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**BLACK JAMAICAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES,
PERCEPTIONS AND RESPONSES TO ABUSE FROM MALE SPOUSES
AND PARTNERS: THE IMPACT OF SLAVERY.**

by

Margaret Ann Vernon, B.A. Hon., B.S.W.

A Thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Social Work

School of Social Work

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

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“Black Jamaican Immigrant Women’s Experience, Perceptions and Responses to Abuse from Male Spouses and Partners: The Impact of Slavery”

submitted by Margaret Vernon, B.S.W.

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Social Work

Thesis Supervisor

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Date

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the perceptions, experiences and responses of a small sample of Black Jamaican immigrant women regarding abuse from male spouses and partners. The study posits that these are influenced by race, gender, class and economy constructs that emerged from Caribbean slave history and European colonial development. A Caribbean feminist perspective informs the analysis of: the treatment of slave women in Caribbean society between 1650 and 1838; the relationships between slave women and men as well as that of slave women, white men and women; and the abuse experiences and perceptions of the respondents. I argue that the heritage of slavery has influenced the violence that resonates in the lives of Black Jamaican immigrant women. The development of a critical understanding of the context of the lives of these women is therefore necessary for identifying appropriate options for social work intervention strategies for this population.

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Chapter I

BLACK JAMAICAN WOMEN AND VIOLENCE IN THE HOME

Introduction

When I was about seven years old, while spending the night at a friend's house, I observed a family member being kicked and punched by the male "head of the household" as she lay on the floor. This experience opened my eyes to the reality of violence¹ in what bell hooks calls "intimate relationships" (hooks:1989:84) that is, relationships between spouses, partners, siblings, parents and children, that are supposed to be loving and supportive.

This kind of violence, also referred to as violence in the home, family violence, or domestic violence², is common not only to my own Jamaican culture, but also prevalent in many other cultures and societies around the world. Attempts to examine and address this issue have focused on approaches ranging from intra- and interpersonal, to societal (Martin,1978; Steinmetz,1987). What is clear is that the answer to dealing with this problem does not lie in any **one** of these spheres. The research to date on violence against women in the home suggests that this is a multi-dimensional phenomenon involving many spheres of the human experience (Gil,1971; Korbin,1981; Levinson,1989; Lockhart,1991; Steinmetz,1987).

Therefore, to understand and address this problem requires critical understanding³ of the dynamic interaction that exists between individuals, communities, and societies, and the ways in which violence in the home is perpetuated by that interaction. This, I believe, requires appreciation, not only of the individual and his/her intra-psychic functioning, but also of the individual's functioning within the society as a member of the community, and awareness of the society itself within which the individual is situated. As a way of contributing to this understanding, I will explore the ways in which Black⁴ Jamaican immigrant women perceive, experience, and deal with abuse⁵ from their Jamaican male partners or spouses, and the impact of the heritage of slavery on these perceptions, experiences and responses.

Violence in intimate relationships within the Jamaican context, indeed within any context, is not limited to violence between spouses and partners, or to violence between heterosexual couples. In fact, there is a growing body of literature which documents the prevalence of violence in lesbian relationships (Brand and Kidd, 1986; Leeder, 1994; Lobel, 1986). It can also happen to any family member, as indicated earlier, regardless of age. Nor is violence against Jamaican women limited to Black Jamaican women, or to the domestic sphere. It also occurs in intimate relationships involving other races, castes, and classes, in social,

political and economic relationships within the broader community, and society at large. Kelly (1988) suggests that these different areas (eg. rape, incest, harassment) and forms (eg. physical, sexual, verbal) of violence are visible manifestations along a continuum, of types of sexual coercion used by men against women.

This 'violence as a continuum' approach also highlights the multi-dimensionality of the problem, and I believe that in any work on violence done to women by men, it is important to be aware of these differing contexts within which violence occurs, and the connections between them. However, it may not always be possible to give equal attention to all these facets at once. Hence, the focus of this work is on violence which involves heterosexual spouses and partners. Any omission regarding other experiences of violence, in the remaining body of this work, does not constitute a denial of them as important, but as a recognition of the need to maintain the focus of this work.

The Problem and Its Importance.

Black Jamaican women, like other women of the Caribbean, share a peculiar historical heritage that has a significant impact on their values, perceptions, and responses to events in their lives. This heritage contains within it complex and simultaneous social relationships of race, class, economy and

gender that emerged out of the specific patterns and practices of Caribbean slave history and European colonial development. I argue that this heritage is a significant factor in the multi-dimensionality of violence in the lives of these women.

When Black Jamaican women migrate to Canada and experience abuse from their Jamaican male partners or spouses, they are often reluctant to access formal support systems available to them in Canada. Some of this reluctance, I believe, is influenced by the understandings that they have inherited from slavery regarding 'white people'.⁶ These understandings may generate concerns about whether they can trust people who, historically, have exploited and ridiculed them, and whether they want to divulge their vulnerabilities to these people. Some of the reluctance may also be a result of actual experiences they may have encountered when they attempted to access support services. These include interactions between them and service providers that result in the women feeling, like many other Blacks, as somehow personally deficient (Katirai, n.d.). Furthermore, temporary solutions such as women's shelters may have left them feeling isolated and even more vulnerable (ibid).

Effective social work practice requires that the full context of people's lives be considered when examining their problems and proposing solutions to help them deal with those

problems. Yet a critical understanding of the heritage of slavery and its impact on the perceptions, attitudes and responses of Black Jamaican immigrant women, is not clearly reflected in existing intervention approaches designed to help them address the problem of violence from their male spouses or partners. I contend that an approach needs to be developed and integrated into practice, which allows for the multi-dimensional levels of violence to be understood and addressed. These include race, class, gender, history, and economy.⁷ I believe that this kind of critical understanding will help service providers and these women to clarify appropriate approaches, and will enhance the effectiveness of efforts to empower the women to deal effectively with the violence they experience.

Furthermore, in a society that has traditionally viewed all Blacks as inferior, there is still limited factual information concerning this population. Consequently, in many cases, interactions between Blacks and many members of the dominant group are often based on myths, inaccurate perceptions and stereotypes. This frequently leads to prejudicial treatment and discriminatory intervention practices (Katirai, n.d.; Razack, 1995; Solomon, 1976). This is particularly relevant for Black Jamaican immigrant women who may need to access the formal social services system for assistance in dealing with abusive relationships. A critical

understanding of the historical context of their lived experiences may help to remove some of the discriminatory practices that may occur. It may also further empower these women to undertake action to break the cycle of abuse, while maintaining their dignity.

Political Stance

As a Black Jamaican immigrant woman, I am concerned about the images and realities of violence between our men and women. I am convinced that these inhibit our ability to work together for healing and empowerment within the Black community. Black Jamaican immigrant women face even greater stress in the dichotomy between leaving abusive relationships, and guilt for not standing in unity with the Black community and with their Black partners in the struggle against racism. This is a dilemma that I, as a professional social worker and a Black woman, believe should be removed from the lives of women dealing with abuse. It is my hope that this work, along with other efforts by others, will aid the process of their healing, empowerment and freedom.

Research Statement

I contend that Black Jamaican immigrant women's perceptions, definitions, experiences and responses to abuse from their male Jamaican partners or spouses are influenced by the particular race, class, gender and economy constructs that

emerged out of the specific patterns of Caribbean slave history and European colonial development. Hence, this study will explore: 1) the ways in which some Black Jamaican immigrant women perceive, experience, define, and deal with abuse from their Jamaican male spouses or partners; and 2) how these are influenced by the Jamaican heritage of slavery. In addressing this topic, the following questions will be examined. What are the women's perceptions and experiences of abuse from male spouses or partners? How do they define this abuse? How did/do they respond to it? How did they seek, access and use help in Jamaica? How did/do they seek, access and use help in Canada? How is the Jamaican heritage of slavery reflected in these perceptions and behaviours? How are the social relations of race, class, gender and economy related to the women's experiences, perceptions, definitions and responses?

The goals of the study are: 1) to facilitate critical understanding of the context of the lives of Jamaican immigrant women who experience abuse from their male spouses or partners; 2) to encourage the development of a model that may enhance the appropriateness and effectiveness of intervention strategies and alliances. The purpose is to examine the heritage of slavery to determine connections between this and the way the problem is experienced, defined and addressed by some Black Jamaican women immigrants in

Canada. As this is an exploratory study with a very small sample, the findings are not generalizable, nor are they intended to be. However, it is hoped that they will provide some insight into these issues, and an impetus for further study in an area that has significance for a specific population who live and deal with abuse.

Propositions

The first proposition that I make in this study is that the perceptions, experiences and responses of Black Jamaican immigrant women regarding abuse from their male partners and spouses are impacted by the heritage of slavery. This heritage encompasses an understanding of Caribbean colonialism deriving from slavery, with Jamaica as part of the periphery of European metropolitan expansion in the interest of the latter (Brizan,1984; Girvan,1988; Lindsay,1980; Lowenthal,1972; Walker, J.W.,1984; Wedderburn,1991; Williams,1966).

The second proposition is that mainstream theoretical models and treatment approaches generally used with Black Jamaican immigrant women to address violence from male spouses or partners, do not adequately reflect their reality and therefore have limited meaning for them. These models do not begin from where these women are, because they do not contain a critical understanding of the impact of the heritage of slavery on the lives of the women. Hence the women experience

difficulty with these approaches. This deficiency also limits the range of options made available to them. Moreover, inherent in these treatment approaches, are structural racism and classism, which the women intuitively tune in to, having been acculturated to these dynamics as a result of their own heritage of slavery. This often results in either their reluctance to use existing services, as well as their limited use, or discontinued use, of the services.

A third proposition of this thesis is that a critical understanding, or awareness, of the heritage of slavery will help clarify appropriate approaches, and enhance the effectiveness of efforts intended to empower the women to deal effectively with the abuse they experience.

Definition of Terms⁸

The term critical understanding is used in this work to denote a particular understanding of the complexity, or multidimensionality, of abuse in the lives of Black Jamaican immigrant women. A critical understanding of the heritage of slavery and its impact on the women requires appreciation of the specific constructs of class, race, gender, and economy that emerged from Caribbean slave society, one's positioning within these constructs, and action **with** the women to remove oppressive elements of their reality (Freire, 1970). It contains within it the notion not only of awareness of the

historical relationships as they have evolved, but also insight into how these relationships continue to evolve within the professional helping relationship. It means critically assessing how one's intervention has the potential to perpetuate the oppression that may maintain the abuse. In other words, it requires the development of critical consciousness that involves both reflection and action, through the process of real dialogue (Freire, 1970).

Mere information can be co-opted, and corrupted. To know about the heritage of slavery in the shaping of the ideology of the abused Black Jamaican immigrant woman is insufficient. Even Black Jamaican women in formal support roles, who are providing support to other Black Jamaican immigrant women, may hold racist, sexist and classist notions, and perpetuate them. For they themselves have undergone the education of violence inherent in the heritage of slavery, that prepares them to service the oppressor (Gladwin and Saidin, 1980; Moreau, 1996). They, too, need to reflect on their own positioning within the ideological constructs that maintain oppression and violence. Hence the necessity for critical understanding for **anyone** working with women who share this heritage.

Violence, is a somewhat problematic term, as the literature on violence against women suggests (Kelly, 1988; Levinson, 1989; Walker, G., 1990; Yllo and Bograd, 1990).⁹ Kelly

(1988) presents a definition of sexual violence which she believes captures the range of violence perpetrated by men against women, without making the meaning so broad that it lacks use for feminist analysis. However, while I find this definition of 'sexual violence' helpful, the use of the term 'sexual' obscures, for me, understanding and therefore discussion, of the ways in which violence intersects at the points of gender, race, class, and economy, and the ways the first is mediated by the others. I have therefore chosen to use the word in terms of a broader understanding of violence as interactions which contain the use of force or power which are experienced as harmful or damaging. Hence, any action or treatment that contains the application of force or power, and which the Black Jamaican immigrant woman experiences as harmful to her, is violence. Unlike Gelles and Strauss (1979) I do not limit this understanding to physical acts. It includes institutional or systemic treatment that impacts in a negative way. It may also, from the woman's perspective, be perpetrated or experienced by individuals, groups or institutions. It is intended to capture, for example, the violence which results from individual, as well as, institutional and systemic racism. This usage allows me to describe the complexity of the violence that Black women experience as a result of abusive relationships with partners and spouses.

Abuse is violence which occurs between individuals only, that is, individual-to-individual manifestations of violence. In this work, the focus is on abuse that is experienced by the woman, from the man with whom she has, or has had, a sexually intimate relationship. The abuse may include any physical, economic, emotional, verbal or spiritual treatment, from another person, that the woman interprets as harmful or damaging to her.¹⁰ In this sense, violence includes abuse, but is not limited to abuse.

The terms spouse and partner are used to identify the relationship that the women share with the men who have, or are abusing, them. A husband is a Jamaican man who is, or was, legally married to the woman who is participating in the study. A partner is a Jamaican male who is or was involved with a participant, and who may or may not have lived with her. The term is a convenient one used to capture the richness of the varying male/female sexual relationships that abound in the Jamaican culture. These include: visiting relationships where there are no children; visiting relationships where the couple are involved in a "steady sexual relationship which has resulted in a child or children but are not living together" (Senior, 1991:83); and common law relationships where they are living together but not legally married.

The term multi-dimensionality acknowledges the complexity of the problem of violence against women in the home. The term indicates that there is a dynamic interaction between the intrapsychic, interpersonal and societal spheres that impacts on the violence which the women experience. In this work, I argue that this nexus of multi-dimensionality includes the social relations of gender, class, race and economy that is derived from Caribbean slave history, and the patterns of European colonial development which is a significant part of the heritage of slavery.

Organization of the Material

The material is organized according to the manner in which my argument develops. Chapter I introduces the problem of Black Jamaican immigrant women and violence in the home. It outlines: some of the underlying assumptions that form the basis of the study; the goals of the study; the way the problem is defined and the reasons for defining it in this way.

Chapter II describes the theoretical approach that guides the study. This chapter also expands on some of the ideas outlined in the introduction.

Chapter III examines the problem of violence in the home for Black Jamaican immigrant women to Canada through an exploration of some of the relevant literature.

Chapter IV describes the methodology employed in this work. It identifies some of the issues and concerns that arose in the process of research, how these were addressed, and the perceived impact on the study.

Chapter V provides information from the literature on Caribbean slavery regarding the experiences and responses of slave women, as well as some of their interactions with other members of the society. It also highlights the race, gender, class and economic contexts of the lives of slave women.

Chapter VI presents the stories of the women who were interviewed. It recounts their understandings, experiences and responses to violence in their lives.

Chapter VII compares the information from the literature with the participants' descriptions of experiences and observations. It also briefly reviews the naming process with the intent of reclaiming actions and attitudes of resistance and survival that were previously named by the oppressor through ignorance, or in order to dehumanise and instill the psychological control necessary to maintain the oppression.

Chapter VIII discusses some of the implications of this study for social work, and includes some suggestions for the development of a model that could be used for empowerment intervention with Black Jamaican immigrant women. It ends with suggestions for additional research that may be needed in the area.

Chapter II

A CARIBBEAN FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

I employ a Caribbean feminist perspective as a framework for developing an appreciation of the perceptions, experiences and responses of Black Jamaican immigrant women to violence, and the way in which the heritage of slavery has influenced these behaviours. The term, Caribbean feminist perspective, is used here to describe what I perceive in the literature as an interweaving of Black feminist thought, with what I refer to as a Caribbean development standpoint. These offer a critique of feminist thought that reflects a white, North American and European upper and middle class analysis of gender, as incomplete and oppressive for those who fall outside of this "centre" (hooks, 1989).

Black Feminist Thought

Black feminist thought is born out of the lived experiences of women who share the heritage of the African diaspora, and critical reflection by members of the group on their lived experiences. This body of knowledge and reflection postulate a complex, simultaneous relationship between various forms of oppression, specifically race, class and gender, that create unique problems for Black women (Amos

and Parmar,1984; Collins,1990; Foster,1992; hooks,1984; Hull, Scott and Smith,1982). At the core of this critical reflection are a number of key themes. These include: recognition of the "legacy of struggle"; "the interlocking nature of race, class and gender" issues, the reclaiming and redefinition of self by those who are living out the struggle, and the importance of the lived experience (Collins,1990:23).

These themes highlight the tension that infuses Black women's realities as they struggle to survive and resist impositions of whiteness and maleness which require them to live simultaneously in separate and contradictory worlds (Collins,1990). They also allow for an accounting of the diversity of experiences that shape the lives of Black women (Moreau,1996). Thus, Black feminist thought challenges the notion of an essential, or universal experience of being woman as:

... 'imperial feminism', that is, the imposition of a particular western prioritization of issues as the correct feminist political stand, which ignores the specificities of different cultural and political contexts... (Chhachhi,1988: 76).

Imperial feminism silences, and removes from the discourse, women who are not white, or located in the upper or middle classes, by emphasizing sexism as the primary oppression. Part of this exclusion has resulted from the focus on only those issues of pertinence to white women located within a particular class construct. However, the exclusion also comes

out of the inability of imperial feminists to comprehend the juxtapositions of race, class and gender because these are not part of their lived experience (hooks,1984). This results in their failure, or refusal, to recognise their own racist and classist assumptions.

In challenging imperial feminism, Black feminist thought emphasizes the centrality of slavery and colonialism, and hierarchical class rendering, to the marginality of Black women:

Similarly, the construction of femininity cannot be understood without elaborating the process by which white femininity was constructed historically in opposition to black sexuality and femininity (Chhachhi,1984:78).

Acknowledgement of the centrality of slavery, colonialism and class hierarchy, facilitates a recognition of the ways in which Black women recreate the threads that allow them to survive contradictions. One of these is the involvement of Black women as leaders and active participants within Black, male dominated institutions and communities, even while they struggle to confront the sexism within the Black community. It is a statement about the legacy of "shared resistance" that Black men and women have, which allows them to stand together to confront racism, and to refuse to see attacking Black men as the way to combat sexism within the Black community (hooks,1984).

Thus, Black feminist thought provides a critical starting place for reflection on the complexity of the lives of Black Jamaican immigrant women. It facilitates an analysis that allows discussion of the multi-dimensionality of the abuse which Black Jamaican immigrant women face as it addresses a history of slavery and colonialism. A legacy of oppression is a critical starting point for examining the violence that Black Jamaican women experience, and their responses to that violence. Writings by Caribbean women and men (Antrobus, 1988; Bush, 1990; Ellis, 1990; Mills, 1991; Mohammed and Shepherd, 1988; Shepherd, Brereton and Bailey, 1995) build on this concept, to develop a perspective that is relevant for Caribbean women. It is this perspective which I refer to as a Caribbean development standpoint.

A Caribbean Development Standpoint

A Caribbean development standpoint is not one clearly defined position, but an interweaving of thoughts, ideas and experiences that reflect the unique historical development of the Caribbean (Beckford, 1975; Curtin, 1968; Hodge, 1986; Lewis, 1986; Manley, 1974; Mohammed and Shepherd, 1988; Walker, J.W., 1984). It addresses a particular form of external socio-economic domination and control that existed and continues to exist. The social, political and economic environment that emerged as a result, maintains the patterns of violence that Black Jamaican women experience.

Included in this standpoint is the understanding of a region where, in many of the islands, particularly Jamaica, most of the indigenous peoples were annihilated, and then replaced with peoples of colour from very different parts of the world to serve an economic purpose for wealthy, white Europeans (Curtin, 1968; Lowenthal, 1972; Morrissey, 1989; Nettleford, 1979; Watson, 1979; Witter and Beckford, 1982; Walker, J.W., 1984). The primary replacements for this economic purpose were imported Black Africans who were coercively introduced into the Caribbean between 1502 and 1807, when the slave trade was abolished. The ideological constructs and practices that facilitated their forcible removal from Africa and the maintenance of their brutal subjugation, were founded on white supremacy, Black inferiority and sub-humanity bordering on bestial natures, and the accumulation of material wealth for white elites. This allowed for the physical, psychological, spiritual and sexual exploitation of Blacks during slavery, particularly Black women, that resulted in a society with complex juxtapositions of race, caste, class, gender and economy. These juxtapositions often resulted in simultaneous positions of power and inferiority, equality and inequality not only within the society, but also within individuals.

Also integral to this standpoint, is the understanding that Caribbean economies benefit foreign interests in a manner

that maintains extra-Caribbean economic oppression (Hodge, 1986). This exploitive relationship is rooted in the patterns of economic activity that developed during slavery. The pattern of draining the Caribbean 'periphery' for the benefit of the developed white 'metropolis' continues, in the form of unequal exchange in international trade and foreign debt, and technological dependency on the metropolis (Girvan, 1988). This contributes to a particular motif which influences the patterns of violence that women experience:

...We are never far away from the context of hunger, unemployment, economic depression...desperation struggle and sheer survivalism...[that] provides the frame for the domestic encounter of male and female. So the negative stereotype of women is not an archetype emanating transhistorically from the male psyche, but an assumption with "particular rootage in colonial ex-plantation societies" where socio-economic circumstances encouraged women to develop a "coping strategy of having several spouses over a period of time", and male insecurity arises from the discrepancy between the internalized "bourgeois ideal" of a nuclear family with a male breadwinner and the reality of high unemployment and a preponderance of non-Western family structures (Rohlehr, in Mohammed and Shepherd, 1988, quoted in Mills, 1991:21-22).

Moreover, it allows for an accounting of some of the particular response strategies that the women employ. One example of this is indicated in the quote above. Another is the critical role that higglering¹¹ plays, both to women's survival in the face of violence, and to the survival of the Jamaican economy. One may fail to recognise this if one lacks understanding of the vulnerability of the Jamaican economy to extra-Caribbean economic control. One may also fail to

appreciate the reality that there is a continued external force that entrenches the violence, as well as the survival and resistance responses that emerged during slavery. These entrenched responses do not necessarily disappear when Jamaican men and women migrate.

This standpoint is therefore useful in an analysis that explores the relationship between economy, race, class, gender, and violence in the lives of Black Jamaican immigrant women. Violence for the women in this context includes violence from their men as well as from external, white, imperialist economic domination (Joseph, 1980:157). Moreover, it uncovers another dimension of the violence: extra-Caribbean economic oppression fosters mediation of the violence through the men in a way that redirects change efforts away from the real targets. This mediated violence, like the responses, does not necessarily change when Black Jamaican women migrate to Canada. In fact, some of the patterns may be replicated. If one is able to identify the patterns for what they are, it may facilitate effective responses that help to limit or remove the violence.

Hence, a Caribbean feminist perspective validates the lived experience of the Black Jamaican immigrant woman at the nexus of race, class, gender and economy, while emphasizing the special place that Caribbean slavery and external economic

control has in the lives of the women today. It confronts the limitations of imperial feminism to account for the full reality of Black Caribbean and Jamaican women by its recognition that gender is not the essential issue. It is only one of a number of essential issues for Black Jamaican immigrant women. This perspective also serves to highlight the juxtapositions and dissonance that arises from living simultaneously in separate and contradictory worlds. Moreover, it acknowledges the accommodation to these contradictions that is necessary to survival.

Chapter III

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this section, I explore some of the relevant literature dealing with the problem of violence against women in the home for Black Jamaican immigrant women living in Canada. The exploration is neither general, nor exhaustive. I focus primarily, though not exclusively, on literature pertaining to violence that occurs between men and women who are spouses or partners. The area of focus is further limited to literature which addresses the experience of women, not men.

Violence Against Women in the Home

The literature dealing with violence against women in the home indicates that violence between spouses exists across many, if not most, cultures (Counts, Brown and Campbell, 1992; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Gelles and Cornell, 1983; Levinson, 1989). Levinson, for example, in his study of 90 societies, found that wife beating occurred in most of the societies studied, while Masumura in his study of 86 primitive societies, discovered the existence of varying degrees of wife abuse in 90% of those societies (Levinson, 1989; Masumura, 1979). Furthermore, this prevalence is not limited to so-called "primitive" or folk societies. Other

studies done specifically on western industrialized societies indicate a similar trend (Dobash and Dobash,1979; Gelles and Cornell,1983) .

Problems with definition, operationalization and measurement have been noted in the literature (Campbell,1985; Counts, Brown and Campbell,1992) . For instance, frequency and exclusivity differences in determining what constitutes wife beating, have been noted. Another issue of concern is the reliance on secondary sources like cross-cultural data banks. Here, the documentation of wife beating is incidental, and the prevalence of male authors and male informants may have led to limited perspective and incorporation of underlying male assumptions (Campbell,1985; Reiter,1975, cited in Campbell,1985) . These methodological issues reflect the variability in the range, diversity and frequency of the problem, as well as some of the difficulties present in gathering, compiling and interpreting data of this magnitude. They do not negate the existence of the problem. It is clear from the literature that women experience violence at the hands of their intimate partners, whether the violence is culturally sanctioned or not, whether it occurs only once or frequently in the relationship, and whether minimal or significant harm occurs.

Moreover, evidence of this kind of violence has been found in many historical documents, recent to remote. For example, Roman law codified justification for a husband killing his wife for such acts as adultery, drinking wine, or other inappropriate behaviour, and English common law of 1768 gave a husband the right to physically chastise his spouse for what he considered misbehaviour (Hampton, Gullotta, Adams, Potter and Weissberg, 1993; Steinmetz, 1987). The problem itself is therefore neither recent, nor specific to certain societies or groups, though specific manifestations may be thus located.

In attempting to come to grips with the problem, different ideas have been put forward and examined regarding the sources of the problem and the procedures for eliminating it. These encompass intra-personal, inter-personal and societal (Martin, 1978; Steinmetz, 1987; Walker, L., 1984). Intra-personal approaches include studies that focus on individual psychopathology such as mental illness, neurological dysfunction, or hormones. Interpersonal factors like frustration, family interaction patterns, or learned responses have been the focus of other studies. Factors such as belief systems, or widespread cultural, social or political practices, have been the focus of societal approaches.

Feminist Perspectives.

Feminists argue that the prevalence of wife abuse, as well as other forms of violence against women, within the domestic and the broader social sphere, reflect the structured dimensions of gender and power that have existed in the relations between men and women throughout history and across cultures (Davidson, 1978; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Martin, 1983). Simply put, men beat their wives in order to maintain male dominance in the home, and because the formal and informal social and institutional arrangements facilitate their doing so. While some men also experience violence at the hands of their female partners, it is women who are disproportionately subjected to violence from their intimate partners (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Kelly, 1988; Okun, 1986; Yllo and Bograd, 1990). When women attack men in intimate contexts, it is often a response to what they are experiencing, that is, action undertaken to defend themselves (Kelly, 1988; Hampton, et al, 1993; Yllo and Bograd, 1990).

The feminist analysis of wife beating, in its critique of the patriarchal system that encourages and rewards male dominance over women, firmly locates the problem within the social and political sphere, rather than primarily in interpersonal or intra-psychic activities (Hampton, et al., 1993). Feminist analysis does not, however, discount these latter two, but see them as linked to the broader social

context. Since its identification by feminists (Martin,1983; Pizzey,1974) as an issue for social concern, much has been done through research and the introduction of services to heighten awareness of the critical nature of the problem and to attempt to address it, albeit with limitations (Buzawa and Buzawa,1992; Hofeller,1983; Walker, L.,1984; Yllo and Bograd,1990) .

Black Women and Violence

However, in feminist literature on violence against women, much less attention has been given to the specific issues surrounding the occurrence of violence in the homes of visible minority populations, such as Black women. The assumption that appears to be made by prevailing feminist literature on abuse in the home is that the problem is primarily one of unequal gender relationships resulting from patriarchy (Davidson,1978; Dobash and Dobash,1979; Martin 1983). Black feminist thought (Amos and Parmar,1984; Chhachhi,1988; Collins, 1990; hooks,1984; Vorst et al, 1989) challenges this approach as limiting, offensive and oppressive. Black women writers understand themselves as differently positioned because of race, gender and class issues arising from their different historical and development experiences. Hence, while Black and other women share the common experience of abuse, perceptions and responses are different for Black women because of this different

positioning, and the different levels on which they experience oppression (Marsh,1993). These juxtaposed dimensions of violence emphasize the complexity of oppression which Black women live, and the multi-dimensionality of the problem of abuse for them.

In non-feminist literature on violence against women in the home, a little more attention has been given to the abused Black woman, but only marginally so (Coley and Beckett,1988; Hampton and Gelles, 1994; Lockhart,1991). Whatever attention has been given to this population has produced conflicting results. In some studies, the conclusion is that there is more violence in Black families than there is in white families; in other studies, the reverse, or no difference, is noted (Coley and Beckett,1988; Hampton and Gelles,1994; Lockhart,1991). While researchers acknowledge that any differences identified may have more to do with income, education and employment than anything intrinsic to race, some of them have gone ahead anyway and stated conclusions "without explicitly considering class differences that allowed stereotypical assertions about racial differences to go unchallenged" (Lockhart,1991:87). This kind of approach has served to perpetuate the violence done to Black women by maintaining stereotypic racist notions through the stamp of scientific approval.¹² This occurs precisely because of the

failure to address the multi-dimensionality of abuse for Black women that includes the historical specificity of slavery.

Other research on abuse from cross cultural perspectives verify some of the argument of the multi-dimensionality of abuse (Counts, Brown and Campbell,1992; Hampton,1991; Hoffman, Demo and Edwards,1994). These indicate that certain socio-cultural and economic factors within different cultures have been found to be associated with the existence of abuse of women by their male spouses or partners. Some of these include "sexual economic inequality, violent conflict resolution, male domestic authority, divorce restrictions for women" (Levinson,1989:88), absence of female autonomy, absence of female coalitions, absent male parent, and general acceptance of violence (Campbell,1985; Counts, Brown and Campbell,1992; Hoffman, Demo and Edwards,1994). However, it should be noted that findings on specific theoretical explanations for the existence of the problem are not necessarily consistent (Campbell,1985). In addition to this, the nature of this kind of research, and the type of data usually accessed, pose other problems, as noted earlier. These actually attest to the complexity of the issue, and the need to look beyond single, linear connections.

Black Jamaican Immigrant Women and Violence

Cross cultural literature on abuse may provide a context for considering the multi-faceted nature of abuse and Black Jamaican women, and feminist literature calls attention to the gendered aspects of the problem. However, attention to the historical dimension of the problem as it relates to Black women, appears to be severely limited. Collins (1990) and Russel, Wilson and Hall (1993) fill some of this gap in their discussions of stereotypic perceptions germinated by the legacy of oppression that play a part in the abuse experienced by Black women. Collins, for example, explores the dynamics of silence predicated on the need for solidarity and the images of female strength within the Black community, as well as the intersecting dimensions of sexuality at the nexus of race and gender. Russell, Wilson and Hall approach the subject from the standpoint of skin colour and the impact of this on abuse of Black women. For Black women, and particularly Black Jamaican women, this history is critical to an appreciation of the multi-dimensionality of violence in their lives. For the violence they experience from their intimate male partners, and the way they respond to it, is coloured by that history:

To speak of Caribbean male dominance in the context of slavery is to parody the concepts of power and dominance....There could be no bond of sisterhood between the black slave woman and Annie Palmer, the female slave owner of Rose Hall.(Brodber, in Mohammed and Shepherd,1988:143)

A perspective that ignores this dimension of history in favour of a perspective that sees men in general, in opposition to women in general, is inadequate, or at best, incomplete (Mills,1991) .

For the Black Jamaican woman, the struggle to understand and deal with abuse requires the integration of an "historically specific analysis" (Chhachhi,1984:78) which takes into account the peculiar relationships of race, gender, class and economy which emerged from the historical and developmental context of Jamaica as a Caribbean island. Integral to this analysis is the historical context of over 300 years of slavery, and the impact that it has had on the formation and maintenance of violence experienced by the Black Jamaican woman, and her methods of survival and resistance. Women historians writing on the Caribbean (Beckles,1989; Bush,1990; Mathurin,1975; Morrissey,1989) point out, for example, the ways in which the social and economic relationships of slavery fostered complex structures of subordination, power and control. From these emerged simultaneous occurrences of equality, inequality and superiority in the relationships between men and women, and people of different shades of skin colour.

These have imprinted on the women, particular understandings of how they should act in relation to others

based on the race, class, colour and gender of others, and their own race, class, colour and gender in relation to those others. As immigrants to Canada, they carry these understandings with them, and it is these understandings which, I believe, shape their interactions with members of their own community, as well as those of the dominant society. The literature on abused immigrant and visible minority women reflect some of this understanding, but limits it to racism, and present cultural practices, without examining the historical roots and the resulting implications (Katirai, n.d.; Mama, 1989; Martin and Mosher, 1995; Razack, 1995; Ruitort and Small, 1985; Thrasher, 1994; Triseliotis, 1972). However, these stress the necessity of attention to cultural patterns. They therefore come close to facilitating appreciation of some of the contextual understandings that influence the lives of Black Jamaican immigrant women. It is these contextual understandings, as they relate to slavery, that I believe are necessary for the formation of an effective working alliance between Black Jamaican immigrant women and those providing support, in order to help them address the abuse they experience.

Chapter IV

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The study is exploratory in nature. It employs a qualitative approach in which in-depth, face to face interviews were conducted, to explore the women's experiences, in their own voices, of past and/or current abuse by their male spouses or partners, their understanding of the abuse, and their methods of coping. The aim is to capture the depth of the women's experiences, and explore the varied meanings of abuse in their lives.

Profile of the Women

Five women participated in the study. All of the women lived in Jamaica for at least 18 to 20 years before coming to Canada. Most left Jamaica and immigrated to Canada while in their mid to late 20's. All are Black Jamaican immigrant women who have lived in Canada for at least three years, and who are either permanent residents or Canadian citizens. All of the women had been in abusive relationships with Jamaican spouses or partners. For some of the women, the experiences of abuse included both spouse and partner. None of the women were presently in an abusive relationship, and for all of the women, the experiences occurred some time ago. They were from several different geographical communities, both in Jamaica and in Canada.

A limited sample size was selected for a number of reasons. As stated earlier, the study is an exploratory one, intended to capture the subjective experiences of the women, and hear their stories regarding their definitions of the contexts within which they live and experience violence. The aim was for depth, detail, individual meaning, and an understanding of their reality as they see it. The intent was not to identify generalizable conclusions, but to provide a starting point for further exploration (Patton:1990). It was also felt that the general distrust on the part of Black Jamaican immigrant women, their suspiciousness of documented information regarding themselves, and the sensitivity of the subject under discussion would impact on the willingness of many to participate. It did. Some of the women who initially expressed an interest in participating chose not to do so after some discussion. Some indicated their reasons, and others did not.¹³

A snowball sampling technique was used to recruit participants through personal contacts with friends, family, acquaintances and female contacts in Jamaican organizations. The aim was to recruit participants who not only met the selection criteria, but also had a wealth of experience in the areas on which data were collected (Patton,1990). Interviews were conducted in English and Jamaican dialect, according to the preferences of the women.

Data Collection Methods, Materials, and Instruments

In-depth interviews were conducted, using an interview guide (Patton, 1980) based on themes to be explored, in order to allow the women to tell their stories in their own words. This provided flexibility to follow up on common issues raised by the women during the course of the interviews. Themes explored the context in which the women grew up, their experiences and definitions of abuse, the ways they dealt with it, the supports they accessed and the reasons for accessing those supports (Appendix A). Interviews were tape recorded to ensure accuracy and minimize bias in recording and reporting of data.

Data Analysis

I conducted an inductive content analysis of the verbatim transcripts of interviews. Sections that were coded as individual datum included words and/or phrases that contained information on views and experiences of, and responses to, abuse; views and practices that reflected relationships derived from the heritage of slavery, as reported in the literature; and statements containing information on relationships between the two.

Transcripts were read repeatedly in order to identify individual segments of data, as well as emerging themes. The data were then organized and coded according to these themes.

Subsequent readings of the transcripts were undertaken in order to identify categories and sub-categories under which themes were then ordered. Themes, categories and sub-categories were compared to identify patterns and connections, and to ensure accurate organization of data within categories. The themes and categories were then compared with components of the research questions, as well as information derived from the literature, to determine consistency with the question the study explored (Guba and Lincoln, 1983; Patton, 1990). The aim was to identify parallels between: 1) the women's stories of their perceptions, experiences and responses; and 2) patterns of relationships between men and women, and responses to problematic situations, as described in the literature dealing with slavery. Interpretation of the data was based on the resulting parallels identified in the themes and sub-categories identified.

Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent.

I arranged meetings with each potential participant to discuss the study. The letter of introduction was presented at the first meeting. In some cases, at the request of the potential participant, both the letter of introduction and the consent letter were presented at the initial meeting. Some of the women also asked to see the interview guide at that time. The letter of introduction outlined the purpose of the

contact, time commitment required, confidentiality arrangements, and how the information will be collected and used (Appendix B). I discussed the contents of the letter with potential participants, and encouraged them to ask questions. I also offered them the opportunity to have subsequent meetings to discuss any other issues they might have had.

Once verbal commitment to participate was received, the letter of consent was presented for signing. This letter included the agreement that participants could: withdraw at any time if the situation becomes too difficult; choose not to answer questions; and have tapes and transcripts either destroyed or returned to them after analysis is completed. The letter of consent also stated that participants were agreeable to the taping of the interviews (Appendix C). The contents of the letter, and implications, were reviewed before the letter was signed.

It had not been my intent to provide the interview guide at all, nor to provide the consent letter on the very first meeting. I had felt that this would overwhelm potential candidates. However, I did so at the request of those who asked, for a number of reasons. First, I felt this was necessary for developing a trust relationship. Second, I felt that it was important to be as open with the women as they

desired. I also did not see this approach as negatively impacting the data collection. Further, I felt that it was crucial that those who actually participated did so enthusiastically, as that was most likely to facilitate depth and openness in the sharing.

I believe that working with the women in this manner did actually positively impact the richness of information given by those who did eventually participate. A few of the women indicated afterwards that they shared information with me that they had not shared with anyone else. One woman told me that I had access to very privileged information. Needless to say, I was honoured by the trust and openness they demonstrated.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The names of the those who referred potential participants were not disclosed, except to the potential participant, and this was done only with the consent of the person making the referral. All identifying information was deleted from the tape transcriptions and written reports. Tapes were kept locked up when not in use. Participants were given an opportunity to review quotes from the interviews that I wished to use in the report, with excerpts of the report showing the quotes in context, and a brief summary of the analysis. This was done so that the women could see how their words were being used. If they expressed objections or discomfort with particular quotes, I removed those from the

report. When they raised concerns about the way in which I used particular words, we discussed alternate expressions to see if a reasonable compromise could be reached. If someone was still uncomfortable, I removed the words entirely.

Risk and Safety Issues

Before recruitment began, I obtained written commitment for provision of counselling support from social workers with experience in the area of abuse (Appendix D). I made arrangements with the social workers to ensure that the support would be provided, free of cost, to participants. I provided for potential supports, information on issues that are significant to Jamaican immigrants in accessing services, and arranged for ways that they could contact me if they needed to ask further questions. The people providing the supports were aware that I would not share any information about the participants that was obtained from my contact with them. During recruitment, I explored with potential participants, how they wanted to address emotionally upsetting issues that might arise during interviews. Most of them actually indicated that they had their own supports that they would use if they felt the need. Participants were offered: their choice of interview setting; crisis support from me during the interview to deal immediately with emotionally upsetting issues that emerged; follow up phone calls to confirm that they were emotionally stable; and to see whether any additional help was needed. None of the women indicated

that they required any follow up support.

Deception

No deception was used at any time. Potential participants were informed, through the letter of introduction, and discussions, of the purpose of the study, and how information was going to be collected and used. I provided occasions for the women to ask questions about the research. Those who participated were offered a copy of the final draft of the work. Most of the women not only accepted the offer, some also requested copies of the transcript because they felt that it represented an important part of their journey through the violence, as well as part of their history. It was something that they wanted to preserve.

Factors That Impacted on the Study.

I am a professional social worker whose experience includes work with women survivors of abuse. I am also a Black, Jamaican, heterosexual, immigrant woman. While I have had no personal experience of abuse by a partner or spouse, I have witnessed abuse within the "intimate relationships" described by bell hooks (hooks, 1989). This starting place of shared language, culture and meanings did actually assist in the development of relationships with the women. These attributes also helped me to 'tune in' to some of the things that the women were saying, and therefore to ask questions that elicited useful information. Instances of this occurred

when the women were describing places, practices and relationships. Moreover, participants and I were able to enter what I refer to as the 'storyteller's rhythm'. By this I mean a state of mind where the person got 'on a roll' as it were, and positioned herself in the place where the memory almost became alive. This occurred when they dramatised some of the past actions, and spoke in the present tense about past events, and the times when they lapsed into Jamaican dialect. They, then, recalled events in detail, sometimes in pain, but most often with a sense of rediscovery.

My particular location did have an impact in terms of the women's expectations of my understanding. There were times, when I asked them to explain particular words or behaviours, that they stopped and looked at me as if to say "You mean you don't know?" On these occasions I dealt with the matter by stating that I wanted to hear how they interpreted those words and behaviours, and what they meant when they said it. There were also moments when I found myself beginning to participate by sharing information, and had to counter this by stopping what I was saying in mid sentence. I started to adopt the strategy of responding "umhm" to practically everything in order to refrain from saying anything, though this did not always work. In any case, I felt that some of this interaction and mutual sharing facilitated the interview process. I also felt that my experience in obtaining

information as a social worker also helped me to maintain, or quickly regain, the listening focus when it was necessary to do so.

Procedures to help me recognise biases included the use of field notes during the data collection process to document my observations, perceptions and reactions to events and situations, as well as my thoughts, feelings and general physical and emotional disposition. Field notes were also used to document my perception of behaviours and reactions of participants. Effort was made during interviewing, to avoid leading questions, statements and non-verbal behaviours. This was not always possible. However, I believe that because I was aware of the need to keep these in check, I was able to recognise times when I was in the process of asking possible leading questions, and again, stopped myself in mid sentence. Self monitoring was therefore a constant that I believe helped to maintain the integrity of the data.

Another factor that needs to be noted in this study, is the fact that I am also a Christian with a particular religious ideology that is impacted by my Catholic faith and a Black spiritual heritage. For this reason, I deliberately did not seek candidates from people who moved within my religious sphere, and none of the women interviewed were, to my knowledge, Catholics. Nor was my faith the reason for my

adding a question regarding spirituality to the interview guide.¹⁴ Once it was identified as an issue of concern, however, I was interested in those aspects of abuse that were related to obeah¹⁵, because I knew it to be a very common practice. Although my question elicited information regarding general understandings of God, it did not elicit, from my analysis of the data, information about how the women dealt with their abuse. Their responses about their experiences and how they responded were spontaneous renderings on their part. Furthermore, the women interviewed came from different communities, as indicated earlier. Yet all the women, without exception, talked about how they were influenced by their spirituality, in either their experiences, or their responses to the abuse. This is consistent with my own perception of Jamaican culture being strongly imbued with a sense of the reality and immanence of God.

Finally, discussion of findings included a discussion of some of the issues identified in the field notes. Participants' preview of quotes, and how their words were used in the report also helped in clarifying the extent to which descriptions and interpretations accurately reflected the reality of the women's experiences as they described it. I believe these methods also helped to protect the integrity of the data.

Chapter V

LIVING THE IMPOSSIBLE: SURVIVAL AND RESISTANCE IN THE LIVES OF JAMAICAN SLAVE WOMEN

Introduction

In this chapter, I begin discussion of the issue of violence in the lives of some Black Jamaican immigrant women by exploring the information obtained through the literature on slavery. The discourse is limited primarily to those aspects of slavery that have relevance for the subject being explored. Additional information is provided where it facilitates understanding of the context of slave society and the patterns that emerged. I also give attention to the distinctions I make between class and economy, as it is during slavery that the subtlety of this differentiation emerged.

Caribbean Slave Society

Caribbean slave society developed out of what Ramcharan (Ramcharan, 1990) identifies as "the twin evils of colonialism and economic exploitation". The first phase of this development was marked by the subjugation of the area's indigenous peoples, and the confiscation of whatever material wealth they had, for the enhancement of white European conquerors. In Jamaica, this resulted in the annihilation of the Arawak Indians, the original inhabitants between 1492 and 1600. Its culmination was the violent uprooting of people of

African descent, and their forcible relocation to the Caribbean through the Atlantic Slave Trade from 1502 to 1807, to meet the needs of white European colonisers wishing to exploit the potential of the land.

This tripartite crucible of white European domination and exploitation, an enslaved population of African origin, and intense land cultivation for economic gain, resulted in the complex, dynamic organism of Caribbean slave society which evolved between 1650 and 1834. Central to the functioning of this society, was the conditioning of every member of the society to the role each was to play. For whites, it was conditioning to the role of power and superiority over the Black person. Poor whites, who provided labour after the extermination of the original native peoples and before the entrenchment of slavery, and who were originally regarded as "white trash", "white niggers", "whores", "sluts", and "miserable sheep", became artisans, supervisors and overseers (Beckles, 1995:132; Beckles, 1989:29 & 37; Williams, 1966:17 & 19). For Blacks, it meant assuming the mantle of chattel, property. By law, this was their status, "goods and commodities within the Acts of Trade and Navigation" (Walvin, in Bonnett and Watson, 1990:29). This law, as well as several others, assigned them to the status of animals, as Walvin informs us:

...living stock, vis cattle and negroes, all of which are as much the property of the planter as it

is possible for the most authentic statutes of the British Senate and Colonial Assemblies to make them (Walvin, in Bonnett and Watson,1990:30)

Their education into the role of chattel took the form of "seasoning", a process whereby newly arrived slaves were branded, had their original name replaced with one given by the slave owner, and placed with selected, already seasoned slaves to learn the behaviours appropriate to property (Brathwaite, 1974). The purpose of this seasoning was to ensure the death of their humanity by isolating them from their original heritage through brute force, manipulation, and the instilling of the notion of Black inferiority and sub-humanity (Patterson,1982, cited in Bush,1990:3).

Sale of slaves was also an integral part of the system. These were generally public occasions, though private sales also occurred. Sales included slaves already owned, and those from the slave ships. During these occasions, those belonging to families, or sharing language, culture and customs, were intentionally separated, and auctioned, or sold by "scramble"(Brizan,1984). The latter was a procedure in which the slaves would be herded into a compound, and those buyers who had paid a scramble fee, would all be allowed in to take whatever slaves they were able to grab in the rush (ibid). During auctions, white male and female buyers alike, could be seen walking among the merchandise, fondling the bodies and sexual organs of male and female slaves as they would do with

livestock (Beckles, in Shepherd, Brereton and Bailey, 1995:132) .

The centre-periphery dichotomy was another dominant feature. At one level this meant that the Caribbean was treated as a colony of Britain, and as such, subject to the constitutional and social dictates of Britain. While distance mitigated some of this external control, it did not limit the drain of resources away from the area to the British metropolis. The most wealthy plantation owners absented themselves from the means of their wealth in such large proportions that houses of Assembly were considered to be governed by "hungry and illiterate...adventurers", white men who "could neither read nor write", and "an imbecile in the last stages of his dotage" (Lowenthal, 1972:36). Those with funds and class positions sent their children to Britain for education, some of whom did not return. Others left as soon as they had made sufficient funds to live comfortably back home. The wealth sourced through plantation economy found its way to Britain to support absentee landowners. The lives of slaves were drained for the metropolis:

...though I have killed 30 or 40 Negroes per year more...I have made my employer 20,30,40 more hogsheads per year than any of my predecessors...(Henry Coor, Testimony, cited in Lowenthal, 1972:42)

Their health was also left to the mercies of chance and the poor and meagre quality of food rations distributed

(Beckles, 1989; Bush, 1990; Morrissey, 1989). The apportionment of provision grounds to slaves allowed owners and managers to reduce both rations and their responsibility to feed slaves.

Another feature of the system was that laws were often activated or ignored by the controlling elite, for their own self-interest. This is particularly evident in the slave laws. Those laws which were designed to control and punish slaves for their resistance/disobedience or infringement of the "rights" of the white elite, were activated with merciless force:

Crimes of running away...of conspiracy...of rebellion...were often punished not only by death, but by death in its most atrocious forms, and sometimes by mutilation...for striking or insulting a white, slaves were subject to...whipping, mutilation, or death; and usually the law provided that if the white was in any way hurt or if the blow drew blood...the more severe punishments should be inflicted (Goveia, 1970:23 & 24)

One account reported the punishment of slaves caught in a rebellion:

...burning them, by nailing them down to the ground with crooked Sticks on every Limb, and then applying the Fire by degrees from the Feet and Hands, burning them gradually up to the Head, whereby their pains are extravagant. (Sloane, 1707, quoted in Bakan, 1990:22)

Those laws that were intended to protect and safeguard the life and limb, literally, of the slaves, were disregarded or constantly amended in favour of the white planter class so frequently that one wonders why any effort was made to write

them in the first place. For example, while there were laws regarding the intentional killing of slaves, "no master appears to have suffered the death penalty" (Goveia, 1970:29) though the offense, in some cases, was punishable by death. More often they were subject to fines, particularly if the slave that was killed was the property of another (Goveia, 1970). In cases where lesser offenses occurred, such as mutilation or dismemberment, the slave was limited in his or her defense because the testimony of a slave against a white person was not acceptable in a court of law (Goveia, 1970). When the Act of 1781, an ameliorated slave code designed to offer slaves some protection under the law, lapsed:

...the members of the Jamaican legislature were apparently too busy to bring in a new...slave law. But this did not prevent them from passing an act providing for parties to hunt runaway slaves, nor from reviving...laws under which thefts and destruction of horses...by slaves were punishable by death (Goveia, 1970:35).

Thus, the legal, economic, social and institutional structures reflected and maintained white privilege. However, the existing relationship of race and class domination and subjugation was, in many ways, symbiotically interrelated (Brathwaite, 1974; Bush, 1990). This symbiotic relationship between master and slave was nowhere more clearly articulated than in the body politic:

...white men and women alike could exercise such intimate power over their slaves through punishment, torture, and the control of their physical needs and environment. ... At an even

deeper level, sexuality itself became a fundamental component of the power white men exercised over both black and white women. Power...manifests itself in manifold forms comprising a 'dense network' of power relationships which could occasionally become inverted in, for instance, the power otherwise subordinate white women had over black men, or the ways in which black and coloured women could manipulate white men. ... Without the slave the master had no identity and no power to exert. (Bush,1990:26)

This reflects some of the complexities of the social relationships in slave society, and the ways in which juxtapositions of power and powerlessness co-existed. These juxtapositions did not only exist in the society, but also often within a single individual, as the author indicates.

Furthermore, from the raping of slave women, and sexual alliances between white men and Black women, evolved an intermediary group of people, predominantly also slaves though not always, who were hierarchically situated between elite white men, and Black slave women. These people were not simply "coloured" as they were in the American mainland, but were sambo, mulatto, quadroon, mustee, musteephino or mustiphini, quintroon, and octoroon¹⁶ (Brathwaite,1971:167, Higman,1976:139). Though their named designations signified their placement in the colour hierarchy, and where they were likely to be located in the class and social arrangements, this positioning was not immutable. Their class positions were mediated by colour and economy. Therefore class, or social status, and economy, or financial and material wealth

rooted in the economic system, were not inseparable.¹⁷ Those with colour (or lack of it), and more money and education than whites, were not on par with poor whites, some of whom were their employees (Brathwaite, 1971; Brereton, 1995; Heuman, 1981).

Whether they were slaves or free, and how they obtained their freedom, also dictated their class, though not necessarily their economy. If they were slaves who had been freed, they were still subject to the slave courts, not entitled to jury trial, and could not give evidence in court against coloureds and Blacks who were born free (Heuman, 1981). Moreover, Black women, by virtue of economic independence and association with particular whites, could attain to higher class positions than some poorer light skinned slaves. These further complicated the social and economic hierarchy through the introduction of very discrete divisions based upon colour, as well as economy, class and slave status. The "creation of a colour continuum" (Walker, 1984:4) that approximated, but did not fully parallel, the social, economic and power relationships that already existed, demonstrates the inherent contradictions, as well as the flexibility, of the system (Bush, 1990). This flexibility was however, always subject to the white elite.

Slave society therefore contained complex arrangements of race, class, gender and economy. At the very top of the

social, economic and political hierarchy were the wealthy, white, plantation owners, at the very bottom were the Black, female slaves. In between, existed permutations along these parameters that at times reflected conflicting roles and expectations. It is within this context that one needs to examine the situation of slave women and their patterns of survival and resistance in the face of legalized violence.

Slave Women in Caribbean Slave Society: Race, Class, Gender and Economy.

Slave women in Caribbean society were expected to, and did, function as the labour equal of male slaves. They performed the same tasks, worked as hard and as long, and were subject to the same punishments (Bush,1990; Beckles,1989; Mathurin,1975; Morrissey,1989). Their production performance was expected to continue even during the rigours of pregnancy. The only allowance made was that they were given some ease from labour in the last four to six weeks of pregnancy (Beckles,1989; Morrissey,1989). They were, however, expected to be back in the field within two weeks of giving birth (Morrissey,1989). Childbearing was also discouraged because of the cost of child rearing to the planter, and the loss of labour power from the mother, however short that period (Morrissey,1989). It was more profitable to purchase adult slaves.

In the area of punishment, there was one small assent to the gender difference between male and female slaves. If a pregnant female slave was found to be guilty of a punishment meriting death according to slave laws, she was allowed to live long enough to give birth to the child, then put to death (Bush,1990; Mathurin,1975). Should anyone consider this a humane and generous stance, let me point out that the death sentence for a slave could, and was, pronounced for actions such as theft, destruction of horses or cattle, for wounding a white person, and for "raising a hand against one of the children of his mistress" (Goveia,1970:35 & 45). Otherwise, like the male slaves, the female was subject to severe whippings resulting in skin lacerations, torture leading to death, and dismemberment (Bush,1990; Morrissey,1989). One of the extremely rare documented accounts of a slave woman, from her own perspective, described punishment she received from the wife of one of her owners:

...[she] caused me to know the exact difference between the rope, the cart-whip, and the cow-skin, when applied to my naked body by her own cruel hand. And there was scarcely any punishment more dreadful than the blows I received on my face and head from her hard heavy fist. (Prince,1831, ed. by Ferguson,1987, quoted in Shepherd, Brereton, and Bailey, 1995:70).

The most common form of punishment meted out for daily transgressions, was whipping, or lashings. Usually, this was done concurrent with divesting the slave of clothing, and tying her to a tree or other material, or pinning her to the ground, sometimes with the use of other slaves (Bush,1990).

Moreover, the flogging was often administered by one of the Black slave drivers:

...as his privileged position depended on his ability to conform...to the system, he showed no lenience...[on] one estate...a 'beautiful samboe girl of eighteen'...was tied up by both arms to a tree, naked and 'lacerated in such a shocking manner' by the whips of two negro drivers (Bush,1990:42)

This, and similar incidents, demonstrates the subjection of the female slave to other male slaves, and the class structure within the slave class. Moreover, it also emphasizes the deliberate oppositional placement of Black men and women to eradicate solidarity, and the manner in which slave men and women were further psychologically brutalised. In a very real sense, they had to learn to hate each other, not only to be privileged by the "massa", but also to survive. The deliberate oppositional placement of Black men and women and the fostering of hatred among them, also ensured the safety of the white elites.

Following the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, the reproductive roles of slave women became pre-eminent, as plantation owners and managers sought to maintain their labour force. Their reproductive powers were exploited for the procurement and maintenance of slave stock. It was during this time that the woman's life and health became increasingly important to the slave holder, and her welfare was given somewhat more consideration. Special concessions, such as

food and clothing allowances, money and other material goods, were offered as encouragement to having children, or as reward for doing so (Ford-Smith, 1986; Mathurin, 1975; Morrissey, 1989). Her periods of reprieve during pregnancy increased, as did her time of rest from field work following delivery, and her actual hours of work when she did return (Morrissey, 1989). Further, women who bore more than six healthy children became privileged slaves, and could be exempt from work, or, on occasion, freed (Bush, 1990; Morrissey, 1989). One should keep in mind though, that the laws governing these were not always enacted, nor consistently employed.

Despite the expressions of desire for increased birth rate among slaves, many owners and overseers still physically brutalized women, including pregnant women. Some of these forms of punishments included being kicked or punched in the stomach, and being staked to the ground and whipped (Morrissey, 1989). This of course, was done while she was pregnant, sometimes in advanced stages of pregnancy. One account told of a slave woman who went into premature labour, delivered a dead infant, and died shortly after the birth, following a brutal flogging by her owner (Brereton, 1995:70).

In race, economy and class relations, the Black slave woman was juxtaposed with the white European woman. Initially, during the formative years of slavery, the poor

white woman, like other poor whites, received very little respect from the white elite. However, as the institution of slavery attained its pinnacle, these class differences were muted in the greater interest of justification of Black servitude. Thus, white women, themselves formally regarded as trash and little more than slaves, attained the positions of higher-status, leisured women (Bush,1990). As Beckles points out:

...white indentured female servants worked in the field gangs alongside the small...number of enslaved black women. In this formative stage...planters did not attempt to formulate a division of labour along racial lines...[but]...by the 1660s...when chattel slavery was fully developed...slave owners adopted the racially inspired labour policy that, whatever their social background or the reasons for their servitude, white women were no longer to be employed as field hands (Beckles,1982, cited in Beckles,1989:29).

This juxtaposition of the white and Black woman did not end in the sphere of labour, but permeated the area of sexuality. Her strong physical disposition, in contrast to white, European notions of femininity and beauty as fragile, dependent and very white, predisposed her to animalistic caricatures of ugliness and vileness, an appropriate target for fear and loathing, suitable for mating with an orang-utan (Bush,1990). Yet these same white men who presented Black female slaves in such denigrating terms, were often to be found establishing concubine relationships with those same women, much to the consternation of those of "British sensibilities", and to white women.

This may convey the idea that relationships with Black slave women and white men were mutually voluntary. On the contrary, this was not usually the case. True, some of the relationships had these characteristics, for some white men did marry some of their Black mistresses, and secured their freedom and economic independence, as well as that of their offspring (Bush,1990; Brathwaite,1971; Heuman,1981; Morrissey,1989). However, plantation owners, white managers, bookkeepers and overseers also raped slave women whom they openly despised. Sometimes the rape was used as a method of punishment (Beckles,1989). Even in situations of amorous liaisons, the children from these unions were still slaves, and were generally offered to white male visitors as prostitutes, or to their white children as slaves (Brereton,1995). Of critical note here is that, unlike the white population in other societies where identification came from paternity, identity in slave society, was determined solely from the mother (Bush,1990:31). By this, the white slave masters and overseers used their own children, as well as that of their Black male slaves, to increase their slave holdings (Brereton,1995).

The predisposition of white men, privileged or not, to Black and mixed race women, was a multiple jeopardy to slave women. While they were never too ugly to sleep with, they rarely met the requirements to become wives, even in instances

of long term alliances reflecting some degree of affection (Bush,1990). They were still subjected to brutal sexual assaults from both the white male population, and Black male slaves. They were also subjected to ruthless physical beatings from the white wives in retaliation for their husbands' sexual behaviours (Brathwaite,1974). In those cases where their positions of relative privilege gave them respite from field labour and the possibility of manumission¹⁸, the positions were tenuous, and depended on the whim of white men. Thus, they could easily gain disfavour and be relegated to harsh menial work as punishment.

Black slave women's positions of relative privilege also impacted their relationship with members of their community, particularly if they were still slaves. They were vulnerable to their community on several levels. They were subject to suspicion and rejection from their own community, for they were not always viewed as trustworthy because of their assumed allegiances with white men. However, as slaves, many of them betrayed this allegiance to assist the resistance efforts, particularly if they were unwilling participants in the first place.

This differential treatment of the women based on their gender and ability to reproduce, for purposes of pleasure, punishment and replenishing slave stock, reveals another way

in which the lives of slave women were mediated by race, class, gender and economy. The rape of a Black woman, slave or free, was not recognised under the law. While Black men lost their lives for charges of raping white women, neither white men, nor Black men were punished for rendering the same act to a Black woman (Beckles,1989).

If race, economy and class were manifest in the gender positioning of Black female slaves and white free women, class, economy and gender met in the emergence of a slave elite. These were the skilled artisans and slave drivers, most of whom were men. The class stratification among slaves started with this elite group, and was followed by domestic slaves, then those like the washerwomen who provided menial services, then the field slaves, followed by the children's gangs, and lastly by the sick, disabled, and those who were too old or otherwise worn out for any measurable productivity (Bush,1990). Within this hierarchy, the only viable placements for women were in the domestic sphere with its attending risks and opportunities, menial labour, or field work, though some of them were selected to be drivers as well (Beckles,1989; Bush,1990).

The situation of slave women was therefore not an enviable one. They were, of all the members of the society, most vulnerable to the race, class, gender and economic

exploitation of the system. This allowed for even greater dehumanization of the slave woman through conflicting role expectations, and the resulting psychological violation. Nevertheless, within this context she too, like the slave man, sought to resist efforts to render her as total property, and to guard whatever vestiges of personhood that she could. For this she made use of whatever tools the society, and her own ingenuity, provided her.

Survival and Resistance.

Confrontation

The white, elite slave owners were the ultimate wielders of power and hence were able to dominate through the means of violent force backed by the European metropolis. However, the slaves did not accept their condition as the docile animals the oppressors wished them to be. They resisted. In that resistance they sought to survive as persons, not property. Slave women were an integral part of this resistance. Moreover, as reproducers of the labour that perpetuated the system after the abolition of the slave trade, they made use of strategies that were specifically available to them as women. Their resistance was at times open and confrontational. At other times, subterfuge and sabotage were used to make life miserable for the oppressor, and to give the women spaces for temporary relief.

Open confrontation was either through group or individual efforts. Group confrontation included rebellions, and developing and adhering to their own "laws" (Bush, 1990:31). Individual acts of open confrontation included delay tactics like frequent petitions to the courts against masters and overseers for mistreatment in violation of slave codes and refusing to work. They also included overt assaults such as verbally and physically attacking overseers and slave drivers (Bush, 1990:56; Mathurin, 1975). For example, owners' complaints included the following:

...a domestic servant who always "failed to open the jalousies (outside shutters with slats) properly, despite being repeatedly instructed on the correct way" (Bush, 1990:56)

...women, one and all, refused to carry away the trash...in consequence the mill was obliged to be stopped, and when the driver on that station insisted on their doing their duty, a fierce young devil of a Miss...flew at his throat and endeavoured to strangle him (Lewis, 1837:68-69, quoted in Bush, 1990:56).

One example of a verbal attack from a slave woman is a report of a female slave who was punished for "abusing the manager and overseer and defying the former to do his worst" (Bush, 1990:58). Many of the female slaves were repeatedly punished for non-compliance: one woman was punished twice in a three week period for "insolence and quarrelling in the field"; another for continual non-compliance; one for using "abusive language" to the manager; and still another for refusing to return to work "when ordered by the

doctor" (Bush, 1990:58). The "quarrelsomeness" of these "hot tempered vixens and viragos" (Mathurin, 1975:15) was very much noted in court records of the period. For example, of 150 cases concerning female slaves who were tried between 1819 and 1835, the "majority...were...found guilty of either violent conduct, or the use of violent language towards other persons" (Mathurin, 1975:15).

Subterfuge included theft, running away, and ginalship.¹⁹ This last strategy put into place in a very concrete way, the motto for survival: the end is to survive, the means is, whatever it takes. Essentially, it is the practice of deception of various forms, for the purpose of survival as defined by the ginal. Ginalship was evidenced in the myriad strategies that slaves used to avoid work, such as claiming illness (real or otherwise), quarrelling with each other, and simply not showing up for work. These acts of subterfuge and non-cooperation "persistently chipped away against the whole fabric of slavery" (Bush, 1990:51). These incidences of resistance were seen by the planters, managers and overseers, to come primarily from women slaves, and they were therefore considered to be much more of a problem than male slaves. When the whipping of female slaves was banned in 1823, plantation owners protested loudly, claiming that it was the only viable measure of keeping the insubordinate, aggressive and uncooperative "female demons" in check

(Bush,1990:53). Many of them continued this practice in violation of the law.

Early modern historians who adopted a Eurocentric view of slavery, presented slaves as passive ingrates who lied, stole, were " suspicious, inefficient, irresponsible, lazy, superstitious, and loose in...sexual relations" (Ragatz,1928, quoted in Bush, 1990:4). Approaches such as this reflect the inherent racist bias of these writers, who adopted, without question, the perceptions of the planter class regarding the slave population. Examination of historical documents by Caribbean historians have resulted in the identification of contradictions between slaves' presentations of themselves to their masters and overseers, and their work habits in their own environments (Beckles,1989; Bush,1990; Higman,1976; Mathurin,1975; Morrissey,1989; Shepherd, Brereton and Bailey,1995). These indicate that the behaviours were therefore more likely, strategies consciously adopted to enable slaves to survive and resist the violation perpetrated against them (Bush, 1990:4). For example, slaves who were considered lazy, and stupid, were, to their communities, valued, astute leaders and producers of food and other needed materials (Bush,1990; Mathurin,1975).

Sabotage included shirking work, damaging crops, animals and property, and more violent forms such as arson, murder and

poisoning (Bush,1990). These activities were sometimes undertaken independently, and at other times they were done in tandem with others as part of a rebellion.

Making Do

Resistance was not the only response made by slave women to an untenable situation designed to erode their integrity as persons. For one thing, open resistance was not always possible. In the face of the whip, torture, degradation and the ultimate surrender of becoming property, not only in body but also in mind and spirit, slave women struggled to survive as human beings. A major survival strategy used by slave women, was the art of "making do":

'Making do' expresses a social phenomenon which is widely accepted: that it is a fundamental role...to make do with what they have, or better still, 'make something from nothing'...At its simplest level, 'making do' involves...being resourceful in whatever is available to maximize its utility to oneself...In some cases, 'making do' represents personal denial and sacrifice (Senior,1991:129-130).

One of the ways in which this strategy was implemented was through developing their own food sources, through cultivation of provision grounds and theft, in order to supplement the meagre and unhealthy food rations provided by the planters (Beckles,1989; Bush,1990). This facilitated the development of a viable market economy for slaves, particularly women slaves. Produce from these activities were sold or bartered

for other necessities of life. Funds were saved and used to purchase their freedom.

Another way in which slave women make do, was in the use of their sexuality. In this, they both used, and were used by, men, particularly white men. Subject to forced sexual relations with both white and Black men, and having learnt to recognise the social and economic power of white men, women slaves saw their sexuality as a means of alleviating their condition. Relationships with white men held the possibility of: relative status for the women and any children born to that relationship; economic gain; relative independence; and manumission (Higman,1976:155; Morrissey,1989:146). True, freedom through this activity was rare indeed, but "hope springs eternal in the bosom of woman"²⁰. Besides, there were other advantages. Many slave women, particularly those of mixed heritage, were able to obtain positions of relative privilege. Occasionally, they or their children received property, or funds sufficient to help them establish independent lodging houses or other business, from the men during their lifetime or through their estate after death (Bush,1990; Kerr,1995; Morrissey,1989).

This tactic was not without its dangers. It had an impact on the relationships between Black men and women slaves. On the one hand, these women, like the domestic

slaves, being closer to the seat of power, had greater access to information that was useful to the group resistance effort. They were able to pass on valuable information, for instance, about key absences that facilitated rebellions. They were also able to learn about important changes in Europe, like the abolition movement and changes to slave laws, that impacted their situation. However, their closer contact meant the possibility of allegiances with white men and children, and the potential for betrayal of Blacks engaged in resistance efforts. This sometimes resulted in them being excluded from secret planning meetings within the slave population, because of the perception that they were aligned with the oppressors (Mathurin, 1975).

Spirituality.

In addition to the survival and resistance strategies discussed above, the slaves made use of their spirituality. Aspects of this method included obeah, myalism and Christianity. Obeah and myalism were forms of African religious practices²¹ that continued, despite efforts of the white elite classes to eradicate them, on slave plantations:

An Obeah man or woman...dealt in magic, poisons, herbs and folk medicine and were highly secretive. Myalism was concerned more with group worship. It was used as an antidote against the harmful aspects of obeah...Practitioners...of whom a significant portion were women, were believed by whites to wield a great influence over their fellow slaves... (Bush, 1990:74).

Obeah was therefore outlawed, under pain of death or deportation from the island, by the Consolidated Slave Act of Jamaica in 1792 (Alleyne,1988; Beckwith,1969; Bush,1990; Morrish,1982). The fear of the practice was rooted in what slave owners and overseers observed and interpreted regarding the relationship between the obeah men and women, and the slaves around them. They felt that obeah men and women had the power to incite members of the slave population to revolt, murder or poison slave owners, cause sickness, disability and other forms of destruction (Bush,1990:75). These practitioners were consulted by Black men and women for:

...the Cure of Disorders...revenge for Injuries or Insults...the Discovery and Punishment of the Thiefs or Adulterers and the Prediction of Future Events. (Sheridan,1974, quoted in Bush,1990:154).

There were also occasions of actual and attempted poisonings initiated by slaves, particularly female domestics, through the use of herbs, medicines and other materials (Bush,1990; Mathurin,1975; Morrissey,1989). These were directed at owners, overseers, and their families. Their fear consequently had some basis in actuality.

Their fear was also influenced by their own lack of understanding of the practice, and projections of understandings of European witchcraft (Bush,1990:75 & 76). Because of this, they tended to focus on aspects of obeah that were connected with poisoning, illness and threats against whites, and ignoring or dismissing "the use of herbal

remedies, ritual and mystical beliefs to cure illnesses...as mere superstition"(Bush,1990:155). An illustration of this is the accusation of planters, managers and overseers of slave women deliberately inflicting their children and themselves with yaws, in order to avoid work, when in fact, the women were likely implementing inoculation practices they had used in Africa (Bush,1990:56-58). Stories of Acompong Nanny, a Maroon slave leader who led successful resistance efforts, both because of her skills as a military strategist and as an obeah priestess; and Annie Palmer, the "white witch" of Rose Hall who learnt obeah and used it to kill seven husbands, suggest the preoccupation with obeah and its dangers. The stories, as well as the practice of familiar rituals, provided the basis for unifying the slave population and maintaining cultural survival. This was critical in the battle against their dehumanization and degradation.

Because of the cohesiveness and power to resist that was obtained from the practice of obeah and other African religious practices and rituals, slaves were initially resistant to, and suspicious of, Christianity. It was seen as the white man's method of maintaining the oppression of slavery, since emphasis was given to those areas that stressed obedience, submission and servitude, and worship practices that maintained race separations (Bush,1990; Drake,1970; Washington,1972; Wilmore,1972). Even when they adopted the

outward show of commitment, many slaves continued their own private and group rituals (Bush,1990; Drake,1970; Wilmore,1972).

However, slaves learnt to read, primarily through learning scripture. Christian abolitionists also pointed out the contradictions between slavery and certain tenets of Christianity. These facilitated an identification of slaves with the condition of the Jews, who were likewise enslaved and oppressed. As God did for the Jews, He would do for the slaves. Moreover, the numerous references in the Bible to Ethiopia, Africa, and Blacks, such as phrases like "I am black but comely, o ye daughters of Jerusalem"²², provided them with strong positive identities and affirmation. References to Ethiopians who were Black, and "powerful and respected when white men in Europe were Barbarians" crystallized their sense that white elites were attempting to "rob them of their past"(Drake,1970: 11, 49 & 51). These aided conversions to Christianity, particularly during the latter period of slavery.

This understanding of the Bible, and the close identification of the slaves with Jewish oppression, gave birth to a particular form of Christianity, born out of lives of oppression and degradation. Primary among these was a Black spirituality that reflected a sense of the pervading

presence of God who "had the whole world in his hands", who would deliver them, whose Holy Spirit, by possessing them, could strengthen them (Drake,1970:22 & 23). This immanence of God meant that the spirit world and the material world were intricately linked, and constantly impacted on each other:

...the devil and his angels...are evil spirits and are ever present with us to tempt us and to try us. They are at war with the heavenly host, and seek to dissuade those who would serve God (Johnson,1969, quoted in Abraham and Mbuy-Beya,1994:82).

God's presence, and the action of the Holy Ghost, could be accessed directly through prayer, dreams, visions, and worship leading to ecstasy (Beckwith,1969). Knowledge of God, and direction for one's life, protection and vengeance, could also be accessed through these means. They therefore turned to God for direction with confidence in His ultimate justice (Wilmore,1972:19). Religious practice in this manner, was not, as Marx had stated, "the opium of the people" (Drake,1970:23). For the slave culture of disenfranchisement transformed their understanding of Christianity. Their God was not the distant, otherworldly God of endurance of servitude for gains in another world. He was a God who was intimately interested in the lives of people in the here and now, who would deliver His people from bondage, and who in fact, called them into active participation towards this end. These Christian beliefs and practices facilitated the resistance and survival efforts of slave women. It allowed them to reclaim some of their humanity and control.

Community.

Community also played a role in the survival and resistance efforts of the slave woman. As demonstrated, community, in the form of religious practices, provided them with a sense of cohesiveness, self worth, and catalyst for rebellion. Furthermore, extended kinship and family were critical parts of their reality prior to the slave ships, and wherever possible, they attempted to recreate these connections through actual, and fictive kinship networks (Bush,1990:105). Dancing, drumming, singing and communal efforts such as house building, to celebrate important events like marriages and deaths, fostered the development of community (Bush,1990). This they sought to do in spite of the enforced separation and sale of their children, spouses, and relatives. These separations were common. Mary Prince, a West Indian slave woman, described the parting between her and her mother at the age of twelve:

The black morning at length came; it came too soon for my poor mother and us. Whilst she was putting on us the new osnaburgs in which we were to be sold, she said in a sorrowful voice, (I shall never forget it!) 'See, I am shrouding my poor children; what a task for a poor mother!'...I am going to carry my little chickens to market...take you last look at them...(Prince,1831, ed. by Ferguson,1987, quoted in Shepherd, Brereton, and Bailey, 1995:85-86).

Although laws were passed in the latter period of slavery to limit the separation of slave families, many of the owners and managers flaunted those laws (Bush,1990; Goveia,1970). Slaves sought to counter the efforts, and maintain connections with

family and members of their communities by threatening suicide, disappearances and troublesome behaviour (Bush,1990).

Night rambling, where:

both sexes are frequently travelling all night, going or returning from a distant connexion, in order, without sleep, to be in due time to go through a hard day's labour after their nocturnal ventures (A Report...into the Slave Trade,1789, quoted in Bush,1009:109)

were also common endeavours to maintain ties, to both children, wives, and lovers. Community activities and contacts was a pivotal reminder that the world view that white elites enforced, was inaccurate. It was also the means through which information regarding group plans for revolts, arson, murder and other dangerous acts of resistance, was disseminated.

The relationships between men and women reflected both the society in which they functioned, and their African heritage. Early records are rife with reports of the instability, or lack, of family relationships, and the sexual depravity of Black slaves (Bush,1990:84). Yet, as Caribbean women historians have indicated, careful attention to the documentation from that period presents information leading to a different analysis (Bush,1990; Higman,1976; Mathurin,1975; Morrissey,1989; Shepherd, Brereton and Bailey,1995). For instance, the "sexual politics of Jamaica" was often one in which:

Some planters had mistresses and children on all their numerous properties...white men of all descriptions, married or single, live in a state of licentiousness with their female slaves...(Brereton, in Shepherd, Brereton and Bailey, 1995:73).

This contrasted with women slaves who used this proclivity for improving their circumstances, and slaves who established nuclear or polygynous relationships based on the African practices with which they were familiar (Bush,1990; Higman,1976, Morrissey,1989). Not infrequently, efforts by slaves at establishing stable unions were deliberately sabotaged. When Mary Prince, a Black slave woman, married a free Black man at age 38, she was severely flogged by her owners, who additionally not only refused his offers to purchase her, but sought to keep them apart (Brereton,1995).

Thus, the survival and resistance efforts of slave women comprised of specific tactics that reflected general strategies of confrontation, making do, spirituality and community. These were adopted by slave women in their attempt to define a life for themselves within a system that violently degraded them. They persevered in their efforts to establish and maintain some sense of control, power over their lives, and dignity in a physically and psychologically untenable situation. In opposition to the total negation of being that slavery demanded, they struggled to continue to exist as human beings (Mills,1991). Additionally, the

strategies reveal some of the consequences of living as slave women in a society mediated by race, class, gender and economy. Black men and women learnt to be secretive, for it was the way they guarded their resistance efforts and their lives. They learnt to distrust each other because where one's allegiances laid, was not altogether clear. The distrust, suspicion and secrecy developed simultaneously with the sense of community interdependence, support and solidarity. Finally, to gain privilege in the white man's world, they had to learn to see themselves as the white man saw them. It meant that they learnt to reject themselves, and to imbue a psychology of self hatred that was then projected on to their own. This was life, it was survival.

Chapter VI

**LIVING WITH ABUSE: THE BLACK JAMAICAN IMMIGRANT
WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE**

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I began discussion of violence in the lives of some Black Jamaican immigrant women by exploring the practice of violence in Caribbean slave society and Jamaica, from the perspective of the Black slave woman. The slave woman's response to that violence, as well as some of the impact of the violence, were highlighted. In this chapter, I continue the discussion by attending to the stories of the lived experiences of some Black Jamaican immigrant women.

Understandings of Violence, Abuse, Violation.

As noted earlier, the term 'violence' is a problematic one. The struggle that exists for feminists in practice and research, and those engaged in political action, also exists for the women who participated in the study. All of the women who were interviewed demonstrated an awareness of violence as an action taken against the will of the person towards whom the action was directed, and that it resulted in harm to the latter. One woman summed up her understanding in this manner:

Violence is when anybody does anything to you that is against your whole principle, that you do not want them to do. If people are playing and having fun, and they want to wring each other's arm or handcuff each other at their own, you know that's

different, but if somebody is doing something to you that is, that you don't want them to do, running after you if you don't want them to, trying to choke you if you don't want them to, then certainly, that's abuse.

All the women discussed understandings of violence within their lived experiences, and from these, it was clear that they did not necessarily equate abuse with violence. Like the participant cited above, some of the women saw violence and abuse as different words to describe similar behaviours. One woman stated that she saw abuse as a form of violence. For her, violence included actions which, while resulting in harm, did not necessarily constitute the intentional damage that she considered abuse to be. Some of the struggle with terms seemed to be the dilemma of naming the experience, and since they did not know what exactly to call it, it was difficult for them to describe their understanding of it.

Abuse did not generate as much confusion. Again, when asked what they understood abuse to be, they gave their understanding in the context of their experiences:

You never know the word abuse, but you know it to be disgraceful and wicked...because it destroy we life, no self esteem, you shame...

It destroyed life because it took away the ability to see oneself as capable, and limited one's ability to act with choice and a sense of control over those choices. Hence, physical and verbal attacks were seen as abuse, because they represented ways in which control is taken away:

...abuse is anything verbal or physical, if somebody verbally try to put you down, or swear at you, is abuse, and physically, and sort of physical contact, violent, is abuse...any sort of threatening behaviour, if somebody is saying, well if you don't do this I'm going to do that, that's abuse, you know, to me. Somebody swear at you, right away that is abuse.

From these, and other, descriptions, the women indicated that there were different ways in which abuse could be inflicted. It could be perpetrated physically through punishment or discipline:

I think it was an abusive way of punishment, because when you get a whip, or a belt, and hit kids till they wale, they have these things on they skin and they hurt, then that is abuse, you know, whereas for them I think it was one way of them saying, you did something wrong and you have to pay for it, and the way for you to pay for it is the strap, and the only way they knew, was to use the belt or the whip or whatever it is they find.

It could be inflicted verbally through name-calling, as one of the women so vividly portrayed:

...when you call a woman a slut...like, men curse women every day and they just tell them stuff that come to their mouth...I find that cursing in Jamaica...the people mouth are really deadly you know, like I find people they telling you off in Canada, they might say something like piss off...its nothing compared to back home. When a person start tell that you smell like nine days cabbage water, and yuh dutty kabbakabba²³, and yuh mus' come kiss out which part ah me, and them kinda stuff dey...them kinda stuff painful.

Abuse could also occur in more subtle forms that are harder to name, though the women recognised that they were being abused because they were being "put down", and they considered this an attack on their sense of self worth:

You get put down by your husband, you spouses...whoever you live with...they make you feel like you're nothing...sometimes parents too put their children down, mek...you feel like you're nothing...instead of building each other up, we inclined to pull each other down...call you no good, all kinda names.

...when you tell a woman that she is no good, and every day she get up and you hear that you no good, you're a dog, you're a john crow, you can't cook, you can't clean, yuh only good fe' breedin'...after a while they internalise that and then it affect the psyche, and they start to think that they're no good...lots of time they just sit there...they don't try to make any kind of move that's going to motivate them or going to uplift their life, because they have this belief that they're no good...

This kind of abuse damages at the level where hope is generated from within the person, so that the person is left completely immobilized. This erosion of one's willingness to even engage in the battle, is also harder to defend against, because it strikes at the very core of being where one mobilizes defense.

The women also described situations which indicated that they understood abuse as being perpetrated through spiritual means, for it was certainly part of their reality. One woman attempted to describe what was meant by obeah, a non-Christian practice used for wellness and protection, as well as a means of harming, controlling others, and obtaining revenge and punishment:

..to me obeah is something you spend you money on and go to somebody who think they know more than you...to hear what is happening in you life, to get things done, you might go to somebody...[or someone

might] tie the men on them...the man can't leave them...because you can't understand how a man would beat a woman, beat the woman to sickness that she might end up in hospital...and they just can't part...some men do the same thing too.

Thus, control and manipulation that cannot be gained through other means, is sought through a means that, being more indirect, is sometimes harder to identify, and therefore defend against.

Abuse could also occur through the medium of one's own sexuality:

...I experience sexual molestation...but I didn't see it as sexual molestation, I only know now that that's what it is. I see it as this guy trying to touch me up, and I never tell anybody.

This report by one woman captures in a very real way, the problem of naming. She had no way of framing this experience of degradation in a manner that made it clear that she was being violated, but she knew that she was. The terms of reference she had did not allow any space for her to say to the abuser, or indeed to anyone else, "This is not acceptable." So she bore her violation in silence, as many other women do.

Abuse, finally, could take the form of mistreatment:

...mistreatment is totally different, somebody could mistreat you, which is still abuse too, you know, unfair, being unfair to you, like not giving you enough food or, that is mistreatment.

This demonstrates another area where the understanding comes

through the process of reflection that connects the naming to the experience, and recognises where and how the violation occurs.

There is another level of understanding which reflects the lived experiences of the women, and which demonstrate the juxtapositions of their lives at the nexus of race, class, gender and economy obtained through the legacy of slavery. It is at this point that the women had difficulty with both the terms 'violence' and 'abuse' as fully appropriate labels for capturing the range of experiences they have had, in which they have felt dehumanised, harmed and degraded. They described incidents which reflect understandings of certain treatment as abusive, while not necessarily being abuse, of violating while not necessarily being violence as they understand it. In an effort to capture and describe these experiences, one woman suggested the term "violation":

...I don't know that it's violence, I guess I would use more a word like neglect, isolation...because there wasn't any violence per se...I think that violation is probably...for some women experience violence, and part of that violence is violation...

This woman indicated that a situation where a man has made a sexual or marital commitment to one woman, and then has a lot of different kids by different women, would be seen as a violation of the first relationship. It reflects an exercise of male privilege that women are not allowed to share, for their behaviour is severely circumscribed by the accusations

and assault they suffer when their partners and spouses felt "them have man". Most of the women demonstrated consistency with the view expressed by this woman. In fact, one woman, when asked if her partner treated her 'bad' in any other way, responded:

...I'm sure he does, because he used to fool around, and that's treating bad, and to me that's a form of abuse...and I know he fools around because my daughter has a sister...which is only, months apart [in age]...

This violation may or may not be known by the woman, but it is still considered a violation, as one woman put it:

...if you don't know about it, like my mother did not know about a lot of those kids until much later, you know, so it's a violation, but it's an unknown violation...if you know, it is a total violation...isolation of her from him, and of the women from each other. Because they don't know that each one is being used by him, at different times...so even if they want to do something about it, they couldn't, because they don't know.

Included here, are those experiences which have yet to be named. These are the situations which the women experience in their psyche as violating, but which they are unclear about, because the patterns themselves are unclear:

...because you don't know what to call it, but you know that there's something in your spirit that says this is not right, and it shouldn't be happening, but you don't know...

These are the experiences that get stored away for a time when the conflict can be resolved in a manner that allows for understanding, and the process of naming.

For all the women who participated in this study, their understandings emerged out of their own experiences, and their observations and experiences of interactions in their communities. Understandings of violence and abuse, as well as the different ways that abuse occurs, were broadened by the reading and self education they did to try and come to grips with what had happened to them.

Experiences of Abuse

The experiences of abuse from spouses and partners that the women in the study describe, reflect many similarities with experiences that are described in the general literature on wife abuse (see for eg. Davidson,1978; Dobash and Dobash,1979; Gelles et. al.,1983; Kelly,1988; Leeder,1994; Martin,1983; Pizzey,1974; Walker,L.,1984; and Yllo and Bograd,1988). However, they also discuss situations and experiences that are not present in the literature, and which may be unique to Jamaican or Caribbean women. Furthermore, four of the women did not see these experiences as separate from their other experiences of violence and violation. They perceived all these areas as intricately linked by the manifest patterns of the violence, and the culture in which they were shaped as women. Thus, in describing their own experiences, they included the experiences of other family members, as well as those they observed in, or experienced

through, their communities. For ease of discussion, I have separated the descriptions of abuse into four main areas.

Spouses and Partners

As noted earlier, wife beating is a common feature of many cultures. Jamaican society is no different. The beatings, though, do not necessarily occur "behind closed doors", as seems to be the case with those experiences described in the literature:

...I have a brother that used to beat his wife anywhere and everywhere. I remember once...she was coming from work...and he was coming from somewhere, saw her walking home, and there was this guy...that she was talking to, or walking with, and he just start beating her up right there...and I heard it was one hell of a beating. He lick her down, in the road, all that sort of stuff...

This kind of public beating was fairly common, as some of the women pointed out. Three of the five women had actually witnessed physical assaults of women by their partners in full view of the public. Moreover, as described here, they could be vicious and degrading. Any material at hand was used. These included belts, fists, branches from trees, pieces of furniture, or kitchen implements, including knives and cleavers:

...they will beat their wives or girlfriend...they fight and cuss di' woman, and throw stone...

...he tried to strangle me...when I got up and tried to get to the police, he came behind my car so I couldn't leave....the next month we had an argument and he hit me over the head with a vase.

...I saw the man in the street beating up the woman, and the woman didn't have any top on, he tear her top off...and she have on one foot ah shoes and the other shoe gone...

...I remember one night in particular, I don't remember what we were arguing about, and he take up, you know these figurines in Jamaica, you have some big figurine dogs...I had two on top of the coffee table, and he take up one to hit, to throw at me...

...that man, that couple...he would throw every plate, every cup, every glass, in the kitchen at her...and that would happen like at least once a week.

...we had no argument, I came downstairs, and I was having his nephew for supper...so I was preparing the chicken...I was using the chopper, and without any provocation or argument he took the chopper and chop me up. I sustained 47 stitches to the head, severed tendons, broken nose, several stitches to the face, and he left me fo[r dead]...

These violent physical attacks were readily identified by the women as abuse because they resulted in actual physical, bodily harm. Four of the five women had experienced this kind of abuse, though not all of them had instances that were life threatening or publicly degrading. Furthermore, the women were able to attest to the prevalence of the behaviour because they gave instances of situations of violent beatings that occurred between parents, neighbours and other members of their communities:

...there was a woman that lived next door to us, her husband was also pounding her...and you grow up with that kind of stuff and you think this is normal.

The fifth woman reported that while she was not aware of abuse between spouses and partners in her own community, she was

well aware of occurrences in her spouse's family:

...and he broke his wife's hand, and he had another brother, and he broke some other woman's leg...

The links to the culture were repeatedly illustrated through the use of words like "that's part of the Jamaican culture", "it's what we/they learn growing up", and "another thing common Jamaica that you don't see anywhere". Two of the women actually drew direct connections between some of these patterns and the experience of slavery:

...the only way they knew, was to use the belt or the whip or whatever it is they find. I think that it is coming from slavery...where else would they have gotten it from?

...the Black man say he beat up the white woman because he taking revenge for his foreparents...and beat up the Black girlfriend because she nuh look like the white one...or nuh brown enough, he might go out dey and have a brown girlfriend and come home and him wife Black and him just beat the shit outa her because him can't stand her Black face...him beat her up because society say that its discipline, you discipline you wife like you discipline you child, and the educated one beat because ah discipline same way, and in addition, they, the Black one gonna beat because he accustomed to get beating in slavery...that's why ah say the Black man...listen. You ever notice how when people ah beat people how dem tie dem up? Just like how dem used to do in slavery? When man ah beat dem bwoy pickney dem tie dem up pon tree? How yuh mean?!? Tie dem up and beat them!...[man beat dem woman] dey tie up dem han' tie dey foot, tie dem to de bedpost, an' beat dem!...Yes! Me see man kick du'ng woman and den put him foot pon her so, [demonstrates action] fe' hold her down, and beat her, because, I think part of that have to do with, that's what them learn inna slavery.

So, while the type of damage done, and some of the ways in which the abuse occurs are similar to those of other women

described in the general literature, some of the patterns reveal a different reality.

Violent physical attacks were not the only form of abuse the women experienced. They were subject to name calling, and being yelled and screamed at. The women felt that this verbal abuse was undertaken in a manner that was very specific to Jamaican culture.²⁴ The women stressed the significance of this verbal abuse in damaging women's personhood, and how devastating the name calling could be:

...the name calling...its awful. The name is worse than the beating...its terrible. Like I heard men call they own wife, whore, call them john crow²⁵, is a regular, regular, john crow, dutty dog...dutty kabbakabba, I heard a man tell a woman one time, yuh dutty kabbakabba...

The name calling, and yelling were almost always accompanied by "put downs", words and behaviours which included threats, that had the effect of reducing the woman's self esteem, sense of capability, dignity and control:

...he was verbally abusive....the accusation was abusive...well, he'd say, why did I have to marry you, you are a whore, that sort of thing.

...he used to curse [my mother] and tell her she working obeah, and she worthless, and she ah white elephant, and she si' dung and she wouldn't even go work, and she ah white elephant...

...and I remember I said to him, we got children, can't you even leave the bed? and he turned to me and he says, you don't deserve it.

...my dad was a man who..stay out at the gate an' curse my mother inside and she was disgraced...she don't even have friends come to her, she don't go

no place, she just lock up in that house...because of him, my father was a disgraceful man...

...him say me ah idiot, me no have no ambition...him trace²⁶ me say, me no have no ambition and me no wa'an move no further in life...me ugly, and me no have no shape...you can't even look after you pickney dem, and hear dis man ah go tell yuh say yuh ugly, and you knock knee and you no have no shape...

...he felt like she should have been home, he threatened near to call immigration so they could send her home, and things like that, so my mom went home...

In the last case, the threats resulted in the desired effect of control, because the woman returned home as she simply was unable to tolerate the verbal and emotional attacks. For another woman, the attack was punishment, method for regaining control, and counter-attack on her efforts at resistance:

...I would just go for a long walk, calm myself down, and come back. But then I would come back and you'll hear that I go look for me man, or something like that, and it start all over again, you know. So sometimes I'd just stay there because you know, I'd go away to calm myself down, to come back, you know, and then you'll get this.

The men wanted to control the women, and employed whatever strategies they felt were necessary:

...the phone would ring...and the person would hang up, and he would claim that there must have been a man trying to get me...he would tell me, you should drive this way...one day I came home from work, and he said, where did you drive? And I says, I don't remember...he became more upset...so that was part of it you know, the control. He just had a desire to control me...because he had the feeling that he owned me... well, it was always my fault, you know, he felt that if only I wouldn't do this, it would be better, if only I wouldn't do that it would be better, you know. He wanted to choose my friends. Well, every friend that I had he didn't approve of, and his reasons for not approving is because they

were always getting a man for me. Nobody saw the men, but they were getting one somehow.

Other strategies used by the men to obtain, maintain or regain control of the women, was the use of conflicting messages:

...after he'd put you down..then he would want to make up as if nothing happened, and I just couldn't go on...I just couldn't because...to me is like saying two things about somebody and then expecting them to, just forget it. And you brain can't shut on and off, you know.

This method of emotional manipulation and control left the women feeling, as this woman described, confused, constantly tense, and disoriented, because of the sense of disequilibrium that it created (Anderson, Boulette and Schwartz, in Ammerman, 1991:294) .

The women also described incidents of abuse that involved economic circumstances:

...like when there is insurance he put his mother's name, instead of my name, or any of the children's name. He would just pay the rent, I had to do everything else.

...sometimes she don't have money to give we food, and then when he do come...to give her money, he curse her...

...because all of my money was tied up with him, and he'd always threaten that you'd have to leave everything, you're not getting anything, and I remember him telling me, you have to leave this house...

...and mi' father wasn't paying the rent...and they take away the 'fridge, and in those days they take away the furniture...for the rent.

One aspect of this type of abuse that appears unique to Jamaica, or to the Caribbean, was that the men could make

commitments to support through contractual agreements with the state, and then not follow through. For on leaving the island:

...they sign forms that says, protect them from paying income tax, which meant that they would pay and support their families. Well, he left, and he supported his family, I guess, for about a month, and then it stopped.

In other situations, the men refused to financially support any children they had, whether from previous relationships, or within existing ones. In this way, the women had to shoulder the responsibility for the children themselves:

...you had to go through fighting for child support...which was nothing. You getting \$75.00 a month for four children, which is nothing, and then when you realise...when you know the person lie about they financial, income...

Or else the men would accuse the women of misusing designated funds given by the men, so that it would appear that they were providing adequate financial support but the women were squandering it:

...me gi'yuh madda eight pounds, she tek i' wuk obeah, she wouldn't even buy milk gi' yuh...

Clearly these incidents indicate the use of verbal assaults combined with economic exploitation, to reduce or erode the women's sphere of capability.

Another area of abuse that became evident as the women told their stories, was in the area of spirituality. This might take the form of isolating the woman from her spiritual community, source of support, and potential resistance,

through the use of cursing, threats and aversive behaviour:

...he would know that my mom is a Christian, he would get at her back...he used to would tell her that she go to church fe go look fe man, and things like that, and then she could not take it any more she just walked away...it's just every time you go to church you come home to this nagging, nagging...she stopped, but recently she have went back...and he's doing the same thing...sometimes, he will even go to the church and quarrel, you know, and things like that.

Another was to engage in behaviours which resulted indirectly in her not being able to attend religious services that had significance for her:

...one of the things that used to do was call me up, say he is coming to pick up the children. I would get them ready, he never shows up, never calls, we wait for hours. I, some of the times was nights when I have to go back to church, I can't go back to church because its too late then...and he did it several times...

This had the double effect of raising hopes only to have them dashed to pieces. This impacted the woman at the emotional level.

Another aspect of abuse in the area of spirituality was the use of obeah, to manipulate, control or punish. This method was used to possess the desired partner whom the person would not have had through the willing participation of the other person, or to hurt or punish someone who rejected them:

One of the things that I know common too was that some women love men and the men no love them so [people] claim say they tie the men on them, and then the men beat them, and all the beatings they get they no part...the man can't leave them...a man would beat a woman, beat the woman to sickness that she might end up in hospital...and they just can't

part...some men do the same thing too.

Sometimes the situation was not entirely clear:

it was said that somebody obeah my father, and so he, at some point went really crazy, and destroyed one of the tanks that he built...and was never really the same after that...and it was said that people obeah him...and whether that is connected to the violence or not, I'm not sure...but i don't remember him being as violent when I was younger.

For this second woman, her perception was that the violent beatings that her mother received at the hands of her father were the possible result of obeah. She felt that someone might have been jealous of the father's creative skills in the community and wanted to ruin his reputation to get even with him. In this case, the beatings his wife received were indirect results of the attacks. Thus, the woman was undergoing abuse from her spouse as a result of the use of particular forces. Another woman described a similar situation of employing obeah to harm:

...it wasn't bad, until she get herself involved with this man...she get sick again, say it was we father again...she went and live with this man. Well him never treat her bad, but she was sick...and people say ah obeah...the next thing she died...

In this case, the attack was seen, by the mother and members of the community, as a direct intervention on the part of the spouse to either regain control, or to punish her for leaving him. Another aspect of this type of spiritual abuse was to accuse the woman, publicly, of "working obeah":

...me gi' yuh madda eight pounds, she tek i' wuk obeah...but...she was filled with the Holy Spirit...so I don't know if he was trying to do her

something and it doesn't work out...well he feel say she is doing something [to block his obeah attacks]

The multiple jeopardy of this, as the woman stated, was that the spouse was accusing the woman to degrade her, while at the same time he likely was attempting to use this method to harm her. The verbal accusation was therefore reflective not only of his attack, but of his concern about the apparent lack of effect of his efforts.

All the women who participated in the study indicated that while there were occurrences of women abusing men, they were certainly much less common, and that more often, the woman's seemingly abusive response was in retaliation or defence. The descriptions of their own situations highlight this, as shall be seen later. This was why one woman found it so distasteful to see a man being beaten by a woman. It was not something she was used to observing:

...this woman used to abuse her common law husband...which was even more degrading, its bad enough to see a man beating a woman, but to see a woman beating up a man...this woman used to beat up this man, she used to have power over him, put it that way...I find that it was very degrading. To me, a man like that can't have very high esteem...and its harder for a man to say, 'my woman beat me' than a woman to say, 'my man beat me'. When people will sympathise with a woman...a man does not get the sympathy, they will say, 'good for you, unnu deserve it...

Her words highlight particular internalized gender approaches to woman abuse and man abuse. One of these is a view that suggests greater tolerance for women being abused than for men

being so similarly treated. Another is the sense that men are not men if they can allow women to beat them up and not defend themselves. Yet another is a statement of women's resistance to the violence, and support for that resistance. Her words also seem to suggest that the resistance of the women is a feature in Jamaican society. The presence of these approaches emphasize the commonality of the abuse of women at the hands of their partners and spouses, and the rarity of the opposite, a point that all five women interviewed stressed repeatedly in their stories. Their observations and experiences are consistent with feminist analyses identifying gender as significant in abusive relationships between men and women. However, as also seen, their situations show that unequal gender relationships does not fully account for the abuse they deal with.

Family and Other Relatives.

The women did not view partner violence in isolation from the rest of the violence they experienced in their lives. They saw violence from male partners and spouses as very much connected to their lived experiences of violence in other areas of their lives. This included violence at the hands of parents and relatives. Moreover, they identified the inter-connecting links as arising from their particular cultural location. For violence took the form of verbal and physical abuse that was part of "disciplining" from parents, and was

significant in terms of the manner in which it occurred:

...she discipline us as schoolgirls...she beat and she curse you...tell you say yuh wi' have pickney before time...

...but she start pon this one piece of cussing and carrying on and say that I mek man breed me. And I thought she was the meanest person on earth to be saying stuff like that...

...he don't choose no place to talk to you, he talk to you any, any and any place, and when he talking he is on top of his voice, he's loud...and vulgar, and just ah curse you 'bout you madda...so when he was just there cursing, I walk away, and he say, I wi' lick yuh dung if yuh walk away on mi'!

...my mother...beats for everything...and when I say she beats...ah mean she gi' yuh some lick! And she doesn't care what she ketch. Anything...like broomstick...those things on the coconut tree...I remember one day...I only feel when [she] grab me...and there was a...beautiful flower tree...at the side of the verandah...and she break one of...the limb, and she beat me with that until it was broken...it was about five of those...branches that she break off the tree and she hit me with...and then afterwards you know after a while they start to lick and preach?...she start to talk 'bout, 'yuh ah tun woman before yuh time...

One woman said that she had none of these experiences, for her parents treated the boys differently from the girls, and further, her parents did not resort to heavy handed disciplinary practices. The other four women received the kind of disciplinary handling described here. Not all the women labelled these practices as abuse per se. However, their understandings of the activities of abuse, and the way they reacted to the disciplinary practices, suggest that the intensity with which they were administered, were considered unwarranted and damaging. As well, they stressed that the

manner in which the discipline was applied, was very intrinsic to Jamaica.

Physical and verbal abuse, accompanied by emotional abuse, were by far the most frequent forms of abuse from parents and relatives. Other experiences of abuse from relatives involved economic mistreatment, and sexual molestation:

...it was never much better either because she only want you to work, she no want give you lunch money to go to school...

..I do remember him...I do remember something happening...and I can't remember whether it happened once, or twice or how many times it happened, or whether I just decided not to remember how many times it happened...

Another woman reported an encounter with a relative who was trying to sexually assault her. Though her struggles to resist him allowed time for her to be saved by the arrival of a parent, the situation resulted in a beating from the parent who misconstrued the situation. This woman felt the blows of double jeopardy of assault and mistrust, precisely because of some of the cultural responses to encounters between men and women. As children, these occurrences were especially difficult, for they came from the hands of those with ultimate power and control, adults. Additionally, they came from people from whom they received material and emotional sustenance, and affection. It usually rendered resistance not only futile, but really dangerous.

Violence within the Community.

The connections between violence from spouses, partners, family and relatives extended into, and included the wider community. The women described experiences of abuse from members of their own as well as other communities, and those holding positions of power obtained from their locations within institutional orders which wielded power. These encompassed abuse perpetrated by women against women because of the relationship that they share, or shared, with a particular male, regardless of whether the sharing occurred simultaneously:

...them fighting over the men, because I remember...two women fighting over one man, even though he live at house with another woman, with children, and the two woman fighting over the man, and meanwhile the two of them fighting over the man, he's not even paying them any mind, he's down the road talking to another woman...

The difficulty that these women face is that even though they saw the man as the one who was perpetrating the violence, sometimes unknowingly to the woman, it was the woman who got attacked and blamed:

...if the man bringing home the bread, and he's caring for them, and he have a woman, they'll ignore him, they won't even ask him about it, or they will find the woman and argue with her, and beat the shit out of her if they can. And the woman would get all the blame but he wouldn't, if he's being a good man at home...

...I had to put up with a lot of abuse from that woman...she would meet me in the shopping mall, come up in my face, try to look fights with me...I would be going on the bus and she is behind me, she would bush her books in my back...anybody she meet

that knows me, she would pass all kinds of accusations to them about me.

In the latter case, the attacks occurred despite the fact that the woman's relationship with the man had ended long before he was ever involved with the second woman. In another case, the abuse was based on a perceived relationship that was not even there:

...what she [an acquaintance] did, she went there and told the man wife that I was going out with her husband...well this lady came to the place the day, came up to me, and just started cursing me like crazy, calling me names, just cursing me, and then left, and I couldn't figure out why this lady was cursing me.

This woman felt completely violated by the incident on several levels. First, she was innocent of the accusation. Second, she was verbally, publicly, attacked and "shamed". Even more devastating, she had regarded her acquaintance as someone she could trust. These pinpoint some of the gendered aspects of the violence that allows the woman to be the only one held accountable for actions which she may not even be guilty of.

Experiences of community-generated abuse involved sexuality as well. These included outright assault, as well as more subtle forms that reflected commonly accepted practices which left the women wondering about the encounters. One woman shared an encounter she had in an employment situation:

...[I] became friends with this guy, and the woman...want to sleep with him, but...I didn't pay it any mind, until one night my dear, I was in my

room, and I feel somebody touch me, and I wake up, nuh de husband!...Lawd, de husband!...the guy come in there want to go to bed with me, so yes!...he say to me he want to go to bed with me, he want to have sex with me, and I say to him, I'm going to tell [your wife]. You know what he say to me? [he said that she] already know...as a matter of fact it was her idea...that she didn't have as much experience with sex, and that he heard that Black woman, they're really good in bed. And he want me to teach him, so...him can teach her, and that was coming from both of them...by this time I found out that she wants to go to bed with him [my friend] she used to say, she said it.

In another incident, the same woman went to her doctor for assistance, and while the doctor was treating her, and threatening the man who had physically assaulted her, he himself was attempting to sexually exploit her:

...he told me now that I am going to Canada he wants to make love with me before I go and give it to all those French men over there. This was, was my doctor.

Situations such as these highlight the dual roles that men sometimes play, where they function as both protectors and perpetrators simultaneously. For the women who experience these confusing and conflicting behaviours in the same person, defensive responses are truncated because they are not sure how to respond to someone who is seemingly helpful and dangerous at the same time. This, as well as the following recounting, display the layers of power operant in the abusive situation that limit women's response-ability:

...my friend say she went to Jamaica...and this policeman walk in and touch her daughter on her bum and say, bwoy, what a nice butt. And they do this all the time. And her...she just start blow! You know, she get really mad, and the man round the counter say, you know who you talking to? That's

Inspector So and So...her daughter, I think, was about 21 at the time...

While this kind of assault, which the woman identified as sexual molestation and common assault, is recognised as such, there are others which are not so easily identified, because of the overlays of cultural behaviours which facilitate their perpetuation:

...people accept, they see it as a way of life. They touch even the breast...like a man, it happen to me too, and I never see it as anything. A guy, 'bwoy, you have nice breast there, yuh titty dem look nice' [and touches her]...and if you don't mind sharp you all tek it out and show him, and say, 'you like it'? Yes! that happen all the time...I see that happen even here amongst Jamaican, or amongst Caribbean...a man say to a woman, 'so how yuh titty dem look so, ah 'tan up so, yuh ah, like yuh ah young gal'? And she tek it out and say, see't deh, dem ah nuh fake! and put it back in, right here...

Although these support the gender analysis, they also contain elements that are not accounted for by gender alone. Other occurrences of community-generated abuse included encounters that indicate cross-points between the dominant white culture, and the women's own Black Jamaican subculture in Canada:

...we will backbite each other a lot...they figure you and I are Black, I can do anything and you shouldn't say anything...you talk to them, they totally ignores you...and you will see them scruffle to a white person...we as Black people...are more inclined to bring down each other...even the men too, sometimes the way they treat you as a Black woman, they does not treat the white woman that way...put it back to slavery days, put it that way. You always look up to the white masters...and look down on each other...

...and white men, always...at least that's what I think...that it was easy to, you easy, to get into bed, or that if you white, a Black woman is going

to want you, cause you white...you go on the bus, and the bus driver ready to make a date!...and they gonna try, and everybody, it's like, they want to experiment...at least that's how I found it...they think that you easy, and they want to have this experiment, so you know, you were nothing but a, object to experiment on.

These experience of abuse from members of the community, emphasize the women's lived experiences at the place where race, economy and gender intersect. Failure to acknowledge these cross-points, and attend to them, facilitates maintenance of the violence they experience.

Experiences of Violation.

There were additional episodes that the women identified as destructive, harmful and abusive, but had conflicting feelings about whether these clearly fell within the domain of abuse, as they understood it. This particular area of violation is not addressed by the literature on violence against women, because of the way in which violence against women is presently defined. Nevertheless, the women who were interviewed considered these critical in their understanding of the ways in which they are violated, degraded and damaged by their men. These included situations which left them feeling violated and isolated in an emotional way:

...it was more emotional, in the sense...that I raised my kids alone...his work took him away a lot, and so, again, it was mostly emotional, because, no, he never touched me, never hit me...so basically what happened for me was, I became a single parent and a married woman, so when he wasn't there I have my...activities that I do as a single parent, or as a single person, and when he's

back I'm supposed to fit into that mould of being married...and so it's kind of playing this double role so for me there is an emotional strain...I had two personalities, one is a single person and another is a married one...

This woman stated clearly that she saw this as emotionally violating as the experience of listening to her mother being physically attacked by her father:

...I wasn't the one being beaten, but I was affected by it, emotionally, so I got the scars from it. So I think the same thing when I talk about my ex-husband, the same thing applies...

For another woman, it was not being "good enough" except at certain levels:

...I was pregnant, so I had my daughter...and then shortly after that...I had my son...and after I had my son I lived with [my partner] for a little while...he was quite a bit older than me. He was in his twenties...he just came home one day...and he said to me, 'You know I'm getting old, and it's time for me to settle down and you are too young'. Just like that, and the relationship was over...and my kids' father is almost white...you should see my kids' two younger brother and sister, they like, you know, almost white, and his father never like me...in Jamaica skin colour was a big thing...if you brown you marry brown skin, if you Black, you stick to Black skin. Because if you marry a Black skin it gonna dilute your kids...and up to this day he is trying everything in his powers to get me to go to bed with him.....and that's the last man on earth, because that would make me feel so cheap, and so used...that you not good enough to be my wife but you good enough to sleep with.

This woman described an anger and hurt at being so exploited, that even after many years, she was still dealing with the emotional damage. For this man did not see her as too young to have sex with, or to have her become pregnant, twice, by him, but she was too young to marry him. Not only that, after

he was married to his socially acceptable light skinned wife, he wanted to re-establish a sexual relationship with her. Furthermore, he proposed to divorce his wife and marry the woman after the woman obtained permanent status in Canada, because he "loved his children and realised he was losing them", not because he wanted to be with her.²⁷ This concretizes the manner in which violations between men and women in the Jamaican community is mediated not only by gender, but also by colour arising from race designations.

Another way that women experienced this violation, was in the denial of their children by the children's fathers:

...while I was visiting with him, my oldest was conceived...and when I told him about it, he said, we didn't do anything...that we didn't do in Jamaica, so how come I am pregnant? That is implicating, indicating that it wasn't his...

...whenever my dad and my mom used to have a quarrel my father would say...and he would say that I was not his child...I think it's a way of hurting her when they were quarrelling, he was trying to hurt my mom...

...he took everything to the extreme, where he not only said I had a man but he even went to the point of saying the kids weren't his, and that was pretty crazy...he had...normal children who looked like him, and he was there, and he not only said it, he told other people...but this was not something he said all the time. Monday they were his, Tuesday they weren't his, you know, it was, it was and wane.

...he has a brother who had a daughter before he was married, and I, only to realise now after this girl is in her 30's he said the child isn't his...

This exercise of male privilege with the intent of harm, was

manifest in other behaviours:

...my dad was a wild man, you know...those men who keep more than one woman...

...later on I found out that he had somebody with children in Jamaica. And it's when I was pregnant with the child...I found out too that he was planning the marriage, not to the woman he had in Jamaica, but to some other woman here...so I don't know what happen that marriage didn't go through...I got this phone call, was his brother calling to tell me there was no way he could marry anybody else...so we start talking again. But during the time just before I had the child I heard he was going to get married, that somebody was coming up from Jamaica and he was going to get married...

...he became unfaithful. He had women...they would call the house, you know, and things like that. He would go away, and things like that...I remember one time he went and picked up venereal disease, pass it on to me...and that was embarrassing, you know, and, I knew the person who he got it from...

The unfaithfulness of the men, as reflected in their "wild" behaviour, and the rejection of their children, occurs, I am certain, in other societies. One thing that requires attention though, in the Jamaican situation, is that these behaviours are often public. As the women attested, their men went and told other members of the community of their opinions regarding the children, or they would loudly proclaim this outside their homes. Their unfaithfulness was also often well known to members of the community, with whom they would discuss their prowess. Many times, though not always, the unfaithfulness was known to the woman.

As can be seen from the stories of the women, their experiences of abuse from their partners and spouses are connected to their other experiences of violence and violation. They are connected by their similar patterns, particularly those patterns rooted in their overlapping race, gender, and economy positions.

Another pattern was also manifest in the women's stories. In examining the data, it was very often noted that one particular form of abuse was very rarely experienced in isolation. They tended to occur in constellations. Verbal abuse often accompanied physical, spiritual, emotional and economic abuse. Also, verbal and emotional abuse appeared to be integral to all the other forms of abuse that the women encountered.

Responding to Abuse: Survival and Resistance.

It is clear from the women's sharing of their stories that they were very aware of the intrusion of violence in their lives. None of them, however, gave any impression that they saw themselves as passive victims. All of them acknowledged the necessity of "getting on with my life" and thus, the imperative for "finding a way out of this". They were not going to allow themselves to be locked into the situation, despite their presence in it. They described various methods they used to move beyond the violence. Some

of these methods are described here, as survival and resistance strategies. While the women did not all use these terms, they did indicate that what they did, they did to survive, and to fight back, to resist what was happening to them.

Survival

Independence, Self Reliance

Survival, for the women, represented those actions that were taken to help them make it through the abuse, to ensure their lives. One very common strategy used to ensure this survival, was to learn to be independent and rely on themselves as much as possible. All the women employed this method. This meant that they tended to work at managing the situation themselves:

I did it on my own. I was the type of person who would just tide things over, I'm the type of person who didn't think that I want to bother anybody. So a lot of time I would go through stuff on my own, you know. I never thought of quitting my job and staying home.

...and at that point in time, I had pretty well made up my mind that it was over, so I didn't want anybody to talk me into it...

...you learn...not to be dependent cause you see what dependent people go through those days...

...because I feel like I could deal with it...I mean, I experience all these other stuff in my life and I never gone anywhere to deal with it, so the same way I deal with all those others I would deal with it...and I'll move on...you get on with your life.

...my mother never went to anybody for help. She was a very private woman, she kept everything inside, she took everything with her to her grave.

Depending on one's own self meant developing strategies that contained pain, such as putting it away somewhere:

...I don't remember thinking about it until...hearing women talking about the stuff that happened to them...it's something that I put in the back of my head...and refuse to talk about because it's so, sad...it's, not something you wanna remember...

...I couldn't have sex with him, and if I did, I'd be thinking about my grocery, my laundry, and I would actually take my...mind out of my body...my body would be here and my mind would be in Timbucktoo.

Survival often meant tolerating situations that were unpleasant for an existing gain:

...if the man bringing home the bread, and he's caring for them, and he have a woman, they'll ignore him, they won't even ask him about it...I heard a woman say, well, that's his business I don't care what he want to do...just make sure when pay day come he bring home the cheque. Yeh.

...It was Mother's Day...and he said to me, he would like to take me out as he's always done, because the kids expect him to do it, and we'd go along with the program, and act normal...

...I remember saying...I'm going to be leaving soon, so, he'll be history...so I hang around with him until I'm ready, until I came to Canada, and I wrote to him and I said, that's it, I'm here and you're there, find somebody else and move on.

For one woman, after she had been insulted and made to feel stupid, her survival strategy was to go to her room, have a "good cry, wipe my eyes, and went back downstairs like nothing happened". The strategy was adopted because of her financial dependence on her partner, and gaining financial independence

would have meant sacrificing a crucial goal she was working on at that time. Her sense was that her goal had significant implications for her long term independence. Once she had accomplished it, she would no longer need him, and she could exit to end the abuse.

On other occasions, survival meant persevering because of the commitment to children, and the alternatives if they gave up:

...the only thing that kept me going was that I had two children, and I promised God and I promised myself say I would never let them suffer, I would never let them lack...

...cause that's all she had. It was us. We were her strength...

...there were times when I felt like, I can't handle this, I'm just gonna walk out too. There were times when I felt like that...I also thought, who am I gonna walk away and leave my children to, you know...

...plus I had to be strong for my children. There was no way I could give up. Because if I gave up, they needed somebody, and the only person they had was me. I'm not going to see them destroyed.

Part of this self reliance and independence required the ability of "making do", using whatever was available to accomplish what was necessary:

...because things were like the way it is you learn to improvise, like, if somebody give you money you wi' save it and you wi' buy them little things, you know....so I started to work, I had two jobs then...and then I take on another job...but I didn't leave my kids alone...my sister was there...

...I used to come home from work and used to go to school, and take the eldest to the babysitter, and

then I would go home and sleep, then wake up, go pick them up in the evening, things like that. During that time I put myself back to school. I work full time nights, go to school in the daytime, come home, take care of the kids, get a little sleep, go back to work...

...and when he give her eight pounds, she throw pardner²⁸ out of that, she save out of it you know, she save pardner out of that to buy clothes for us...and she would sew...she would sew for us, she used to make our uniforms...she argue with him, and sometimes she just ignore him.

When all else failed, sometimes desperate measures were necessary. A desperate measure used by Jamaican women was "ginalship". One woman employed this strategy thus:

...[when] without any provocation or argument he took the chopper and chop me up...I pretended to be dead on the floor...I pretended to be dead, and I got up after he had walked away, and I ran next door...

This meant flexing the situation to one's advantage. Often, this meant combining methods. In one woman's situation, she stayed with the man and had his assistance in obtaining a job. From there she employed the "making do" strategy to supplement income in order to increase her financial independence:

...from there me cut and sew and ah struggle, but mi' never stop work.

Help From Others

The women also availed themselves of help outside themselves. From the data, it appears that the most often accessed assistance outside themselves, was spirituality, specifically, their attention and calling upon God. The consistency of the information was interesting in that the women were from

different communities, geographical and otherwise, both in Jamaica and Canada. None indicated their use of obeah as a means of protection, retaliation, or exit.²⁹ Four of the women identified this as significant to their own survival:

...and you don't really know how to pray, but you pray, and there are certain things you ask God to take over, and there are certain things you commit in His hands, and no feel no way, God hears sinners prayers, no matter what situation you in, God hears you prayers...and that's the only one thing I know I used to do, I used to pray...

...I read my bible a lot during this time, to find out why I had to struggle so much...

Part of the survival was reflected in the understanding that God would manage the situation, in one way or another. The sense was that God was present in every circumstance, and while He did not necessarily use miracles, He manipulated existing circumstances to provide the support needed:

...mama, every day you sit down and mek daddy do that and you don't even do nothing, and she keep saying, oh, lef' him to God, lef' him to God...but you see, most of our words come to pass...because my father marry again, and him wife treat him just like how he used to treat my mother...

...and with God's help, Him give me the strength...it takes God for you to come out in you sound mind...you say, no God, help me, show me a way out of this...because you don't see a way out.

...when he left I had no bed...but that year the Lord provided enough taxation money for me that I was able to buy myself a bedroom set.

...I don't know how I got out of the house, or how he stopped chopping me, but I remembered praying and asking God to do something, loudly, I called upon Him, and at that point he dropped the chopper...

Tapping into spirituality involved making use of the church community and its resources:

...I thank God I was in the church, and my minister helped me a lot, my minister did counselling...he talked with me, prayed with me you know, and things like that...I knew if I wanted to talk to my minister I could always go and talk to him...and I know it would not go anywhere else.

...she talked to her minister, and of course that would be private, but she never talked to anybody else...she never confided in anybody.

I know there were people that was praying for me, and the children. I know there were brothers and sisters in the Lord that was praying for us, that I think, that, that helped me too.

...I saw a Christian psychiatrist...I wanted somebody who had a Christian background, because I felt if I tell them I prayed for him to be, they could understand what I meant...she understood where I was coming from.

...it was so bad, I went to church, and I spoke to a lady at church, and I told her I wanted her to pray with me to let God remove my husband, and she said, that prayer cannot be said, but I've often prayed...for God to kill him somehow, because I didn't see a way out...

It also meant openness to healing. One woman reported being healed of her distrust of men that had resulted from her abuse:

...I used to get very angry at men, very angry, very angry. A woman would say anything to me and no matter how simple it is I would let it pass. But the moment a man would say anything to me I would, like I ready to snap they head right off...and I had to come to grips and say, God, forgive me...Lord, put love in my heart for that man...the Lord had to heal a lot of emotional scars that was there, and I know God have done it...and now I can say I am not angry...

One day when she almost lost her life because of her anger,

her own understanding of God's action in her life led her to the realization that it was necessary for her to forgive and be healed. Her life was worth more than the anger. She recognised that the healing had occurred when her own attitude towards the man who had abused her changed, her anger gone, and her attitude towards men in general had also changed.

Spirituality also meant making use of dreams and visions to understand the situation, the potential consequences of continuing along the same path, and the choices one has for surviving or resisting the violence:

...when he tried to strangle me...while I was on the floor, I think I lost some consciousness for a minute, because I saw what appeared to me like it was my father's face looking down in my grave, and he was saying why...and that's when I...realised that I've got to get away from this man, because he is going to kill me...he was looking down at me in the grave, I was already in the coffin, and...to me, I was dead, and I was laying in a casket, and he was looking in the grave...he was annoyed...with everything, like, why was I dead...ah shouldn't have been dead. That was his greatest question...

This experience strengthened her resolve, and galvanised action to get out of the relationship. The woman who told this story had, after this, developed a plan, and was actually implementing it, when she was again attacked by her spouse.

Another method used for survival was reliance on family. This involved receiving actual material support, support in the form of encouragement and someone to talk with, or it drawing on the experiences of family members. Actual material

support included:

...at one point I had brought my child home [to Jamaica], because it was too difficult with babysitters, and the wages then was small, paying the rent, paying babysitter, you left with nothing, and I was not getting support...

No! You wouldn't give up you kid, you take it to family, you wouldn't give it up.

They talked with family for support and encouragement:

I would call my sister up...talk to her. Sometimes I would go away on holidays with the children, to her, just to be with family...the moment I call her she could always tell that I am down, you know, and she picked it up right away from my voice and she says, you down today? And we would talk, and...I come off the phone and I'll feel better...

The women also learnt from experiences in their family. They learnt how to recognise the development of abusive patterns, and to plan for dealing with them:

...what happen in my mother's life, I use it as an example to me, because no way am I gonna allow that to happen to me...I can't see myself making people walk all over me...

...I am not sorry I went through those things, because...it teach me, it help me, it show me how to get around, you know, certain things come you way you know how to deal with it, you know, and you know how to handle yourself...no matter how life rough, you know how to set aside and make do because you, you situation you have to make do with what you have...

...it was a challenge because it helped me in my...adult life, how to handle situations and things like that. I see my mom go through hard times and it helped...kinda ground me in my life to see the challenges she faced...

...my mother was...she was an independent woman, even though she has a husband, she learnt to depend upon herself, and I find myself even develop that same road. Even though I had a husband, I had learnt to depend on me.....I did not depend upon

anybody too much for anything...and being started as a young girl...to take a lot of responsibilities, I think also helped me, so that when the challenges came...I was able to handle it somehow...

Making use of help from others meant at times, using institutional supports in the secular community to meet certain needs. One woman accessed support through a Black community centre. Another got some day care supports through day care subsidy programs to enable her to continue to work and remain financially independent. It also allowed her to move forward in her education to a better job. One woman accessed the Children's Aid Society to assist with accommodations and finances in the care of herself and child when the child's father denied his parenthood. When another woman was left financially destitute by her partner during a particularly difficult period, she accessed social welfare services for financial assistance. She also used the support of friends and colleagues to develop the necessary skills for challenging the social service system.

All five of the women indicated that they would go wherever necessary for financial help, but they reported difficulty, and feelings of ambivalence accessing counselling supports. Reasons for this included the sense that they could deal with it by themselves, that God was sufficient, and that they were not comfortable going to just anyone. Three of the women indicated that the discomfort came from the way they had

been labelled in the past, uncertainty about how professionals would regard their reports, and feelings of inferiority. Those to whom spirituality was important, were also concerned that their spirituality not be trivialized or identified as a part of the oppression.

Those counselling supports that were accessed were through the direction and support of friends, co-workers and other people who were familiar to them. So, for example, two women talked with colleagues at work, while another accessed institutional support because the individuals that were suggested to her were recommended by her colleagues. This woman stated adamantly that had it not been for this, she would have accessed no other help other than the financial. Two of the women went to their family doctors, and two used the supports available through their church community. It is interesting that one woman who expressed strong reluctance to general counselling support from strangers, accessed professional counselling when she was depressed. Moreover, she was quite assertive in obtaining the assistance she needed. Two of the women reported accessing marriage counselling, one through her family doctor, and both through private individuals who had been recommended to them.

Resistance

The women were not content to just survive the situation.

They did not want to be abused, and they actively sought to resist that abuse by undertaking action to limit or remove it from their lives. these included both independent action, and help from others. Independent action included open confrontation in the form of physical and verbal retaliations. Of the four women who had been physically assaulted by their spouses or partners, three of them fought back physically:

...I would go for the knife to defend myself...

...so me fight back, and he end up ah hospital, with some stitches inna him head, and him side.

Another took a chair and floored her husband when he attacked her. Open confrontation was a method fraught with its own risks. It might work, or the violence would escalate. It was a risk the women were prepared to take. All five women indicated that they would fight back if they were being physically or verbally abused, and all four women who experienced physical assaults, did. For one of the women, the retaliation worked, because her partner never hit her again.

Fighting back was also verbal. The mouths of the women were as deadly as the men:

...him try but it no make no sense, because he know say he would end up ah hospital same way...one night in particular...he take up [a figurine]...to throw at me. And I look at him and I say, you want, you buy yuh casket yet? eh? Mi' say, yuh buy yuh casket! Mek sure yuh buy it, because ah yuh ah go in ah it tonight. So him put down the figurine. So him realise him can use him words but him can't hit me.

...I was dying for him, I took the phone up and I says, 'dial!' But he wouldn't. I wanted the police to come, in fact I wanted to be arrested so I could leave. Cause I felt if I killed him they'll have to take me out of the situation.

...I took him to the people's house...and they say they did not tell him anything about me, right in front of his face.

...so I just get upset and I tell her off in Jamaican, tell it to her real properly, tell her some Jamaican bad wud, long from here to Montego Bay, and just packed my stuff.

In the latter case, the woman, used her mouth to retaliate with an employer who was verbally abusing her. True, the employer probably never understood the depth of the insult that was being levied at her, but if this woman did the cussing in real Jamaican fashion, as her recounting suggests, the non-verbal demonstrations alone would have convinced the woman that she had been thoroughly insulted. In any case, the insults stopped.

Another resistance strategy, was secrecy:

...I'm very protective of me, and I think you might say, secretive, but I think it's protective. Because I've had to protect myself. The only way I could survive in this country is to protect myself, from the society, from everybody else around, from my own colleagues, from white people from Black people.

... you don't tell people you business, they going to tek it curse you, you don't take things from people because they going tek it curse you...and you learn to just keep yourself to yourself.

As indicated here, secrecy and self reliance were at times combined.

Accessing the help of others came in several forms. The women drew on family for support to continue the resistance against abusive manipulation:

...and I have called her and...I have encouraged her...and my sister...phones practically three times a week, and so she gets the news, so she pass the news on to me...

I remember one time when I couldn't take it no more...I wrote to his sister and tell her that I hate him because of the way he treat my mother, and she must talk to him and tell him to treat my mother better.

...I called my mother, and she talked to him about it, especially the accusation, and he couldn't come up with anything. I talked to friends, I talked to his relatives...it was just a no-win situation...

Additionally, the women used what they learned from the examples or advice of family as a way of resisting, of keeping themselves out of potentially abusive situations, or as direction for exiting:

...I wasn't gonna end up like my sister having many kids, and all of them were from different fathers, and then having to send them back to my mother...

... [my grandmother told me] if you married and your husband hit you once, you can forgive him, but the second time, you leave him...there should be no argument, there should be no talking about it, because to her, that was just something that he was going to do all the time...so sure enough my grandmother told me what to do...I shouldn't have to be talking to people to find out what to do. I was told what to do from like I was five years old, why was I waiting now?

They also relied on help from friends and neighbours:

...I have a number of people, individuals, who I've let in, who I get support from. So I know where to go when I need support, depending on what I need support around.

...Sometimes people run to their neighbour's house...if they can get away...but sometime the men will step into the neighbour house and grab them out...

...mother got tired, she got tired of the beating, and so the village, the people in the village, plotted with her as to how she could get out...and got her, at night, to leave...but my father didn't know anything about it...and next morning we got up and mom was gone. Nobody knew where she was. Of course, everybody knew where she went cause they all helped her, but nobody would say anything...

Spirituality was also important to resistance efforts:

...and I say, don't let him make you walk away from God, I say, it's between you and God, not between you and him, and leave him to the Lord...like all I say to my mom, pray for him, you can't change him, but God can change him, and you pray that his soul is saved. If God has to save him and take him that's it...you not gonna do it, is God gonna do it.

...my grandmother had a great part in, you might not believe this but two weeks before [a life threatening assault from her spouse] I dreamt, it was a very clear dream, that I was back in Jamaica as a child, and...my grandmother...I remember seeing her standing on the top step...and my grandmother took her hand and beckoned to me...and I did not go...and it was as if my grandmother was calling me to join her in death, but I decided I wasn't going...it's unusual that my grandmother would tell me to come and I turn back, because whatever she say was law...but at that time I says, no...and I firmly believe that she had come to greet me, in the other land, and it was she and one of my aunt that died...and they were both standing on the step, and calling me, and I didn't go.

The community, in the form of institutional supports, were accessed. Two of the women went to the police. One woman described it this way:

...I called the police that day...and I reported it, and they asked me if I wanted to lay an assault charge, and I say, no. I just want...you to tell her to leave me alone...

One of the women had her spouse arrested and charged after he physically assaulted her twice in one month, and she sought the services of a lawyer to end the marriage.

Efforts at resistance was often met with counter force:

Oh yeah, you see a lot of physical fights, man lash out, woman try to fight back as a way of protecting themselves, but sometime most time the men overpower the women, you see them with bruises, black eyes, cuts, you know, things like that.

Three of the women encountered this counter force when they fought back. One woman reported that when she went for walks to regain her emotional space, and manage her reactions that could have led to her possibly killing her spouse, he retaliated by accusing her of going to look for men. One woman saw the violence from her spouse escalate in response to her efforts to maintain control and resist his abuse. Another experienced increasing verbal and emotional assaults. These were the risks and the dangers of open confrontation, but none of them, as stated earlier, were prepared to allow this to limit their will to resist. Moreover, their descriptions suggest that they did not necessarily see themselves as trapped in the relationship, or that they had to endure the abuse. In other words, they were victimized but they did not assume the role of victim.

Survival and resistance therefore involved the use of various strategies. Some of these were similar to efforts adopted by other women who persisted through abusive situations. Some of them bore close resemblance to efforts adopted by slave women in Caribbean plantation society. These patterns will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.

Chapter VII

RESONANCES OF SLAVERY³⁰: PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE, SURVIVAL AND RESISTANCE

Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I examined the practice of violence as it related to slave women in the Caribbean, and particularly Jamaica, and to Black Jamaican immigrant women. Chapter V reveals how this practice of violence imposed on slave women facilitated appreciation for receiving and giving back violence. Through the words of the five women who participated in the study, one gains insight into the ways in which that practice of violence continues to resonate today, in the relationship between Black men and women.

The term "resonance" is used in this work because it captures precisely the essence of what this thesis illustrates. This is that the experiences, practices and patterns which emerged during slavery, continue to be heard, seen and felt, not in totality, but in echoes, as it were, in aspects of peoples' lives. Unlike echoes however, they do not fade away, but are maintained and prolonged by structures and interactions that reflect and amplify the practices and patterns. It describes, concisely, the ways in which the atrocities that occurred during slavery continue to be reflected and repeated to the present time. In this section,

I examine a few of those resonances in order to highlight some of the issues that I think are crucial to facilitating critical understanding of the lives of Black Jamaican immigrant women who are abused.

Public and Private Abuse of Women

As the women indicated in their stories, some of the patterns of abuse that they experienced from their male spouses and partners, were repeated in childhood disciplinary methods, as well as in the lives of other members of their communities. These included the interactions they witnessed between their parents. Three of the women made direct links between these practices and patterns, and the experience of slavery. Two of the women connected the disciplinary practices from childhood with slavery. They experienced, as well as observed, beatings that caused welts on the skin that were intensely painful and resulted in bruising. They also experienced or observed, beatings that employed various materials intended to inflict pain. One woman observed, as I have, women being kicked down, pinned to the ground or tied up, and beaten on the ground. She also saw, again as I have, incidences where the woman's clothes were torn off as part of the beating process. Besides the fact that these women drew the connections themselves, the literature on slavery reveals almost identical situations, as described in Chapter V. As I listened to the women's words, the words of Mary Prince, the

West Indian slave, and the drawing of a slave woman tied to a tree, almost naked, and bleeding from the lacerations of the whip (see Bush,1990:43), came to mind.

The verbal and emotional abuse reflect some of the patterns of slave society as well. The literature is replete with the common perceptions of slaves as lazy, useless, worthless, ugly and good for nothing but sex and baby production (Beckles,1989; Bush,1990; Higman,1976; Lowenthal,1972; Mathurin,1975; Morrissey,1989; Shepherd,Brereton and Bailey,1995). These were constantly repeated to the slaves, and often talked about in the social circles of the white elites of that time. Verbal abuse often went hand in hand with physical abuse, and was part of the repertoire of the holders of power, as well as that of the slaves. These epithets approximate many of the abusive expressions that the women reported in their recounting, though they are in many cases embellished with picturesque descriptions.

As the women report, a very significant feature of these patterns of violence in Jamaica is that they often transpired in public, in similar fashion as they did when punishment was meted out in slavery. Although violent public beatings may not occur in Canada³¹, the publicisization of private conflict is evident in some of the women's stories. In one

incident, one woman was publicly "cussed" by someone's wife. In another situation that continued for some time, another woman kept attempting to instigate fights and quarrels, in public, with one of the participants in the study, and actually attempted to publicly embarrass her. Two of the women reported that their spouses went to their places of work, or to other members of the community, and discussed their private conflicts and opinions regarding them and their children. To date, I have yet to come across any similar situation in the general literature on violence against women.

Moreover, as one woman indicated, some of the ways in which sexual violence is exercised through "touching up" by the police, is not only a reflection of gender inequality manifest through patriarchal systems, but also through institutional power vested in police officers. As well, her description suggests an acceptance, in Jamaican society, of this kind of public assault. Other aspects of this kind of violation are seen in the man's fondling of the woman's breast, his intrusion into her sexuality by his comments about "how yuh titty dem ah stan' up suh"³², and her response of showing him the merchandise, as it were. It was almost like going back 150 years to the public slave sales, and seeing the purchaser examining his stock of the goods, to see if they met his approval. To interpret this as a matter of male privilege only, obscures the very real potential of additional

underlying dynamics which are significant factors in the pattern and practice of abuse.

The Politics and Economy of Skin

Some of the sexual violations and abuse encountered by the women in the study also reflect the legacy of a gender- and race- mediated slave society. For a light skinned Jamaican to see it fitting to impregnate and live with, but not to marry, a Black Jamaican adolescent, and to want to maintain a sexual relationship with her after he has married his equally light skinned wife, calls to mind all too clearly the proclivities of the slave massa. As the woman pointed out, the emphasis on gradations of skin colour, derived from the attention to racial features during slavery, particularly hair and skin colour, permeates the abuse experienced by the Black Jamaican women. It is something that impacts all Black women, whatever the particular gradation of their skin colour, for they are all ultimately compared with the white woman (Mills, in Wedderburn, 1991; Russell, Wilson and Hall, 1993; Ford-Smith, 1994). The insidious evil of this is that both Black and white alike end up enslaved by these race-mediated perceptions, even though the power balance may rest in the hands of the white male (Gladwin and Saidin, 1980; Hall, in Shepherd, Brereton, and Bailey, 1995). White women for example, are beaten by Black spouses and partners for reasons not accounted for by gender, as one woman indicated.

The gender- race- and economy nexus goes further. That a white male and a white female employer could have the audacity to approach a Black female employee with the idea that Black women are "good in bed" and that the white couple needed to be taught sexual prowess by a Black woman, in order to justify sexual exploitation, is very revealing. It resonates, in no uncertain terms, the racist notions of Black women which emerged out of the crucible of Black slavery. These notions are more a reflection of the projections white men used to rationalize their abuse and exploitation, and the necessity of slave women to present themselves in a particular way for survival, than it is a reality of the way Black women actually are. That the white employer presented himself in her room, without her consent, with the intent to activate sexual exploitation, shows precisely how race, economy and gender intersect in the encounter of violence. No feminist accounting that sees the essential problem as one of gender only, can ever remotely address these experiences. While this was the experience of only one woman of the five interviewed, it is not an uncommon situation for many other Black women from the Caribbean (Silvera,1983).

Economy, Poverty, and Pretence

The economic abuse that the women in the study endured appears similar to that experienced by women in North American and European society. However, there is an added dimension,

where cognizance of the links to slavery and the development of a metropolis-periphery dichotomy emerging from slavery, may be significant. For many of the Black men, the avoidance, or refusal to financially support their women is at times linked to the actual lack of real resources available to them to support their families. In describing the situations of their parents, three of the women mention this limitation. One woman identified it in her own experience. As well, there is an expectation that the women are just as capable of independently addressing their financial needs. The women's testimonies of their abilities, as well as that of their parents, to make do, support this perception. Added to this is the perception, among many Jamaicans, of some amount of nonchalance on the part of some men, in providing for their children. Again, four of the women discuss the "wildness" of Jamaican men who have children by several women.

Although two of these patterns reflect male privilege, that accounting may not fully reflect what is actually occurring. In addition, one pattern definitely contradicts the gender inequality approach. So an analysis that sees the essential problem as one of gender, could miss the possible underlying realities. However, awareness of Caribbean development within the specific historical context of slavery might shed light on the nature of the observed patterns. For instance, juxtapositions of expectations of female equality in

productivity and responsibility with notions of male sexual privilege, and the making do approach borne out of subsistence and survival, make sense in light of such an analysis. These juxtapositions are clearly evident in slave society, as noted in Chapter V, and some authors understand these patterns in light of that reality (Clarke, 1966; Ford-Smith, in Wedderburn, 1986; Hadley, in Lowenthal, 1973; Hodge, in Wedderburn, 1986; Mills, in Wedderburn, 1991; Sistren, 1987; Witter, in Wedderburn, 1991). Hence, the financial abuse that the women experience from their men does not come only because of male privilege. It is also a mediated violence, arising from the patterns of slavery and the location of the island as peripheral to the European metropolis. The control has shifted from Europe to North America and has become more clearly tied to economy, but it has not disappeared. The men then, participate in the violence as mediators of extra-Caribbean economic slavery, so to speak. It is an arrangement that allows for the maintenance of the violence without attention to where the real power to victimize is located.

The Use of Language as Resistance

Some of the women's responses to the treatment they received reflect aspects of slave resistance to their own circumstances. Physical attacks on masters and overseers, like the slave who "flew at his throat and endeavoured to strangle him" reflect the way the women physically defended

themselves against their partners and spouses. It is in the verbal behaviours though, that one hears resonances very clearly. The number of charges against slave women for violent conduct, abusive language, quarrelsomeness and insolence attest to this as a common form of resistance. These descriptions almost parallel those given by three of the women about the mouths of Jamaicans, and their ability to thoroughly insult with the tongue. The response of three of the women to their own assaults also reflect this. The woman who told her partner that he had better have his coffin ready if he contemplated hitting her; the woman who picked up the phone and told her spouse to go ahead and call the police when he threatened to do so after she defended herself; and the woman who told off her employer in proper Jamaican fashion, with "some dutty bad wud long from here to Montego Bay"; are clear illustrations of the parallel with the verbal resistance of slave women. All these seem to resound with a similar ring to that of the slave woman who told an overseer to "do his worst" when she was punished for non-compliance, and other similar verbal assaults on the massa.

Ginalship and Making Do

The making do strategy is also very evident. Not only did the women make do by saving any money they obtained, they also used a strategy predominantly employed by the slave women, the cultivation of provision grounds. Two of the women

employed this strategy while in Jamaica, and three of the women reported that their mothers did the same. The situation was different for the women when they came to Canada, for this option was no longer available to them. Here the women used other methods of making do, like working at whatever they could. One of the other strategies they used was to remain with the man while they quietly laid the groundwork for a better life. Three of the women did this while in Canada; two in Jamaica; and two of the women indicated that their mothers did the same.

One woman activated the ginalship strategy when she played dead to safeguard her life. While playing dead is not recounted in the literature on slavery, other ginalship strategies, such as pretending stupidity, laziness, and illness were similar strategies employed under related circumstances, by many of the slaves in order to avoid overwork or other hardship.

Spirituality in Resistance

None of the women reported using obeah as a method of resisting abuse, though two of the women reported it being used by others against their mothers, and one possibly against her father. The men's use of obeah as a method of punishment and control to obtain a desired end, however, is also reminiscent of the particular ways it was used in slavery.

Slave men and women, like the abusers the women describe, often went to obeah practitioners to obtain potions which they then applied to slave masters and their children in an effort to kill, inflict pain or sicken them.

All five women report the Christian aspect of spirituality being used as methods of survival and resistance: four in their own situations, and one in the case of her mother. They reported belief in God, even though one reported not living a Christian life, and one stated that she was not a Christian.³³ They all felt that God would respond to cries for help and direction, even if the person was not living as a Christian. Four of the five described God as being very near, in the sense of being immanent.

Moreover, the women presented a God who directly intervened in their everyday lives. For example, one woman reported calling upon His name, and the spouse dropped the cleaver at that instant. Besides this, God intervened and gave her clear direction through a dream and a vision, about what would happen if she did not actively disengage from the relationship. Another woman's experience, was that in her life, God set her free from the abusive man by having him immigrate, and punished her mother's abusive husband by letting him suffer the same things from someone else that she had suffered at his hands. For one of the other women, God

helped her through the abuse by preventing her from killing the man, and providing her with the wisdom to support her children in love. He also provided for her financially, and brought her into full healing and forgiveness, so that any harm she experienced no longer controlled her emotions or actions. She felt free to love others, and respond in generosity to her previous spouse. Another woman reported that God had healed her of the anger, bitterness and hurt she had experienced.

Images and Realities.

Gender, race, class and economy are strong features in the relationships between Black Jamaican men and women. In slave society, wealthy, elite white men held the ultimate power. This was reflected in the ways that they could dictate how white women, Black men, and Black women must behave. They were able, for example, to dictate the relationships between white women and Black men, as well as between Black men and Black women. However, a gender analysis alone would not be able to account for the ways that white women were able to exercise power over Black men, or how Black and coloured women obtained the capacity to manipulate white men. Therefore, a gender analysis of violence in the home of Black Jamaican women would fail to recognise, or address, the problems of the woman who was violated by her very light skinned partner. Only one aspect of the encounter would be identified. Even

when there is no colour difference between the women and the men who beat them, the race dimension is still operative (Mills,1991). As one of the women pointed out, Black men sometimes abuse their partners and spouses because they do not measure up to the image of white women. Another of the women mentioned that some of the verbal abuse she received from her partner occurred after he had migrated. It was then, when he compared her to white women, that he decided that she was ugly and fat.

Another aspect of the relationships between men and women that is obscured by the application of an analysis that sees the problem as primarily one of gender, is the complexity of equality/inequality that exists between Jamaican women and men. Often, in the domestic and economic sphere, men and women are considered equals. This, in fact, was one of the major reasons why feminism as an explanatory model of the situation between men and women not only failed to capture the hearts of Jamaican women when it was first proposed, but antagonised them (Mendoza,1990). In their economic struggle to survive, they had identified their primary obstacles as those of racism and external economic control.

One interesting thing to note in the women's stories, is the sense that men "fooling around" was violating to them. All the women were consistent in this perception. True, many

women in other societies share similar feelings. Yet the application of an historically specific analysis rooted in Caribbean slave society adds another perspective. This gives the behaviours meaning beyond the commonly accepted one of male privilege and breaking of marriage bonds. For the behaviours resemble those of many white men during slavery, in that they had many Black and coloured mistresses in addition to their wives, and children by these mistresses. One wonders if Black men patterned this behaviour as a way of enhancing self esteem by indicating that they too had power like the massa. However, the literature regarding this issue is limited, hence one needs to exercise caution in drawing such connections. It is also possible to argue from another perspective. This is that the women in the study, like many of the Black and coloured women during slavery who sought to imitate white society or became converts to Christianity, viewed any relationship outside of marriage as a violation. This postulation is a reasonable one, particularly given the religious beliefs of the participants, for it reflects the adoption of traditional Christian moral beliefs and practices.

Self Hatred and Internalized Colonization

The relationship between Jamaican men and women also cannot be adequately grasped without the inclusion of the practices of violence imbedded in slavery. Three of the women pointed this out. How does one begin to examine and

understand the intense self hatred that we project on one another, especially in intimate relationships between men and women, without understanding the manner in which this was fashioned in slavery? One woman noticed how Black women ignored, or failed to take instructions from her, but very quickly followed the very same instructions given by white women. All three of the women noted how members of the Black Jamaican community are apt to "pull each other down", to "backbite each other" at the same time they have expectations that we should let other Black people get away with unacceptable behaviour and activities. One woman described vividly how Black men visit this self hatred on their spouses and partners through their abuse of women generally, including Black, coloured and white women.

One may gain some insight into this dilemma when one considers the ways in which Black men and women, in order to gain privilege, or to simply survive in slave society, had to treat other slaves callously. Slave drivers had to mercilessly whip their spouses, daughters, children, brothers, fathers and others of their kind in order to maintain their positions that kept them from the same treatment. For them to do this, they had to learn to see their slave compadres as the white man saw them, and to believe that the white man's perception was accurate, and the punishment justified. Otherwise, they had to shut off any feelings they had for the

persons they flogged. Whatever the process, slave drivers had to put emotional separations between themselves and the objects of their whipping. Even more revealing, was the response of slaves to being owned by coloured men and women: "no give me mulatto, dem no use neega well" (Heuman, 1981:14). This was a response to the common understanding that coloureds, in order to separate themselves from Blacks, bought into the slave system of the massa almost with a vengeance. They treated slaves they owned sometimes more brutally than some of the white owners (Heuman, 1981). It is here that the greatest violence occurred. The colonization which invaded the mind facilitated the use of the social relations of race, class, gender and economy to imprint the practice of violence (Freire, 1970; Gladwin and Saidin, 1980; Nettleford, 1970; Russell, Wilson and Hall, 1993).

Contradictions: Solidarity and Mistrust

This internal colonization instills distrust, suspicion, secrecy, the sense that one has to guard oneself against one's own, for fear of betrayal, for fear of seeming too much like a "nigger". These behaviours occur simultaneously with the attitude that if a Black person does something wrong, other Blacks should ignore it, as one of the women pointed out. It is also seen in the expectation among many members of the Black community, that Black women should only date and marry Black men, for to do otherwise is betrayal, and the resentment

of some Black women when Black men have white partners. These two simultaneous occurrences seem to reflect the resonance of need for secrecy, underground solidarity of Blacks with Blacks, and guarding against betrayal that was evident in the slave community, for these were necessary in developing group resistance efforts. The descriptions given by the participants in this study convey a co-existence of conflicting agendas in the ideas of what constitutes community, how the community ought to function, and how it actually functions.

These interconnections, as shared by the women, manifest patterns of interactions rooted in the legacy of slavery, and the particular way in which race, gender, class and economy are mediated by that legacy. Attempting to understand, and intervening to limit or eradicate violence from the lives of Black Jamaican immigrant women without some appreciation of this heritage, can be non-productive, if not dangerous to the women. This is not to say that all problems of violence in Black Jamaican immigrant women refer back to slavery. However, this is an essential component that contributes to the patterns of violence, and which has too long been neglected.

Chapter VIII

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study has explored some of the perceptions, experiences and responses of Black Jamaican immigrant women around abuse by their male partners and spouses. The intent was to examine possible connections between the heritage of slavery, and the way the problem is understood, experienced and addressed by some women from this cultural background. The aim has been to facilitate the development of critical understanding of the context of the lives of Black Jamaican immigrant women, and to encourage reflection on possible options that may enhance the appropriateness of intervention strategies. I will now review the major assumptions of this thesis in light of the foregoing explications, with some reflection on future possibilities for addressing the violence that Black Jamaican immigrant women experience from their partners and spouses.

Slavery and Abused Black Jamaican Immigrant Women

This study was not intended to prove or disprove connections between slavery and the experiences and responses of Black Jamaican immigrant women with respect to abuse from their male partners or spouses. Nor were the findings designed to be generalizable. The discussion does however, identify sufficient similarities and connections to merit

serious consideration of the linkages between the two in developing and implementing intervention approaches with women from this cultural background. For some of the particular experiences and responses around abuse, as well as interaction patterns between Jamaican men and women, display close resemblance to some of those existing in slavery. It therefore means, for me, that in confronting and limiting abuse with women who share this legacy, one has to be prepared to address some of the damage resulting from slavery and colonialism.

Existing Models and Relevance for Black Jamaican Immigrant Women

It is for this reason that Caribbean feminists insist on models and strategies that are historically and culturally specific, so that they accurately reflect the particular ways that race, gender, class, and economy impact on the lives of people who share this culture. Mainstream theoretical models and treatment approaches simply do not reflect a critical appreciation of this reality, that is, the reality of slavery and its resonance in the lives of Black Jamaican immigrant women. As noted earlier, the primary focus of these models is the victimization of women as a result of patriarchal systems which locate power with the male (Davidson, 1978; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Kelly, 1988; Martin, 1983; Walker, 1984; Yllo and

Bograd,1990). By focusing on gender as the essential problem, other critical factors that impact the violence, such as race and economy, are obscured. Some of the discussions above highlight how this invisibility restricts analysis of the violent situation.

In addition, the historical dimension of abuse, as it relates to white women and patriarchy, has been well documented in the literature. My reading of the literature leads me to conclude that this historical reflection is part of the understanding that allows for the recognition of sexism and patriarchy to be acknowledged and addressed. Yet to date I have found very little in the way of literature that looks specifically at Black women and abuse from the perspective of history as it relates to slavery. If European and Judeo-Christian history play such significant roles in defining abuse for white women, why not the history of slavery for Black women? Furthermore, European and Judeo-Christian histories have been used to account for the abuse of all women. This seems to me to be another area where Black women and others who do not share that history in the same way as European white women, are silenced. For they have had their realities denied, and the realities of others imposed on them and defined as their own.

This limits the range of options made available to the women. For example, failing to appreciate how race, gender and economy fuse, may limit a service provider from appreciating why a Black Jamaican immigrant woman does not disclose, or refuses to access shelter where the women are all white. The service provider may attribute that to the woman's fear of exiting the situation, or not being "ready" to leave, when in fact that is not so. These explanations reflect an individuated analysis that sees the woman only in the context of a white European woman, and nothing else.

Likewise, those who proffer help cannot do so without critical analysis of their own locations in relation to the women they work with. To do so is to run the risk of alienating the women, and even worse, perpetuating the violence, exploitation and oppression. How, for instance, will a white worker assist Black women if she is not confronting the manner in which her position of privilege facilitates the subtle imposition of her will, opinion and interpretation on the Black women's situations? How will a white worker who genuinely exerts effort to nurture the woman's strength and resilience, confront and combat lack of commitment by many Black women to the process, or deal with any residual hostility? Even more, how will a Black, light skinned, economically disprivileged³⁴ worker recognise projected self hatred that subtly sabotages her efforts to

facilitate change to end the violence? This is where mainstream approaches fall short, and need to be broadened if they are to be relevant.

Critical Understanding, Healing and Freedom from Violence

The need for critical understanding is pivotal, for it is my argument that critical understanding of the heritage of slavery will facilitate identification of appropriate approaches, and enhance intervention effectiveness. From the discussion above, it can be seen where this lack of critical understanding has the potential to negatively impact the working alliance between those who help, and those who seek help. This is especially significant in terms of understanding how the legacy of slavery continues to resonate in the professional helping relationship (see Dominelli, 1988). By becoming aware of this, those who genuinely desire to facilitate positive change, will have made an important step in initiating dialogue leading to the "practice of freedom" (Freire, 1970; 15).

In dealing with the issue of safety for example, as two of the women pointed out, a worker who is critically aware of the resonance of slavery, may not suggest that the woman access shelter support. She would understand that this may not be the most supportive environment, but might explore with the woman, friends or relatives or other communal endeavours

that are more likely to affirm her intrinsic value. Or the worker might work with the woman and the shelter to ensure that the additional supports are in place. She would also understand that sending the woman to a Black person is not necessarily going to guarantee support of the sort that she needs. Furthermore, she may well gain appreciation that some of the options she would normally put in place for a white abused woman, might actually subject the Black woman to the violence of institutional racism (Dominelli,1988:108).

Additionally, critical understanding brings to light the multi-dimensionality of violence in the life of Black Jamaican immigrant women. It facilitates exposure of the linkages between individual acts of violence, and the social fabric that allows for the entrenchment of attitudes, behaviours, practices and patterns that perpetuate the violence. Social workers need to understand this to be effective in their work with women who transcend the boundaries of gender-only analysis. They must learn to "transgress" (hooks,1994) as it were, with those they work with, and to facilitate the ongoing transgression of the women, by choosing methods of interaction that are:

...informed by the particularity and uniqueness of whom we are speaking to and with...[so that] not only our paradigms...shift but also the way we think, write, speak...to educate as the practice of freedom [requires interaction] in a manner that respects and cares for...souls...if we are to

provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin. (hooks,1994:11 & 13).

I might add, where healing can most profoundly occur. Considerations like these also facilitate sensitivity to the spirituality of those we work with, and efforts to allow the women to actively access this source of power that is so relevant to many of them. For some women, moving beyond the rage is necessary for their growth and wholeness, and spirituality can become, for them the method for doing so, as two of the women attested.

Summary

This study outlines the complexity of the issue of abuse in the lives of Black Jamaican immigrant women. It pinpoints some patterns from slavery that exist in the context of violence for these women. The information gained from the study suggests that further attention to this aspect of historical specificity in the narrative of violence for Black Jamaican immigrant women will be useful. It certainly makes clear that treating all abused women as a homogenous group, is not fitting.

This academic undertaking also reveals that in this area, there is a paucity of documented information. Russell, Wilson and Hall (1993), and Collins (1990) suggest that some of these links exist between the violence that Black women experience,

and the legacy of oppression borne out of the crucible of slavery. I have yet to see any other study that considers the links between Black woman abuse and slavery. Any other work done by feminists on the issue of violence to women by men, using the lens of history, has remained in the area of gender analysis. As I have repeatedly suggested, this linear approach renders invisible, the complexity of violence in the lives of a group of women that feminist analysis purports to support.

Finally, I think that exploration of frameworks that facilitate this accounting, and strategies that implement components of the practice of freedom, would be not only exciting, but fruitful. Feminist, anti-racist approaches that engage both those who give and those who receive help, in a dialogue that actively encourages the conscious reflection on institutional and social structures that maintain oppression, will, I believe, facilitate healing and empowerment of abused Black Jamaican immigrant women. These would allow both the giver and receiver to deal with each other as equals, regarding the assumptions and exercise of privilege manifest in each. As Freire envisioned, both would be gifting each other, for in the dialogue, they would bring freedom into each other's lives. It is my hope that the possibilities for such models will be a focus of further work.

ENDNOTES

1. Please refer to the section on Definition of Terms for information on the use of this term in this work.
2. Feminists have argued that these terms obscure the reality that the primary perpetrators are men and the primary victims women (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Kelly, 1988; Okun, 1986; Yllo and Bograd, 1990). In this study, I limit my use of these terms to the term 'violence against women in the home' in reference to the range of violence done to adult women by men within the context described in the opening paragraph.
3. Please refer to the section on Definition of Terms for further information on the use of this term in this work.
4. In this work, the term "Black" is capitalized to indicate the politicization and reclaiming of the term by some Black writers as part of the process of self identification and recognition of blackness as a distinct heritage (Moreau, 1996:8-9).
5. In this work, the terms 'violence' and 'abuse', while seeming to be used interchangeably, are not. When the term 'abuse' is used, it is specifically intended to denote acts of violence of individual against individual. The term 'violence' may be used to describe individual to individual situations, but is also used to indicate situations where harm is perpetrated or experienced by groups or systems. Hence the latter encompasses the former. Please refer to the section on Definition of Terms for additional discussion.
6. The term 'white people', in the colloquial way in which I as a Black Jamaican woman am familiar, contains two intuitive meanings. One is the general descriptive term of people who have what is generally regarded as "white" skin. The second reflects an understanding of the power manifest by those people who held and exercised power and control over African peoples and their descendants in the Americas and the Caribbean. This power and control was obtained as a result of their traditional historical relationship of master/slave in relation to Africans forcibly brought to the Americas and the Caribbean. The people who, predominantly, held those positions of power were white, European, and wealthy. Moreover, that wealth was often gained by the conscious exploitation of others, usually through violent means. Ramazanoglu's (1989) discussion of the term 'white' reflects a similar perspective:
 White is, therefore, a very specific historical category used to identify certain peoples of European origin who have been in political and economic positions to dominate peoples of generally different appearances.

In areas where whites have at particular periods of history dominated other racial groups, for example Afro Americans and Amerindians, the white group is itself a social rather than a strictly biological category. (Ramazanoglu, 1989:21)

When the term is used by Jamaicans, it might contain only the first meaning, or only the second, or both meanings may be fused. In the latter case, the person who uses the term makes no intuitive distinction between the oppressor and the colour of the skin, while in the other two senses, a distinction is made. The distinctions made in the usage of the term is not always a conscious one. I believe this accounts for the situation where Black Jamaicans respond to "white people" with suspicion and distrust as they are oppressors, while at the same time respond to "white people" as they do to any human being: individuals who are friends, confidantes, and intimates. I believe it also demonstrates in a very concrete way, the ongoing deconstruction and reconstruction of names to accommodate the contradictions and juxtapositions that have arisen in the particular crucible of Caribbean slavery and colonial domination. This continuous deconstruction and reconstruction is necessary to validate the dignity of the human person while confronting the evil of oppression that can manifest itself in myriad forms. This is one of the gifts to the world that come from people who have experienced intense violation of the psyche.

The term, as I use it in this work, contains the second meaning only. As such, it reflects the understanding that the power relationships, and the affective responses, still exist, albeit in different ways. Further, the term has been used pejoratively to label Blacks who do, or attempt to, create or exercise this kind of relationship viz other Blacks, and those who are perceived as having 'bought into' the 'system', ie, the ideological constructs and behaviours of the oppressors. Hence, a Black social worker in a formal social service support organization may not necessarily be viewed as an ally.

7. I make a distinction, in this work, between class and economy, because in Jamaica, and I dare say, the Caribbean, these are not necessarily the same, owing to the particular historical context of the Caribbean. The distinction is made and discussed in the Chapter V.
8. I recognize that by using some of these terms, I may be excluding women who have experienced violence but who do not define it in the terms contained here. I recognize this as a potential limitation of the work. However, during interviews, I encouraged participants to define, label and interpret their own experiences of violence in their relationships with spouses or partners. They were also encouraged to re-define the terms "spouse" and "partner".

9. In some of the literature, the term is used by itself, and is used interchangeably with abuse to describe individual-to-individual behaviours that harm (Star, in Flanzer, ed., 1982). In other literature, the term is used in conjunction with others to order particular individual-to-individual harmful behaviours within categories, such as 'domestic violence', 'family violence', 'sexual violence' (Gelles and Cornell, 1990; Gelles, Finklehor, Strauss, and Hotaling, 1988; Hampton et al., 1993; Levinson, 1989). In still other literature, the term is used on its own, and defined narrowly to include only physical, individual-to-individual behaviour (Steinmetz, 1987). Walker, G. (1990) presents some very insightful comments on the use of the term. Kelly (1988) also presents a discussion of the term that I found interesting.

10. The particular forms of abuse identified here, are defined as follows:

Physical: captures behaviours that damage at the physical level. These include hitting with a part of the body or other implement, punching, knifing, shooting, shoving, and slapping (Levinson, 1989:12)

Emotional: denotes behaviours that result in harm to the person's positive regard for herself and her own sense of self worth. These include "put downs" and words and/or behaviours that induce shame, humiliation, degradation, a sense of powerlessness, helplessness and/or loss of control (Andersen, Boulette and Schwartz, 1991).

Spiritual: I have chosen to discuss this aspect of abuse separately from that of emotional abuse. While I consider it to be a specific form of emotional violence, its prevalence in Jamaica and the Caribbean, and the importance of its impact, are such that I believe it merits special attention apart from emotional abuse. Spirituality, Christian or otherwise, is a significant part of the lives of Jamaican and Caribbean women. Spiritual abuse, is the attempt of individuals to isolate the woman from spiritual support networks, as well as the use of spiritual threats, activities and curses to intimidate, harm and/or manipulate.

Economic: describes those behaviours which limit the woman's ability to adequately meet material needs, such as food, clothing and shelter. It includes the withholding of financial support, and the removal of material supports such as furniture, craft materials and food that the woman uses as capital for accruing funds.

Sexual: indicates behaviours that appropriate the woman's body, specifically where her body reflects her sexuality, in a manner that damages or dehumanises her, or takes away her control. These include rape and uninvited fondling or

touching of the body.

Verbal: is the use of words that removes control from the woman, and which degrades her. These include name calling, shouting, yelling, screaming.

11. The activity of buying and reselling goods, including food, at the level of the informal sector. This enterprise usually involves visits to Britain or the USA, but more often the latter, for the purchase of goods.
12. With approaches like this it is no wonder that some members of the Black community choose to identify race as the primary oppression, at the expense of sexism, or else to see violence against women in the Black community as another manifestation of racism.
13. Reasons were not sought, as I felt it was important to allow anyone to withdraw without any sense of obligation or guilt.
14. Actually, I was influenced in this regard by a member of my thesis committee, who identified spirituality as an issue of concern, and by the response of the entire committee to its inclusion, for, despite my personal biases, I did not initially consider spiritual abuse as a factor.
15. Obeah is an African religious practice that is often used in Jamaica to obtain desired ends. See Chapter V for further discussion of this practice in Jamaican slave society.
16. Brathwaite (1971) reports that the most commonly recognised terms in Jamaica were sambo, mulatto, mustee and octoroon, with mulatto being the legally designated term for all coloured people. An octoroon was considered legally white, and therefore automatically free, according to the law.
17. It is for this reason that I separate class and economy. The general understanding of class in most discourse attending to notions of class and power, clearly align class to material wealth. This is also impacted by birth in some societies, such as Britain. Hence class, or social status, was synonymous with wealth and sometimes birth. However, in the Caribbean during slavery, birth and material wealth were mediated by colour. Also, colour and material wealth were not immutably co-existing. One could be poor and white, and wealthy and Black. In the latter case, this was possible through the manumission of slave children by wealthy white fathers. Because of the colour principles, a rich Black man was situated lower on the class scale than poor whites, even if that white person was hired by the Black man. A mulatto woman that was born free, could have more status than a freed mustifini who had been born a slave. What is also of

particular note is that based on the whim of the privileged white class, certain privileged coloured individuals could be admitted to white society whether they were born free or not. Moreover, women who were further down on the colour scale, and who were able, because of their attachment to white men, or who had gained some economic independence, could attain to some class positions, to a limited degree, than lighter skinned white women who were born slaves and not as positively economically endowed. See Brathwaite, 1971, Bush, 1990, Shepherd, Brereton and Bailey, 1995, and Heuman, 1981 for additional discussion on this.

18. Some concubines and mistresses were given their freedom by the white men who owned them, because of the degree of affection that developed between them. For the same reason, other concubines and mistresses had their freedom purchased by their white lovers. Still others were able to purchase their own freedom by degrees, by saving the funds that they accrued through prostitution. All of these were still subject to forcible return to the condition of slavery if their papers indicating their legal status of freedom was stolen, or more often, deliberately destroyed by white men or women. This practice, I believe, gave rise to the expression, in Jamaica anyway, "mi' free papa bun' ", a saying that was used to express the loss of a privilege or pleasure (like having to return to school after holidays). See Brathwaite, 1971, and Lowenthal, 1972, for example, for a brief discussion on these Certificates of Freedom.
19. Ginalship is a colloquial term that contains variable nuances. Ginalship, to my understanding, is deception of any kind, using the existing circumstance, in situations of real or perceived exploitation, to reclaim or safeguard oneself and the things of value to oneself, or for purposes of self gain. I cannot recall ever seeing a written definition of the word. However, it is almost always used when describing Anancy (or Anansi) the spider-man of Jamaican, as well as other Caribbean and some African folk tales. Anancy is the quintessential ginal. He employs lies, subterfuge, deception and trickery for personal gain. The gains usually are to feed himself and his family, to get even with someone, or to escape some calamity. He sometimes falls into his own traps, and sometimes others get even with him. He is both applauded and condemned for his behaviours, though he is none the less entertaining.
20. This a paraphrase of a popular saying. I am uncertain of the origin of the saying, but it is one that my younger sister is fond of reminding me of.

21. Wilmore (1972), in a very interesting discourse, points out some of the elements of African religious ideology that were completely missed in white understanding of African spirituality:

...the widespread assumption that Africans worshipped nature and venerated animals as gods is a gross misunderstanding. While [these] have a place in some African religions they are only two of several categories of Being, and are, in a way, symbolic representations of the living, pulsating environment in which man subsists and through which he is related to the spirits of supernatural beings and the ancestors, but pre-eminently with the Supreme Being, the God who is above all gods and who is Creator, Judge and Redeemer (Mbiti, 1969, cited in Wilmore, 1972:22).

Because of this, they failed to see connections between practices and rituals, and an ideology that guided those rituals. Failing this, they made connections between what they observed and what they were familiar with, that is European perceptions of witchcraft. They then focused on certain aspects of these practices that fostered their paranoia. This is not to say that their fears were groundless, for many slaves used these methods to resist, attack and otherwise damage their oppressors. One wonders what effect their fears had on the efficacy of the some of practices.

22. From the King James Version, Son of Songs, verse 5. Some modern translations have rendered the word as "dark" instead of Black.
23. I suspect the original underlying meaning of this term has faded for many Jamaicans. Those whom I have asked have indicated that its meaning is akin to "worthless, lazy, good-for-nothing, idiotic, fool", with all these meanings contained within the one word.
24. Jamaica has a very long tradition of "cussing" or "tracing". To many, it's an art form that one works at developing. I remember watching the unfolding of such encounters. The whole idea was to so thoroughly humiliate by description of the other person's attributes that the person was silenced, or disgraced enough to remove themselves from the scene. Some of the poems of Louise Bennett, a highly respected Jamaican storyteller, captures the essence of this art form. The crux of the art is not only in the words used, but also in the manner the cussing is done, usually with very picturesque body movements to accompany the words.
25. John Crow is the Jamaican colloquial name for the vulture, a scavenger meat eater. To be called a "dutty john crow", for a Jamaican, is an insult of tremendous proportions.

26. This is another word with a meaning similar to 'curse'.
27. I wonder whether another level of violation was not occurring, or would have occurred, had she taken him up on the offer. Though none of the women discussed this aspect, it is one which I see as occurring in the Jamaican community. This is that men at home in Jamaica will profess to love, and then marry, Jamaican women with permanent residence in Canada. Once the marriage is recognised and the man becomes a permanent resident, the woman endures living hell until the relationship ends. That ending might not come for years, because of all the additional stigma that attend it. I caution however, against anyone saying that marriages which start off with the man living in Jamaica are for this reason, for that would be an inaccuracy beyond measure. I am aware of too many healthy relationships that began this way, to make, or support, such a perception.
28. This is not a mis-spelling. The spelling reflects the pronouncement of a word that describes the effort of saving funds through group effort. It is a common practice in Jamaica. A group of people agree to contribute a certain amount of money each week in order to save funds. One person collects the funds, and each week one person from the group receives the total funds collected for that week. The process is repeated until all members have received a payment, then the process is repeated, with the consent of the participants. It is a process which is highly dependent on trust.
29. The use of obeah, considered as the application of evil, is generally seen in the Jamaican context as not only inconsistent with genuine Christian practice, but also anathema to obedience, and trust, in the relationship with God. So it is not surprising that the women did not identify this as part of their usage. I have personally encountered situations though, where church attendees combine both.
30. This expression is not my own. It was used on an episode of "Charlie Rose" by a Black writer and musician. It is unfortunate that I did not have the presence of mind to note his name, or the particular episode of "Charlie Rose" when the discussion took place.
31. At least, I have not yet heard of any occurring in the general public. I have heard, though, of very rare incidences of women being physically or verbally assaulted by men at public gatherings that consist of members of the Black community only.
32. This means, essentially, "how your breasts are firm and erect in such a way that they visibly protrude from your body".

33. A Christian, in terms of my perception of commonly accepted Jamaican understandings, is someone who has given their life to God by acknowledging Jesus as Lord and Saviour, who has been "born again" and is living a life according to the Bible. It does not mean, as it does in Canada, one who is of the Christian faith, as opposed to being Muslim, or Buddhist. In the Jamaican sense, one may believe in a Christian God and believes that He is the only true God, and yet not be considered to be a Christian, for one has not been "saved". In this sense, a Catholic is not necessarily a Christian, if that person does not "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" and "accept Jesus as his/her Saviour, through personal acknowledgement.
34. I use this word in order to capture and describe the complete absence of any privilege whatever. The word is further used to indicate that the person is not at fault for not being in an economically favourable position.

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APPENDIX A

Interview GuideIntroduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate. This will be an informal interview, and will last about two hours. Also, the interview will be taped, as we previously agreed.

The topics that I would like to cover in the interview are: your experiences of growing up in Jamaica; of coming to Canada and living here; abuse by your partner or spouse and how you deal/dealt with it; supports for dealing with abuse that you were aware of, or used, in Jamaica and Canada, and your response to them. You can set your own pace for the discussion. You can refuse to answer any question, and you can choose to end the discussion at any time if things get difficult for you. If you need some time out during the interview, let me know, and we will take a break.

Do you have any questions you want to ask before we begin?

Themes/Probes

- growing up in Jamaica
 - : important figures, personally and socially; reasons
 - : everyday events
 - : foods ate; reasons
 - : important traditions in family and community
 - : perceptions of men and women and the relationships between men and women
 - : things done for fun & entertainment; reasons
 - : relationships with family, friends, men
 - : ideas about growing up and relating to men, and sources of these ideas
- coming to Canada
 - : reasons for coming
 - : expectations; hopes; plans
 - : experiences of living in Canada
 - : feelings about living in a predominantly white society
- supports accessed/accessing for help, generally
 - : who turn to when need help/want to "chat"
 - : primary people with whom discuss general problems; reasons

- perceptions/definitions of abuse
 - : own understanding of the terms; violence, abuse, mistreatment; reasons
 - : words used to describe "bad" treatment from a) anyone; spouse/partner; reasons
 - : source(s) of these understandings
- experiences of abuse
 - : general ways of relating to partner/spouse; expressions of affection; communication; need
 - : "bad" treatment by spouse/partner; forms; how different from regular interactions
 - : descriptions of what happened/is happening
 - : reasons; source(s) for seeing these as bad
- coping with abuse
 - : how dealt/dealing with it
 - : others who deal with it in similar ways; relationship
 - : help offered: who; purpose; how; when
 - : how viewed/view that help: reasons
 - : was/is the help used: how; when; what prompted use; results
 - : what was most/least helpful/useful: how
 - : awareness of formal help/services available to help; how; when; through whom
 - : were/are these used: how; when; reasons
 - : what feel would have been most helpful
 - : what want to see available for Jamaican women
- anything else want to add
- describe how see living situation, say, five years from now

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the research. If you want to see the transcript of the tape, let me know. Once I have identified quotes that I wish to use, I will contact you, and give you the opportunity to look at them in the context that I intend to use them. I will remove any quotes that you wish me to withdraw, as we agreed. Do you have any questions?

Again, thank you.

APPENDIX B

Letter of Introduction

Dear _____,

I am a student currently enroled in the Master of Social Work Program at Carleton University School of Social Work. As part of the requirement for graduation, I am expected to complete a major research project or thesis.

For my thesis, I wish to talk with Black Jamaican women who are immigrants to Canada, to get your views and experiences of living in Jamaica and in Canada, and abuse by your husbands or male partners. I am also interested in supports that you were/are aware of or have used to help deal with the abuse in Jamaica and Canada. My aim is to gain a better understanding of Black Jamaican immigrant women who are/were abused, how you understand the abuse, and what is/was important in helping you deal with it.

Before agreeing to participate, you may meet with me to ask questions about the study, and about any of your concerns about safety and remaining anonymous.

Participation in the study involves a two hour interview with you, and with your consent, the interview will be taped to ensure accuracy in my analysis. Another meeting will be arranged for you to review quotes from you that I wish to use in the report, and how I am using those quotes. I will not use any quote that you wish to withdraw. I will not discuss your participation with anyone.

You may choose where you want to have the interview; refuse to answer any question; and to end the interview if you feel you need to. If emotionally upsetting issues arise during the interview, I have arranged contacts to provide support after the interview.

Although I will be using your words in my report, I will remove all names and references to places or situations that may identify you, from all tape transcriptions, and any written documentation of your story. Tape transcriptions, once identifying information is removed, will be seen by my Supervisor Dr. Bessa Whitmore, to facilitate accuracy in analysis. When analysis is complete, I will destroy the tapes and transcripts, or return them to you, depending on your choice.

Thank you for your willingness to consider participation in the study. If you have any questions please call me collect at 519-426-3141, or you may contact my Thesis Supervisor, Dr. Bessa Whitmore, at Carleton University School of Social Work, (613) 520-2600, ext. 6692 or ext. 5601. I will reimburse you for the cost of any calls you make to me, or to the university.

Sincerely,

Margaret Vernon

APPENDIX C

Letter of Consent

I, _____, agree to participate in the study being conducted by Margaret Vernon of Carleton University School of Social Work.

I am aware that this study will involve discussion about my views and experiences of growing up in Jamaica and living in Canada, my experiences of abuse by my husband or male partner(s), and supports in Jamaica and Canada that I may be aware of or have used to help with the abuse.

I agree to the following:

- a two hour interview with Margaret, which will be audio taped. The tapes, and transcripts, will either be returned to me or destroyed, at my request, when the study is finished. If my involvement ends before the interview is completed, the tapes will be destroyed or returned to me at the time of my request;
- tape transcriptions, once names and other identifying information has been removed, will also be seen by Margaret's Supervisor, Dr. Bessa Whitmore, but no one else;
- a second meeting where I will review quotes by me that Margaret wishes to use in the report, and the way they are to be used in the report. Margaret will not use any quotes by me that I wish to have excluded from the report;
- my participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer questions;
- my participation will not be discussed with anyone;
- I may choose where I want the interview to take place;
- access to supports arranged by Margaret, in discussion with me, if emotionally upsetting issues arise during the interview and I need support to deal with them;
- my words may be used in Margaret's written thesis;
- Margaret will remove all names and references to places or situations that may identify me, from all tape transcriptions, and any written documentation of my story.

I understand that the results of the study may be published and will be deposited in the Carleton University Library for future reference.

I understand that my name and all identifying information will remain confidential and not be disclosed under any circumstances whatever.

Signed _____

Researcher _____

Date _____

APPENDIX D

(Attached)

August 15, 1996

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter will serve as notice of my intention of agreeing to support women who are being interviewed by Margaret Vernon for her research study.

This support will include counselling and/or referring to appropriate community resources as necessary, i.e. Interval House. It is my understanding that these women may be in abusive relationships.

My experience in this area includes a work placement at Catholic Family Services. Currently, I work as a medical Social Worker and for family physicians. Approximately 30-35 percent of my caseload is comprised of these types of issues.

Please find enclosed my card which lists my qualifications. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Bonnie McNab
Bonnie McNab

/lr
encl

Bonnie McNab, B.A., B.S.W., C.S.W.
Social Worker

Individual, Marital & Family Counselling

Wentworth - Limeridge Medical Centre
849 Upper Wentworth Street, Suite 406
Hamilton, Ontario L9A 5H4

To book an
appointment call:
(905) 575-9004

September 18, 1996

To Whom It May Concern:

I would be pleased to provide clinical support to the individuals involved in Margaret Vernon's research study.

I have a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from McMaster University in addition to a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology. I am also a member of the Ontario College of Certified Social Workers.

I would be prepared to provide social work intervention to individuals who are survivors of abuse. I would anticipate that my involvement would be of a relatively short duration or until appropriate, longer term services could be accessed.

My work in the McMaster University Medical Centre's Emergency Room over the last eight years has entailed working with victims of abuse who are in crisis. My work in the Hamilton General Hospital's Emergency Room has been similar in nature.

I would be pleased to provide references upon request.

Sincerely,

Charlene Wilson, B.A., B.S.W., C.S.W.
Clinical Social Worker