren't allowed to put a new roof on because we wouldn't have been compensated for it. Through the Freemans Bay Advisory Committee I met some great people like Johnny Mitchell, who was secretary, and Bob Elsender, who was a J.P. They taught me a lot so I wasn't afraid to go out and talk to a landlord or help a neighbour hammer the fence back or put clothes back in the houses (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

The narrative history of exploitation and struggle faced by Betty's family and the different groups of people for whom Freemans Bay was home, are histories of oppression and resistance. The geographic location of Freemans Bay in Betty's narrative acquired a meaning and function as a site of personal struggle. It was home – the very thing she had struggled and yearned for since her early years - which was threatened. Home was no longer safe and protected — it had become a place of resistance and struggle.

\(^2\) The Urban Renewal and Housing Improvement Act (1945) was operated in relation to the Public Works Act (1928) and that was the mechanism that was used for compulsory purchase. In a number of cases, the Auckland City Council had also used the Health Act (1956) to demolish properties which meant Council had no responsibility for compensation to owners. Under the Public Works Act owners had to be compensated, but given the low level of values in the area, people found it difficult with the compensation they received to relocate elsewhere (Bruce Hucker personal communication with Annette Smith, February 7, 1994).

N.B. Dates of Acts supplied by Parliamentary Information (for the Public) via email parlinfo@parliament.govt.nz, communication with Corrine Cromar, July 11, 2005.
Betty speaks of feeling very connected to the Freemans Bay community, and her heart politics was in many ways ‘shaped’ in relation to the buildings and streets in which she lived at this time. As Mohanty (1988) points out, architecture and the layout of particular towns provide concrete, physical anchoring points. This was the case for Betty. Initially, she felt secure and happy in Freemans Bay, but the very stability and security of her home was undermined by the discovery that the buildings destined for demolition obscured particular race and class struggles. This realisation meant that Freemans Bay became a ‘growing up place’ for Betty and came to symbolize her politicization. Her membership of the Freemans Bay Advisory Committee was the catalyst for her future work as a community worker and people's advocate.

Freemans Bay is a suburb of inner city Auckland. It was subdivided in the 1840s by London speculators. On the lower slopes and in places with less spectacular views and aspects, sites were purchased and re-subdivided into six to twelve perch lots, and low-cost housing was erected. On the upper slopes where large sites were found, people with more substantial incomes established themselves (Dodd, 1973). Freemans Bay had been a stable residential area with a good cross-section of the city population in the latter part of the nineteenth century but it had declined as a stable residential area by the 1930s. Its identity had been transformed with the Harbour Board’s reclamation of the foreshore and subsequent building of the Gas Works, City Council work shops and industrial sites (Dodd, 1973). In the 1950s Freemans Bay was primarily an area of houses occupied by families. Between 1956 and 1971, six hundred and fifty one houses in the area were lost to the housing market due to the Auckland City Council’s policies on slum clearance and urban renewal. Blocks of flats were then erected to replace the homes which were demolished (Dodd, 1973).

During this transition process of the 1950s to the 1970s, when Freemans Bay and other areas of the inner city were experiencing urban renewal,
there were also a number of changes to demographic patterns. The common residential unit of the nuclear family was no longer dominant, and there was an over-representation of the single person household. The inner city also became a place of high tenancy, with a large percentage of rental accommodation. The population also tended to be a transient population of immigrant groups. Māori (who had increasingly become urban dwellers since 1945), and Polynesians (who began immigrating to New Zealand in large numbers in the 1960s) made up a significant proportion of inner city inhabitants during this period (Dodd, 1973).

Betty and Jim and their family had moved into the Freemans Bay area at a time when it represented to Aucklanders the nearest thing to a slum the Welfare State could produce. However, its proximity to employment in the city was noted as an important element in its location and was a motivating factor behind the rejuvenation of the residential function of the area. By the late 1970s, professional people were buying properties in the area for restoration and renovation and consequently the property prices rose sharply. Private ownership became more usual in the area and the supply of rental accommodation declined. Accordingly, many of the working class families were forced to relocate (Auckland University Environment Group, 1982). Bruce Hucker had met Betty in 1973 when he became the co-coordinator of the Inner City Ministry and had worked closely with her on a number of committees. He discussed some of the changes to the Freemans Bay area with Annette Smith in February 1994:

New townhouses in the Freemans Bay area were sold with mortgage finance by the Council at three percent in the interests of attracting a middle class group of people - middle class Pakeha! The values started to shoot up and Freemans Bay became an attractive place for gentrification to occur (B. Hucker, personal communication, February 7, 1994).

Prior to the rejuvenation of the area, however, Freemans Bay was a close-knit community of mainly working-class people. During the 1960s Betty’s heart politics continued to expand as her involvement with the community
of Freemans Bay grew. The more she became involved with the Freemans Bay Advisory Committee the more politicized she became:

It was during that time I got involved in a little politics. I used to go to a lot of Council meetings. I learned a lot. I didn’t know much about politics, but through the people I met around Freemans Bay who were very political because most of them worked on the waterfront, I started to look at local politics. I also got involved in the Napier Street School. It was so easy to be involved in Freemans Bay because it was a very close-knit community (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Betty was secretary for the Napier Street School Committee for approximately five years. This period of the 1960s also saw Betty become involved in the Māori Women’s Welfare League, the Ponsonby Māori Community Centre and the Tenants' Protection Association, an organization set up to advise tenants of their legal rights.

The identity of Freemans Bay was in a process of change and transition during the 1960s, and so too was Betty’s identity. After the war there had been a wave of Māori migration to the urban areas and there was a large Māori population in the Freemans Bay area. The urban drift of Māori continued for several decades, and the 1971 census showed that 60 percent of Māori were living in cities (Brooking, 1988). The demand for unskilled labour for the wharves and factories of Auckland also attracted Polynesian immigrants, and these immigrants contributed to the cultural diversity of Freemans Bay, Ponsonby and Grey Lynn for many years. Indeed, well after the gentrification of the area, in the early 2000s, the Polynesian influences remain.

By the mid 1960s the inner city areas had increasingly become places where young, single Māori immigrants would live, sharing facilities in flating

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3 Dates could not be confirmed as the school was relocated and became Freemans Bay Primary after motorway construction in the area. Archival material at Freemans Bay Primary was not accessible.
situations or boarding houses. Frequently, many of these young Māori would have difficulties adjusting to the city life and were unable to find accommodation and employment. Betty was quite involved with the Māori Community Centre in Freemans Bay at this time, and became aware of the problems through her own observations and the attempts of the Centre to assist some of these young people:

When they were pulling Freemans Bay down, I used to see a lot of young people where they’d pulled the houses down, under the taps having a wash, and I went out to find out what they were doing there. They’d come from different rural areas, trying to look for jobs, and a lot of them lived in old houses there because there was no place to live and they came up on their own. While I was living in Pratt Street, I had a lot to do with the Māori Community Centre because I belonged to the local Māori Women’s Welfare League at that time. We spoke about getting a hostel for some of the young people, particularly the kids that came from the country. So we rented two houses at 24 and 26 England Street. We had men from prison on parole and probation. We must’ve had about eighteen then and we had a caretaker there. We used to go down to the Māori Community Centre in Fanshaw Street to play basketball, play games and listen to music. Then one night one of the houses caught fire and it was terrible. Fire is a terrible thing. The men were trying to save their stuff from going down the gutter. We had to let the men live at the Māori Community Centre because there was nowhere else for them to go and they stayed on until the Council found out. They lived there for about a month but because it was against Council by-laws they were asked to leave (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Betty then became actively involved in finding further housing for this group of young people:

I knew a place in Wellington Street had become empty so then I found out that Reverend Kingi Ihaka was in charge of the houses down there so I went up to see him and I asked him if we could live in the house in Wellington Street because it was due to come down and they were selling it to City Council. At first he was a bit reluctant but I put a bit of pressure on, said there were these kids that had no place to go, so he gave it to us for three months. So we moved in there. He gave us three months but I had it for twenty three
months! I thought well, if I had a foot in, you know, I wouldn’t have to move until I got another place (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Betty later managed to gain the use of a second house in Wellington Street and approximately 26 young people lived between the two houses. She recalls that most had employment. "Most had jobs labouring or in factories and a lot worked for Henderson Pollard, the timber place" (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

The period of the 1960s when Betty’s heart politics was evolving was also a time when her identity as Māori was being strengthened. She was an active member of the Ponsonby branch of the Māori Women’s Welfare League, an organization which was established in 1951 with Dame Whina Cooper being the foundation Dominion President (Rogers & Simpson, 1993). The League provided charitable services with the aim of enabling its members to play an effective part in the cultural, social and economic development of the community. It also sought to preserve, revive and maintain the teaching of Māori arts and crafts and the Māori language and culture. A further aim was to promote understanding between women of all ethnicities and to liaise with other women’s organisations, local bodies and government departments on issues of concern to the League such as Māori health, education and housing. Several of the kuia at the centre supported and taught Betty and she formed some very deep and significant bonds with these women who went out of their way to awhi (assist) and mentor her:

I wanted so much to learn and be with Māori people. I felt the Māori Women’s Welfare League was important. It supported the whanau and it was concerned about Māori Health. Whina Cooper had got it going and she came from Pungaru, the next settlement around from where I grew up in the Hokianga. She owned the local shop. She was a hard lady and it didn’t matter to her if something went wrong, she’d tell people. I met her again during the Māori Women’s Welfare League survey on housing in the Freemans Bay area. She initiated the survey because a lot of people lived in a transit camp down at Victoria Park and she got people to apply for either a Māori Affairs housing or State Advances
housing loan and she got a lot of them houses in Glen Innes. Glen Innes was the place at the time. Whina pushed me to help raise money for Te Unga Waka Marae. I wasn't confident at all you know but she used to pull me in (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Betty’s involvement with Te Unga Waka Marae provided an effective way for her to participate in the Catholic Church as it was another way of nourishing her Māori identity and at the same time her identity as Catholic. Betty’s links with the Church were also helpful in accessing charitable assistance for the increasing number of young, unemployed people for whom she continued to find accommodation:

Then the time came and the jobs went, there weren’t any jobs. I remember one time we had nothing for Christmas Dinner. I think the dole was £11.00, and they had to pay £8.00 for board. I remember ringing Father Tate up. He was at Te Unga Waka and he must’ve given us about £30.00 so we were able to have a good chicken dinner (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Betty cared for both young women and men in the early days of her community work and both sexes lived in the buildings she secured in Wellington Street:

When I had the houses in Wellington Street we had both men and women there. I kind of taught the women how to cook a meal and get things ready. They all had their own chores to do. So they were told what vegetables to get ready and I’d go back and put the meal on, and they would serve it and they would clean up and I’d go home. I’d go home when my two young boys came home from school (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

By the late 1960s Betty’s work with youth was attracting media attention. An article in the New Zealand Herald on 8 August 1969, entitled, ‘Like Wendy - Mother to Lost Boys’, began:

There are many people working through welfare leagues and church organisations to help young people from the country 'find' themselves in the city and set them on the right path but few would be as willing to devote as much time as Mrs Betty Wark.
The article described the hostel Betty ran and her tight schedule:

Old as the hostel may be - and on the list of houses to be demolished - it is home to 11 Māori and Island lads whose average age is 18. There are five bedrooms, a dining room, kitchen and bathroom facilities and a television room. Mrs Wark’s day is run to a pretty tight schedule. It goes something after this style: Cook breakfast at the hostel between 6 am and 7 am; back home which is fortunately just in the next street; cook breakfast for her own family and get the two youngest children Robert, aged nine and Gary, aged seven off to school; back to the hostel to get the chores for the day organised; then it’s back home again to do the housework. There is general rushing back and forward during the day until tea-time when Mrs Wark prepares her family dinner and then goes back to the hostel, cooks dinner there and returns home to eat with her family. Washing up doesn’t provide her with any extra work. The boys wash their own plates and utensils and there is a roster to do pots and pans (New Zealand Herald, August 8, 1969).

By the early 1970s Betty’s reputation as a community social worker was well publicized and she received referrals from the Courts, probation and the police. A newspaper article of 1973 describes how a young homeless couple with their two children were referred to Betty via the Department of Māori Affairs:

At 6 am, tired and dejected, Willie and Rose Wilson, with their two children were on the road to ‘fend for themselves’. With no-one to turn to, the couple, with suitcases in hand walked to the Otahuhu Police Station. There they were questioned by a woman constable. She contacted the Department of Māori Affairs, which in turn referred the couple to Mrs Wark (Auckland Star, August 14, 1973).

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4 Many of the newspaper articles referred to were taken from photocopies from Betty’s scrapbook and no page numbers were available.
Betty’s growing media profile publicized her work and widened her networks, and she became skilled at gaining publicity for causes dear to her heart politics. In February 1976 there was wide media coverage of the occupation of Tole Street Reserve in Ponsonby by tent dwellers, a protest organised by Betty which succeeded in dramatizing housing issues and securing further hostel accommodation. Most of the inhabitants of ‘Tent Town’, as it was dubbed by the media, had been evicted from a Lion Breweries-owned house in Kelmarna Avenue, Herne Bay, a house that Betty had originally found to accommodate a large group of homeless men:

I knew of this empty seven-bedroom house in Kelmarna Avenue and thought it would be a good place for all these young men who had come out of prison and were living at the Māori Community Centre. We moved in the early hours of the morning - I was quite scared - but we moved there and cleaned it out from top to bottom. There was no electricity, no water - but we had some people who knew how to turn
the water on and we knew somebody next door who was able
to put a long cable across for our lights. The day after we
moved in I went to the Ponsonby Police Station and spoke to
Sergeant Andy Tolich. He said we were trespassing and
squatting but he didn’t arrest me (B. Wark, personal
communication, October 4, 1996).

The house in Kelmarna Avenue provided refuge to a group of around sixteen
men for approximately three months. When they were eventually evicted
Betty managed to borrow six tents and set up a ‘tent village’ at the Tole
Street Reserve in Ponsonby. An article in the newspaper, the *8 O’clock*
reported:

Mrs Wark said that eleven men ranging in age from sixteen
to forty, work each day at labouring jobs arranged through
their new Ponsonby Labour Co-op. They each pay for food
for themselves and the three women and one three year old
child living in the tents. All cooking and washing is done at
the nearby Ponsonby Community Centre, but food is eaten
outside the tents (*8 O’clock*, February 21, 1976).

Realising the Council would evict the group if there was any hint of health
hazards Betty enforced strict hygiene standards. There was a toilet in the
reserve and she ensured it was cleaned out every day and that all rubbish
was disposed of. Cooking and washing were done at the Ponsonby
Community Centre. Alcohol and drugs were banned.

While the Tole Street protest raised public awareness of housing needs and
gained a great deal of support, there were inevitably those who sought to
undermine Betty’s efforts:

One night someone sliced our tents up, split them down the
sides, so we had to sew them up. Somebody tried to burn us
out - threw cigarette butts on the tents. We were very
exposed - it was very scary (B. Wark, personal
communication, October 4, 1996).

The Tole Street tent village kept going for several months while Betty
continued to look for suitable accommodation to house the group. The group
also actively sought work:
While we were in the tents we formed a group called the Ponsonby Labour Co-op and we had people that lived in Ponsonby, people from different church organisations - we had the Baha’i, the Young Catholic Workers and some others who decided to do something and we went out looking for jobs: every morning the work co-op would sell their labour so we could eat (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Figure 22. Tent protest, Tole Street, Ponsonby, Auckland.
Private collection of Wark whanau.
(Photo appeared in the 8 O’clock, February 21, 1976).

The Tole Street tent protesters eventually found a temporary home in O’Neill Street, Ponsonby:

Fred Ellis 5 lived in a place in O’Neill Street caring for psychiatric patients. He was moving into a bigger house so he offered his old place to us. It was starting to get cold in the park so we were very pleased to move out of the tents into a house straight across the road from Tole Street Park (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Betty’s heart politics was grounded in the geography and architecture of Freemans Bay and Ponsonby in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Housing the homeless and utilising buildings to their full extent became a passion:

So when you look at the 70s so many things happened. Freemans Bay started tumbling. This whole area changed. Like in the 1950s and 60s, you had a group of people that

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5 Fred Ellis was a well-known humanitarian who worked with Betty for many years in the Ponsonby/Freemans Bay area.
moved in here, 1970s another lot, and they resented each other. I'm talking about university students, different groups, and they were gradually having a look in the Ponsonby and Freemans Bay area saying, 'I don't mind that it's run down but it's going to be a good place to live because it's handy to town.' And Council made that move in the late 60s and they started the ball rolling. When Council put up those flats in Franklin Road and Wellington Street in the early 1970s the whole area changed. I guess in the 1970s a lot of things were going on. I was very interested in what the Auckland City Council was doing as far as housing, jobs and things like that and I'd frequent a lot of their monthly meetings and I got pretty well known down there for what I did. I was complaining about the houses in Freemans Bay where people paid high rents to absent landlords. I had a day with about eight parliamentarians, having a look at housing. I showed them all round Freemans Bay where people were charged exorbitant rents for very poor living conditions. It was pretty dilapidated down there. I got a good hearing from them and out of that Council gave Tenants' Protection four houses and so we were able to place people in different houses (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Betty was a founding member of the Tenants' Protection Association, an organisation formed in April 1972. Its main functions were to advise tenants of their legal rights, help protect them and prevent exploitation of tenants. It drew attention to the housing shortage and related problems of high rents and substandard accommodation:

The Tenants' Protection was formed in Ponsonby by a group of people in the area. We had a big crowd, and we were there to talk to people about housing. A friend of mine, Paul Halloran was the secretary. He was an angry, political young man and he got a lot of things moving. Ponsonby was very good in creating all these new things like Tenants' Protection and you know Tenants' Protection is all over New Zealand now, it's nationwide. Tenants' Protection worked well when it was able to make peace between a landlord and a tenant. But some of the tenants were the hardest people out. I mean, some of them paid their rent and some of them didn't and I used to go down to the houses and if I found alcohol in the houses I'd tip it down the sink. Sometimes we agreed with the landlord. Sometimes we fought against the landlord if we thought the landlord was unreasonable. Okay, if we thought the tenants were unreasonable, we'd
stand by the landlord (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Betty was also involved in the Citizens Advice Bureau at Ponsonby and was one of the first volunteers to work there:

We had to go through a training and I was one of the first trainees. We worked a lot with Peter Harwood around housing and I think that stimulated me because people were ringing up with questions and you had to have the information to help them. That was a very exciting time because lots of people came with problems and of course you learned from their problems and how to deal with the next lot. It was voluntary and my day was usually on a Wednesday and a lot of Māori and Pacific Island people would wait for a Wednesday because Fred and I’d be on and we would take lots of food and it was easier to talk to people (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

The Ponsonby Citizens Advice Bureau was officially opened on 1 October 1970 by the Minister of Māori and Island Affairs, the Hon. Duncan McIntyre. The Law Society gave its approval for a free legal advice service to operate from the Bureau and this was seen as a radical new venture at the time. Within the first three months the Bureau dealt with over 300 enquires, many of them relating to housing matters (Ponsonby Citizens Advice Bureau and Community Centre, 1990).

In the early 1970s Betty’s heart politics also extended to the People’s Union:

During that time I got very interested in the People’s Union. There was a guy there, Roger Fowler, he worked hard. He was very political. They did a lot of work in Ponsonby. They had books and literature and it was a food co-op as well where you could get your vegies and they put out a paper every week (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

This was a period when Betty was also becoming involved in prisoners’ rights and prison reform:
I started visiting someone in Paremoremo, he was a man who had lived in one of the hostels I ran and he asked me if I could find somebody to come up and teach some Māori. So, I went down to see Anne Tia and she was able to go up there and she was doing all that work teaching Māori language and Māoritanga (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

It is important to position Betty’s evolving sense of political activism and heart politics in its historical and social context. The 1970s brought a dramatic revival of Māori culture and morale and many of the initiatives came from radical urban groups such as those Betty was involved in (King, 1988). Pressure groups such as the Tenants’ Protection Association, the People's Union and Freemans Bay Advisory Committee pressed for equality between Māori and Pakeha at all levels of public policy. For Māori involved in such groups one of the outcomes was an assertion of Māori identity and pride after experiencing the debilitating effects of post-war Māori urban migration. The Pakeha-dominated, mono-cultural society was being challenged and Māori concerns around the Treaty of Waitangi and loss of land were brought to the forefront of New Zealand’s political environment: "The Treaty was seen as the basis for renegotiation and reclamation of collective rights for Māori as co-partners in the establishment of Aotearoa as a modern nation" (Durie, 1994, p. 163).

The Treaty brought into focus the issue of self-determination as an entitlement and as a means to redress the long-term social effects of political marginalization. As Betty’s heart politics evolved and her identity as Māori strengthened she became increasingly aware of the social effects of political marginalization and indeed racism. She worked alongside Māori who faced prejudice in the labour and rental markets and she saw first-hand the incapacitating effects that loss of land, language and erosion of culture have had on Māori. For many Māori and other indigenous peoples, one of

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6 Paremoremo is a prison with maximum and medium security facilities located in the North Shore region of Auckland.
the most insidious consequences of cultural erosion is a high rate of imprisonment (Connor, 1994).

In 1973 Betty was involved with a small group who began to look into the possibility of establishing a home where ex-prisoners could live with support and acceptance. They wanted to assist ex-prisoners to re-establish a sense of individual and collective responsibility and to return to a normal life in the community. With these aims in mind, Aroha House was established. It was the forerunner of what was to become Arohanui Incorporated, a distinctly Māori response to the urban environment, fostering Māori values and responding to the needs of Māori youth. Betty was about to embark on her most ambitious community initiative: Arohanui, a place to call home.

Figure 23. Map showing the Ponsonby, Freemans Bay area where Betty’s heart politics was formed. The Ngati Arohanui Trust home where Betty lived was located in Hopetoun Street next to Western Park.
Arohanui: A Place to Call Home

A home is more than a building (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

In May 1976 rental accommodation became available at 2 O’Neill Street in Ponsonby in what was to become the first of the Arohanui Incorporated homes. Betty took up the position of house-mother:

Aroha House went into recess\(^7\) and I was finding ways of trying to get it going again. Then I found out that one of the things our constitution said was to rehabilitate prisoners and I followed up on that. There were some people on the committee of Aroha who belonged to a group called Project Paremoremo\(^8\) and they were in agreement to find another house and get it going again. People like Maynie Thompson, John Seddon, an ex-prisoner, Bob Cooper who used to be the prison chaplain and John MacLean who was the local minister from Grey Lynn (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Arohanui Incorporated was determined to extend the principles of Aroha House to even more people and during the first ten months over eighty people stayed at the house. The house in O’Neill Street was basically a three-bedroomed home so additional mezzanine floors and bunks were built to accommodate these large numbers. Toilet and kitchen facilities were also improved. In December 1976, after negotiations with Auckland City Council, a second house was opened by Arohanui in Hopetoun Street, Ponsonby. At this time care was also extended to girls. The original house-parents at Hopetoun Street were Graham and Teresa Baker, followed by Maude Noble, Fred Ellis, Donna Russell and Marcia Greenwood (Derrick, 1982).

Betty met Fred Ellis when he was running a second-hand shop in Ponsonby:

I met Fred Ellis when he had a second-hand shop in Ponsonby. Ponsonby used to have a lot of second-hand

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\(^7\) Aroha House closed on 22 May, 1975 due to financial problems. It was essentially a private experiment and as such received no government subsidy (Derrick, 1982).

\(^8\) Project Paremoremo was a rehabilitative prison-visiting project (Raymond, 1973).
shops. He'd spent considerable time in prison but had been out for about seven years when I met him. We became quite close to each other. We didn't always agree. We had our fights. Then because of Tenants’ Protection we hunted for houses that were empty. We didn't believe a house should be empty. At that particular time Fred was still looking after his psychiatric patients but he was still taking part in Tenants' Protection - whatever was going on, he was part of. When he joined with Tenants' Protection and Arohanui he never went back to jail. Never went back to jail (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Fred was a large man with a large reputation. Dr Ngahuia Te Awekotuku’s description of how she remembers him provides a little glimpse into this remarkable man who worked so closely with Betty:

He was the sweetest human being. He was this large, rather odd-looking Māori man. He was very flamboyant. He had long wavy hair and a long flowing beard and he would wear colourful kaftans and ponchos and harem pants (N. Te Awekotuku, personal communication, October 7, 1996).

Bruce Hucker describes Fred, together with Betty and Anne Tia as being regarded as part of the ‘Royal Family’ of Ponsonby during the 1970s:

Betty was one of the people regarded as the ‘Royal Family’ in Ponsonby. There were three people, each of them from Māori communities, who had a real impact on the area. One was Betty. One was Fred Ellis and one was Anne Tia. Anne’s area of concentration had been on the Māori Community Centre and also in Paremoremo Prison and Mt Eden Prison. Fred Ellis had worked in really providing housing and assistance with tenancy disputes, that kind of thing. Fred came from the North. He lived in O'Neill Street and he had converted his house into a warren of bunks, where he assisted young people (B. Hucker, personal communication, February 7 1994).

Fred spoke of the meeting with Betty as a turning point in his life: "She helped bring me out. She taught me how to use the skills I had. It was a changing point in my life"(New Zealand Herald, December 3, 1984).
Fred and Betty would patrol the streets during the winter nights taking creamed mussel soup and scones to 'street kids' urging them to make contact with Arohanui. Many would and were either reunited with whanau or alternative accommodation was found for them:

Of course by gathering all these young people up to protect them, well, I did take on a job! I did take on a job! All I thought, well let's give them a lot of loving care and a place to sleep and good meals. That was it. I mean, they were maimed before I even got them. And I took on a big thing then and I couldn't stop because it was there, eh? It was there (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

One of the young people that came under Betty's care was Fritz, a former street kid and heavy glue sniffer. He found out about Betty and Arohanui through word of mouth and met her in 1983 when he was a street kid:

I just used to go there for the feeds and the sleep and then take off the next day. Betty used to get me to have a shower and go to bed and fill me up with oranges and stuff (Fritz, personal communication, November 21, 1993).

Fritz lived on the streets for approximately seven years and would frequent Aotea Square:
It was home, eh. It was our home - Aotea Square. Betty always used to come down there. She used to bring food down for us but I was out of it most of the time. She was down there a lot especially when we used to have a lot of trouble with the Tongan Mafia. We used to fight them a lot and she was always down there with the Māori wardens (Fritz, personal communication, November 21, 1993).

Throughout his street years Fritz appreciated having Betty and Arohanui as a refuge:

It was good to know that there was someone who cared, a house there, you know, it was just good to know that. Like if I got to rock bottom or something at least you knew that there was somewhere you could go. Like it helped me a few times with the police. Like really, I had no fixed abode so I used to use that place and they wouldn’t lock me up. Because I had no-one you know. Had nowhere to go. Betty has got a lot of love in her but she is a hard lady too. I’ve experienced that. Like she’s got her standards and rules and I crossed over that boundary heaps of times but she always took me back. Like my parents, when I got into trouble they just didn’t want to know me any more, but with Betty, you can make a mistake and she might not approve of it, but then the next time she’s got an open door again. I’ve tried to make contact a lot of times with my family but they still hold on to what I was, not what I am now. And so I’ve accepted that and I’m just carrying on with my life. It’s not easy. Knowing that you’ve got somewhere to go is a big thing and that’s what Betty gave to me that no-one else did. She was always there. Betty is a unique woman. She’s one of a kind. I don’t believe there’ll be anyone like Betty. There’ll never be anyone like her. You know I have a lot of love and respect for her (Fritz, personal communication, November 21, 1993).

Gabrielle, a former Arohanui resident who met Betty in 1988 views Arohanui and Betty as inseparable: "Where Arohanui is concerned and where Betty is concerned you can’t separate it. It’s one and the same so to speak" (Gabrielle, personal communication, September 4, 1993).

One of the things that impressed Gabrielle during her time at Arohanui was Betty's commitment to the residents:
Gabrielle’s description of Betty as being fully committed to the residents of Arohanui also extends to many of the various people Betty worked with over the years. Those who have joined her have more often than not shared her vision and worked just as tirelessly. Trish Stewart is one example. Trish is a Pakeha woman who met Betty in the early 1970s. Like Betty she was a pioneer in community social work. In 1972 Trish had been instrumental in setting up Strawberry Villa, a safe-house concept which pre-dated women’s refuge\(^9\). Strawberry Villa provided refuge for women and emergency housing for families (Hamer, 1974). Strawberry Villa also worked with youth.

We were working a lot with teenagers too - if someone was o.d.ing in a phone box it was usually young people and someone would go out and bring them in and we had a very good doctor, because in those days it had to be reported and you could get charged with attempting suicide. We used to get people tripping badly and we would try and turn a bad trip into a nice trip; bring them down by doing things like playing soft music, having burning incense and candles and generally trying to create a pleasant atmosphere. We did a lot of work with battered women which is a term I loathe - I always have this image of women covered in batter. Anyway, there was this mentality that if you were beaten then you had deserved it and we would try and teach the women that it wasn’t their fault. We would allow their men

\(^9\) The first woman’s refuge in New Zealand was started in Christchurch in 1974. It was initially set up for homeless single women, but increasingly supported women and their children fleeing violence in the home (Dann, 1985).
to come and see them which was interesting as the women would have the power as the men had to see them on their territory (T. Stewart, personal communication, February 27, 1994).

Trish and the other women involved in Strawberry Villa worked together as a collective, pooling resources and skills and working on a voluntary, rostered basis. Trish did not have any formal training in community social work which in fact was a non-existent term in the early 1970s. However, as with Betty, what she did have was an abundance of common sense, determination, commitment and enthusiasm. As there were few government allowances for community-inspired enterprises such as Strawberry Villa in the early 1970s finding funding became a central component of Trish’s work. She paid for the rent of Strawberry Villa through her Domestic Purpose Benefit and she and her two daughters lived in a flat at the back of the house while the house itself provided temporary emergency shelter for women and their families. Trish, like Betty, became very adept at working with government departments and speaking to community groups such as Rotary and church groups. She would tailor requests to suit the groups who offered help and learned to be very specific about what to ask for. For example, if church groups wanted to help Strawberry Villa she would suggest the congregation be asked to bring one dried or tinned food item each Sunday and someone would deliver these items on a Monday. Other groups would be asked to donate furniture so that once the women were housed into permanent accommodation they had some furniture to set up house.

Trish was with Strawberry Villa for approximately two years and it was during this time she heard about Betty and Fred Ellis. In 1981 Trish happened to meet Betty in Ponsonby at a time when Arohanui had just received funding from a job creation scheme to employ a community worker. Betty suggested Trish apply for the vacancy and she became Arohanui’s ‘social worker’.
It was 1981 and the beginning of job creation schemes. When I first got the job I shadowed Betty, trying to learn from her and eventually I got a feel for it. I would relieve her of some of the domestic things but I soon realised I could help the residents with applying for their benefits and dealing with the courts and using some of the skills I learned at Strawberry Villa. Eventually, I got Social Welfare to give me a liaison person and we worked out a system where the residents could apply for their benefits at Arohanui. This gave me a chance to assess their literacy skills and it also speeded things up. Social Welfare would then pay the benefits straight into Arohanui and we would deduct their board and then give them the balance (T. Stewart, personal communication, February 27, 1994).

Trish also pioneered 'advocacy work', assisting any residents who had to appear before the courts, explaining to them what was happening and trying to ensure they were adequately represented.

Trish also had to develop skills in applying for funding as the social policies of the Labour Government elected in 1984 saw a restructuring, a sharp reduction in State expenditure and the consequent reduction of the Welfare State (Shannon, 1991). With the new philosophy of market liberalism which swept the country came a whole new culture and language. Agencies, such as Arohanui, had to shift their focus and become attuned with business enterprise; they had to learn the jargon of accountability, restructuring and the commercialization of State services:

We had to learn the jargon and learn to talk the talk. We had to start keeping records and talk about how many beds we had. We had to find out what the criteria was of whoever it was we were applying for funding (T. Stewart, personal communication, February 27, 1994).

Where previously Arohanui staff had always tried to address individual needs as they arose they now had to start devising programmes for the residents as a whole. This was quite difficult to begin with. As Trish asked: "How do you describe a programme that is about living as a family?" (T. Stewart, personal communication, February 27, 1994).
Being a family was what Arohanui was all about and as an organisation it strove to maintain a family atmosphere. However, a bureaucratic structure that insisted on having various criteria and outcomes met conflicted with Arohanui’s basic philosophy and kaupapa which stemmed back to the days of Aroha House. June Harris, the first house-mother of Aroha House, sums up this underlying kaupapa simply and succinctly: "We haven't got anything to offer these men except 'aroha' - love, kindness and an understanding home - and that is what has been missing from the lives of most of them" (J. Harris, as cited in Doherty, 1974, n.p.).

![Image](image.jpg)

**Figure 26.** Betty and Trish Stewart, chatting at Arohanui Trust during the making of Bill Saunders television documentary, *Give Me a Love*, August, 1986. Private collection of Wark whanau.

As Arohanui grew and began applying for government funding there was clearly a need for a more formalised literacy programme. In addition Arohanui strengthened its Māori culture and language programmes and introduced some innovative health and exercise programmes which used Eastern martial arts and Māori weaponry training.

The Arohanui Martial Arts Academy was initially set up by Korean-born Master Shim Sang Sool in 1990. Master Shim held a black belt in Tae
Kwon Do and was an accredited Tae Kwon Do instructor. Rather than teaching his trainees how to fight, Master Shim would first teach restraint and control and how to relieve stress. Training in Tae Kwon Do takes enormous self-discipline and hours of practice. The exercise routines would begin at 6.30am and some trainees would continue practising the high kicks and hand movements for up to six hours a day. The following comments made by some of Master Shim’s former pupils demonstrate the benefits of Tae Kwon Do:

It is just like being switched over from negative to positive and it hasn’t been easy either. Master Shim teaches fighting skills, but he is also teaching attitude and a way of life. Silver and gold are not worth what he is teaching us. Betty is the door to the whole thing. Without her none of us would be where we are today. I give my thanks and aroha to them both (Danny Puia, 1991, quoted in Arohanui Martial Arts Academy pamphlet).

Master Shim is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I’ll always be loyal and grateful to him. I would like to give something back to Arohanui and Betty, by giving our house a good name to the public and by trying to teach other people what I have learned here (Ben McDonald, 1991, quoted in Arohanui Martial Arts Academy pamphlet).

I look at Master Shim and I look at the life I used to lead and how I am now and the same for Betty, for me it is not just that I love them but it wouldn’t be enough to say thank you 100 times (Adrian Delamare, 1991, quoted in Arohanui Martial Arts Academy pamphlet).

Tae Kwon Do is about self-defence and not attacking. You don’t want to hurt other people any more because you’re not scared any more and you know already that you’re probably not going to come off second best (Stephen Tainui, 1991, quoted in Arohanui Martial Arts Academy pamphlet).

It has changed me a lot. The discipline is great (Taiti Puia, 1991, quoted in Arohanui Martial Arts Academy pamphlet).

Sadly for Arohanui, Master Shim returned to Korea in the mid 1990s. However, his legacy of transformation remains with all those he taught.
While the benefits of Tae Kwon Do were considerable, Betty also initiated the incorporation of Māori weaponry into the martial arts training. At the onset of this programme Betty liaised with Hoani Waititi Marae, a pan-tribal marae in West Auckland, and Tim and Jason Pahi, taught te taiaha (a long club) to the residents. These two brothers had been mentored by one of Māoridom’s most charismatic and influential leaders, Dr Peter Sharples. Both were fluent in te reo Māori and nga tikanga Māori and both were committed to their Māoritanga and assisting other young Māori to reaffirm a sense of Māori identity. Under their tutelage, residents not only learned the art of using the taiaha but also a great deal about their Māori heritage.

Providing the Arohanui residents with both physical and mental challenges has been a consistent objective for Betty. She encouraged them to apply for places on various courses that were designed to extend young people. Operation Raleigh, a brainchild of Prince Charles which provided a series of purposeful adventures for young people, is one example:
We now have a chance to provide young people with a unique opportunity to seek challenges, develop their skills and learn to overcome what may seem like impossible problems. Such an experience will provide them with the sort of confidence and awareness which will, in turn, help them to accept responsibility in a difficult world (The New Zealand Women's Weekly, 5 January, 1987).

Betty nominated former Arohanui resident Sam Rudolph to attend Operation Raleigh and he was not only accepted on the scheme but also sponsored the $2,500 needed to attend. Sam spent three months camping army-style near Te Anau in Fiordland in the South Island of New Zealand. He had to learn how to live and work together with 125 other young people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, often in arduous conditions. Interviewed by the New Zealand Women's Weekly about his experiences, Sam spoke of Betty with great love and admiration:

It was while Sam was doing one of several spells in borstal that his life took a dramatic turn for the better. It came in the form of Betty Wark, of Auckland’s Arohanui Home for Māori Youth. ‘She clipped my ears and told me to get the hell out of there and stay with her instead. I’ve been there for five years now. It’s my home. She’s the only real Mum I’ve ever had. We argue a lot - but we love each other’ (New Zealand Women’s Weekly, 5 January, 1987).

Sam’s profile was typical of the majority of Arohanui residents. He had spent his early life in various homes. He had been a consistent truant from school and by the age of 13 was living rough on the streets: stealing, pooling money to buy ‘greasies’, sniffing and drinking. His literacy was adequate but required considerable improvement. How to teach literacy classes at Arohanui had been relatively problematic for Betty because most of the residents had had negative experiences of schooling:

School simply turns them off. Some don’t read or write but to get someone down here to teach them reading or writing, they revert right back to their school days. They get sulky. You have to use a little psychology on them (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).
Excerpts from various letters Betty has received over the years highlight the problems many of Arohanui’s residents have with basic literacy skills:

Dear Betty, How are you as four [sic] me I’m not doing very good. The day we got here it was very funny because you got a haircut and it was is very short. I am very sorry four the right better but I’m still trying to spelling and reding [sic] and right. I hope that you will come and see me at C.T.\textsuperscript{10} We are up at 4.45 and you have to call then Sir and we mach everwhere but they say C.T. is very harding [sic] because you macth [sic] on the double. I don’t want to go back here, because it hard and you have to rember [sic] everthing (personal letter to Betty from former resident, name withheld).

Erratic spelling and grammar aside, however, all of the letters Betty received over the years expressed sentiments of affection and respect:

Hello Ma, How are you. As for me I’m fine. It’s freezing down here in Turangi. I’ve only be here (CT) a week but to me it seems like a year....Bye Ma, xxxx, I miss you an da rest (personal letter to Betty from former resident, name withheld).

Dear Aunty Betty, I felt I could write and out my feelings to you because you are my aunty and I grow to love you and come closer to you. I keep you in my prayers and the children of Arohanui. Give my love to Trich [sic] and the others (personal letter to Betty from former resident, name withheld).

Over the years various tutors came in to teach literacy skills at Arohanui. Many did this on a voluntary basis, including a Catholic nun and former residents who ‘wanted to give something back’. Former residents also came back to teach te reo Māori and nga tikanga. However one would expect to come across examples of reciprocity within a Māori organisation such as Arohanui, as reciprocity has always been part of Māori culture:

Sam, who I used to know in the Black Power twenty years ago offered to come and teach te reo. I told him, Sam, I can’t afford to pay you – ‘that’s okay’, he said, ‘pay back!’ It was his way of paying us back for how we looked after him - an

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{10} C.T. is an abbreviation for Corrective Training.
\end{footnote}
exchange. We talk about tautuutu (reciprocity) but we give it over so much that there is no exchange. In the early days when I was a child living up North, if someone's kumara patch was ready and you had been fishing you would exchange some fish for some kumara, or you would help dig up the kumara and then your neighbour would come and help dig up yours and what Sam did was the same kind of thing - reciprocating or exchanging (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Low levels of educational achievement and negative experiences within the school system have been identified as one of the general characteristics of young people ‘at risk’. Betty and the staff of Arohanui recognised this as did a report that was carried out on Arohanui in 1984. The Research Unit of the Department of Internal Affairs was asked to undertake a study on Arohanui after the House was given a grant by the Department in 1979. Owen Coup’s 1984 study and subsequent report, *Arohanui: A Report on the Auckland Youth House*, was intended as an assessment of the organisation in terms of the value of the work it was doing, the alternatives to community-based organisations, the nature of the population which Arohanui caters for and the circumstances under which it operates:

The general characteristics of young people ‘at risk’ were repeated with minor variations by all those interviewed. Those ‘at risk’ are under 25 years, but predominantly 14-20; largely Māori or Pacific Islander; most are street kids with no money; some are associates with gangs; they have often been ill-treated and have associated emotional problems; most are genuinely homeless or come from homes that are an undesirable environment for them; many have alcohol or drug-related problems; some are on probation, or have previously been in prison, borstal or welfare homes; most have very low levels of educational achievement, and very negative experiences in the school system are common; most have poorly developed personal, social and work skills, and are unemployed; most are either known to or are being dealt with by official agencies (Police, Social Welfare, Justice) or are verging on coming to their attention. There was considerable criticism of the school system. Consequently, many leave school having been in conflict with school authorities, never having experienced success, with low self-
esteem and, indeed, already labelled as failures (Coup, 1984, pp. 13-14).

The work of Arohanui when viewed through the lens of the Coup report brings into sharp focus the multiple problems faced by the majority of young people who have come under the care of its workers. "Of course by gathering all these young people up to protect them, well, I did take on a job! I did take on a job!" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 2, 1996).

The central aim of Arohanui was to provide a home for homeless youth at risk. This implies something more than simply providing accommodation and that ‘something more’ can be summarised within the concept of whanau, which in its broadest sense refers to an extended family connected by ties of kinship and community. The whanau or family is positioned as being the fundamental unit of Māori society and it is ironic that so many of the young Māori who have been under the care of Arohanui have not experienced living within a whanau environment. The care-givers at Arohanui have consequently tried to create an atmosphere where ‘family’ relationships can be nurtured and residents can experience living within a whanau environment despite not having blood ties to one another. As Coup (1984) identified in his report:

Arohanui was seen as providing a range of benefits which are summed up by likening the House to a family environment. It was seen as a caring, supportive, stable environment which treats each resident as an individual. While particular behaviour is not always condoned or accepted, residents are not treated as failures, are encouraged to do better and their self-respect and sense of responsibility is enhanced. Because of the family environment many experience something more than just superficial relationships for the first time in their lives. This environment also provides adult role models and allows individual problems to be dealt with flexibly and positively (p. 17).

The creation of a whanau environment within the community was viewed as the first step towards habilitation. This has been a very important factor in
Arohanui’s success as an agent of intervention. It is viewed as being one of the reasons why Arohanui has managed to retain its young people and has been able to help them to develop skills for living in a world beyond Arohanui. The development of reading and writing skills have generally focused on literary and numeracy for everyday life. Many of these skills include the taken-for-granted, such as learning how to fill in forms, open a bank account, become involved in sporting and cultural activities and how to deal with various government agencies.

Nothing remains static however, and Betty was open to experimentation and committed to piloting new programmes that could help residents live a better life and stay out of trouble. At the start of 1992 Betty’s youngest son, Gary, introduced her to a teaching model called ‘Learning to Learn’. ‘Learning to Learn’ is a model developed within the Scientology Church. Scientology is a movement founded by L. Ron Hubbard in the 1950s. It seeks to address the individual’s need for a spiritual base and provides the seeker with principles and practical technology for improving self-confidence:

Gary had heard about ‘Learning to Learn’ and decided to go along just to pull it to bits but what he found was a method of teaching that could switch you on to learning. The course cost $795.00 for three days and that’s what bothered me but anyway I was sponsored to do the course because they felt it would be a very good thing for Arohanui. I found it all strange culturally. We were asked things like what are your successes in life? I didn’t know what to say and someone said to me, ‘I think you’re awesome’. I almost crawled under the table. I just wasn’t used to talking about myself in that way (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Arohanui piloted the programme with its residents and found it had dramatic results. The literacy programme was divided into what were termed ‘blocks of learning’ and within each block various learning goals were met and vocabulary was extended. The programme came as a complete package called ‘Applied Scholastics’ with lesson plans, text books, assessments and evaluation. Self-awareness and communication skills were also essential elements of the programme. Betty felt she had developed a
greater sense of self-awareness and communicated in more effective ways after participating in the initial training: "I have learned to communicate in better ways and Gary and I have a much better relationship since we did the course" (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

When talking about ‘Learning to Learn’ Betty made it clear that it was the programme she supported and not Scientology:

> I’m a Catholic. I’m not a Scientologist but within the programme people are able to hold whatever beliefs they have. You don’t have to become a Scientologist. I’m looking at the tools they have and I guess all religions have tools - they all borrow from each other and when I see it is able to help our young people to give themselves better lives, then I’ll use it (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Betty maintained an avid interest in alternative learning and ways to turn Arohanui residents on to education. She also maintained an interest in reviving traditional Māori models of teaching, and learning about new developments within Māoridom and the New Age movement:

> She took us down to this place in Bennydale, that’s down by Taumaranui. And like you go into this place and it’s shaped like an octagon with different doors coming in and when you go in you have to bend down because of the way the doors went and there’s also - what do you call it - hieroglyphics. And we thought oh yeah and what’s this got to do with Māoridom or anything. And then he’d start telling us about the elders and what they used to do and how they’d do things and Betty was also learning this as well. And we went by this stream and it was almost like the water went up hill and then stopped and I’m sort of sitting there ‘Oh yeah, well, may be I’m tired or something’. You know, far out. And then I tell her and she goes ‘Yes well these things do happen around here’. And I thought far out and you just go this, you know, brrrr feeling and thought yeah this is pretty freaky. You think it’s almost like being in a different time warp listening to it all and seeing it all and what does it mean. So I mean that was another added thing to the book of knowledge as well. Another time she took us to a place where they were doing a healing thing down there - people were doing iridology and reading your eyes
and reflexology where they were massaging your feet and telling you about your diet and people were there with crystals and she said, ‘go on you fellas have a massage’. And she had one so we all had a massage and it was like choice! And just learning about that and being around that (M. Sellars, personal communication, October 6, 1993).

Betty’s openness to exploring and trialling alternative education also extended to investigating alternative treatments for drug and alcohol addiction. Over the years a large proportion of Arohanui’s residents had problems with addiction and the abuse of solvents, drugs and alcohol. Various programmes had been investigated to assist the residents. With the success of ‘Learning to Learn’ Betty decided to trial another Scientology initiative, Narcanon. Narcanon means ‘no drugs’ and utilises a completely drug-free rehabilitation programme developed by L. Ron Hubbard in the late 1960s:

The Narcanon program today consists of a series of exercises, drills and study steps done in a precise sequence. The techniques and learning programmes help the individual withdraw from current drug use; get into communication with others and the environment; remove the residual drugs from his body; gain control of himself and his environment and reach the point where he can take responsibility, not only for himself, but also for others (Church of Scientology International, 1992, p. 409).

Narcanon operates in 34 locations in various countries including the United States and Europe. The programme includes the ‘New Life Detoxification Procedure’ which is a tightly-supervised purification regimen of exercise, sauna sweat-out, nutrition (including vitamins, minerals and oil) and rest (http://www.narconon.html). While the scientific validity of the detoxification procedure has been questioned Betty found the procedure to be helpful not only as a physical detoxification but also as a way of changing a person’s mind set:

Once they start the detoxification programme with saunas and vitamin and mineral supplements they have to start thinking about why they are doing it and where they want to go with their lives. They have to confront things they have
been hiding from. Things they have done or things that have been done to them. We find a lot of young men who come through here have some horrific stories and they hang on to them so they are not growing. But once they start to confront them they grow and when they do the programme it helps them to start growing, start changing (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Residents who participated in the rehabilitation programme were encouraged to have some retreat time and up until the early 1990s Arohanui was able to offer facilities at Waiheke Island, a small island located in the Hauraki Gulf and less than an hour's boat ride from downtown Auckland: "The ones that come over here, they generally are the ones that have been involved with drug or alcohol abuse or glue. We get them away from the city environment into a natural environment (W. & J. Manahi, personal communication, November 6, 1993).

Gary Wark (Betty's youngest son) and Marina Sellars (former resident and staff member for Arohanui) both trained as counsellors for Narcanon: "It encourages me that Gary has become involved with helping people and is working with me because for a long time it bothered me · who's going to carry on? (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Narcanon appeared to offer some practical and productive solutions to drug, alcohol and solvent abuse and Betty was keen to promote it as a viable option for helping Māori. However, funding was difficult to obtain as she encountered a number of prejudices from the various agencies she approached: "People get turned off when they hear the word, Scientology. They just don't want to know." (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

The association with Scientology suggests Betty has a discriminating interest in a variety of religious traditions and certainly, despite her unwavering faith in Catholicism, she took an eclectic approach to religious thought. Her attempts to synthesize aspects of Catholicism and Māori
spirituality have already been discussed in some depth. She was interested in learning about different cultures, particularly in the transmission of ideas from one faith to another. Her friendship with Master Shim kindled an interest in Buddhism and she visited a Buddhist Retreat Centre at Kaukapakapa, west of Auckland. She also visited Australia and took a lively interest in Aboriginal spirituality. This facet of Betty’s personality brings to light another dimension of her character and the complexities of human nature. While a spiritual base was clearly important to her on a personal level, she was disinclined to promote any particular religious affiliations in her public life. Apart from occasional articles about her in the Catholic newspaper, the general public were unlikely to perceive her as a religious figure. Certainly, she did not fit commonly held stereotypes of such figures.

Over the years Betty developed a reputation as someone who was tough and at times intimidating, as Arohanui’s cook, Dawn Paratini comments:

The first time I met Betty was when I came for the job as cook at Arohanui. I pulled up outside there and at the time Betty was swearing her head off at all these young boys who were out on the lawn and she was really going for it and I thought to myself, oh gosh, what have I come into? And I was almost on the verge of just turning around and jumping back in the car and taking off (D. Paratini, personal communication, n.d.).

Dawn overcame her initial misgivings and worked for Betty for some years. She enjoyed her job and she enjoyed working with Betty:

I like my job. I come in the mornings and I go home in the evenings. I do a lunch and a dinner. I don’t work weekends but I prepare the food for the weekends. I might make a bacon and egg pie or whatever, cook a couple of chickens and there might be a roast and then Betty doesn’t have to do too much, just the little bits and pieces (D. Paratini, personal communication, n.d.).
While Betty may have occasionally intimidated, her commitment and her compassion were never in question. The Coup Report identified the role of house-parent as a crucial one and stated: "Many of those interviewed commented particularly on Betty Wark’s commitment to young people ‘at risk’ and on her perseverance with them (Coup, 1984, p. 27).

Arohanui was formed as a community response to a community problem. The main focus for Betty and the other trustees and workers at Arohanui was to maintain a positive environment for the residents - to create a home. This remains a special feature and as such would be difficult to duplicate in any ‘officially established’ house. Betty’s personal involvement with Arohanui was extensive. However, she was also involved in several other projects. The most ambitious of these was her time as an Auckland City Councillor.
Power to the People, Councillor Wark

Power to the people (x8)
Say you want a revolution
We better get on right away
Well you get on your feet
And out on the street

Singing power to the people (x4)

Millions of workers working for nothing
You better give ‘em what they really own
We got to put you down
When we come into town

Singing power to the people (x4)

I gotta ask you comrades and brothers
How do you greet your woman back home
She got to be herself
So she can free herself

Singing power to the people (x8)

John Lennon, 1971

John Lennon’s ‘Power to the People’ could well have been a theme song for Betty’s election campaign when she stood as a candidate for the Auckland City Council in 1986. Indeed, when Tom Hyde wrote an article on local politics for an Auckland magazine in 1987, the caption to a photograph of Betty and Bruce Hucker read ‘Power to the People’ (Hyde, 1987, pp. 138-151). Both Betty and Bruce Hucker had a commitment to ordinary working class people on lower and moderate incomes and both had long histories of being active in the affairs of the Freemans Bay and Ponsonby communities.

Betty and Bruce Hucker represented the Ponsonby Ward when they were elected on to the Auckland City Council in 1986. “Bruce Hucker with 2,010

The slogan, ‘Power to the People’ is attributed to the Black Panther Movement started in the United States in 1969 (Rees, 1987). It was later taken up by others including singer/songwriter, John Lennon whose song, ‘Power to the People’ (1971) was a semi-official slogan for working class activism and unionism.
votes was a Labour candidate and Betty with 2,102 votes was an independent" (Bush, 1991, p. 443). The 1986 election coincided with the new ward system introduced by Labour in July 1984. The full ward system was mandatory for all cities with a population over 70,00012 (Bush, 1991).

Reporting on Betty’s election win Hyde (1987) states:

She is the only Māori woman on the Auckland City Council but she might not have been there at all had it not been for the change in the voting system (p. 149).

Hyde’s description of Betty conveyed her as a woman of serious intent and commitment who was trying to find her way in unfamiliar territory:

Betty Wark is not loud or recalcitrant, and her presence on the Council hasn’t stirred things up in a way that would draw media attention. She is quiet and dignified. ‘I try to bring a Māori perspective to Council, even though I sometimes feel lonely there,’ Wark says. ‘I realise now that when I was on the outside making demands, there were times when the Council’s hands are tied. The laws they have to abide by means they can’t always meet the demands. That’s when I find myself in conflict. I must be loyal to my community and loyal to the Council, and that’s difficult at times’ (Hyde, 1987, p. 149).

Betty’s election campaign flier of August 1986, stressed her commitment to the people of Auckland:

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12 Auckland was divided into ten wards: Avondale; Blockhouse Bay; Central; Eastern Bays; Grey Lynn; Meadowbank; Point Chevalier; Ponsonby; Remuera and Tamaki (Bush, 1991).
Why I am Standing for Auckland City Council

As a Councillor, I believe that, being elected by the people, I will have a strong responsibility, as guardian of peoples’ rights and needs, to make sure that the voices of ordinary people are heard and listened to in the Council.

I want Auckland to become a safer city so that all people (both old and young) can feel proud to belong and happy to participate, at whatever level. I want people to feel as though they are welcome and part of the city, whoever they are and wherever they are from - no one should feel isolated or alienated in Auckland City.

I believe we have all got to have a greater awareness of the needs and requirements of tourists which, if attended to properly, will create many additional opportunities for employment. Young people, especially, need to feel that they have an important role to play in the life of the city and in its growth and development.

Old people too, need special care and attention. Their housing standards and requirements need to be monitored constantly. Programmes for involvement of the over 60s in civic and community activities need to be encouraged and developed to ensure not only that the entertainment and enjoyment of this age group is catered for but that outlets for their talents and abilities still remain open.

Vote for BETTY WARK Independent candidate for PONSONBY WARD

It was her commitment to people that motivated Betty to stand for Council in the first instance. Interviewed by the New Zealand Herald on 30 August 1986, and asked why she was putting herself forward as a candidate for Auckland City Council, she stated: "I think it’s my duty. I have been moaning on the outside for long enough. If I get on the inside I’ll have to have the answers. I will be the target" (Outsider Gives it a Go. 1986, August 30, New Zealand Herald). When asked in the same interview how she would work round a table with up to twenty other Councillors, she responded: "How would they work with me? But seriously, if we want to make improvements we have to work together" (Outsider Gives it a Go. 1986, August 30, New Zealand Herald).
Betty had also decided to stand for Council as a way of ensuring Māori representation was continued:

Denese Henare was on the Council for three years and she had to come off because of her business. She was a lawyer. She came round and asked me if I’d like to stand as she didn’t like to just give up and leave that part of it empty. I was not excited about it to begin with but I agreed to do it (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Bringing a Māori perspective to Council was difficult, however, as the only Māori Councillor. There was also a Samoan Councillor, Jim Yandall, but he tended to be more conservative in his voting patterns than Betty. The emphasis on Māori interests and other minorities tended to be limited:

During that period the people who controlled Council, like the Chairperson of the Planning Committee then, Patricia Thorpe, was really quite firmly opposed to any stress on Māori interests and taking seriously Treaty of Waitangi issues. So Betty’s influence, actual influence, not her symbolic influence, was limited in the Council and she was uncomfortable with that (B. Hucker, personal communication, February 7, 1994).

Betty believed she could make a practical contribution to the civic and public life of Auckland City but she was never completely comfortable working within the established structures of Council:

People used to say to me, ‘Give them heaps Betty!’ But it’s a different thing altogether when you get on the Council. Oh, you can fight as much as you like but you hardly get anything through (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Bruce Hucker who was also elected to the Ponsonby ward with Betty in 1986 recalls how Betty made the transition to Council:

This was really a change of direction for her in a sense that while she’d built up considerable experience in local body affairs and with contacts with local body politicians, I think her introduction to being a Councillor was probably a bit more difficult because there was a lot more reading to do, very long agendas, on top of her busy life. That I think
created some difficulties for her. It's difficult to achieve things in your first three years. You have to build up networks. You have to develop sources of information. You have to work with officers and in many ways that was a new world to Betty. She was always a little ambivalent about being a City Councillor but we worked very well together on the Council from the then Ponsonby ward and we’d been good friends for many years. I tended to do a lot of the policy work which Betty supported and that was really very good. She covered a lot of the civic responsibilities in relation to receptions and other things (B. Hucker, personal communication, February 7, 1994).

Bruce Hucker and Betty shared a number of concerns:

Our issues were very similar. We’d worked together on housing issues. We were sympathetic to Pacific Island communities. Treaty of Waitangi issues were very important. The treatment of people was important to both of us and we really represented residential rather than business interests in the community and in some ways it was a shame that she didn’t get the Labour nomination in 1986 for that (B. Hucker, personal communication, February 7, 1994).

Betty’s main area of strength was seen as working with people and housing issues:

Betty was very active on housing issues, not simply in relation to ACC issues, but to central government issues as well, on housing policy and she had built a reputation as a person who was not a theoretician but as somebody who worked consistently over a long period of time providing real assistance to people. So it was that kind of mana that she developed in the community based on experience. Her forte was working with people. She was consistently there assisting people and that was one of her major qualities (B. Hucker, personal communication, February 7, 1994).

Betty was sixty-three years old when she stood for Council. At a time when most of peers were thinking about retirement she had taken on another challenge. Her venture into local politics in late midlife was, however, something that was relatively predictable. As Sheehy (1978) states: "Secondary interests that have been tapped earlier in life can in middle and
old age blossom into a serious lifework. Each tap into a new vessel releases in the later years another reservoir of energy (p. 497).

Betty’s interest in local affairs had developed in her late thirties as her ‘heart politics’ evolved. Heart politics, as previously discussed, requires courage and challenge - overcoming one’s fears and taking risks and having a feeling of connectedness to the people or the cause you are fighting for. During the ‘heart politics’ years when she was becoming involved in community initiatives such as the Tenants' Protection Association, Citizens' Advice Bureau and the Māori Women’s Welfare League, she was literally paving the way for her more serious life’s work, Arohanui Incorporated. The move into local politics seemed like a natural progression at this phase of her life and a way to promote Arohanui. To use Sheehy’s analogy, by tapping into the new vessel, which in Betty’s case was local government, this, in turn, released another reservoir of energy in Betty’s later years. Some of this energy found an additional outlet in travel as a representative of Auckland City Council:

> It was interesting. You met a lot of people. I went to Japan. Council didn’t pay for me. I went to Japan because I thought here’s an opportunity. I like finding out how other people live and taking bits from other cultures. Auckland City has a sister city in Japan. I found Japan a very orderly place. Very, very orderly. Very hard-working people and when they relaxed, they relaxed. Then, Auckland became a sister city to Brisbane and I went over there. I paid my own fare and stayed over there. I met up with one of the people I’d had in Arohanui (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Of the twenty-one Councillors elected to the Auckland City Council for the period, 1986-1989, thirteen were men and eight were women (Bush, 1991). Although equity was not quite achieved, the installation of Dame Catherine Tizard in her second term as Mayor was seen as a significant victory for women. Catherine Tizard was first elected as a Councillor in 1971. "In the local elections of 1983 she won with 11,924 votes. In 1986 she again won
this time with 32,390 votes and in 1989 she was again elected as Mayor with a huge majority of 61,627" (Bush, 1991, p. 439).

Dame Catherine Tizard first met Betty and Fred Ellis in 1971 when she was standing for Council. Betty and Fred were involved in the Tenants’ Protection Association and were organising the Tole Street protest.

I was somewhat intimidated by this somewhat formidable and apparently severe Māori lady - later though I thought this was due to shyness with strangers (C. Tizard, personal communication, March 1, 1994).

Betty and Dame Catherine maintained sporadic contact over the years and Dame Catherine was very supportive of Arohanui Trust: "I thought the work she was doing was very selfless" (C. Tizard, personal communication, March 1, 1994). Dame Catherine would also give financial support to Arohanui:

Catherine Tizard was very pro-women. When she was a Councillor and later as Mayor, she would often pass over any fees she received for making speeches. She’d go and do a speech at a place, they’d pay money and she would come looking for me. I remember I was protesting on the corner of O’Neill Street, something to do with the workers there and then I saw Catherine walking along the road looking for me. She gave me a $500 cheque because she’d done some talking and was always a supporter of Arohanui (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

When Betty became a Councillor in 1986, Dame Catherine continued to support Betty:

She certainly made a contribution and always voted along the lines of her conscience. Her most effective work was outside of established structures. She never seemed comfortable with the structures and restraints of Council and the way local government was a creature of central government. It was good to have a sensible woman who worked in the community and was more representative of the wider community. She never allowed herself to be seduced by the position. She did try to bring a Māori
perspective to Council long before there were any Māori advisory committees and she forced us to see things from a Māori perspective.

Thank God for people like Betty Wark who do what they can do without expecting reward and without worrying about what other people think about them and the way they do it - she just got on and did it (C. Tizard, personal communication, March 1, 1994).

Dame Catherine’s remark that ‘local government was a creature of central government’, was especially pertinent in the mid-1980s as this was the period of restructuring of the State under the 1984-1989 Labour Government. Both central and local government underwent major reorganisation (Peters, 1993). The disintegration of established Labour party policy and the subsequent installation of New Right ideology was both unexpected and unacceptable to traditional Labour supporters:

Historically, Labour was the party of the Welfare State and the regulated economy. On becoming the government in 1984, it discarded this tradition without warning and became a party of the New Right. In the next six years, Labour almost entirely deregulated the economy. It privatised most of the State’s commercial activities. It reorganised both central and local government along commercial lines (Jesson, 1992, p. 37).

Central to the New Right is the neo-liberal view which rests on an ideology of individualism and individual responsibility within a free-market economy (Peters, 1993). A major critique of neo-liberal individualism is that there is a delegation of power and authority to individuals rather than a genuine power-sharing within the community (Peters, 1993). The emphasis on individualism has an underlying assumption that human behaviour can be explained solely in terms of individualistic self-interest. Such a view explicitly screens out different cultural and gender values and alternative accounts of human behaviour, such as kinship obligation, duty and altruism (Peters, 1993). For Betty, as Māori and a woman and someone who had worked as part of a community, the philosophy of the New Right and its strategies of reducing State expenditure and increasing privatization were
abhorrent to her. Not only was the concept of individualism contrary to the traditional Māori viewpoint of communalism but it was also contrary to the way Betty was used to working at Arohanui. Arohanui fostered a community environment in which Māori values, such as reciprocity, symbolic exchange and shared responsibility, were key features. Furthermore, Betty worked closely with those groups who were most vulnerable to the operation of the market - Māori youth. As Peters (1993) argues, job losses due to regulatory reform and restructuring of the economy impacted disproportionately on Māori:

In the June quarter, 1991, the unemployment rate for Māori had increased to 27.1 per cent, compared to the European rate of 7.7 per cent. It is clear that Māori have suffered disproportionately under policy changes since the mid-1980s. The same can be said for women (p. 177).

As a City Councillor, then, Betty frequently found herself in a conflicted situation. Her political work prior to standing for Council had been at a heart politics, grassroots level and as Hyman (1994) suggests, grassroots groups tend to be autonomous, concerned with their own activities rather than attempting to influence government policy. As a Councillor she was confronted with a political framework that advocated social policy based on the much touted ‘economic recovery’ rhetoric. She had to address her specific concerns for Māori within this environment and maintain a position as a representative of Māori which was both challenging and disillusioning: "Oh, you can fight as much as you like but you hardly get anything through" (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Ironically, it is not the preoccupation with cost-saving and privatization which the 1986-1989 Auckland City Council is remembered for. Mayor Dame Catherine Tizard and the Councillors of this period have been memorialized for their part in the restructuring of the City of Auckland with its ‘City of Sails’ logo and the opening of the Aotea Centre: "Whatever its chequered history of construction and financing, or reservations about its
architectural splendour, the Aotea Centre up and running is an outstanding cultural asset of metropolitan magnitude" (Bush, 1991, p. 442).

The plaque which commemorates the opening of the Aotea Centre states that construction began in 1985 and was completed in 1989. It was opened on 9 September 1990 by Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. The Councillors of 1983-1986 and 1986-1989 are listed alongside Mayor, Dame Catherine Tizard. Betty is listed as ‘E Wark’.

Figure 29. Mayor, Dame Catherine Tizard and the Auckland City Council after their final meeting in October 1989. Betty is in the front row, third from the left. Bruce Hucker is in the back row, first from the left. Private collection of Wark whanau.
Annotated Reflections to Chapter Eight

Media Profile and Public Recognition

Betty’s relationship with the media can be described as symbiotic. Betty provided the media with human interest stories and Māori news and the media provided Betty with publicity and helped raise the profile of her work with Arohanui. This mutually beneficial arrangement produced a substantial media profile for Betty from the 1960s right up until the time of her death. Most of her media profile was through newspapers and magazines but she was also interviewed on radio and was the subject of a major interview by Dr Brian Edwards on 6 July 1996 on his popular Saturday morning National Radio show. She featured in a television documentary, Give Me a Love, in August 1986, and was Television One’s ‘Person of the Week’, on Mother’s Day, 14 May, 2000. This section of Chapter Eight examines her media profile and highlights the public recognition she received for her community work. Central questions are why her work gained media attention and how she was constructed and represented by the media.

An early story about Betty appeared in the New Zealand Herald on 8 August 1969. The headline read: ‘Like Wendy - Mother to Lost Boys’13. The article described Betty as a mother and a young energetic grandmother. It discussed her work with the Māori Women’s Welfare League and the Māori Community Centre. However, the main focus of the article was on the hostel she was running for young boys in Ponsonby. The article was accompanied by a flattering head and shoulders portrait of Betty, smiling for the camera in a semi-profile posture. This portrait appeared with several articles about her during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

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13 The allusion to Wendy, mother to lost boys, comes from J.M. Barrie’s classic children’s story, Peter Pan and Wendy, first published in 1911, in which Wendy is ‘mother’ to a group of lost boys in Neverland.
As a representational image of Betty this particular photograph depicts her in a relatively neutral light. There are no obvious signs when reading the photograph to indicate the cultural and historical times of the late 1960s. The overall impression is of a fine looking woman with a pleasant disposition, probably aged somewhere between 35-45 years old (Betty was actually forty-five when the photo was taken). Her hair is swept back off her face in an almost matronly fashion and she is devoid of make-up. She looks homely, friendly and above all, motherly. Indeed, from the earliest media coverage, Betty was constructed as universal mother and caregiver.

Betty was never completely comfortable with the media construction of her as an archetypal mother-figure. Due to lack of mothering as a child, she has always felt ambivalent and detached about motherhood: "I didn’t know what being a mother was as I’d never had one" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996). Her early experiences of motherhood were tinged with
a certain amount of uncertainty and a sense of inadequacy and ironically, her work with at risk youth took her away from mothering her own children.

The construction of Betty by the media as a mother-figure and a tamer of wild boys has thus been somewhat ironic from Betty’s point of view. Nevertheless, this particular construction with its emphasis on mothering and home-making has endured over three decades of media representation, as the following selection of newspaper headlines on stories about Betty demonstrates:

‘Like Wendy - Mother to Lost Boys’
(New Zealand Herald, 8 August 1969)

‘Getting to Know You Over Tea’
(Auckland Star, 8 April 1976)

‘The House Where Somebody Cares’
(New Zealand Herald, 16 October 1976)

‘A Haven Where Love is a Mother who Really Cares’
(Auckland Star, 21 June 1978)

‘Our Community Service Award Winner’
(North Shore Times Advertiser, 8 August 1978)

‘The Tough Old Bird who Turns Anger into Hope’
(Auckland Star, 2 January 1982)

‘Making Room at the Church Inn?’
(Zealandia, 20 June 1982)

‘Ma to Homeless City Youngsters’
(New Zealand Herald, 2 February 1985)

‘Mum Modest About Medal’
(New Zealand Herald, 31 December 1985)

‘Mothering Plus Māoritanga’
(Auckland Star, 8 January 1986)

‘Mother with a Big Heart’
(New Zealand Herald, 12 August 1986)

‘Mother Teresa’ of Auckland Helps ‘Pull Up’ Māori Outcasts’
(Memphis, 9 May 1991)
These headlines indicate how the media has tended to concentrate on stories about Betty which have constructed her as both mother and home-maker. Such an emphasis is hardly surprising considering that her public profile has focused on her work as a house-parent for Arohanui and that her key motivation for publicity has been to promote Arohanui and to secure funding: "I learned to manipulate the media to promote Arohanui and the work we are doing" (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

From the perspective of gender, the way the media has represented Betty is also unsurprising. As Macdonald (1995) asserts, the construction of femininity has an ideological association between women and caring, and the media has sustained this mythology. "Women are seen as ‘natural’ carers who have a biological predisposition towards nurturing and they still carry the structural foundations of family life" (Macdonald, 1995, pp. 132-133). The responsibilities for moral leadership continue to be placed on women within the family and the wider community.

The promotion of Betty in the gender-specific role of mother is an example of the way the media plays an important part in reinforcing female stereotypes. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to view Betty’s representation in the media purely through the lens of gender. As a Māori woman, Betty has also been represented in terms of her ethnicity and culture.

The little research that exists on representations of Māori by the media tends to suggest that, on the whole, Māori are constructed as conforming to a number of negative stereotypes. Wall (1995), for example, asserts that Māori are constructed by media as the black ‘other’ and she identifies several common stereotypes including: the comic other and the quintessential warrior. Historically, Māori women have also tended to be constructed as sexually promiscuous and lacking in morality (Connor, 1994). Similarly, Spoonley (1990) has identified the media’s tendency to use "a shorthand style" to categorize Māori, using one-word definitions and labels.
such as ‘activist’, ‘radical’, ‘protester’, ‘demonstrator’ (pp. 32-33). Spoonley (1990) concludes that such labels automatically invoke a negative perception and Māori ‘folk devils’, such as Atareta Poananga and Titewhai Harawira are created and used to illustrate the ‘excesses’ of Māori activism14. It is an interesting paradox, however, that although Betty viewed herself as a Māori activist she was not portrayed as such - at least not in a way that denoted a negative perception of her actions. Indeed, representations of Betty within the media did not conform to negative stereotyping about Māori and she was not positioned within debates centred on race relations.

Cultural representations of Betty can also be viewed as conforming to what might be characterised as the kuia role. This iconic representation fits within the lineage of the renowned kuia, Te Puea Herangi and Whina Cooper, both of whom had public images characterised by a kuia role which extended beyond kinship ties15. As with Betty, Te Puea Herangi and Whina Cooper were also admired and celebrated for their abilities to tackle tough tasks and to agitate for social change. All three women worked for the political and social advancement of Māori yet were also able to gain support and assistance from tauiwi.

Media constructions of Betty did not tend to conform to negative stereotyping of Māori nor did representations of her as universal mother conform to negative stereotypes such as the ‘mammy’ typecast, prevalent in so many representations of women of colour. While Betty was certainly represented as finding satisfaction in caring for others, this representation did not carry a static image of a Māori woman’s role as being one of serving others’ needs. Rather, she was represented as someone who chose to do the work she set out to do in much the same way as a religious figure who has a particular vocation. Indeed, one of the more provocative headlines in her

14 Atareta Poananga and Titewhai Harawira are wahine Māori activists. Both women have been positioned in the media as controversial figures.
15 Te Puea Herangi and Whina Cooper were both prominent Māori women leaders. Refer to King (1977) and (1983) for details of their biographies.
media history called her, the ‘Mother Teresa’ of Auckland (Byrd, 1991, p. C1).

Despite Betty’s protestations that she was no Mother Teresa, the comparison was nevertheless an apt one. Both women took refuge in their Catholic faith although in entirely different ways. Betty’s Catholicism was a very personal part of her life and clearly did not adhere to the conservative official interpretation of Catholic doctrine as was the case with Mother Teresa. In contrast to Betty, Mother Teresa’s Catholicism was both private and public. At age twelve she felt a calling to become a nun; at eighteen she realised her vocation was towards the poor and she believed wholeheartedly that her work was for Jesus (Chawla, 1996). However, while faith alone motivated Mother Teresa she shared with Betty an abhorrence of a society that creates a pariah caste of misfits and untouchables:

That little one who is unwanted and unloved, who has come into the world already unwanted, what a terrible suffering that is! Today it is the greatest disease, to be unwanted, unloved, just left alone, a throwaway of society (Mother Teresa, as quoted in Chawla, 1996, p. 208).

Betty’s work with the street kids of Auckland stemmed from a very similar attitude and like Mother Teresa she had the courage, the energy and the strength of personality to take action.

Betty was very uncomfortable with the Memphis article’s comparison of her to Mother Teresa, but conceded it was a headline that was likely to draw attention to the article, the primary purpose of which was to promote Arohanui as a deserving recipient of a commercial appeal run by the newspaper. As an American paper the Memphis also needed a headline that an American readership would be able to relate to. Comparing Betty to Mother Teresa would have given American readers an immediate connection and signalled her work as being very similar. The paper had
also researched Betty’s work and had been in touch with *Metro* magazine which is quoted as the source of the Mother Teresa comparison:

Mrs Wark has been praised highly for her work. *Metro*, a sophisticated monthly magazine that takes pleasure in knocking the wind out of the sails of Auckland’s bigger egos, has only complimentary things to say about Mrs Wark, calling her the Mother Teresa of Ponsonby, the neighbourhood where she lives and works (Byrd, 1991, p. C1)

The article is no hagiography, however, and further states that *Metro* was referring to Betty’s exceptional devotion and not her saintliness. The *Memphis* article offers a glimpse into the complexity of Betty’s personality by portraying her as someone who has been able to carry out exceptional work for the homeless, just as Mother Teresa did. At the same time it also presents an image of someone who has human foibles: “This is a woman with all-too-human faults. She smokes too much and exercises too little. She loses her temper at lost boys, and weeps as she kicks them out of the house for breaking the ban on drugs” (Byrd, 1991, p. C1).

Decidedly unsaintly, Betty’s ‘faults’ or ‘flaws’ were like little pebbles, thrown into the river to cause ripples on the surface. The analogy here, is that like the ripples, her ‘flaws’ were only surface distractions. Underneath, she remained an exceptionally devoted and hardworking woman.

The allusion to her smoking and swearing detracted from her public persona as the Mother Teresa of Auckland, portraying her as both saint and sinner concurrently - an interesting dichotomy. Such a construction echoes colonial constructions where missionaries viewed Māori women as potential ‘moral’ and ‘spiritual’ reformers within Māori society. Conversion to Christianity, preferably Protestant, rendered Māori women as ‘agents of salvation’, or ‘God’s police’. Non-conversion equated with immorality and depravity (Connor, 1994, p. 25).
One of the more comprehensive newspaper articles about Betty’s work was written for the *New Zealand Herald* by Tony Reid in 1985 and although there were no comparisons made to figures such as Mother Teresa, the word ‘legend’ is used - again conjuring up an image of an exceptional human being. However, as in the *Memphis* article, this dominant construction has been qualified. Reid’s feature on Betty in 1985 ever-so-gently points out the ‘legend’ had feet of clay:

> Her own family felt Wark’s neglect. At one desperate stage she took some of the ‘second family’ into her home: ‘Dynamite! Never again.’ At other times she felt she could cope no longer. ‘I can remember the scenes. Once I just walked out bawling from one of those houses. My son came to me and said ‘All right leave. But not until you are happy with everything that is happening in this place. And then I got to the stage where I could feel just how much I was getting back. I found I needed the young people as much as they needed me. I mean, that’s why I’m still doing this work’ (Reid, 1985).

Betty, a woman of immense energy and personal charisma, tended to polarise opinion. She was aware of criticism from some co-workers and members of her social networks who felt that she had on occasion been too tough on residents and that she had neglected her own family. Such criticisms have seldom been picked up by the media, the 1985 article by Reid being an exception. On the whole she has been represented as the quintessential kuia - strong, determined, wise and forthright. Implicit within this construction has been the image of someone selfless to the verge of saintliness. The photograph of Betty which appeared with the *Memphis* article on 9 May 1991 reinforces this construction visually. It shows an emotional Betty, distressed and weeping because she was forced to ask two young men to leave Arohanui. She is being comforted by Lee Waho, who also looks pensive and sad.

The photograph used by the *Memphis* is an imposing and powerful image. The photographer has managed to capture Betty in a moment of acute vulnerability with raw emotions exposed. One reading of the image is that the photograph was contrived, and consciously (even cynically) constructed to lure would-be philanthropists to donate funds to the Memphis Appeal. After all, the whole purpose of the article was to publicize Betty and Arohanui in order to attract donations. Nevertheless, while there may be some validity in such a reading, to simply interpret the photograph as a publicity gimmick would be a disservice to Betty and the photographer, Karen Pulfer Focht. Why the photograph is so powerful and compelling is simply because it is real. It shows a mature woman with real grief etched on her face. She was clearly not afraid of showing her pain and vulnerability. Pulfer Focht captured Betty in a moment of fragility yet the viewer was not left feeling like a voyeur intruding on someone else’s grief. Rather, the photograph managed to affirm Betty as a champion of the people; a woman in the ilk of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. It conveys an image of Betty as both human enough to cry over a wayward youth and saintly enough to want to.

The construction of Betty as someone verging on saintliness was an enduring one. In 1986 she was the subject of a television documentary, *Give Me a Love*. Directed by Bill Saunders, the programme was an episodic
record of one month in the life of Arohanui. It showed Betty as being a person of immense dedication and aroha. Yet, at the same time the programme did not attempt to sanitize her image. It also showed her as someone who is realistic, who demands respect and who hands out a good deal of old-fashioned discipline. A review in the *New Zealand Herald* on 13 August 1986 praised the documentary as direct, full-frontal television at its unobtrusive best:

The closing frames of *Give Me a Love* (TV1 last night) just about summed it all up. One of the young people on whom the big-hearted mother of Arohanui Inc, Betty Wark, had lavished a month of special aroha disappeared into the shadows down the side of a Ponsonby house to see if he could take on the city which had so nearly destroyed him. Behind him, and filling almost a quarter of the frame, was the brightly-lit window of the house he could always return to when the going got tough. Bill Saunders’ compelling and warm documentary about the woman who has looked after Auckland’s dispossessed and rejected since long before society so neatly classified them as ‘street kids’, was rich in such telling shots, composed with taste and elegance (*Give me a love, New Zealand Herald*, August 13, 1986).

Similar reviews also appeared in the *Auckland Star*, the *Christchurch Star*, the *Evening Post* and the *Otago Daily Times*.

*Give me a Love*, a portrayal of Arohanui house-mother, Betty Wark and the charges she is ‘ma’ to when their own families have disintegrated, caused the odd tear. A reassuring sign amid the cynicism about worthwhile programmes that give New Zealanders an image of themselves (*Give me a love, Auckland Star*, August 13, 1986).

*Give me a Love*, a documentary on Betty Wark, the house-mother of the Arohanui group in Auckland was the best local current affairs programme this year. It was a warts-and-all look at a slice of life we don’t normally see on our screens. There was a good balance between Ma Wark tending to the teenage drunk after a night on the town and the success of the trio who took part in the Operation Raleigh trials (*Give me a love, The Christchurch Star*, August 14, 1986).
Bill Saunders avoided the trap of having an interviewer attempting to analyze and explain. He allowed the cameras to follow so that we could watch and listen and see for ourselves. Betty Wark’s strength, her ability to give that subtle mixture of discipline and love to the young people in her care, made powerful and memorable television, a vivid illustration of the concept of aroha (Give me a love, Otago Daily Times, August 16, 1986).

The New Zealand documentary, Give me a Love, which played on Tuesday showed just how good New Zealand productions could be. The programme showed Betty Wark, who cares for dispossessed young Aucklanders, without excess sentimentality or editorial comment. It was honest, restrained, genuine, and one of the most powerful documentaries I have ever seen (Give me a love, Evening Post, August 16, 1986).

Television documentaries, according to Atkinson (1993), will pose a key question to viewers: what is the compelling ingredient about this programme? For the viewers of Give Me a Love, it would appear, almost unreservedly, that the compelling ingredient was its central focus – Betty Wark. As Maharey (1990) argues, the power of the media is exercised by representing the world in certain ways and this power to define the world is what makes the media crucial to an understanding of contemporary race relations in New Zealand. Betty was presented in a light that was relatively free of racialization. At a simple level she was portrayed as a Māori kuia and tamer of wild boys. According to McGregor (1991) there is a vital need for the media to explain the underlying causes of social problems and what it is like to be a Māori or a Pacific Islander in New Zealand. Give Me a Love not only tried to explain underlying causes of the ‘street kid’ phenomenon, but it also offered solutions, thereby defying the conventional reporting of Māori news as negative news. While there was no overt agenda to contest negative stereotyping about street kids, the documentary generated alternative viewings of this problem by giving a face to the young people living this particular lifestyle. One of the factors that strikes the viewers is the youthfulness and vulnerability of the street kids. They invariably look very young indeed. Most were as young as fourteen and fifteen and had
been living rough on the streets having either run away or been kicked out of home. While the documentary showed both Betty and Trish Stewart in conversations with young boys encouraging them to eventually return to their immediate or extended whanau, there was also an acknowledgment that this may not have been possible.

Throughout the documentary Betty came across as a woman of immense compassion, yet streetwise and tough. The opening frames showed her walking down Auckland’s Queen Street with other staff members of Arohanui. They would stop and chat with street kids asking them if they had food and lodgings. Betty was shown giving one young boy some money from her handbag: "If I give you some money you'll buy some food? Don’t waste it on shit eh!" (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996). The youth in question shyly accepted the money, grateful to have someone take an interest in him but not quite sure how to respond. Betty was also filmed trying to sober up one youth who was totally inebriated having indulged in a cocktail of alcohol and pills. She patiently tried to coax him to eat some toast and remonstrated with him when he began flailing his arms about. It was evident she had played this scenario many times before and was well-equipped to deal with the situation. Successes were also shown: *Give Me a Love* also featured the Arohanui residents who had weaned themselves off drugs and alcohol and were taking part in job training, culture groups and programmes such as ‘Operation Raleigh’.

Unemployment was cited as one of the major concerns for Arohanui residents: "Unemployment is very serious - it takes their innards out of them’ (B. Wark, as stated in Saunders, 1986). For this reason, teaching work skills was seen as a crucial factor in preparing residents to fend for themselves once they left Arohanui. One of the work schemes Arohanui initiated was wood carving, seen as both culturally appropriate and also as a potential revenue earner: "Wood is part of us - it’s a living thing so we teach
carving in the hope they can set up a small business’ (B. Wark, as stated in Saunders, 1986).

The *Otago Daily Times* (August 16, 1986) declared that *Give Me a Love* "was a vivid illustration of the concept of aroha". Betty’s strength was her ability to be compassionate and non-judgmental. Her aroha and sincerity was evident in the high expectations she placed on each of the residents in her care and in her demands that they did the best they could do.

At the end of the documentary viewers were shown a glimpse of the ‘tough old bird’s’ soft interior. As one teenage boy left the confines of Arohanui for a taste of Auckland’s night-time street life, Betty and her assistant wept together: "That’s one I’d like to protect - really save" (B. Wark, as stated in Saunders, 1986).
The sentiments expressed by Betty in this final moving scene further augmented her reputation as the Mother Teresa of Auckland. Stories of dedication and selflessness are refreshing and inspiring in a world so beset with conflict and human tragedies. On one level Betty embodied these qualities in a way that transcended race and gender. When you are endowed with saintliness you move into another realm beyond your human status. On a more mundane level however, while her qualities were intrinsically linked to her social identity as Māori and woman, it was her identity as a mother that caught the media’s attention. The discursive
production of motherhood has long been constituted as the only legitimate occupation for women (Copas, 1999; Kedgley, 1996; Matthews, 1984). For the media to continue to glorify this particular maternal institution is unsurprising. Betty, like Mother Teresa, epitomises the idealised mother-figure, eulogised by poets such as Coleridge: "A mother is a mother still, The holiest thing alive" (Coleridge, as cited in Akmon, 1998, p. 20).

While Betty was never comfortable with the media construction of her as an idealised universal mother-figure, she was conscious of her public persona. Ever humble, she found it a difficult mantle to live up to but conceded there was a need for the public to have icons to honour and revere. Nevertheless, when her work was publicly recognised she was frequently a reluctant recipient. When Betty’s name was put forward to receive the Queen’s Service Medal by Ewen Derrick, a co-founder and one-time chairman of Arohanui Incorporated, she was initially hesitant about accepting the nomination:

I had a letter from whoever gives you notice and I didn't want it. I didn't. I felt I was being a traitor and Ewen Derrick rang me. He was the man that applied for it. I said, 'Ewen, I don't really want it'. I cried because I didn't know whether I felt unworthy of it or what. Whether I felt I was being rubber stamped. I don’t know how I felt but in the end Ewen asked me to please accept it. So I did but it took me about two weeks to decide. I went down to Wellington and there were about 90 people. We were all in one room and I was second to last to get mine. But it was very pleasant because Queen Elizabeth knew exactly each one. She knew. She asked me how did I find the work? Was it difficult? I said, yes it was difficult and rewarding (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

The investiture of the Queen’s Service Medal by Queen Elizabeth took place at the Michael Fowler Centre, Wellington on 28 February 1986. Women were requested to wear a short dress or uniform and Betty had a special dress designed. "I had a special dress made by Colin Cole, the dress designer. It was all lace and pinkie and I wore a hat" (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).
The *New Zealand Herald* ran a brief story about Betty’s award with the headline, ‘Mum Modest about Medal’:

In a career that has seen her squatting in parks, calming Queen Street rioters and battling bureaucrats, Mrs Betty Wark is modest about her latest success... Mrs Wark had to be persuaded by her family to accept the QSM. She says the medal belongs to everybody involved in the Arohanui homes. ‘People do not need medals to prove that they have done good. You only need to know yourself, that you are doing good - that alone should make you happy’, (‘Mum Modest about Medal’, *New Zealand Herald*, December 31, 1985).

Betty’s immediate whanau and her Arohanui whanau were thrilled she accepted the medal. A former resident wrote:

Dear Betty, You don’t know how pleased I was to hear you had been awarded the Queen’s Service Medal and that the many years of community and welfare work you have undertaken have received deserved recognition. It reminds me of the times when I myself needed help and you willingly assisted me. It makes me feel proud to be able to tell people. ‘I know Betty Wark’ (Peter, [former Arohanui resident], personal letter, January 6, 1986).
Figure 33. Betty on the day of the investiture of the Queen’s Service Medal by Queen Elizabeth II. She is wearing her special dress designed by Auckland couturier Colin Cole, accompanied by Jim Wark, February 28, 1986. Private collection of Wark whanau.

Betty was also honoured with several other awards for her service to the Auckland community. In 1978 she was the winner of the Suburban Newspapers Limited Community Worker of the Year Award. The Western Leader reported:

Friends and acquaintances call her ‘a wonderful woman’. She is devoted to caring for young folk in her community. And because of her outstanding community work, Mrs Betty Wark, of Ponsonby, has been selected as the winner of Suburban Newspapers Limited Community Service Award. The prize is a holiday in Fiji, with travel and accommodation arranged by Air New Zealand. Mrs Wark can’t believe she’s won the award. ‘It’s wonderful,’ she says. ‘But I feel guilty.
You don’t do this sort of work for an award. The reward is in seeing people in the house doing good and when they come back to see me five years later, married, with children and a steady job’ (Our Community Service Award Winner The Western Leader, August 8, 1978).

In 1981 Betty was awarded the Altrusa\textsuperscript{16} Silver Apple and in 1984 she was awarded the Nuffield Scholarship to visit Great Britain to study their probation accommodation systems. The Nuffield Award provided funds for travel to China and England:

I applied for a Nuffield Award through working with probation. I got one for a month paid by the Justice Department and I decided to go to China and England. I loved Hong Kong. It was crazy but it was great going from Hong Kong into China. You never saw a blade of grass. Everything was dug up for vegies. I spoke to a group of people who called themselves the Street People. It took about three hours just to get done because it had to be translated. What they were doing was trying to find empty buildings they could set up private enterprise in - small businesses. One man for example provided breakfasts for school children. From China I flew to London. I stayed with Paul Halloran, a friend who had worked with me for the Tenants' Protection in the 1970s. I visited about seven places where they looked after people from prison or probation. One place I liked was a 20-acre farm where they had about 30 young people where they learned about horticulture and agriculture (B. Wark, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

Public recognition for Betty’s work has not been limited to the form of specific awards. Her work for the kohanga reo movement, for example, did not receive any particular award but nevertheless is considered to be an important achievement. Betty was instrumental in founding the Hinehou Kohanga Reo in 1989. She made a room available in the Arohanui property at Shelley Beach Road and remained a kuia for the kohanga for some years.

\textsuperscript{16} Altrusa International is an association of business executives and professional women and men who volunteer their energies and expertise to projects dedicated to community betterment (http://www.altrusa.com/), Nuffield (http://www.nuffield.com/).
Betty named the kohanga in memory of a kaiako called Hinemoa who had been tragically killed in a car accident.

In 1996 Betty won top honours in the Trustees Executors Senior Achiever’s Award. The award recognised fifty years of voluntary services to the community. The award was sponsored by the Retired Persons' Association. When interviewed by the *New Zealand Herald* on 2 October 1996, Betty jokingly said she regretted she could not qualify for membership of the organisation behind the award: "Retirement, what’s that?" she asked.

*Figure 34. Betty being presented with the Senior Achievers Award in recognition of 50 years of voluntary work, October 1996. Private collection of Wark whanau.*
On 19 March 2001, the feast day of Saint Joseph I visited Betty at Arohanui, the imposing, two-storied Edwardian villa, at 8 Hopetoun Street, Newton. This substantial home of a by-gone era is bordered by Ponsonby’s Western Park famed for its grand old trees, sweeping pathways, abandoned glue bags and empty bottles of cheap sherry. I reflected on the many times Betty and I had retreated to the park to take a walk and get some fresh air, particularly after interview sessions which had brought up painful areas of her life and had been very emotional.

Arohanui is aptly located. Its upstairs balcony overlooking the park is perfectly positioned to watch out for those young, and not so young, itinerants poised to leave their lives of drug, solvents and alcohol abuse behind them. Many have heard Betty’s call and many have answered.


1 On 8 December 1870, Pope Pius IX proclaimed Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, as Patron of the Universal Church, and from that time Saint Joseph’s Feast Day has been celebrated on 19 March as a feast of high rank (Hoever, 1955). Saint Joseph was very important to Betty as he was not only the Patron Saint of her much-loved school, but also the patron saint of a happy death. It was serendipitous that we met on his feast day and talked of death and dying.
As I opened the rickety old gate and made my way along the pathway to the side door, I stopped to admire the vegetable garden and remembered Betty’s conviction that everyone should at least know how to grow silver beet! There in the compact little garden were lush and vigorous silver beet plants, the dark, shiny green variety that you only see in home and organic gardens. Walking along the old porch-way towards the entrance, I removed my shoes and made my way into the reception area - a wide hallway, spotlessly clean, warm and welcoming. I asked after Betty and was directed to her bedroom and I made my way up the stairs to see her. She was resting in bed, and although physically tired, her mind was sharp and alert, her eyes bright and clear. We greeted one another and I took a seat in a comfy, old armchair beside her bed and using a remote control, she turned off the television set so we could korero without distraction. I admired a beautiful bouquet of flowers which made a striking display on a bedside table and she asked after my garden. I told her that all the stunningly colourful annuals I had enjoyed and admired so much over the long hot summer, were slowly dying off. The crimson tails on my ‘love-lies-bleeding’ had withered away to pale seed-heads, the scarlet petunias were now looking limp and tired, and even my hardy cosmos was beginning to look a little dowdy. "Ah, life is like a garden", Betty responded. "We bloom, and then we wither away and we die". We both knew she was talking about her own imminent death and for a moment in time the word 'death' was suspended in that in-between space of oscillation - do we gloss over it and ignore it, or do we confront it? Allow it to resonate and reverberate between us? We chose the latter, and so we spoke of death and dying. Betty told me she was ready for her spirit to leave her body. She was tired and her body was slowly giving up its fight against the cancer that was diagnosed in July 2000, shortly after her 76th birthday.

The year 2000 had not been a good year for Betty. She had been a victim of a home invasion and had woken to find a man rummaging through her handbag. When she called out for help the intruder attacked her and she was very badly bruised and shaken. Ironically, the intruder turned out to
be an ex-Arohanui resident, though he claimed he had not realised it was Betty he had attacked. As we talked that day she spoke about the home invasion and how traumatic it had been. Shortly after she suffered the home invasion she was diagnosed with cancer, and these two events were intrinsically linked together in her mind. She had dealt with both events in a stoic and practical way. She spoke about how very distressed she was after the home invasion and how the incident had really knocked her. Yet she also spoke about wanting victim reconciliation and for the perpetrator to face her in order for him to accept responsibility for his crime. She felt this was something that would benefit them both as she needed to let him know she forgave him. She talked about her conviction that everyone is born pure and she had reached a point in her life when she was able to forgive, even though she would never condone criminal and violent behaviour. Her compassion even extended to convicted murderer, Taffy Hotene, who brutally raped and murdered an Auckland journalist on 6 June 2000. Hotene had been a resident at Arohanui but had absconded after only six days and Betty was horrified and distraught when she found out about the rape and murder of his 23-year-old victim, Kylie Jones. Nevertheless, while utterly appalled at this hideous crime, she believed that Hotene had elements of goodness in his character and that he, too, had been born pure. She stated: "I love him as a human being but I hate what he did" (B. Wark, personal communication, March 19, 2001).

Betty’s belief that everyone is born good and it is only circumstances that make people behave badly was also taken up by Mary Hobbs (2000), who interviewed Betty for her book, Kiwi Tucker for the Soul, a book about New Zealanders creating the spirit of our nation. Betty stated:

I feel each person has something to do in each life they have. We have to go through with that, and I think if we can all make things more positive – for a minute even – then it all helps to bring about a better world (Hobbs, 2000, p. 134).
We briefly talked about her contribution to *Kiwi Tucker for the Soul* and the driving force that had led her to devote so much of her working life to bringing about social change.

Retirement had eluded her. The work Betty began in her forties in response to seeing those homeless young men in Freemans Bay took her in a direction that would eventually become her path or vocation. Juliet Batten (2000) describes this type of work as 'soul work' and states: "When we take on the concept of soul work, the whole notion of retirement becomes redundant, for soul work in some form or another is what we can do until we are very old" (p. 24).

The concept of soul work is work into which we are beckoned or lured:

> Midlife calls us into our soul work. It is work that expresses our unique essence. It is work that embraces the full dimension of who we are, and expresses our most cherished values. How do we know it is soul work? Because it flows, we feel supported by something larger than ourselves, we sense we are being smiled upon and blessed. Because, even when we work hard, we end up feeling we have received. Soul work can take any form, from the most humble activity to the most aspiring. It may be serving food, cleaning a house, or writing poetry (Batten, 2000, p. 10).

Midlife for Betty was a period of change and challenge. She spoke of her forties as a time when she began to search for a deeper meaning to her life. It was also the time she felt a strong emotional need to nurture her Māori side. Midlife, as Batten (2000) suggests, is the time when we stop and reassess our lives, and this is exactly what Betty did. She was ready to take on new challenges and she felt a sense of rightness about becoming more involved in the Māori Community Centre and Māori youth at this time. As her work evolved from the 1960s to the 2000s her belief that this was her chosen purpose was continually affirmed. In December 2000, TV producer Maryanne Ahern wrote an open letter to Betty in *Grace* magazine and asked:
At 77 years of age you’re still doing your life’s work. How do you do it? Especially as this year hasn’t been great. And you’re having chemotherapy. But with Christmas upon us you talk about how good life is and how lucky you are. You like to think every human is born perfect, with the spirit whole. It’s what happens in life that changes things. I salute you Betty Wark. I thank you for sharing your love and helping to make a difference (Ahern, 2000, p. 146).

Betty continued to carry out her life’s ‘soul work’ until she was too frail to do so. Betty spoke of her cancer as being a gift, because she had time to prepare to die. She had found the ‘soul work’ that expressed her unique essence and she had tried to live her life in a positive and compassionate way. During the final months of her life Betty was able to reflect on her chosen path, to contemplate the contentment as well as the anguish. One of the greatest difficulties she spoke about during her illness was learning to receive. She had become accustomed to being the one who gave and supported and now others wanted to reciprocate. Betty talked about being embarrassed and humbled when the cards, letters and flowers began arriving as the news of her illness became public. Gradually, though, she saw this period as another of life’s lessons. Learning to receive was a challenge, but she met it with all the fortitude and resolve she had mustered when meeting all the other challenges she had faced during her life.

Betty was really touched and heartened by all the messages of tautoko and aroha she received from former residents of Arohanui, former colleagues, friends and whanau. The day I visited her in March 2001, she had received a beautiful bouquet of flowers from her old friend and colleague, Dame Catherine Tizard.

Betty also had to learn how to receive physical care as the cancer progressed and she was no longer able to care for herself. Her whanau and members of the Arohanui Trust provided most of her care but she also spent time at the Catholic hospice, Saint Joseph’s Mercy Hospice in Epsom. Betty enjoyed her time at Saint Joseph’s Hospice and found it quite poignant that it had the
same patron saint as her much-loved school. She felt there was a ‘rightness’ about being there, a synchronicity about being under the protection of Saint Joseph - patron saint of a good death.

Although Betty came to terms with dying she spoke about how many of her whanau, friends and the staff at Arohanui had found it very difficult to accept. After the initial shock of her diagnosis, people around her felt overwhelmed by the anticipation of the tremendous loss that would be in their lives after she died. Betty felt she had to try and help everyone around her to come to terms with her illness and to prepare people for her passing. She spoke of being ready to go but so many were holding her back because they wanted to cling on to her. Part of learning to receive was helping others to work through their grief by letting them know what they could do for her and how they would be able to continue without her. Betty knew intuitively that accepting she was dying helped her to view her cancer as a blessing. She also knew that it is the dying who can teach others the importance of ‘grace’ in our lives. Becoming used to being dependent on others is difficult for anyone used to living an independent life and Betty was no exception. Nevertheless, she viewed her dying as what Kübler Ross (1986) has termed "the final stage of growth" (p. x), and learning to accept help and receive from others was all part of her final stage of growth.

To die in a good way it is helpful to have some spiritual support and Betty drew on her Catholicism to sustain her in her last months as it had throughout her life. She was comforted by prayer and repeating the Rosary and knowing groups were also saying it for her. When death finally called, Betty was ready. She had sought the right path to benefit her world and remained stoic and strong until the end.

_ E kore au e ngaro;  
_ Te kakano i ruia mai i Rangiatea  

_ I am never lost;  
_ I am a seed sown at Rangiatea  
_ the heartland of the human spirit (Tai, 1992, p. 4).
Betty Wark died peacefully at 12.40am, Thursday, 16 May, 2001 in her 78th year surrounded by her whanau. At the time of her death Betty was survived by Jim Wark, her five sons: Brian, Danny, Conrad, Robert and Gary; her fourteen grandchildren: Deane, Darryl, Fiona, Jason, Avril, Sharon, Natalie, Glen, Lani, Rick, Tia, Tane, James and Alexander; and six great-grandchildren: Jayden, Dillon, Coen, James, Carlos and Miriana. As biological mother and grandmother to her own children and their off-spring, and spiritual mother to countless others, the tributes made after her death honoured her foremost as a mother and someone who cared deeply for the poor and marginalized.

The then Acting Prime Minister Jim Anderton paid tribute to Betty on the national television news and also in a New Zealand Government press release:

I knew Betty for many years as a strong and determined worker for the many people that society rejects. On the outside she appeared as a gentle kuia, but she was made of steel, as she needed to be, to help the people who had been hardened by the tough road of life.

Betty was a person who will leave a real gap for the poor and dispossessed. One of her most admirable qualities was that she never sought either laurels or advancement for herself personally, but rather advancement and assistance for society's underdogs. She battled to the end for those people, and all New Zealanders will be saddened at her passing (Anderton, May 18, 2000).

Alliance Party Deputy Leader, Sandra Lee, also made a tribute to Betty and expressed deep sorrow at the loss of a friend and role model.

In my years as City Councillor and Member of Parliament from Auckland Central, I observed Betty’s gutsy stoicism in supporting and fighting for the rights of the people that the rest of society rejects. Ex-prisoners, street kids, drug addicts and people suffering from mental health illnesses were always able to find shelter under Betty’s cloak and in her big old warm boarding house in Ponsonby.
She never set out to make her own name famous or to seek mana. More importantly she never moved on or away from the flax roots people she spent her life supporting. They knew and will mourn Betty more than the rest of us, because she was one of a few who really cared in a practical sense, one of a few who walked their talk.

I fear Betty’s passing may be reflected in statistics of people whose lives, if she’d still been with us, would have been turned around. The lesson we can learn from Betty’s life’s work is to exhibit tolerance, grace and understanding of the ‘otherness’ (Lee, 2001, May 18).

Community Probation Service staff from around the country paid tribute to Betty in a Corrections Department newsletter.

R.I.P. Betty Wark: ‘mother to many’

Betty died last month after a long battle with cancer. She was 77. During her lifetime she worked with many of the people that nobody else wanted to help – high-risk offenders, including those convicted for rape and murder. She ran residential programmes for the Ngati Arohanui Trust in Auckland, working with young, mainly Māori offenders. Auckland Area Manager Marie Faith-Allen remembers visiting Betty and Ngati Arohanui in the 1970s, during a field visit as part of her social work training. ‘It was one of the most popular field visits, because everyone recognised the tireless energy that Betty had for giving offenders and the disadvantaged better opportunities for bettering their lives. Betty showed both warmth and firmness to the residents of Ngati Arohanui. She always confronted poor behaviour, at the same time gaining immense respect from residents. She often took on people whom no-one else would touch. She attended District Prisons Board meetings in support of offenders she thought she may be able to assist with accommodation or programmes. To Auckland Community Probation she has offered tremendous support – both to offenders and to staff, for more than 25 years.’ Gisborne Probation Officer Ted Toroa worked with Betty just prior to moving out of Auckland in the mid 1970s. ‘She was just setting out on her journey then. I have an absolute appreciation of what she has contributed toward all those people she has worked with. She engendered an immense spirit of cooperation’. In 1985 Betty was awarded the Queen’s Service Medal for her community work. Since her death, tributes have flowed in from high-profile New Zealanders from David Lange to Dame Catherine Tizard,
praising the work of the woman that young men knew simply as ‘Ma Betty’ (*Corrections Agency News*, June, 2001).

Several other tributes and obituaries also appeared in newspapers throughout the country. The main theme, as in the excerpts above, was Betty’s compassion, humanitarian ideals and her capacity to just do what she saw needed to be done.

After her death Betty lay in state at Nga Whare Waatea Marae at Mangere where a Requiem Mass was held for her on Friday 17 May. Hundreds of people went to Mangere to pay their last respects to her and to express their gratitude, aroha and grief. Through countless moving speeches and tributes, Betty and her life’s work were honoured and affirmed. The custom with the tangihanga is to ensure the tupapaku (body of the deceased) is never left on its own at any stage after death. Usually groups of people will stay with the tupapaku throughout the tangihanga and the coffin is left open so people can touch the tupapaku (*Tauroa*, 1993). This was the case for Betty. As the hundreds of people who came to farewell her filed past the open coffin they would frequently stop to touch her and to speak to her, and throughout this process there was a constant shedding of tears. On Saturday 18 May, as she had requested, her body was taken back to Motuti Marae in the Hokianga to await burial in her papakainga.

Private collection of Helene Connor
Kua hinga atu te Totara
Ki te waanui a Tane
e te Mama Betty,
haere, haere, ngaro atu
The mighty Totara has fallen.
She stood proud and tall in Tane’s forest.
She provided shelter for
the homeless and food for the needy.
Her heart was filled with love
and tenderness as she
showered affection on those around her.
Ma Betty’s gifts are endless
to those whose needs are many,
so rejoice that we were blessed
by this beautiful Angel of Mercy.2

Figure 37. Totara Tree

CONCLUSION

This thesis, *Writing Ourselves 'Home', Biographical Texts: A Method for Contextualizing the Lives of Wahine Māori - Locating the Story of Betty Wark*, has argued that biographical research is an appropriate and well-suited method for carrying out research into the life stories and social histories of Māori. The thesis also presented a biographical narrative with annotated reflections about the life of one remarkable Māori woman, Betty Wark. While the main focus has been on women’s biography, the thesis has proposed the biographical research method is also suitable for documenting the lives of Māori men. Autobiographical texts have also been identified as being an apt literary genre for Māori, other indigenous groups and people of colour to employ as a way of reclaiming a sense of cultural identity and as a mode of self-representation. The thesis also put forward the premise that auto/biographical texts can be viewed as a literary extension of whakapapa and accordingly these literary genre are ideal methods for writing about the life histories and experiences of Māori.

Whakapapa represents the essential Māori self and distinguishes Māori from any other ethnic group, nationality or community. Hence it is important to carry out research for and by Māori that can accommodate this fundamental aspect of Māori identity. Nevertheless, it must also be recognised that the structuring principle of whakapapa is problematic for many Māori who have been dislocated from their whakapapa through the processes of colonization, urbanization and other factors, as indeed was the case for Betty Wark. While Betty and many of the at risk youth she cared for were frequently disconnected from their whakapapa, there was often a connection through their common childhood experiences of maltreatment - a whakapapa of abuse.

However, despite such disconnections many Māori have been able to access their whakapapa through research and in many whanau there is often one central person who becomes the keeper of the whakapapa (as is also the case for many non-Māori families). This was certainly true for Betty who was
able to access knowledge about her whakapapa, tupuna and pepeha through her brother, Kane Mutu and his wife, Anna.

The theoretical underpinnings of kaupapa Māori and Māori feminism that were explored in Section One of the thesis provided a theoretical framework on which to construct Betty's biography. The biography set out to uphold the mana of wahine Māori by telling Betty's story as sympathetically and in as celebratory a manner as possible without it metamorphosing into a hagiography.

The theme of home recurred throughout the thesis, both literally and metaphorically. The reference to ‘writing ourselves home’ in the title set out to convey the hypothesis that writing about lives and the lived experiences of biographical subjects can express notions of home and cultural space. The theme of home illustrated how the concepts of home, papakainga and turangawaewae strengthen a sense of cultural identity and belonging. Home-place was also constructed through whakapapa links, geographic connections to the land and associations with whanau and the marae, tikanga Māori and te reo Māori. Betty's search for home was at both inner and outer levels. She sought to be at home within herself and she sought to feel at home within a space and place that gave her a sense of belonging and of being at home. Betty's concept of 'home' evolved with her life experiences. Throughout her early life she desperately desired a home and talked of the nuns at Saint Josephs' Māori Girls' School as providing her with her first real 'home'. In her second marriage to Jim Wark she also found a 'home' for herself and her family but she later left the security of this home to form another 'home' with at risk youth.

Betty's narrative, as with all biographical narratives, is filled with multiple stories and layers of stories within stories. A significant story which underpinned much of Betty's narrative was the story of the childhood abuse she experienced. The anger, shame and deep sorrow she felt about her childhood never left her. Throughout the interview sessions she would say:
"It’s always there, it’s always there" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996). These experiences had left an indelible mark on her psyche - they were part of who she was. Betty rarely spoke about these experiences. She did not belong to the therapy generation and in her own words: "I never heard the word 'abuse' as a child" (B. Wark, personal communication, August 12, 1996). During the interviews for her biographical narrative she began reflecting on the point in her life when she learned to channel her anger. Throughout the biographical interview sessions, Betty retrospectively relived these experiences as she narrated her story. She felt it was important for readers of her biography to know the history of her life in order to make sense of who she was and what motivated her to do the work she did. By locating herself within a narrative that outlined the triumph of the human soul in the face of adversity she wanted to give hope to others who had similar personal experiences. It was important for her to share these experiences within the Māori community where she had been a role model to many.

Biographical research recognises that lives are lived through time and are made intelligible by their narrative composition. Biographical research methodology is underpinned by Western notions of time and space but there is certainly scope to represent non-Western narratives with this research approach. Time, whether it be past, present or future is the defining architecture of human existence and time is only made comprehensible in terms of narratives (Erben, 1998). Human experiences of temporality give rise to emplotment as individuals seek to make sense of events within their lives. Creating plots out of occurrences within the life enables individuals to compose a sustainable narrative of themselves. Emplotment is an ongoing process, adjusted accordingly as new information arises. Murray argues that we both create narratives and are created by them. He states:

Narratives are part of our very being since the structure of literature is in some sense the structure of the mind. We cannot avoid this interpenetration since the temporal nature
of life requires that we organize our interpretation of the world in narrative form (Murray, 1999, p. 49).

A recurring narrative throughout Betty's life was the triumph of the human soul in the face of adversity; a narrative that emerged from a plot structure of tragedy. The circumstances of her childhood during which she endured abuse and cruelty, emotional deprivation and the harsh conditions of poverty formed the basis of the archetypal plot structure - tragedy - a plot that underlay later life narratives. Her time at Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College where she experienced more positive models of nurturing and was no longer subject to cruelty and abuse enabled her to recreate the plot structure of tragedy, demonstrating how individuals continue to compose sustainable narratives of themselves as new information arises. Although the tragic circumstances of her childhood could not be altered, her responses to them could. She drew strength from what she had endured and her mature conceptualization of the self was told in stories of survival, whereas her childhood stories represented the self as victim.

In Betty’s story of her time at Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College for example, her narrative is expressed in sentiments of gratitude and admiration for the nuns who cared for her. The particular self that is constituted through these narratives is the self that has been redeemed and saved. Betty’s understanding of the social fabric of which the local culture of Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College was composed is expressed through a narrative in which the moral character of the nuns is maintained. Her narration of her life at the convent dramatizes the nuns as guardians of her destiny and ultimately of her soul: "Nothing was ever said but the nuns knew I’d had a hard background and they made a special pet of me" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

The abuse or neglect of a child has been described as "soul murder" (Shengold, 1989, p. 1). Soul murder deprives the child of a separate identity and joy in life. Betty’s narrative of her childhood experiences are told
through a saga of pain which the term ‘soul murder’ sadly encapsulates. Her dramatization of the nuns as guardians offering salve to her soul is entirely comprehensible within this context.

Narrative self-representations exert enormous power as they shape how we conduct our lives and how we come to terms with pain (Ochberg, 1988). In Shengold’s (1989) work with people who have been abused as children he noted that many were susceptible to terrible rage. Certainly, throughout Betty’s narrative she represents herself as a woman consumed by rage: "I was a very, very angry woman!" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996). However, in some instances a narrative of childhood pain can sometimes strengthen a person (Ochberg 1988; Shengold 1989). In Betty’s narrative this was indeed the case. She possessed the self-awareness and insight to realise it was both her anger and her early experiences of hardship and abuse which motivated her to help others who had experienced neglect and abuse.

Betty’s story relating her time at Saint Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College offers an insight into the image Betty had of herself as an adolescent on the brink of womanhood and the transition into the workforce. Her narrative provides glimpses of an ideal she aspired to: "I wanted to be like those nuns; they were all strong women, they owned nothing but they gave everything" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996). However, her later work and solitary lifestyle did in many ways reflect that idealized life of the nuns at Saint Joseph’s. Her bedroom at Arohanui Trust for example was relatively austere. The furnishings were minimal. There was a single bed and a set of drawers and the only concession to decoration was a large Byzantine-style painting of 'Our Lady of Perpetual Help'. Her narrative also reveals her self-image precluded her from attaining the ideal she sought to emulate: "I knew I didn’t have a vocation. I was too impatient for a start" (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).
In her midlife, when Betty’s career as a community worker was well established, a symbolic connection between this type of work and entering a convent, or at least emulating the nuns, are clearly evident. As characters that populate her story the nuns of Saint Joseph’s are constructed as symbolic guardian angels, an image which is sustained throughout her life story.

Contemplating the construction of the self is central to narrative analysis. The concept of the ‘self’ where a personal and individual identity is separate and different from ‘others’ stems from the humanist/individualist tradition in Western thought (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000, p. 104). Aspects of the Western concept of the self may be present in the narratives of non-Western peoples but will intersect with racial, ethnic and cultural narratives of the self. Within the biography of Betty Wark, her narrative from a Western concept of the self demonstrates how her experiences of a rapidly changing modern society required her to negotiate and alter her sense of self. The feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, for example, led to a radical rethinking around the gendered female self. Throughout this second-wave of feminist consciousness-raising the ways in which social institutions, practices and discourses defined women was examined and the traditional supporting role of women was challenged. While Betty’s narrative around her gendered identity articulates the influences of feminism on her life as being relatively minimal, it nevertheless caused her to rethink her role within the domestic sphere:

I was never what you would call a women’s libber but I was all for women working for equal pay and not having to be dependent on men. I felt a need to work out of the home and Jim supported me in this (B. Wark, personal communication, September 9, 1996).

The analysis of narrative in biographical research into the lives of women will in all likelihood emphasize women-centred experience. One of the most consequential experiences for many women is motherhood. Throughout
Betty’s biography, motherhood was a central narrative. Her narrative also illustrates how the constructions of femininity and discourses of motherhood and daughterhood impacted on the emergence of her maternal voice and her identity as a mother. Motherhood was something that Betty had to learn and she found it challenging. Paradoxically, though, it was her media construction as ‘Ma Betty’ that became a marker of her public identity as a universal mother-figure and it was her work as a house-mother that was to form the base of her heart politics.

Heilbrun (1997) suggests that as women age, they will often create another story within their life story and that it is only in hindsight, or through a biographer’s observant eyes that the concealed story is revealed or construed. Betty’s story as a mother was caught up in the conventions of her gendered identity as a woman. As with many other women, Betty searched for another identity - one that would give her a diversion from the domestic constraints of being a wife and mother. Betty sought to create another identity and role which offered her more possibilities and where she was more comfortable with herself. She was of a generation that ‘soldiered on’ and she intuitively knew that if she was to heal the inner self she needed to look beyond the doors of her comfortable home with Jim and her boys. The traditional story of women’s destiny - that of the marriage plot and ‘happy ever after’ - needed a sequel.

Betty’s sequel cast her in a questing sub-plot. Betty’s quest for selfhood created a public persona that brought her a degree of satisfaction that was missing from her private life. She went from anonymity in the home to recognition in the public domain. She no longer felt ‘nameless’ and obscure. The paradox of her public persona as the ‘Mother Teresa’ of Auckland did not escape her. It was an ironic twist that the motherless child who believed she was not equipped to mother others became so widely known to thousands as ‘mother’. While public recognition was never part of Betty’s quest for selfhood it nevertheless brought her something that she had
always wanted. It brought her a sense of being substantial, of having a vocation and a purpose. She had a need to belong to something bigger than herself. She had seen how the nuns at Saint Joseph’s had absolute faith in their God and spiritual path and she too sought a narrative that would bring meaning to her life. Her quest led her to explore her Māori identity in greater depth; it led her into local politics and activism; and it led her full circle back to the place of her wounding as a child. Betty knew what it was to be wounded as a child. She knew all about abuse and neglect and being abandoned. She knew about anger and hurt and pain, and she knew that her life path was to help others who had known these emotional caverns of anguish with the same intimacy as she had. Yet, paradoxically, Betty rarely told her own stories of abuse. Telling her story in the form of her biographical narrative gave her the opportunity to revive that forgotten, turned-into-stone part of herself and to review it with new eyes. She gained an insight into what motivated her to do the work she did, what caused her to seek other possibilities and to re-story her life.

Betty wanted her biography to be written for public consumption and she wanted it to help motivate others who had experienced what she did as a child. On another level though, her story provides an example of the diversity of women’s life experiences and, more specifically, Māori women’s life experiences. Betty’s biography offers a unique insight into one woman’s quest for self identity and selfhood but it can also be viewed as a form of social and historical consciousness. The historical and social context of her life enabled her to create a new story. The influences of feminism and the Māori Renaissance were two significant social movements that greatly impacted on her life. Had she lived in another time her story would in all likelihood have followed another path.

Betty’s biography must also be viewed in the wider context of other indigenous women’s writing: "In this time in our history the indigenous women of the world embark on a timely path. We are reclaiming the right
to speak for ourselves, to decide our own strategies and to plan our own futures" (Trask, 1991, p. 11).

The diversity of Māori women is reflected in our auto/biographical writing. Despite our differences, the medium of biography provides a common framework through which to intertwine our life stories and tell the stories of our experiences. It is a powerful and provocative medium and biographical research can be seen as a methodological catalyst, something which can assist Māori research to meet the objectives of kaupapa Māori and Māori feminist practice. Biography and biographical research also offer vital political wisdom, not only in the form they take but also in the content. To write from a kaupapa Māori and Māori feminist perspective implies a political underpinning, a desire to empower Māori at both individual and collective levels. In the telling of Māori biography we are all one blood, we are all bound by whakapapa. Betty's story was both her own, personal story and a story of location within whakapapa, iwi, hapu and whanau.

In Betty's biography her concept of the self conveys what Holstein and Gubrium (2000) term "the variable linkages and narrative slippages that exist between received cultural categories" (p. 108). Māori constructions of selfhood tend to be based on conceptualizations of whakapapa as the foundation of being, a conceptualization which defines Papatuanuku as spiritual mother and source of spiritual and temporal sustenance:

Whakapapa-based stories of selfhood do not rely on division, fractionalization or learning to attain their coherence. Whakapapa-based stories are centred around themes of physical and spiritual genealogy. The emphasis in these stories is on connection and inclusion. Within a whakapapa narrative, genealogical ties determine the nature of our being and provide roles, responsibilities, purpose and identity. Within this narrative, a group that is not genealogically-based, and therefore without an ultimate relationship to the land, carries no accountability to the past and no responsibilities to the future (Love, 1999, p. 72).
Traditionally, selfhood for Māori was indivisible from land, whakapapa and the spiritual system which governed the Māori world (Love, 1999). In contemporary Māori society, conceptions of Māori selfhood based on whakapapa and narratives of whanau, hapu and iwi remain fundamental. Betty Wark’s conceptions of self were articulated through a whakapapa-based narrative that connected her to her turangawaewae. She identified as Nga Puhi with the Hokianga as her papakainga. Not surprisingly, one of her final requests was that her body be taken back to the far North. She wanted to return to the Hokianga, where her whakapapa connected her. She wanted to make the journey ‘Home’.
Appendix i

Interview Themes

⇒ Sociological/historical context of the life
   • What historical material related to Betty Wark’s life? (e.g. the Depression, World War II, the Māori Renaissance of the 1970s).
   • What connections could be made between Betty’s life and aspects of the historical context of her life. For example, what was the impact of the Māori Renaissance on her life?
   • What sets of social relations existed within the historical context of Betty’s life? (e.g. relations between Māori and Pakeha, men and women).
   • Influences of religious beliefs, ethnicity, gender and class constructions within the context of the life.

⇒ Kinship
   • How did Betty define kinship and whanau (family)?
   • Betty’s relationships with her parents, siblings, other significant relatives; her partners, tamariki (children), mokopuna (grandchildren), her extended whanau.

⇒ The Public and Private in Work and Politics
   • What values did Betty perceive as being ascribed to Māori women’s work?
   • What factors contributed to the media exposure of her public work?

⇒ Sociology of Māori Girls’ Education
   • The dominant ideology in educational policy pertaining to the education of Māori girls in single sex Catholic schools during the 1930s and 1940s.
   • Hegemonic and counter-hegemonic notions of education and cultural reproduction – i.e. Pakeha cultural and ideological dominance over Māori and Māori initiatives such as the kohanga reo movement which challenged Western models of education.

The interview sessions were timetabled into chronological chunks from childhood to kuia (older woman) status and the themes created an overall structure for the interview questions. These initial interviews were
recorded and transcribed chronologically. The transcripts were faithful reproductions of the interview dialogue which included the natural digressions that may occur within personal conversations when topics deviate. Not unexpectedly, when Betty had been talking about certain memories these had triggered other recollections and the interview would digress from the focus topic. The sessions were undertaken in accordance with permission from the University of Auckland's Human Subject Ethics Committee.
Appendix ii

Betty was honoured with the following Awards:

- 1996, Trustees Executors Senior Achiever’s Award
- 1988, Woman of the Year
- 1986, Queen’s Service Medal
- 1984, Nuffield Scholarship to visit Great Britain to study their probation accommodation systems
- 1981, Altrusa Silver Apple 1978 - Community Worker of the Year Award
- Date unknown, Paul Harris Fellow, presented by the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International

The awards Betty was honoured with were largely for her political activism and community work through a variety of grassroots initiatives. One of the first community-based initiatives Betty became involved in was the Freemans Bay Advisory Committee. Betty continued to be involved in the close-knit community of Freemans Bay and Ponsonby for a number of years. She was secretary for the Napier Street School Committee, (now Freemans Bay Primary School), for approximately seven years and was an active member of the Māori Women’s Welfare League and the Māori Community Centre. She was also a founding member of the Tenants' Protection Association, an organisation set up to advise tenants of their legal rights.

Betty’s involvement with community organisations was extensive. She was an executive of Prisoner’s Aid, served on the Auckland Children’s Board and continued to work for Arohanui Incorporated from its inception in 1974 (when it was known as Aroha House) until her death in 2001.

1 Freemans Bay and Ponsonby are inner-city suburbs of Auckland, New Zealand.
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