

Coloniality, Sexuality & Violence: An Interrogation into the Colonial Patterns of Violence Against Women in Grenada

By

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ABSTRACT

Situating the lives of women within a decolonial, anti-racist and feminist framework, this thesis interrogates the interconnectedness between colonialism, gender ideologies and violence against women in Grenada. Analyzing and complicating violence against women continues to be a necessary part of feminist activism and epistemology. However, failure to expose the colonial roots of violence and its unique impact onto the lives of women of colour and women in the Global South lends itself to the continuation of such violence and the erasure of their experiences. Using Maria Lugones' colonial/modern gender system and coloniality, this thesis contributes to the process of decolonization and critical intervention required to truly work towards transformative change by supporting spaces of acknowledgement and resistance.

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This thesis is dedicated to my mother, my grand-mothers, my ancestors and to all the Grenadian women who continue to live, love, resist and survive in a world that would rather see their bodies and revolutionary spirits die.

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In solidarity and remembrance of all who have passed, to all who continue to fight and to all who continue to love endlessly.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAFRA- Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action

CARICOM- Caribbean Community

CARIWA- Caribbean Women's Association

C.O.P- Commissioner of Police

CSA- Caribbean Studies Association

DVA- Domestic Violence Act 2001

ECLAC- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

GrenCHAP- Grenada chapter of the Caribbean HIV/AIDS Partnership

GNOW- Grenada National Organization of Women

LACC- Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic, Grenada

LGBTQI- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer and intersex

NNP- New National Party

OECS- Organization of Eastern American States

RGPF- Royal Grenada Police Force

INTRODUCTION

Gender itself is a colonial introduction, a violent introduction consistently and contemporarily used to destroy peoples, cosmologies, and communities as the building ground of the “civilised” West. (Lugones 186)

Using Argentinian popular educator and feminist philosopher Maria Lugones’ insightful work on the colonial/modern gender system, this thesis will complicate patterns of violence against women in Grenada and the latter’s relationship to colonialism. In this thesis, I will use the following question to map the possible interconnections and frictions between coloniality and current patterns of violence against women in Grenada and how this may inform future research. What role does coloniality play in the defining of gender, gendered practices and sexualities in Grenada and how does this affect the subjugation of violence experienced by Grenadian women?

Lugones’ quote above cautions us to remain cognizant of and to problematize the use of the term ‘gender’ by historicizing it and placing it within the context of colonialism, particularly when addressing violence against women of colour. For the purposes of this thesis, ‘gender’ will signify the social and heterosexist demarcation of man, woman, their associated roles and expectations and the production of differential power relations that determine the material lived realities for men and women. In addition, emphasis will be placed on gendered practices as opposed to gender roles in order to highlight the strategic use of gender in differing contexts that entrench power imbalances.

Anglo-American feminist scholarship on violence against women has tended to centre feminist analysis primarily on patriarchy and a ‘false sense of sisterhood’. As a result, other axes of oppression that exist beyond gender,

particularly as they impact women of colour and women from the Global South, have been overlooked (Mohanty 36). In historicizing gender, the goal is to consider the multiple strands of oppressions that shape and define women's experiences within a decolonial framework that extends beyond interpersonal gendered violence.

I am not attempting to speak for all Grenadians, particularly Grenadian women throughout this thesis. My concerns and analysis are through my gaze and are based on what I have witnessed and experienced while growing up on the island and upon my return over the course of six (6) years. However, engaging in this research as a Grenadian woman, socialized within the very ideological and attitudinal structures that I am critiquing, my uses of 'we' and 'our' will be in reference to the people of Grenada. This thesis is therefore in some ways, a call for change from one Grenadian woman to the rest of the Grenadian population.

This thesis argues that in Grenada, we are witnessing the coloniality of gender and sexuality premised on and supported by violence against women. This thesis challenges the Grenadian public's general acceptance of the colonial gender binary system, and the conceptualization of gender, sex and sexualities within a heterosexist, dimorphic framework. This dual and oppositional categorization of gender as existing between males and females with entrenched asymmetrical power relations pervades the everyday ideals, traditions, perceptions and social attitudes on gender, gendered practices and sexuality in

Grenada and subsequently endorses numerous forms of violence against women.

Colonialism in Grenada introduced a gender system based on Western conceptions of a duality between men and women where the white colonizer 'male' was positioned as the norm and that explicitly supported the reproduction of power struggles between these imposed categorical labels. This gendered binary with its assumptions about masculinity, femininity and sexuality allows for the existence and progression of violence, domination and forms of oppression such as sexual and marital violence against women.

Our understanding of the continuing influences of colonialism onto the laws created, our social interactions and the valuing and devaluing of lives, physical bodies and spirits based on gendered and racial lines needs to be expanded and complicated. By engaging in this decolonizing process, we are able to expand and challenge notions of post-colonialism and, instead, come to view gender relations and gendered practices as racialized and as constitutive of coloniality. This requires that we interrogate many of the social and gender norms and institutions that we continue to unquestioningly ascribe to such as our reliance on the legal system and the adoption of laws such as the Domestic Violence Act (2001), the Grenada Constitution (1975) and some of the campaigns created to address violence against women.

Gathering research and data on violence against women, specifically in Grenada proved to be a bit difficult as I was based in Ottawa at the time. Therefore, with support from my department, I attended the Caribbean Studies

Association's Annual Conference from May 24th-28th 2010, in the parish of St. Peter, Barbados. The goal of this trip was to help gather information and to ground my research within the Caribbean. The primary goal of this conference was to encourage a fruitful discussion on the social, emotional, political, physical and psychological impacts of the notion of violence in the Caribbean. The theme for the conference was Understanding the Everyday Occurrence of Violence in the Cultural Life of the Caribbean: Where Do We Go From Here?

The first workshop I attended was titled "Reckoning With Violence Against Women: Recognition, Connection, Action." Linda Carty, a professor at Syracuse University shared her experiences as a black, radical feminist visiting and doing research at the Centre for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies Cavehill campus in Barbados. Carty argued that feminism needs to be more than a discursive exercise. She posits that academic feminism has not only failed in the Caribbean but also in the North and that the constructions of gender in the Caribbean have taken place within a neoliberal and colonial framework (Carty 2010). The critical approach Carty was asking that we engage in requires the destabilization of colonial and patriarchal systems that will eventually lead to transformative change and the redefinition of Caribbean ideals of feminism.

My participation in these workshops and conversations with primarily students and professors left me questioning whether a failure to critically interrogate the roles of colonialism, race, gender and heterosexism in addressing violence against women's bodies contributed to increasing incidents of violence

against women in Grenada, in turn stunting the effectiveness of law and social policy?

Coloniality versus Post-Colonialism

Lugones' coloniality of gender acted as a catalyst in my questioning of gender, race, colonialism and modernity and how they interlock. Her decolonizing and scholarly epistemological framework yielded a need to include broader discussions of race, class, state oppression and heterosexism when examining violence against women in Grenada. Though postcolonialism and coloniality inform one another, they belong to two related but distinct schools of thought in which the former assumes an end to colonialism and the latter analyzes the continuing productions and reproductions of colonialism without the explicit presence of a colonial administration. Lugones captures Peruvian sociologist and humanist thinker Anibal Quijano's extension of the differentiation between colonialism and coloniality when she states that "though coloniality is related to colonialism, these are distinct as the latter does not necessarily include racist relations of power" (Lugones 191).

The term 'postcolonial' suggests, in my reading, an era subsequent to colonialism, it signals the end of colonialism and the ushering in of an era that is witness to the residual effects of colonialism. Other scholars, and many feminist authors, embrace the term 'postcolonial' such as Ratna Kapur, Chandra Mohanty, Gayatri Spivak and Mindie Lazarus-Black, and their contributions to the field have been groundbreaking and critical. It is true that feminism and postcolonial studies both attempt to interrogate and challenge systems of

domination and oppression. However, postcolonialism, in my view, minimizes the continuing dark side of modernity and the term may unintentionally support the light side of the colonial/modern gender system which naturalizes gender and entrenches “oppressive colonial gender arrangements” and “oppressive organizations of life” (Lugones 187).

Violence Against Women in Grenada

Gender-based violence, including violence against women in Grenada, continues to be a pervasive and consistent weapon used to interrogate and violate women’s lives and their communities. According to Grenada’s Social Development Minister, Sylvester Quarless, violence against women accounts for the number one cause of death of women on the small Caribbean island (Spice Grenada Newspaper 2009). Gender-based violence is rooted in gender inequalities and involves more than just a few bad men committing violence against a few women. It is systemic and hegemonic, emanating across borders and boundaries, through multiple parts of the lives of Grenadian women. It is not solely a woman’s issue, but a societal concern.

On August 20, 2009, Godfrey Simeon from Beaton, St. David’s attacked the mother of his three children, Andrea Williams, with a cutlass (The New Today Newspaper 2010). According to Crown Counsel, Crisann Greenidge, the relationship between Williams and Simeon had broken off a year prior to the incident but Williams still provided Simeon with daily meals. Around 9:00pm on August 20, while in a shop in Beaton, St. David’s, Williams complained to another woman that though school was about to reopen, she had yet to receive any

assistance from Simeon to support their three children. Immediately after, Simeon proceeded to seek out the whereabouts of Williams and started chasing her with a cutlass (machete) as “he felt hurt” after being informed of what Williams had said. Simeon began chasing his estranged wife and, while chasing her, began “chopping” her. Even after she fell to the ground he continued “chopping” her, rendering her unconscious (The New Today Newspaper 2010).

According to an eyewitness, at one point, Simeon “held onto Williams and tried to put her head on the wall in an apparent attempt to cut it off but he was restrained by one of his sons” (The New Today Newspaper 2010). Williams sustained multiple lacerations including the loss of her right forearm and left thumb. The presiding judge, Justice Henry felt as though the attack was “unprovoked”, charged Simeon for attempted murder and imposed a seven-year sentence on Simeon. In Grenada, the charge for attempted murder carries with it a maximum of fifteen years.

According to Williams, the sentence was not enough. She expressed to the *New Today* reporter how difficult it had become for her to carry out everyday tasks and to take care of her children. Quoting Williams, “I have to keep on begging people to comb my children hair, begging somebody to do something for me. I don’t have a job. If my sister and them don’t help me, I don’t have nobody to help me” (The New Today Newspaper 2010).

This case illustrates the interactions between gender based violence and the intervention of the legal system in Grenada where the gendered aspects of the crime are typically not prioritized or made visible by the Justice of the Court

or the media. In the newspaper article, the journalist made sure to include a portion of Simeon's criminal history that included two previous convictions of a similar nature. In 1992, he was convicted of assault and placed on a bond and in 1997, he was charged with wounding and was fined \$1,000 (The New Today Newspaper 2010). Yet his previous criminal records of crimes similar in nature did not seem to have influenced the Justice's decision on sentence.

Williams clearly relied on Simeon for financial support to assist her and their children, a gendered-economic aspect that would have further reinforced Simeon's power over Williams yet was not explicitly considered by the Justice. While Simeon received a jail sentence, it is unknown if Williams' received any redress for herself and her family; this redress would have greatly assisted Williams as she learned how to creatively function in her newly impaired body. In stating her final decision and the rationale, Madame Justice said that it was an 'unprovoked attack' raising the question as to whether or not Williams would have been partially blamed for the offence if she had in fact 'provoked' him? This case is indicative of the nature of most cases involving violence against women in Grenada and helps to illustrate the inaccessibility and subsequent lack of gendered analysis for addressing violence against women. Also, the very framing of the language and narrative recounted both by the Justice and the media, depicts to the intuitive reader how violence against women has become normalized on the small island.

Globally, patterns of violent acts perpetrated against women continue to significantly impact individual lives, families, communities, and nation-states.

Although in Grenada, there have been changes in legislation, policies, and protocols surrounding violence against women, dominant gender ideologies still need to be adequately challenged. The notion that men have the final say - a key aspect of gender-based ideology in Grenada - has remained relatively unchanged and to some extent, unchallenged.

Gendered Ideologies

The role of ideologies is fascinating as it renders (in)visible the reasons and socio-political contexts that rationalize behaviours, ideas, values and ideals. A consistent definition of ideologies is not easily distinguishable due to the open-ended and multidimensional aspects of ideology. Alan Hunt uses the term ideology to map out the relationships that exist between ideas, attitudes and economic and political interests (Hunt 13). Ideologies are usually associated with relations of power but they also gain credibility vis-à-vis our everyday beliefs/ideas, interactions, practices. Ideologies can be both oppressive and yet, can allow for sites of resistance (Boyd 114-115). As a result, ideologies can be used to legitimize locations of privilege by compelling others to engage in certain ways of thinking, acting and being by framing those actions as natural or the norm. These modes of influence occur through ideals, values, and attitudes, cultural practices, institutional practices, (such as through the church and the legal system) and our conceptions of the world.

The term 'ideology' is also used to show the concrete impact that discourse and power may have on people's lives. An example as to how ideologies are created and further entrenched based on our conceptions of the world is how

global society conceives of post-secondary education. The educational experience in the Global North (refers to those countries and spaces that are hierarchically defined as the West) is perceived as superior and 'worldly'; this ideological stance regarding education is used to bolster capitalist ventures of establishing private for-profit institutions to attract students from the Global South¹ and the implementation of differential user fees for students choosing to pursue post-secondary education in other countries. This hierarchization of post-secondary education concretely impacts the lives of students and their families as they are now forced to pay the 'price' of securing this northern ideal of education and the associated elements attached to living in a state where you are not a citizen and are hence defined and deemed (il)legal by legislation and policies that govern your social and geo-historical location. In this example, the "site" that "produces" the ideology on globalized knowledges ranges from the universities to governments and to the private sector. However these "sites" also "transmit" these ideologies (Hunt referencing Althusser 18). In the context of gender ideologies that entrench power imbalances based on sex and gender, both the "sites" that "produce" and "transmit" these ideologies are the schools, the family and the church and this is quite evident on the island of Grenada.

Part of the gendered ideologies introduced by the colonial project, and are now characteristic of dominant Western knowledges regarding Black women's bodies, is that the violence inflicted upon their persons, though at times shocking,

¹ Global South is used to refer to what has been historically labeled as "Third World" countries and spaces. It encompasses the broader structural inequalities experienced by these countries and their peoples as a result of colonization, imperialism and globalization.

is somewhat expected. Not only is violence normalized but it has been deemed appropriate within black communities. Black women's bodies are then rendered less worthy and the autonomy and independence of Black women over their bodies is compromised. This is manifested in the ways by which some Black men treat their women and the increasing rates of violence against women.

In a special issue of *Feminist Review* entitled "Rethinking Caribbean Difference" feminists such as Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen have critiqued the overwhelming Afro-centrism of Caribbean feminism as it erases the experiences and voices of women from other ethnic backgrounds and living within the Caribbean (83). Soodeen argues that "the Caribbean post-independence and feminist discourses gave pre-eminence to the historical experiences and present-day situation of African-Caribbean people, leading to an Afro-centric rather than a multicultural paradigm" (83). Acknowledging the validity of Soodeen's claims above, the majority of Grenadian women are of African descent and my social and historical location also generates from that space therefore this thesis will focus on the lives of Afro-Grenadian women.

Grenadian born, Caribbean feminist Eudine Barriteau has urged other feminists in the region to seriously consider the work that has been published by other Black feminists. Black feminism may prove useful when critically analyzing violence against women in Grenada. Barriteau wonders "whether or not Caribbean feminist scholarship and practice have engaged with black feminist scholarship- and if not, why not?" (Barriteau 2007). She argues that, while Western feminism has inadequately included the work of Black feminist theorists,

and because the Caribbean has not escaped colonial legacies, Caribbean feminism can benefit from the inclusion of work done by Black feminists. She posits that "...black feminists focus on difference in order to understand problems of oppression: "They struggle to theorise a feminism that is diverse at its core, rather than to theorise difference as an end in itself" (Barriteau *Feminist Africa* 7: 16).

Barriteau argues that some of the benefits of Black feminist thought to Caribbean feminism include its challenging of an essentialist notion of sisterhood, the placing of race at the centre of the analysis, and the call for new methodological approaches informed by the specificity of the lives of black women/minority women/marginalized women (Barriteau 2007: 13). Along similar lines, as noted by Chandra Mohanty, Russo and Torres, Third world women's feminism has consistently focused on the following aspects:

(1) the idea of simultaneity of oppressions as fundamental to the experience of social and political marginality and the grounding of feminist politics in the histories of racism and imperialism; (2) the crucial role of a hegemonic state in circumscribing their/our daily lives and survival struggles; (3) the significance of memory and writing in the creation of oppositional agency; (4) the differences, conflicts, and contradictions internal to third world women's organizations and communities. (Mohanty, Russo, & Torres 10)

Relying on Black, African and Third World feminisms and their relationship to Lugones' colonial/modern gender system will be critical throughout this thesis as I attempt to flesh out the role of coloniality in shaping Black Grenadian women's bodies, socio-political locations and sexualities.

Staying Grounded: Standpoint Feminist Epistemology & Methodological Framework

A decolonial methodological framework is used to ground this thesis and the data and findings gathered. There are three types of methodological paradigms that were examined: positivist, interpretivist, and critical. Positivism, otherwise recognized as the scientific approach, holds the view that problems can be solved using scientific means. Reality is perceived as 'objective' and "can be "discovered" through the same means by which "facts" about the natural world are determined" (Brown & Strega 8). Interpretivism proposes that there are multiple realities shaped and determined based on one's experiences; therefore, reality is subjective. One of the shortcomings of interpretivism is that it assumes that the researcher can bracket their biases, which would disallow those biases from influencing their research, and, in turn, supporting the notion of objectivity. Critical research methodology, on the other hand, challenges both positivism's and interpretivism's supposed neutrality by viewing reality as both objective and subjective; "objective in terms of the real forces that impinge on the lives of groups and individuals, and subjective in terms of the various individual and group interpretations of these forces and the experiences they engender" (Brown & Strega 8-9).

The goal of this thesis is to apply a critical, anti-racist, decolonial and feminist methodological framework that challenges current research paradigms and reminds the researcher to "be aware of and acknowledge their locations of power and how those locations "permeate their inquiry at every level" (Brown & Strega 10).

The application of the aforementioned methodological framework is critical as the failure to be cognizant of systems of oppression and domination and one's role within those systems only helps to perpetuate the production of hegemonic knowledge that contributes to increased rates of violence against marginalized communities.

Critical Discourse Analysis

An ongoing thread in this thesis is the relevance and influence of social attitudes and norms in both resisting and reproducing forms of violence. By using the theoretical underpinnings of coloniality to analyze the values and social attitudes of Grenadians as displayed in the interview process, critical discourse analysis allows for the better understanding of the interlocking relationship between power, politics and value systems as embedded within text and talk.

The purpose of relying on critical discourse analysis is to discover general meaning behind text and to further tease out some of the covert and embedded meanings behind the use of certain words. One's words and their inherent meanings exist within politicized and historicized contexts that further shape our ideologies, political and legal frameworks and policies. Critical discourse analysis forces one to interrogate whose voice is narrating the story, who is being discussed - that is, to determine the subject - and subsequently, what are some of the implications of the structure of the sentences and what are the meanings of the words within a particular socio-political and cultural context.

The use of critical discourse analysis provides ways of “challenging systems of knowledge and power by interrogating and contextualizing dominant discourses” (Carroll 225). William K. Carroll notes that discourse does not refer to “simply printed text but to the full range of practices, structures, and media that saturate our world and our selves with meaning” (Carroll 225). Another way of defining discourse is that it is a “system of statements which constructs an object” (Parker in Carroll 252). It focuses on “dynamics of power, knowledge, and ideology as they surround and partially constitute discursive processes (not simply on the ways in which social reality is discursively constructed)” (Carroll 252).

Critical discourse analysis challenged me to remain aware of my own social location. As a researcher born and raised in the environment being examined, existing within and across differing socio-economic and political realms and having studied in the Global North, I had to constantly question whether my choice of inquiries and interviewing skills enabled the indoctrination of my own ideas regarding violence against women and social attitudes onto the participants. Was the interview process an opportunity to unlearn, relearn and teach, or was it a way of sharing and imposing my personal beliefs and values onto others?

Using decolonial feminist theories and methodologies such as standpoint feminist epistemology and critical anti-racist analysis, the research process used in this thesis stresses the importance of recognizing the andocentric foundations of mainstream methodologies where ‘her answers do not fit his questions’

(Doucet citing Graham). Relying on the feminist epistemologies geared towards recognizing the role of 'subjects' as active agents of the research process, assists in acknowledging the importance of advancing the voices and experiences of Grenadian women by recognizing their agency in the creation of, maintenance of and resistance to violent structures.

It is important to acknowledge some of the shortcomings of feminist standpoint epistemology throughout this thesis. The foundation of this thesis calls for the unlearning and relearning of gender and gendered practices. Feminist standpoint theory, however, relies on the material concept of 'woman' and gender as its starting point, therefore not necessarily problematizing the concept of woman and that of gender. This essentialist aspect of feminist standpoint must be rejected as it fails to adequately address the complex and interlocking forms of oppression and identity that trouble the labels "woman" and "gender". The reliance on feminist standpoint epistemology may then seem contradictory to the overall goal of this thesis of unlearning and relearning. However, what remains of vital importance is the fact that there are factors at play that ensure embedded hierarchies in the construction of gender and gendered practices by relying on the central devaluing of women and femininity. Acknowledging power differentials and the subsequent negation of certain groups of peoples to advance the interests of others, allows one to advance the complicating of gender and gendered practices for social change.

Standpoint epistemology, by centering "women's experiences and informed by feminist theory, provides potential grounding for more complete and less

distorted knowledge claims than do men's" (Harding 184). Standpoint epistemology therefore requires the delinking of power relations as embedded in gender discourse which is similar to the decolonizing process that this thesis is calling for.

The combination of critical discourse analysis, decolonial feminisms and feminist standpoint epistemology showcases the problematic labeling of research as objective and helps to depict the value of subjectivity especially when addressing the lives and concrete experiences of women. British sociologist Ann Oakley, challenged the so-called objective and detached approach to interviewing, positing that the process of attempting to learn about people through interviewing was "best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee can become non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship" (Doucet citing Oakley 41). Despite Oakley's contribution to the realm of research methods and methodology, the idea that hierarchal relations between interviewer and interviewee are non-existent is false and disingenuous. Relying on friendly relations between interviewer and interviewee is not sufficient to erase power differentials as "the final shift of power between the researcher and the respondent is balanced in favor of the researcher, for it is she who eventually walks away" (Doucet citing Cotterill 40).

It was important that I recognize my social location and the power that I brought into the interview process as well as when observing as a participant during the Police Training workshops. Though I shared the same nationality as

the women and officials being interviewed, nationality as a label and identifier, needed to be complicated. In addition, my privilege being able to leave the geopolitical space which the interviewees occupied, at my convenience, helped me to understand why they may or may not have chosen to participate. Having lived and receiving formal higher education in the Global North and perceived as the researcher examining the researchable object, my validity as a 'Grenadian'² understanding the social locations and lived experiences of the participants may have been brought into disrepute. My sharing of nationality and race with the respondents being interviewed did not in anyway signal an erasure of power differentials (it may have worsened the power imbalance) and a homogenizing of experiences as "even where researchers and respondents share structural and cultural similarities of, for example, gender, ethnicity, class, age, this does not guarantee knowing, or "better" knowing (Doucet 40). Being an "insider" is not an uncomplicated route to knowing (Doucet 40).

As discussed earlier, feminist standpoint epistemology and theory, participant observation, self-reflexivity as well as critical discourse analysis are woven together to create the methodological framework used throughout this thesis. Some of the traits that differentiate feminist research from traditional theories, methodologies and epistemologies is that the former argues that research should be for women and where possible with women and not solely about women (Doucet 40). In addition, feminist researchers continue to actively engage with "methodological innovation through challenging conventional or

² Grenadian is used here as a social and political marker; a way of identifying my nationalist connection to a state because of my place of birth.

mainstream ways of collecting, analyzing, and presenting data (Doucet 40). Thirdly, feminist research concerns itself with issues of broader social justice and social change and acknowledges that society is based upon unequal power relations and unequal social, political and economic stratifications (Doucet 40). Andrea Doucet goes on to include two further properties of feminist research that have become vital to the processes of feminist research and methodologies; power and reflexivity (Doucet 40). My understanding of feminist research and standpoint theory is that it inevitably includes analyses of power and reflexivity; however, the explicit listing by Doucet and others only proves useful to the broader goals of feminist research.

Standpoint theory as originally coined by Sandra G Harding (1987) and expanded upon by feminist sociologists Dorothy Smith (1987) and Patricia Hill Collins (2000) allows for women's experiences to ground the foundation and basis of critical research analysis. Sandra Harding captures the principle claim of feminist standpoint theory when she posits, "Starting off research from women's lives will generate less partial and distorted accounts not only of women's lives but also of men's lives and of the whole social order." (Harding 56) Standpoint theory validates the social location of the social agent as a site of epistemic privilege, enabling the sociological outlook on analytical frameworks and epistemologies from the standpoint of the social agent, in this case, the woman. There is critical knowledge to be gained from the social agent in their social location. Their occupation of a social location provides epistemic privilege that

challenges the mainstream andocentric ways of knowing and allows for a broadened and more in-depth understanding of their particular epistemology.

The epistemic privilege associated with occupying traditionally marginalized spaces can also be quite limiting. As argued by Patricia Hill Collins, the social situation of a group of people limits and constrains what is known and not known about their experiences. One example of Collin's discussion is the existence of stereotypes that define African American women who work as domestic servants. African American women are labeled as "the Mammy" stereotype who is 'faithful and obedient' in contrast to "the Sapphire" who is controlling and manipulative or "the Jezebel" who is a sexual temptress lacking boundaries and morals (Collins 456). As Collins argues, these stereotypical images are 'controlling images' and serve to reinforce racist ways of thinking about African American women but also African American women also utilize and reinforce these ways of thinking about themselves and their sisters by internalizing these racist and sexist stereotypes. In turn, rather than acknowledging the underlying oppressiveness that have led to racist and sexist social norms, African American women are blamed for their own oppression (Collins 1999, 2000). The online version of the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy notes that "...the epistemic process whereby a standpoint emerges enables the occupants of that standpoint to gain an element of power and control over knowledge about their lives. In becoming occupants of a standpoint, they also become knowing subjects in their own light, rather than merely objects that are known by others" There is a distinct difference between standpoint and perspectives. Both the dominant and the dominated have

perspectives however standpoint extends beyond the notion of perspective as it requires an in-depth, political and critical understanding of oppressions that only the dominated can occupy. The epistemic project of achieving a standpoint consists of many different lives, different activities, different social relations and many different consciousnesses that all give rise to critically insightful newly voiced perspectives on reality. Sandra Harding explains the difference between standpoint and perspectives;

Only through such struggles can we begin to see beneath the appearances created by an unjust social order to the reality of how this social order is in fact constructed and maintained. This need for struggle emphasizes the fact that a feminist standpoint is not something that anyone can have simply by claiming it. It is an achievement. A standpoint differs in this respect from a perspective, which anyone can have simply by 'opening one's eyes'. (Harding 127)

There is a double visioning experienced by the dominated as they exist within the world of the dominator/oppressor but are also located within the world of the subjugated. This double visioning afforded via the social location of women and marginalized groups through standpoint can be seen in the plight of Aboriginal peoples of Canada. The Aboriginal peoples of Canada were forced to learn the language of the colonizer, English as use of their native tongues was strongly discouraged and in fact, penalized as has been depicted in the untold stories of residential schools' (Neegan 6). This double visioning afforded the colonized entry into the world of the colonized and though is beneficial regarding critical standpoint analysis, should be viewed more as a means of survival as opposed to an absolute privilege. The Aboriginal peoples therefore simultaneously occupy insider/outsider spaces as they are both 'inside' Canada

and deemed as Canadian citizens though debatably a lower class of Canadian citizens and they exist as 'outsiders' due to their racialized locations as Aboriginal peoples.

This thesis is broken down into three chapters. The first chapter situates Black Grenadian women's bodies and sexualities within Lugones' colonial/modern gender system illustrating how colonialism continues to influence violence against women.

The second chapter further interrogates the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis and introduces the colonial reconceptualizing of gender.

The third and final chapter will present the data and findings gathered while in Grenada and throughout the duration of this thesis project. Interviews with women survivors, police officers, government officials and representatives from the social services and legal sectors in Grenada were completed. The women interviewed were seeking emotional and practical support in a program called Changes, which was being administered by and located at the Legal Aid and Counselling clinic in Grenada.

It is my hope that this thesis will contribute to the field of research on violence against women in Grenada; that it will provide an avenue for the voices of those women who have been and/or continue to experience violence to be crystallized, and will help to establish or begin discussions on the use of a critical, decolonial framework of analysis when dissecting the complexities of violence against women and gender practices in Grenada. Within the limits of this thesis, it is not possible to provide a complete catalogue of the multiple connections

between violence against women and colonialism. In particular, the limited use of Black male Caribbean intellectuals specifically during the times of slavery and colonialism in no way indicates the value of their work to this research project. My intent here is more limited to making the case for further research on this theme and to complicate the interpretation of Black women's bodies within the context of colonial and sexual violence.

CHAPTER 1

Coloniality Of Gender, Sexuality & Violence: Black Enslaved Women's Bodies As Sites Of Violence & Resistance

We all live within a multiplicity of colonialities; subjected in both body and mind. It is not only our labor, or our sexualities and genders that mark colonial relations; it is not only the wars, the mass murder and death squads organized by imperialist classes, nor the subcolonies formed by women, African-American communities, or ethnic identities; it is also the hegemonic mind, the white, or masculinist, or heterosexist, or national chauvinist mind that constitutes and is constituted by coloniality. (Martinot, Steve: Centre for Global Justice)

Any attempts to end violence against women, particularly in colonizing spaces such as Grenada, cannot occur without an understanding of how Black women's bodies have been inscribed as justifiable sites of violence and domination through coloniality. An interrogation of the ways by which colonialism has helped to create, re-create, and shape the bodies of Black women as impure, reveals how Black women have had their selves and their sexualities defined for them. Colonial definitions of gender, gendered practices, sex, and sexualities continue to shape contemporary ways of seeing and addressing violence against women and their bodies.

Gender in Grenada, and also more generally in the English-speaking Caribbean, is premised on a dichotomous, heterosexist separation of gender roles which I have labeled as the colonial reconceptualizing of gender as well, is made visible in Lugones' colonial/modern gender system. Social norms, as defined by a binary taxonomy of sexes and sexualities, continue to play a defining role in the perception of gender and sex. This chapter excavates the

colonial influences on the heterosexist gender roles and expectations imposed on Grenadian women and how these exacerbate violence against them.

Colonality, Violence & the Colonial Reconceptualizing of Gender

Rhoda Reddock (1985) examined the role of the planter class in controlling the reproductive capacities of Black enslaved women in the Caribbean. She stated that “for the people of the Caribbean...slavery is a crucial aspect of their historical experience, and its existence and legacy are not confined to the distant past” (Reddock 63). The continual need to interrogate colonialism’s roles in the shaping of social attitudes, discourse, laws and institutions cannot be ignored.

This thesis is primarily informed by the work of two Latin American scholars, Maria Lugones (2008, 2010) and Anibal Quijano (2002, 2008), on the colonality of power and the modern/colonial gender system. Their theoretical framing of colonality is used in this thesis to complement anti-violence work already being undertaken by Caribbean feminists such as (and not limited to) Eudine Barriteau, Patricia Mohammed and Rhoda Reddock.

Coloniality as opposed to colonialism and post-colonialism describes the ongoing relations and influences of colonialism on power structures, gender constructions and sexuality.

Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that

emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administration. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breath coloniality all the time and everyday. (Torres 243)

An example of coloniality's continuing presence is in the proliferation of skin whitening creams in the Caribbean which reflects racist standards of beauty.

Anibal Quijano and Maria Lugones have defined and used the term coloniality as the "overall dimension of modernity" (Mignolo 60). "Colonialism is a concept that inscribes coloniality as a derivative of modernity. In this conception modernity is first, with colonialism following it. Coloniality constitutes modernity and as a consequence we are still living under that regime (Mignolo 82).

Using Quijano's coloniality of power, Lugones (2007) has introduced a "systemic understanding of gender constituted by colonial/modernity in terms of multiple relations of power" (Lugones 186). Lugones argues that this complicated understanding of gender, colonialism and race is necessary to understand how violences are enacted upon women in the Global South, be it state-sanctioned, epistemic and/or physical (Lugones 186). Walter Mignolo posits coloniality in a different context when he argues that the "coloniality of power opens up an analytic and critical door that reveals the darker side of modernity and the fact that there never was, nor there can be, modernity without coloniality" (Mignolo 632). Lugones, Quijano, Mignolo and Torres' references to coloniality is vital in understanding the (de)colonial creation and (de)legitimization of knowledge and

knowledge sharing and the (de)valuing of enslaved people's bodies. Coloniality refers to the domination and exploitation that accompanies capitalism, patriarchy and imperialism and is constitutive of modernity premised on the categorical assumptions of racial hierarchies.

Using work by Lugones and to some extent, Quijano, I explore violence against women in Grenada in the context of coloniality, that is, within multiple social, political, and historical variants that shape violence. Central to this analysis is the interlocking of culture and tradition with heteronormative and heterosexist ideologies and institutional structures that ensure the continued marginalization of Grenadian women and their bodies. As a result of slavery and colonialism, enslaved women were simultaneously hypersexualized and desexualized and their autonomy over their bodies, their reproductive options, and their sexualities, was consistently determined by the dominant views of the ruling planter class (Lugones 2007, 2010; Hobson 2003; Collins 2000; Reddock 1985; Beckles 1998). The planter class determined the structure of enslaved families and the levels of intimacy allowed among enslaved people. This, in addition to the different means of resistance employed by those enslaved, was critical in the shaping of traditional Caribbean culture (Reddock 1985; Beckles 1998).

Conceptualizing violence and supporting ideologies within a decolonial context sheds light on forms of oppressions such as racism, heterosexism and

economic exploitation. It also grounds the interrogation in a way that exposes the interconnectedness of these violences and how they manifest themselves within communities. These ideas were always premised upon notions of power, domination and subjugation either for economic, social and/or political reasons. Through the theoretical frameworks offered by Lugones and my 'colonial reconceptualizing of gender' it becomes easier to distinguish the societal ideologies veiled in tradition and culture that perpetuate violence against women.

Part of the influence of colonialism on gender relations can be further discussed and examined using the notion of creolization. Coined by Caribbean scholar C.L.R. James, creolization highlights the distinct social identities of Caribbean societies. It refers to the active role played by native people in defining and shaping social and cultural relations based on social power and material resources as opposed to a passive acceptance of imperialism (Mahabir 10).

The cultural forms in Caribbean societies derive from two influential streams--European and African--both introduced in the region by colonialism. For Afro-Caribbean women in the anglophone Caribbean, creolization has resulted in a cultural repertoire with a wide spectrum of even oppositional values of womanhood. As outlined by Christine Barrow, this cultural repertoire includes "the Anglo-Protestant, Euro-centered codes of passive dependency with its correlates of submissiveness to male partners, support for marriage, sexual fidelity and the church, home confinement, commitment to the roles of mother and wife/female partner," on one hand; and, on the other, the oppositional "West African-centered code based on economic autonomy with its correlates of individualistic relationships, insecure support from partners often seen as unreliable, conjugal unions of uncertain duration, dwindling support from children who leave home and assume their own family responsibilities or may be ungrateful.

The process of creolization, triggered by colonialism, has helped to shape racial and gendered practices in the Caribbean and must then be taken into account

when examining gender practices and violence against women in Grenada. According to the above quotation from Mahabir, the oppositional ideals of womanhood and femininity imposed upon enslaved Black women were simultaneously grounded in notions of submissiveness yet at the same time, expected responsibility to care as mothers and/or midwives. For example, enslaved Black women were expected to play into the 'controlling image' of 'Mammy' (Barriteau citing Collins 2006) and at other times as hypersexualized beings such as the 'Jezebel' or 'Sapphire' (Barriteau, Collins 1999, 2000, Hobson 2003). Discussions on the use of 'controlling images' (Collins 1999, 2000) to distinguish Black women's bodies and sexualities from those of white women and as tools of violence will be further discussed.

Cognizant of the complex roles played by multiple levels of oppression and their fluid and continuing influences, utilizing theoretical contributions of coloniality and sexualization inspired by the work done on gender, race and colonialism by Maria Lugones as well as work done by Black, African and Caribbean feminists, I will use the phrase, 'the colonial reconceptualizing of gender' to consider colonialism's role in shaping gender ideologies that support violence against women in Grenada.

My use of the phrase 'colonial reconceptualizing of gender' is meant to capture the incessant contribution of colonial practices and ideals when interpreting gender and gender practices by state apparatuses. There are established norms governing gendered practices and expectations that contribute to the silencing of violence exacted upon women's bodies and upon

their spirits. The use of the term 'reconceptualizing' alludes to the decolonizing process that accompanies the reconstructing of ideas around gender and gendered practices and the concept of gender having the fluidity to take on different meanings and implications in varying socio-historical, geopolitical contexts. At this point, it is important to note that though my use of the colonial reconceptualizing of gender is to primarily critique the use of heterosexist gender binaries as they promulgate power hierarchies across peoples and communities that my use of femininities and masculinities are in a way, endorsing such binaries. The use of the terms: woman, man, femininity, masculinity and other gendered and sex related taxonomies, are problematically used throughout this thesis. I am aware of the inherent power imbalances that such terms carry with them but for the purposes of this thesis, they will be used as identifiers as defined by the colonial project. The colonial reconceptualizing of gender as a concept, will be further discussed in Chapter 2. Also, though gender can be used to revictimize women, as argued by Mary Hawkesworth, the concept has also been used to repudiate biological determinism as well as to analyze the interpersonal and socio-political relations between men and women and to "conceptualize the semiotics of the body, sex, and sexuality" (Hawkesworth 650). Therefore 'gender' as an identifier will also be problematically used throughout this thesis.

The Interactions of Gender and Slavery

Ethnology,³ imperialism, the economic exploitation of Africa, and the emergence of scientific racism were all core tenets of the feminization of the African interior as a space worthy of and needing to be colonized. This colonial expansion affected not only the Caribbean region and Latin America, but also the US and Canada, and continues to shape and influence the nature of and types of spaces taken up by racialized women in the Global North (Global South in the North). An example of the oppressive colonial actions towards the African continent and its peoples, and the associated justifications for such exploitation and plundering, is the vile treatment of Sarah “Saartjie” Baartman.

Baartman was a South African woman brought to London in 1820 and placed on public display as the epitome of grotesque sexual deviance (Hobson 89). Her sexual body parts, her “large” buttocks and labia, were shown to Europeans as a spectacle of excessive female sexuality that was deemed contrary to the desired female gender norm that was white femininity. “The lesson that audiences in London and Paris learned from attending these shows was not only that Baartman’s body was ‘ugly’ and ‘freakish’ but that this ‘ugliness’ was considered ‘beautiful’ in Africa” (Hobson 90). The distorting of ideals of beauty became part of the colonial invasion and transferred from Global North onto the African continent.

³ Ethnology in this sense refers to the characterization of peoples and the labeling of differences. It alludes to the origins and social structure of ethnic and racial groups.

The dehumanization and sexualization of Baartman's body is indicative of the lack of value placed on Black women's bodies. The racialization of enslaved Black women that accompanied colonialism concretized purity as the defining characteristic of whiteness, ultimately differentiating enslaved Black women from the white colonial settlers. By being seen as "Black," enslaved Black women were personified with animalistic characteristics and became viewed as permissible sites for domination and violence. This dehumanizing process was constitutive of the light side of Lugones' colonial/modern gender system, which is organized around biological dimorphism and patriarchal and heterosexist sexual organizations of relations (Lugones 190). The light side of the colonial/modern gender system relied on the differentiation of Black enslaved people from the white bourgeois colonizers, and their occupation of a space of difference in turn called for very different patterns of violent abuse (Lugones 190). The imperialist and racialized application of non-human, animal-like characteristics on the African woman's body, along with the feminization of African men, helped to justify the brutal treatment of the African population (Lugones 2007 & Holmes 2007). These dehumanizing perspectives were also carried to the plantations in the Caribbean.

The development of gender definitions and practices unfolded against this history of the dehumanization and domination of the bodies of people of colour, particularly women of colour. Patricia Hill Collins spoke of the use of "controlling

images” (Collins 1999, 2000) under the systems of slavery and colonialism to control and define Black women’s bodies and their sexualities. This triggers the following question: How have controlling images such as Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire (identities grounded in racialized gender stereotypes) been used to justify Grenadian women’s bodies as sites of violence?

This chapter engages in an analytical discussion of imposed notions of Black sexualities as a tool of coloniality. Three structural pillars that form the foundation of colonial violence against women are conceptualized. These are not laid out in hierarchical form, but are understood as the main analytical and concrete pieces that support the continuation of violence against women as a system and the further erosion of the value placed on women’s bodies and their lives.

Structural Pillar 1: Male Marginalization

In the English-speaking Caribbean, women currently participate in education at a higher level than men (Lindsay 63). They are also represented in the labour force in higher numbers as compared to men (Lindsay 63). Therefore, a quick glance might lead one to assume that Caribbean women have greater access to resources and enjoy a higher standard of living than men. Using a priori evidence as just stated, Caribbean scholar Errol Miller argued the Caribbean men are an “endangered male species” (Miller 1991, Keisha Lindsay

1997). This damaging perception of women occupying spaces of domination at the expense of men has been problematically used to shape academic and everyday discourses on Caribbean gender and sexuality.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Errol Miller's "The Marginalization of the Black Male: Insights from the Development of the Teaching Profession and his Men At Risk" (1991) garnered a following from Caribbean men who had grown concerned with the "residual effects" of feminism, ranging from threats to male authority, "unacceptable transformations in the discourse on gender relations," and an increasing presence of women in public and political life (Reddock 2004). Miller's marginalization thesis has been used to discredit some of the gains made by Caribbean feminism and needs to be challenged and deconstructed, as it feeds into the pervasive perpetuation of hierarchies based on patriarchy. The notion of the heterosexist gendered male in the Caribbean has partly to do with dominant narratives such as the male marginalization thesis promulgated by Miller. Central to Miller's marginalization thesis is the assertion that men are missing from the workforce, the family, and the higher echelons of society, such as the education sector. Underlying Miller's male marginalization thesis is the idea of sexual divisions associated with being male and being female. Miller argued,

Both birth and death "are once-in-a-lifetime events". One cannot be threatened with birth. Once born one can only be grateful for the privilege. The life-giving power therefore engenders only gratitude....Those with the power to take life

[however] are usually feared. [Hence] men exercising the life-taking powers became the final authority. (Miller 112)

Underlying his thesis is the re-inscription of men's roles as the "constructor" and women's roles as the "constructed," so that women are continuously perceived as the products of men's actions (Lindsay 71). Miller's thesis also relies on the binary category of the victimized male and the demonized woman. Patricia Mohammed argued that within the Caribbean region, there is a distinct and "mythologized" idea of Caribbean masculinity, where men are identified as the "head of the family, provider and controller of female sexuality.... [A]ny disruption in this ideal is not only seen as destroying the foundation of a socially accepted idea of masculinity but as victimizing the Caribbean male" (Lindsay citing Mohammed 74).

It is true that overall, there are higher numbers of women in the education system and increased levels of participation by women in the workforce in the English-speaking Caribbean. However, as noted by Keisha Lindsay, there remains a patriarchal stereotyping of the fields of education that women gravitate towards (Lindsay 63). "Despite the significant inroads made by Caribbean women into traditionally 'masculine fields', most women are still doing courses which limit them to professions and occupations that are essentially extensions of conventional "women's skills" (63). It is true that colonialism and slavery severely impacted enslaved Black people, their families, and communities; however, Miller's thesis assumes that somehow the enslaved female was able to escape slavery unharmed and unaffected. In addition, Miller has failed to realize that his marginalization thesis constantly relies on the distinct roles of the male as the

victimized yet valiant body and the female as the deceptive and manipulative one (Mohammed 1996) and that these demarcations are created and supported by heavily stereotypical ideals of masculinity and femininity.

Structural Pillar 2: "I'm The Boss!" The Reclaiming of Power (Over) By Black Men

During the presence of the Spanish, French, Dutch, and English colonial powers in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, the white slave masters had economic, political, and social control in society. Slaves were viewed as mere property and economic units under the plantation system, as their main purpose was to be the labour in the production process, and slave families were not allowed to live together, as white slave masters constantly feared rebellion among the slaves. "The [Black] male head [of the household] could not assert his authority as husband and father as his 'wife' was the property of another" (Reddock citing Paterson 68). However, with the official end of slavery, patriarchy as a tool and extension of colonialism shifted from the white slave masters to men of colour, who then attempted to regain their location of power (as the head of the household) by inflicting violence upon women of colour. It seems that with emancipation from slavery, Black males could secure more of a presence within their families, arguably resulting in the hypermasculinization of males supported by the violent preservation of power. Are Black males in Grenada now striving to concretize their roles as fathers, breadwinners, and heads of the household by any means necessary?

Black men must not be absolved of their violent behaviour simply because they are Black men and have suffered historical wrongdoings. The failure to critique the actions of Black men ensures the continued marginalization of Black women. Lugones has posed the question of why it is that “those men who have themselves been targets of violent domination and exploitation” have not recognized “their complicity or collaboration with the violent domination of women of color” (Lugones 188).

It is also important to note that the complex masculinization of the formerly enslaved Black male was within the framework of white, Eurocentric and heterosexist standards of manhood and relied on the simultaneous emasculation of the enslaved Black male to benefit the plantation economy. It is therefore difficult to create a strict binary that posits the majority of the power belonging solely to the Black male as opposed to the Black female. Within the broad categories of masculinity and femininity, male and female, there exists a spectrum of power, gender, sex, and sexualities that is being played out in the Caribbean.

Structural Pillar 3: Heterosexist Ideals of Masculinity and Femininity

Dominant ideals of Caribbean masculinity and femininity are influenced by religion, social attitudes and heterosexist colonial standards. To explicate this, a study done on gender socialization in the mid-nineties will be briefly explored. Janet Brown and Barry Chevannes completed an ethnographic study on gender socialization in Dominica, Guyana, and Barbados (Brown and Chevannes 1995)

and below are some of the transcriptions made available through interviews conducted in the study. Brown and Chevannes identified in their study five general definitional sources of Caribbean masculinity: religious doctrine, biological criteria, self-determined behaviour and roles, male sexuality, and maleness that is stridently opposed to homosexuality (Brown and Chevannes 116–18). Brown and Chevannes's study renders visible some of the defining traits underlying the colonial reconceptualizing of gender as discussed in Chapter 1. The pervasive role of religion, anti-homosexuality and masculinity as polar opposite to any understanding of femininity play a crucial role in the construction of gendered ideologies in the Caribbean. Though Brown and Chevannes identified five definitional sources, I will only focus on three: religion doctrine, male sexuality and maleness as opposed to homosexual ideals of masculinity. Beginning with the religious doctrine;

From yu bawn yu is man...De bible did say, 'Let's make man', and outa man dere cometh ooman (woman),...At all time yu mus' know seh yu is a man an' like yu is supreme. It go right back to religion y'know.

The above quote states that upon birth, one immediately knows that they are male and that the bible directed it to be that out of man, came woman. The quote goes on to emphasize the importance of always maintaining that (heterosexual, biblical defined) ideal of masculinity that is supreme. The word supreme not only denotes power and status hierarchy when compared to females but it also alludes to the religious backing and foundation that supposedly validates the masculinity in question.

Another of the more important definitional sources is that of maleness, which is centered on male sexuality in relation (and opposition) to femininity:

A wil' [wild] man always get a enormous amount a respec'...a wil' man normally have money. An yu know that respect is based on money. If yu don' have money...yu get no ratings from nobody

The above quote concretizes the idea that a 'real' man is one who is able to juggle multiple intimate affairs with numerous women. It goes back to earlier discussions on Caribbean male infidelity that has become so normalized and is in fact encouraged by males and females. The quote also stresses the need for a 'real' man to be able to financially cover the expenses in his life, as well as the women he's currently involved with.

The final definitional source stresses opposition to male homosexuality, which under the colonial heterosexist understanding of gender, is generally perceived by heterosexuals as learned behaviour:

Me love ooman bad, bad, bad, bad. Me hate gay wid a passion...how me seet it is like de type a gay wha me hate is, him is man like me, or him bawn wid balls, but because of certain situations like all economics, like all money, an him waan look good an, him go tu'n gay.....

(Brown and Chevannes 116-18)

The final quote above implies that any 'love', intimacy and/or sexual desire for women cannot exist if a person were to feel those same sexual desires for a male. In fact, it renders the latter almost possible. The informant being interviewed acknowledges that someone can be gay, because of reasons such as "...economics....money..." or feeling the need to "look good". Yet, the informant makes it clear that it is a choice to be gay "tu'n gay" (to turn gay) and

actually incites hate speech when he emphasizes how much he hates gay people “wid a passion.”

These core definitional sources of Caribbean masculinity, and also Caribbean femininity, were evident in the data gathered in Grenada for this study. In interviews with police officers and in discussions at workshops which will be discussed in Chapter 3, informants’ reactions to homosexuality still carried with it an underlying current of unacceptance and judgement. It was clear that ideals of masculinity and femininity in Grenada are heavily grounded in biblical references and supported by learned social attitudes that demonize homosexuality, that devalue anything that falls on the margins of dominant gendered practices and entrenches nearly any form of masculinity that is in stark opposition to femininity.

Caribbean Sexuality & Intimacy: Through the Gaze of Black Enslaved Women

The main stereotype of Caribbean femininity is that it is matrifocal or mother-centred. This assumes that an inert amount of strength and resilience is possessed by Caribbean women, but as explained by Collins, sexuality and willful desire are also deemed characteristic of the Black woman. These varying ideals and expectations sometimes conflict with one another but at other times are complementary, as research has shown that Black women have learned to negotiate these lived spaces and expectations as ways of surviving and resisting. Darlene Clark Hine (1994) described this survival tool as the culture of dissemblance (Hine 41).

This presumed natural disposition of unfaltering strength and resilience expected of the Caribbean woman— that is usually placed as polar opposite to Eurocentred standards of femininity as frail and pure—has its origins in slavery and the plantation system. Black enslaved women were prized labour under the plantation system. White male overseers and plantation managers commented on the “apparent ease” that black women had when it came to “dropping children” and arduous physical labour, with their general “amazonian cast of character” (Beckles 36). During the years of the plantation system, white women’s references to Black women as masculine and animal-like in nature, was considered as justification for the inhumane punishment of enslaved Black women (Beckles 36). These views also shared by white men regarding enslaved Black women’s bodies, their sexualities and their capacity for labour (Beckles 36).

Rhoda Reddock, in her essay, “Women and Slavery in the Caribbean: A Feminist Perspective,” reinterpreted the history of slavery. She used the slave mode of production in the sugar plantation colonies as the backdrop for an analysis of the oppression of women and their bodies (Reddock 64). When analyzing slave law reforms and their impact on women in the Caribbean, particularly regarding the flogging of enslaved females in the early eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries, she quoted a member of the Barbados legislature who was adamantly opposed to the proposed changes. He stated, “.....I believe that their (enslaved Black women) husbands would be very sorry to hear that they were placed beyond the reach of chastisement” (Reddock citing Williams

73). Reddock went on to quote Tobago planters who similarly “condemned the prohibition of the flogging of female slaves as ‘tantamount’ to unqualified emancipation at this hour” (Reddock citing Williams 73).

During slavery, Black women’s bodies were masculinized and (de)sexualized to suit the needs of the economic agenda and the whims of the white slave masters. In the case of the plantation system during English colonial rule in the Caribbean, enslaved females were considered strong (masculine) enough to work the fields, maternal enough to take care of the children born to the ruling class, and yet also hypersexual—rapeable and readily available to satiate the sexual appetites of the slave masters (Smith 2005).

Gathering data about the lives of enslaved Black women under the plantation system is difficult, as records are limited, but Hilary Beckles was able to excavate the journal of Mrs. Carmichael, an Englishwoman who lived in St. Vincent and Trinidad during the 1820s. Mrs. Carmichael described Black women in her published travelogue as “‘masculine’, brutish, and lacking feminine sensitivities” (Beckles 36). These qualities were irreconcilable with the colonial interpretation of acceptable womanhood, showing that the Black woman was seen as everything that the white woman was supposedly not. Hence, the Black woman, from the perspective of the white woman, was undesirable, and yet the white plantation masters still lusted after enslaved Black women (Beckles 37). “The worlds of white and black women, as a result, despite dramatic experiences of intimacy, were filled with mutual antagonism, cruelty and violence” (Beckles 37). The process of defeminizing Black women damaged their sense of identity

and illustrates why Black enslaved women were not seen as women (Beckles 36). “For the black woman the scars of centuries of denial went deep; with the onset of free society the raw wounds remained, sending tensions down the spine of all recuperative socio-political strategies” (Beckles 37).

As previously discussed, enslaved Black women’s bodies were perceived by white men as rapeable and persistently hypersexualized by the ruling class during slavery. These associated stereotypes have been passed down through generations, language, and history (Collins 2000). Black enslaved women were the property of the plantation masters and hence had little to no autonomy over their reproductive, sexual, and everyday needs. Though their sexualities were externally defined and imposed, whenever it suited the colonial slave master, they were readily available to satisfy the sexual appetites of their slave masters though not as active participants but rather as receivers. Therefore, their sexual and non-sexual identities as women were always shifting and determinant at the whim of the colonial slave masters. They were mother-like when the offspring of the white colonial families needed to be raised and masculine enough to work long and inhumane hours on the plantation (Jones 1985). This shifting of womanhood and competing roles, if and when applied to enslaved Black women, always existed outside the confines of what it meant to be a white woman (Beckles 36).

Though the experiences of slavery in the English-speaking Caribbean were different from those in the southern states of the US, one theme shared by enslaved women was their lack of ownership over their bodies. Black women’s

bodies were sexualized, perceived as deviant, and seen as the prized possessions of slave owners. The children of slave women were also considered the property of their masters, and rape was used to reproduce an exploited labour force (Smith 2005, Hobson 2003, Lugones 2008, 2010). Access to women's bodies and control of their reproductive capacities were core aspects of colonial rule (Reddock 1985, Smith 2005). Smith (2005) recounted how one southern politician declared in the early twentieth century that there was no such thing as a "virtuous colored girl" (16). The bodies of Black women and women of colour were deemed dirty and vile; therefore, any sexual violation of their bodies was considered justifiable. This sexual violence was part of colonial rule, reducing women's bodies to those of animals, undeserving of worth and value.

Black men were viewed as savage and hence needing to be controlled. One of the main goals of the colonial project was to emasculate the enslaved Black male; to control him in order to control the entire enslaved population. This emasculation of the enslaved Black male along with other attempts to control the Black family helped ensure limited chances for resistance and mobilization. The feminization of Black men therefore occurred for different reasons, including as a means of controlling enslaved labour and ensuring the inability of enslaved peoples to have stable families.

The intimacy shared between Black men and Black women was persistently invaded and ruptured to prove that the slave master had full rights and ownership over the bodies of enslaved Black women and also those of enslaved men (Mohammed 25). The emasculation of the enslaved male through control and

humiliating means of punishment, such as public flogging, were also used as a means to limit freedom of association and any mobilization; the removal of genital organs as punishment for attempting to flee also acted as a deterrence to others who were thinking of escaping (Mohammed 1998 and Hall 1992).

The masculinization of the female and the emasculation of the male is a detrimental result of slavery and colonization, but as noted above, this process must be complicated. It is not a clear-cut gendering process. Unfortunately, theories such as Errol Miller's marginalization thesis promulgate the notion that Black women have taken advantage of the emasculation of the male. However, as Patricia Mohammed has pointed out, "the fact that women have emerged from the same system with their femininity intact is often glossed over" (Mohammed 25). For example, Miller solely focused on the effects of slavery as conceptualized through an anti-racist lens, which usually erases the gendered experiences of women. An analysis centred on gender, sexuality and the experiences of women within an anti-heterosexist lens would demonstrate the detrimental effects of slavery and colonialism on the bodies of enslaved Black women.

From Generation to Generation: Colonial Standards of Sexuality Continued

Miller's marginalization thesis fails to account for the subjugation and raping of enslaved Black women's bodies, the impacts on Black women's psyches, and how that has been passed from generation to generation, which further shapes how Black women's sexualities and bodies are perceived today and why

coloniality is a useful tool of analysis. Similar to but an extension of Mohammed's views on the gendered effects of slavery, I argue that women did not emerge from slavery with their femininity intact. Women have instead emerged with imposed ideas of sex, sexuality, their bodies, and gendered practices that dictate what their sexualities should resemble and imply a voluntary lack of ownership and autonomy over their bodies. The erotica (Lorde 1984) and intimacy that should be part of a woman's liberatory, political, and decolonizing struggle to unlearn and relearn what it is to love and nourish her body and spirit has been contaminated with colonial ideals of masculinity, femininity, sexuality, and how they all interlock. Acknowledging the three structural pillars that form the foundation of the system of violence against women in Grenada, this thesis now investigates how these pillars contribute to increasing rates of violence.

It is the removal of women's authority and power over their sexualities, and the implementation of distorted, conservative, and conflicting ideals of sex, gender, sexuality, and power within gendered practices that assist in the manifestation of violence against women in Grenada. Control over women's bodies has now, to some extent, been passed from the colonial masters to Black men, who, because they have been marginalized for so long are now feeling swept aside as a result of the perceived success of Afro-Caribbean women. To assert a false sense of manhood and flawed sense of power and control, some have chosen to engage in violence against women.

It is not uncommon to hear Grenadian men deny the existence of violence against women, because women are seen as the head of the household. But as

noted before, matrifocality does not translate into power and does not erase the existence and possibility of violence. This dynamic is illustrated in the statement, “Although it is the woman who keeps the family together, it is the man who rules” (Barriteau citing Simey 199). Therefore, as part of the decolonizing process that this thesis calls for, certain questions need to be asked such as, who is defining gender and the Grenadian people’s dominant knowledges around gendered practices, power, sex, sexuality and violences? What institutions legitimize those perspectives and who is benefiting from these definitions and descriptions?

The colonial imposition of gender ideals, having its roots in times of slavery and the ruling of the plantation class, continues to define gendered practices despite many Caribbean states acquiring independence and the existence of the so-called post-colonial state. This thesis is not arguing that slavery and colonialism were the only sources of inequalities that have defined and shaped gendered practices up to today. However, they were important sources that continue to influence gender and perceptions of power and gendered practices in Grenada.

Coloniality of sexuality and gender help to capture the continuing influences of colonialism on the creation, demarcation, and rupturing of Grenadian women’s sexualities and their bodies and how those processes lead to situations conducive to physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence. The fact that women’s bodies continue to be perceived and treated as sites of violence and subjugation worldwide speaks to the need for continuing theoretical

and grassroots work on violence against women as a critical body of epistemology.

As Foucault notes, where there is power and domination, there is resistance (Jiwani paraphrasing Foucault 1980b). Enslaved women did resist colonial attempts to control their bodies; for example, enslaved women did not see it in their best interest to comply with the slave masters' desire to increase reproduction and hence resisted by deciding to not bear the children conceived through forced impregnation (Reddock 72). The slave masters' perception of Black women's bodies as always accessible for sex also contrasted with the women's views of themselves. This constant negotiation of the enslaved female's body, as defined by her and perceived by the slave master, occurred within the context of the economic and exploitative institution of slavery.

It is important to recognize the influences of colonialism as they continue to affect the social attitudes and perceptions of gender and gendered practices. The introduction of the colonial/modern gender system and the colonial reconceptualization of gender shows that the concretization of a heterosexist binary system of gendered practices did help support gendered power dynamics based on violence.

The perpetuation of colonialism influences ideological positions as well as institutional structures, epistemologies, and actions on how to address gender-based violence. By failing to acknowledge the patriarchal, colonial, and racist tendencies of our ways of thinking and of tools for change, such as the criminal justice system, we are simply using the "master's tool to break the master's

house” (Lorde 1984). We must always remain in a constant state of critical thought.

Interlocking Oppressions in the lives of Grenadian Women

Understanding the role of power is vital when interrogating patriarchal notions of gender, sexualities, and violence is critical. As argued by Eudine Barriteau, “one of the shortcomings of this existing discourse [on gender] is our failure to confront the raw power dynamics impinging on our ongoing attempts to expose and alter the systemic character of women’s multiple experiences of material and ideological subordination” (Barriteau 123). I agree with Barriteau’s argument that it is partly due to this failure to confront power that there is a disconnect between feminist analysis, understandings of gender in the work done by women/gender bureau in the Caribbean, and the everyday experiences of women and men in the English Commonwealth Caribbean (Barriteau 123).

Approximately 108,132 people inhabit Grenada, including the 6,521 residents of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Seventy-five percent of Grenada’s population is of African descent, 59% live in rural areas, almost half are women, and 32% live under the poverty line. These statistics are clearly indicative of the need to include combined analyses centering on issues of race and class when engaging in anti-violence against women work in Grenada, especially when considering that during times of slavery, race equated to class, and therefore, if one was Black, that person was a slave.

Grenadian women must be recognized for their differences in skin colour, ethnicity, and cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, as these usually exist in an interlocking fashion, shaping women's lived realities. Failure to engage in race and class analysis assumes that every woman starts off on a level playing field and overlooks the differing impacts that violence can have on their lives and families and the role of the law in providing adequate redress. It also ignores the perpetuation of violence that some women continue to experience as a result of class and status when accessing the legal system (illustrated in the stories of Lorna and Susan who were raped by police officers). The non-recognition of women's differing social locations also assumes that every woman is aware of and fully comprehends the laws in place and the ramifications of those laws in her life. "Certainly there are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it's not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences" (Morrow 589).

There is an underlying belief that all Grenadian women share a common identity that blankets and erases the continuing influence of colonialism, yet everyday practices categorize women along class lines and rural-urban lines. It is not uncommon to hear the phrase "country people are different from town people" in everyday conversations. This perspective does represent an ideological and discursive means of creating a hierarchy among Grenadians based on their geographical location but one, I argue, that is quite superfluous. Despite this, one's geographical location on the island does impact one's access to resources and is usually tied to issues of class but not necessarily race.

The inclusion of maintenance redress in the Domestic Violence Act (2001) in Grenada is useful as it acknowledges the impacts of violence on a woman's socio-economic positioning. However, using a class analysis, do these provisions account for varying wages and economic purchasing power of women as well as their financial responsibilities? Where the abuser is a woman's partner, a woman who is making EC\$3,000 per month without relying on her partner's wages, has three children, a physically stable home, access to a vehicle, and the support of family will be in a much better position than a woman who is making EC\$500 to \$1,000 per month on her own and who relies on her partner's wages. Therefore, maintenance allocations of \$300 per month will obviously have differing impacts and may translate into poverty-stricken living conditions for some women as opposed to others.

As referenced earlier, Caribbean feminism has been criticized for its largely Afro-Caribbean focus and neglect of the lived realities of women from other ethnic backgrounds, in particular, Indo-Caribbean women (Baksh-Soodeen 74). Grenada is predominately made up of Afro-Caribbean people, but the next largest ethnic group is those of Indo-Caribbean background. Because the Grenadian population is largely comprised of Afro-Caribbean people and I am Afro-Caribbean, my ability to adequately carry out a racial analysis for Indo-Caribbean and Indigenous Caribbean women is limited. Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen criticizes second-wave Caribbean feminism as being predominantly Afro-centric and closely tied to the processes of independence and national identity struggles. Therefore, the movement needs to now include the voices and

experiences of women of other ethnicities such as Indo-Caribbean women (Baksh-Soodeen 74), and this may have to be the case in Grenada as well.

Notions of race did not begin with the slave trade, as the Indigenous peoples of Grenada were racialized by the Spanish upon arrival, deemed as 'other', and put to work. The Indigenous populations then either died of European-introduced diseases or murdered by the colonial regimes. Race and processes of racialization were conceptually and in reality, continued as the slave trade was introduced to the Caribbean. The slave trade instigated "the need for an exploitable main-d'oeuvre, preferably a group 'constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West,' as Stuart Hall so ably puts it...." "It was arguably the instantiation of this process of othering that gave rise to the slave trade and its accompanying discursive corollaries" (Murdoch 66).

Towards the Reclaiming of Sexual Identities and the Challenging of Violence

Before a thorough discussion on the most adequate and less victimizing means of addressing violence against women in Grenada is to happen, there must exist an acknowledgement of the need for accurate and substantive data that illustrates the high occurrences of violence against women on the island. Data collection coupled with under-reporting continues to hinder effective and in-depth work addressing violence against women (ECLAC Report). Data supports and directs policy creation, political directives, and the allocation of public financial resources. It also helps to shape the scope and magnitude of political and social policy.

There are current structures and institutions in place that can be used to address violence against women in Grenada but the underlying colonial ideas that support these institutions must be interrogated. The existence of offices, shelters, and/or more stringent laws cannot be the end all of work on violence against women. Social attitudes, political will, and gendered ideologies are critical aspects that must not go unattended. The Domestic Violence Act (1999) in Trinidad and Tobago does the most comprehensive job of such Caribbean pieces of legislation, explicitly challenging the role of ideologies in supporting violence against women:

“Whereas incidents of domestic violence continue to occur with alarming frequency and deadly consequences:
Whereas it has become necessary to reflect the community’s repugnance to domestic violence in whatever form it may take and further influence the community’s attitude and support social change in respect of this social ill.”
(Robinson 5)

Part of this process of changing social attitudes, gendered ideologies and political will requires holding the government and elected officials accountable for their (in)actions when it comes to addressing the issue of violence against women. The role of gendered ideologies will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

However, the call for greater state intervention and/or more stringent criminal laws supports the notion of an intervening patriarchal protective state, which must be problematized considering the earlier discussions on state-endorsed violence and coloniality of citizenship, questioning how the “state undermines the very conditions in which women and children live within its own geographic borders” (Alexander 4).

The Domestic Violence Unit at the Ministry of Social Development in Grenada is a great starting point for having discussions and implementing anti-violence initiatives, as it is situated within the political confines of the government yet ensures a direct connection with the public and survivors because of the community leg of its work. The scope of this unit can be expanded to critically address violence against women in Grenada in a few ways:

- a) by stressing the need for a strengthened political and social will to address violence against women as a serious concern affecting women because they are women;
- b) by prioritizing the importance of increased and sustainable funding and allocation of resources to be directed to the Domestic Violence Unit, its departments, and other institutional and grassroots initiatives and services that address violence against women on the island;
- c) by shifting the onus and responsibility from the survivor to the perpetrator and/community where applicable; and
- d) by pushing for greater accountability measures that will govern the role and involvement of the police force.

Consultations have occurred among and within groups of stakeholders, such as the Multi-sectoral meeting (discussed in Chapter 3) that I attended in July 2009; however, there is limited knowledge of spaces where survivors have been consulted for feedback regarding support systems that they think will be useful for them. A space where survivors can hammer out some of the obstacles in addressing violence against women and then include these in policy-making

discussions is crucial. Besides policy, survivors should also be able to engage in grassroots organizing and mobilization that falls outside the purviews of bureaucratic and state-endorsed change.

The ability of social attitudes and gendered ideologies to shape and affect the law can be negative for survivors navigating the legal system as a means of acquiring justice and addressing the wrong(s) done to them. Mindie Lazarus-Black completed a study examining how Trinidadian courts have responded to cases of domestic violence in her book *Domestic Violence, Court Rites and Cultures of Reconciliation*. Lazarus-Black starts with the case of Richard Daniel from Marabella, Trinidad, who strangled his wife Ramdaye, left her body in her parents' home while her family was at home, and went to confess to his friends (Lazarus-Black 1-2). Daniel claimed that he killed his wife because she was "horning" him (having an extra-marital affair) with a white man who had an expensive car (Lazarus-Black 1). Daniel's lawyer, while defending him in the courtroom, said that his client was "humiliated" and that "he was scorned by his friends and his family." (Lazarus-Black 1). The judge exonerated Daniel from a life sentence and instead gave him 15 years because of his "relentless efforts to reconcile with a wife who brazenly admitted to her adulterous ways to him" (Lazarus-Black 2).

The judge felt the need to comment on Ramdaye's adultery as somewhat of a justification for her death and Richard's violent actions. This criminalization of women's actions and scapegoating women for any type of abuse is not novel to the Caribbean or globally as shown in earlier chapters' discussions. The

perception of women as sexualized beings needing to be controlled forms part of the foundation of gendered ideologies in the Caribbean.

Another core part of gendered ideology and practices in the Caribbean is in regards to the notion of “horning”. This is actually a very popular term used in everyday discussions and music such as soca and calypso, and even in the political realm. Eudine Barriteau, in her essay *Confronting Power and Politics: A Feminist Theorizing of Gender in Commonwealth Caribbean Societies*, noted the announcement from the Minister of Community Empowerment, Sports and Consumer Affairs (the former Minister of Culture and Gender Affairs) in Trinidad and Tobago of the creation of an anti-horning unit (Barriteau 136). The purpose of the unit was to create jobs so that women would not have to horn men (which assumed that women’s infidelity was due to financial reasons as illustrated in the study by Barry and Chevannes) (Barriteau 136). The minister, referencing a popular calypso song by the Mighty Shadow called “Yuh Looking for Horn,” stated,

Young men were “looking for horn if [they] think they can take a wife without having the necessary training or employment or income to support a relationship.” So what I intend to do in the Division of Gender Affairs, through our Male [Support] Programme is to create similar to the Ministry’s Second Chances Programme for women. (Barriteau paraphrasing and citing Andrews 137)

The minister’s actions highlight the importance of social attitudes and values in shaping everything from public discourse to the implementation of law to politics.

The legal system remains, however, an important point of entry and analysis as it intersects with social attitudes in the creation of socially acceptable norms, the determination of legitimate authority, the mechanisms of social

control, issues of human rights, power arrangements within society, and the relationships between the public and private sphere. Unfortunately, the behaviour of judges, jurors, criminals, litigants, and other consumers of legal products is sometimes charged with emotion; distorted by social attitudes and cognitive glitches; limited by political and social will or lack thereof; and constrained by altruism, etiquette, or a sense of duty.

CHAPTER 2

The Colonial Reconceptualizing Of Gender

My interaction and point of entry with this thesis is from the ground-level vantage point of having been born and raised in Grenada and as a Black Caribbean feminist still deciphering what it means to identify as such. Witnessing multiple forms of violences such as domestic violence, incestual abuse, sexual violence and gang violence has triggered questions that left me pondering on the historical and contemporary structures that reinforce and perpetuate these occurrences. Particularly, when it came to addressing the increasing rates of violence against women, the little to no recognition paid to the quality of the women's lives who endured such violations was truly concerning. Aware of the colonial roots of the current socio-political and geo-historical state of Grenada, I began to suspect that a lack of analysis on the continuing presence of colonialism in the shaping and re-shaping of gender, gendered practices, sexualities and violences, ensured the preservation and sustenance of violence against women on the island.

This thesis analyzes the nature of and responses to violence against women in Grenada. The colonial rooting of the nation state of Grenada is a necessary point of departure in this analysis. It was through colonialism that the concretizing of heterosexist gender binaries, the imposition of labels and asymmetrical values placed on the bodies and lives of gendered enslaved beings

became entrenched. Accompanying this gender binary creation was also the disproportionate allocation of power and control onto the bodies of freed enslaved Black men contributing to the enslaved Black women being deemed powerless. Interrogating whether the colonial construction of gender, gendered practices, sex and sexualities has enabled the continuing increase in violence toward women is at the crux of this thesis.

Engaging with the questions above may also shed light on the rationale used to justify the less than proactive responses to violence against women from the legal, political and social spheres of Grenadian society. This chapter will therefore engage in the theoretical and feminist theories and scholarship underpinning analyses of violence against women, its nature, its impact, and the institutions that support its existence.

The current laws and policies in Grenada that address violence against women such as the Criminal Code (1987), the Domestic Violence Act (2001) and the Grenadian Constitution (1975), are premised upon inequitable gendered and racialized ideologies and practices that were introduced, entrenched and bolstered by the colonial project. The colonial project, a term used by Nelson Maldonado-Torres refers to the model of power that centred on the colonizing of the Americas by Spanish and European imperial nations and was “inescapably framed by world capitalism and a system of domination structured around the idea of race” that is “at the heart of the modern experience” (Torres 244). The

subsequent construction of gender, gendered practices, sex and sexualities in turn entrench asymmetrical power relations of gender and support the idea that violence against women is more of an individual issue where the woman is deemed the *raison d'être* for the violence as opposed to violence being understood as a systemic and societal construct. These developments are now at the basis of current laws, policies and social attitudes that may partly explain the lack of political and social desire to address violence against women.

Violence against women is a global epidemic and a gendered crime directed towards women simply because they are women. One of the questions animating this thesis was: why is it that the bodies of Grenadian women are considered normalized and justified sites of violence and subjugation? Is this a peculiarly Grenadian phenomenon or is there a need to contextualize this analysis within a framework that acknowledges and complicates issues of race, power, geo-politics, gender and sexualities? In light of the pervasive gendered ideologies premised upon power, control and the devaluing of women and their bodies, how have Grenadian women resisted these violences upon their persons?

When analyzing violence against women, this thesis stresses the need to broaden one's definition of violence beyond the obvious physical and emotional forms of violence to also include socio-economic and epistemic violence. Gayatri Spivak (1988) introduced the term epistemic violence to refer to the destruction

of non-Western ways of knowing and the manner in which Western ways of understanding have become dominant. Spivak's analysis highlights concerns about knowledge production: who is seen as producing knowledge; who decides what is considered knowledge.

Chantal Kalisa (2009), Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, refers to epistemic violence as cultural violences. Kalisa, who teaches courses on Francophone African and Caribbean literatures and cultures with particular emphasis on postcolonial and gender studies, argues that cultural violence is constitutive of the violence inflicted upon enslaved peoples through processes of dehumanization, assimilation, and political dependence and the imposition of the colonizer's language, religion, and customs (Kalisa 2009). Acknowledging the breadth and scope of violences and the avenues which validate their existence, how are these various types of violences created by the state vis-a-vis its laws and policies and further inflicted onto the bodies and spirits of women? In addition, what structures of violence are Grenadian epistemologies and ontologies founded upon and how are these informed by historical and contemporary manifestations of colonialism and coloniality?

Coloniality is able to spread its influence through state sanctioned and systemic forms of violence. This is manifested in various ways, one of which being the reliance on the criminal justice system and the state to address violence against women. Angela Davis (2000) asks:

Can a state that is thoroughly infused with racism, male dominance, class-bias, and homophobia and that constructs itself in and through violence act to minimize violence in the lives of women? Should we rely on the state as the answer to the problem of violence against women? (Davis 2007)

Many anti-violence activists and feminists call for longer prison sentences as a way of addressing violence against women. One of the many contributions of *Third World and women of colour feminists in the United States* around the reliance of prisons when seeking redress for violence done to women however, encourages the challenging of all forms of violence specifically, state violence done to racialized women and their communities (Smith 2000, 2006, Davis 2006, Collins 2000). Adding and centering in on factors such as race when examining the gendered impacts of prison sentences on the lives of women of colour allows for a more critical understanding regarding the impacts of these forms of violence on racialized communities.

A reliance on the state and the criminal justice system in the pursuit of justice fails to place the concerns of women of colour at the core of the analysis and recommendations for change, a contention that has been argued by scholars like Angela Davis, Andrea Smith, Sally Engle Merry, Kimberle Crenshaw, and Patricia Hill Collins. As noted by Andrea Smith in the context of the US, the criminal justice system has been more punitive towards communities of colour, including women of colour; one of the key shortcomings of the early domestic violence movement is its failure to acknowledge the ways by which the criminal

justice system has used violence against communities of colour (Smith 2000, Merry 2006). Violence against women is tied to state violence and many times, activists who are focused on forms of state violence (such as those involved in anti-prison and anti-war movements) do not draw connections to the interpersonal forms of violence such as violence against women (INCITE! 223). Sexual and domestic violence, however, need to be considered within the purview of institutionalized violence (INCITE! 1). As argued earlier on, the definition of violence needs to extend beyond the physical and must embrace notions of epistemic and systemic violence. By the state failing to adequately address violence against women and how legislation and policies continue to perpetuate such violences, the state is explicitly engaging in forms of systemic violence.

Very rarely is the role of the criminal justice system and the state and how they impact the lives of women and their communities ever really deconstructed. Andrea Smith and Angela Davis continue to remain critical of the professionalization and institutionalization of the criminal justice system when used as the solution to ending violence against women from racialized communities. They argue that it is generally used as a way of delegitimizing black families, reducing the perpetrator as the 'typical' violent male and the families as dysfunctional (Smith, Davis). Smith and Davis call for an expanded frame of analysis and critique that takes into consideration other structures of

violence such as xenophobia, militarism, police brutality, institutional racism, attacks on Indian treaty rights, “the proliferation of prisons and economic neo-colonialism” (Smith 2). Angela Davis poses the following question:

How then can one expect the state to solve the problem of violence against women, when it constantly recapitulates its own history of colonialism, racism, and war? How can we ask the state to intervene when, in fact, its armed forces have always practiced rape and battery against “enemy” women? In fact, sexual and intimate violence against women has been a central military tactic of war and domination. (Davis 2000, INCITE Conference)

I would pose an additional question: how can Grenadian women resort to a criminal justice system that has methodically used their vulnerable positions as an invitation to revictimize and remarginalize and that has as its backing, a political and social structure that devalues these women’s lives and their bodies?

Aya Gruber, in her article “Rape, Feminism, and the War on Crime”, urges feminists to rethink what has become for some, a romantic affair with legal reform especially in regards to prison reform. Like Andrea Smith and Angela Davis, Gruber is speaking from an American context, yet her points may be applied to other geopolitical locations. Her call for feminists to engage in a “discursive shift and consciously distance scholarly dialogue about and political strategies to counter sexual violence from arguments and strategies that strengthen the American penal state” (Gruber 585) can be applied to the broader feminist goal for stricter prison reforms that strengthen the punishments for offenders.

Scholars such as Andrea Smith (2006), Beth Richie (2006), Julia Sudbury (2006), and Janelle White (2006) have called for approaches that challenge the violence perpetrated by capitalism and the state as part of the experiences faced

by women of colour. This includes challenging an approach of safety regarding survivors of sexual/domestic violence that includes the strengthening of the criminal justice apparatus (INCITE! 1-2). By reifying this notion of greater safety being equated to stricter prison laws and reform, the violence experienced by women of colour and racialized communities is legitimized and used to support the growing prison industrial complex.

These are important questions that continue to prove challenging, especially as a researcher within the field of law as I need to remain cognizant of the possible progressive role of law in addressing violence against women without necessarily enabling a system that continues to criminalize and marginalize women. However, these are pressing questions that need to be included in an analysis of coping with violence against women but are outside the purview of this thesis. It is my desire that this issue will be addressed in a future study.

“A Woman Must Be Seen But Not Heard!”: Gender Construction, The Role of Ideologies & the Colonial Reconceptualizing of Gender

To make use of ideologies is to wield a powerful tool that sets in motion ideas and knowledges that structure and put in place colonial definitions of gender. Ideologies produce “a certain kind of knowledge about a subject and certain attitudes towards it” (Hall 185). Gendered ideologies referred to in this thesis suggest that there is a gender binary consisting of males and females and that there are explicit and covert asymmetries of power existing between these

two groups. This in turn reproduces inequalities and produces knowledges of how we think and speak about gender.

This heterosexist gendering of people establishes a heterosexual male as the standard against which women's differences are measured and hence deemed less than equal. The sharp polarizing of men from women in gendered ideologies is what helps to sustain power asymmetries among people. The use of gendered ideologies and social attitudes play a critical role in the enabling of misogynist behaviour towards women. From the explicit transmission of discourse and language to the more nuanced connotations behind words, intonations and language construction, patriarchal and colonial notions of femininity and masculinity continue to be manifested through ideologies and social attitudes and act as ways of negating and trivializing women's lives and experiences. The hegemonic nature of these social norms and attitudes allows for them to exist unchallenged and create, sustain and naturalize colonial constructions of gender as discussed in Chapter 1.

The social attitudes in Grenada manifest themselves in the value system and attitudes of the people, institutions, and cultural activities, which then legitimize the current order and power structures so that these heterosexist ways of seeing and knowing gender are self-evidently to maintain order; that they are part of the natural order of things. There are, however, individuals and groups of people who have begun to challenge the rigidity and heavily-Church influenced

definitions of social norms, the most recent of those being the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) movement through organizations such as the Grenada chapter of the Caribbean HIV/AIDS Partnership (GrenCHAP).

The dominant gender ideologies present in Grenada convey that the male is and should be the head of the household, that there are relatively fixed gendered roles in society that should be respected, and that the family is the base of society. As a result of these ideologies regarding gender and family, increasing levels of gang violence and teenage pregnancies are perceived as a result of a breakdown in the family and Caribbean mothers are usually the first to blame when their children have somehow fallen off the 'right track'. Ideologies of mothering (Boyd 1989) position women as the lynchpin of the family and the de facto cause of social breakdown. Boyd also notes that a key aspect of the ideology of motherhood frames the nuclear family as the ideal family type (120) and thus a woman making the decision to leave a marriage is associated with poor mothering (120). Religion continues to play a key role in shaping familial norms in Grenada painting marriage as an absolute sacred goal.

The assumptions inherent in these ideas surrounding gender subsequently place less value upon the lives and choices made by women and enforces this notion of men as the head of the household or as having the final say. In reality, though, the head of the household in the Caribbean is

predominantly female (Barriteau). The notion of women, when compared to men, as lacking in decision making power simply because they are women is at the core of colonial, patriarchal, racialized, and sexualized assumptions that is illustrated in the colonial reconceptualizing of gender.

The colonial reconceptualizing of gender has specific traits:

First, it is dichotomous and heterosexist. That is, gender is posited as being a binary—male and female—excluding intersexed peoples. Despite 1 in 4 of the world's population being intersexed, the heterosexist categorical assumptions of gender exclude what may exist at the intersection which may include, but is not limited to, intersexed people (Lugones 193-4). Appropriate' gender relations in Grenada are expected to exist solely between a male and a female⁴. Intimacy between a male and a female is the norm and therefore the suggestion of a happily intimate relationship between a male and another male or a female and another female is seen as taboo or undesirable. Homosexuality is considered an aberration. Demarcated gendered roles and practices within a heterosexist framework prioritizes 'maleness' over 'femaleness' usually tends to devalue the latter, leading into the other characteristic of the colonial reconceptualizing of gender.

⁴ Though the heterosexist expectations of partnering does not necessarily imply monogamy as men are somewhat expected to have multiple partners because they are male but women will be labeled as sluts and/or immoral for engaging in similar behaviour. This is so as femininity is always measured against notions of virtue, motherhood and what is it to be 'good' wife (Mohammed 26).

Within this hierarchical binary, one category is typically considered submissive to the other. Within a heteropatriarchal society, the female is perceived as submissive to the male though, as discussed in Chapter 1, these expectations were inconsistent when it came to enslaved Black women. They were expected to embolden sexual passivity, possess undue strength to work the fields and play a matriarchal role as mothers, mid-wives and care-givers; all of this was usually expected to occur simultaneously (Collins 1999, Hine 1994).

Though biological properties may be used as identifiers of differentiation, this hierarchization also typically involves non-biological characteristics such as the social and political expectations of gender roles and practices. An example of this would be the emasculation of males for behaving as or personifying notions of femininity.

Third, it tends to be associated with and have its foundation on moral dogma. The moral and religious framework to which gender expectations and practices are attributed meaning contributes to the heterosexist hierarchical ordering of gender binaries. The interrelationship between the law and the church with moral dogmas is used to delegitimize non-heterosexual relations. Inherent within these gender power relations – are masculinities and femininities founded upon Judeo-Christianity and other Western religions (Williams 1990) where women are typically seen as the sacrificial lambs.

The interlocking analysis including colonialism, race and gender, forces readers to question (though not romanticize) what existed pre-colonization and to remain cognizant of the recurring role of colonial ideals in defining and redefining

gender and gendered practices. According to the work done by Third World feminist Oyeronke Oyewumi, the imposition of a Eurocentric gender system on Yoruba society in Nigeria encompassed the subordination of females in every aspect of gender and life and was, in fact, not an organizing principle in pre-colonial Yoruba society (Lugones 7). In Yoruba society, Oyewumi argues that intersexed people did occupy a location within society that was respected and deemed legitimate. Though the terms *obinrin* and *okunrin* have been mistranslated to refer to females and males, respectively, these terms were neither binarily opposed or hierarchical (Lugones 8).

In Oyewumi's analysis, gender as imposed by colonialism and the consequent general marginalization of females transformed Yoruba society. Part of the Eurocentric colonial imposition of gender was that women were not necessarily identified solely on biological attribution but rather, defined in relation to men, the norm (Lugones 197). Some of the core attributes of being a woman equated to a lack of power, unable to fully, if at all, participate in the public sphere and the lack of a penis which denotes maleness (Lugones 197). This was a critical part of the patriarchal colonial state where power was gender-determined. "For women, colonization was a twofold process of racial inferiorization and gender subordination.

The creation of "women" as a subordinate category was one of the very first accomplishments of the colonial state." (Lugones 197). Lugones' analysis complicates the naming and defining of gender and gendered practices within an anti-colonial and anti-racist framework in Grenada as her theoretical model urges

the interrogation of other factors such as socio-economic, religious and heterosexist influences.

The colonial reconceptualizing of gender is inherently violent because it enshrines a power struggle, where within the heterosexist gender binary, the male is usually attempting to assert and affirm his location of power over another. Due to dominant heterosexist definitions of masculinity, men are always striving to maintain and prove their location of power. The heterosexist assumptions used to justify power relations are problematic because they involve power over someone else ultimately endorsing violence against women.

This colonial reconceptualizing of gender is not just physically violent but epistemically violent, because it defines and moulds rigid and detrimental perceptions and epistemologies of gender and gendered practices that marginalize, dehumanize and erase the voices and experiences of 'the Other' (Spivak 1988). Why is it that heterosexual men are expected to be 'machismo', rough and promiscuous to ascertain their "manhood"? Why it is that women have to maintain a public (and at times, private) image of "purity", "lady-like" behaviour and limited sexuality to be considered as "worthy", especially noting that "sexual purity emerged as a controlling metaphor for racial, economic and political power" and was enabled and sustained during times of slavery (Lugones 205)?

The fact that rape and sexual violence have become so normalized and in some instances, viewed as permissible depending on 'the type of woman' involved is supported by these andocentric, violent definitions of gender, gendered practices, sex and sexualities. These gendered ideologies that work to

determine the perpetrators of violence and who is seen as the deserving victim have deep-seated roots in the historico-political context of gender and gendered practices.

Ideologies framing the narrative of manhood suggest that men cannot and should not be emotional, which suggests suppression and/or limited expression of one's feelings. The explicit display of one's feelings is often seen as feminine and therefore automatically associated with negative aspects of manhood. To possess the physical traits typically belonging to a heterosexist male yet performing in feminized ways is immediately relegated to categories of homosexuality. Because of this societal pressure and reminder of the need to suppress one's emotions, in many instances, one of the ways through which men choose to express themselves is through violence (Kempadoo 3). As Kamala Kempadoo notes, "Violence to women is continually raised as a way in which Caribbean men seek to maintain patriarchal power, and sex becomes a primary means available to Caribbean men to exert control over and to inflict physical harm on women" (Kempadoo 3).

The notion of the 'macho' man who rarely displays his feelings and/or affections to those of the same sex also carries with it very heterosexist assumptions because the idea of a man intimately loving another man is seen as 'unmanly', as immoral and often referred to throughout the English speaking Caribbean as 'buller man behaviour' (Crichlow 186 qtd. in Reddock). The pejorative term 'buller man' though reclaimed by Trinidadian scholar Wesley Crichlow (Reddock 2004) is used to refer to men who have sex with other men

(Crichlow 186 qtd. in Reddock), which to the traditional majority of the English speaking Caribbean is outside the normalcy of [heterosexist] relationships. As noted earlier, a man expressing his emotions is usually broadly labeled as “gay” or as belonging to a ‘buller man’, as the expression of emotions and feelings tends to be associated with homosexuality and femininity. Yet there are many examples of public homoeroticism, as men often express their desire to “be with the boys” and to desire to “hang with the fellas” over other responsibilities or duties within and outside of the home. Instead of acknowledging the levels of homoeroticism facilitated by this kind of behaviour, it is considered as normal behaviour as the typical, heterosexual “manly” male obviously always want to be with the ‘fellas’ as opposed to doing traditional household chores or spending a romantic evening with his partner. “Heterosexuality is reinforced by education, social studies, and the media, or as “the norm as ordained by God” (Kempadoo 2009 citing Holder 2003; Genrich and Braithwaite 2005), however, it is not only heterosexual men who engage in violence to assert their ‘manhood’. This transcends sexual orientation boundaries in patriarchal societies (Barriteau 2009).

Lugones’ use of the colonial/modern gender system is intriguing as it transcends the interlocking role of race and heterosexism in the broader systemic interplay of oppressions and domination within a colonial framework. While writing this thesis, I battled with the idea of race being an issue that required an in depth analysis in the case of Grenada, for, based on my biomythography (Lorde 1982), (which is my life story and my experience or representation of self)

race was not necessarily an issue of concern in Grenada. The population of Grenada is comprised predominantly of African descendants and though skin colour remains an important factor, my perception of race was limited to the dichotomy of white versus black in terms of the role of 'skin colour'. As Paul Gilroy argues, race is linked to the world capitalist project; it needs to extend beyond the black skin/white skin divide and we need to reframe our ways of thinking on race and recognize it as it is a powerful tool linked to epistemology, nationhood, language and so on (Gilroy 2004). Aligned, therefore, with Gilroy's analysis of race, engaging in a decolonial understanding of gender, sexualities and violence required me to consider the role of race in Grenadian society.

Skin colour and the culture of whiteness as it works with and influences standards of beauty and acceptance are vivid, contemporary and concrete issues in the lives of Grenadian women (and men). This racial discussion and analysis has not been covered within a Grenadian context but is nevertheless an important point of reference when discussing coloniality of gender. Issues of race are vital parts of the decolonial analysis required when examining anti-violence work in the Caribbean.

Global Feminisms, Caribbean Feminisms: Complicating Violence Against Women

While recognizing that Anglo-feminism cannot be placed into one homogenous grouping, critics have noted a tendency in some Anglo-American feminism to essentialize women from the Global South. Like women from the Global North who originate from and are socialized in different socio-cultural and

historical contexts, so too the women of Grenada cannot be essentialized into one main category. They are from different economic, status, educational, and racial backgrounds. Status is used here in reference to familial background, which plays a large role in the structure of Grenadian society. A person's current economic situation, for example, may not be the only determinant of access to social goods; family name and networks also play a role. As migrants from China, Syria, and Taiwan, issues surrounding the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, and religion are beginning to gain greater recognition. Without reducing the importance of other forms of oppression(s) experienced by women, such as disability and language, for the purposes of this paper, the intersections of gender, race, sexuality, class, and religion will be highlighted.

Ideas of gender essentialism cast fixed values or traits upon women and men. These traits may be seen as biological, psychological, or natural, or they may refer to activities or procedures that are not necessarily dictated by biology (Kapur 2005). The main strand in gender essentialism is that traits are envisioned as attributes that are shared by all women and therefore universal. Spivak (as cited in Kapur 2005) has argued that due to ideas of essentialism, the subaltern cannot speak: "Subaltern historians are erecting a native subject with an authentic voice" (101). Essentialist stereotypes have been used to create dichotomies, racial hierarchies and as a tool of exploitation as exemplified by the classification of homo sapiens and their attributable characteristics; Africans are often classified as "black, phlegmatic, relaxed.....governed by caprice" (Bahri 209). Throughout this paper, caution needs to be taken to avoid essentializing

women and depicting them as though they share identical ideas and experience power relations and situations in the same way. This very problem has led to so many criticisms of global feminist discourse and even Caribbean feminism.

Another problem that is emphasized by anti-essentialists is that the claims of essentialists primarily reflect the needs and interests of privileged (class, race and the privilege of access to resources) women and therefore result in the development of agendas that only worsen the situations for marginalized women (Kapur 2005). Caribbean feminism, largely influenced by Anglo-American feminism and Caribbean feminist intellectuals and academics, must be wary of some of the essentialist characteristics that frame feminist scholarship and must remain cognizant of the multiple forms of oppressions experienced by Caribbean women – especially those differentiated by issues of class and race.

Caribbean feminism continues to be problematically framed by some Caribbean feminists and scholars within a postmodern, poststructural and neoliberal structure that according to Paolo Friere, translates “diverse forms of class, race, and gender based oppression to the discursive space of subject positions” (Friere 14). This framework of analysis fails to recognize the systemic violences inflicted upon marginalized women in the Caribbean as a result of broader systems of domination and oppression such as the effects of structural adjustment programmes.

In examining violence against women, it is important to historicize gender; a failure to do so will result in the centering of the analysis on gender without a “clear understanding of the mechanisms by which heterosexuality, capitalism,

and racial classification are impossible to understand apart from each other” (Lugones 187). Through Lugones’ use of her modern/colonial gender system, she refers to the light and dark side of the modern/colonial gender system (Lugones 7). She argues that although sexual dimorphism was a key instrument in the light side of the colonial/modern gender system, those who were considered part of the dark side, who typically were the colonized peoples, were not viewed dimorphically (Lugones 2008). Lugones argues that “it is important to consider the changes that colonization brought to understand the scope of the organization of sex and gender under colonialism and in Eurocentered global capitalism” (Lugones 7). This production of knowledge through capitalism was imposed on the world as the only way of knowing (Lugones 2008) and through this normalization, there has resulted the epistemological and social acceptance of gender, gender relations and sexuality within a heterosexist and heteronormative framework that primarily goes unchallenged.

As discussed earlier, in historicizing gender and expanding the definition of violence, the role of state-sanctioned violence becomes particularly visible when centering the lives of women of colour and their communities in the analysis. American Indigenous feminist and activist Andrea Smith argues that colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy are ‘predicated on violence, whether direct and interpersonal or structural, economic or epistemic’ (Kuokkanen 221-222). Structural violence may seem invisible, remote, and distant, and this contributes to the exoticization of the other’s suffering. Violence against women is wrongly interpreted as “some timeless inborn male sadism” (Kuokkanen 222) but as

Rauna Kuokkanen has argued, it should be seen instead as part of the continuing process of “primitive accumulation,” dependent on exploitation, domination, violence and the extension of “patriarchal control over those considered as subordinate whether women, indigenous peoples or the environment” (Kuokkanen 222).

Violence against women should not be viewed merely as a few men battering women but instead should be seen as intricately linked to “patriarchal neo-liberal state violence” (Kuokkanen 2008: 223). Hoffman (2001, as cited in Kuokkanen 2008) argued that male violence is, in fact, part of the state and authorized by the state. Hence the hesitancy and failure of the state to directly address violence against women should not be surprising since the state is founded on patriarchal, colonial, capitalist, and neo-liberal ways of thinking and being.

The role of the state is addressed in both Lugones’ and Quijano’s analytical frameworks. Lugones (2008) explained that in Quijano’s theoretical framework, the coloniality of power, assumes that the:

..disputes over control of sex is a dispute among men, about men’s control of resources who are thought to be female. It seems as though men are not understood as the “resources” in sexual encounters. Women are not thought to be disputing for control over sexual access. (6)

Whereas Quijano’s analysis tends to centre primarily around race and a broad application of gender (and arguably class), Lugones (2008) contended that coloniality does not just refer to “racial” classifications, but is an encompassing phenomenon that permeates all control of sexual access, collective authority, labour, subjectivity/inter-subjectivity, and the production of knowledge. Lugones

examined the exclusion of gender from Quijano's analysis of coloniality as well as the problematization of the term gender, within the broader analysis of colonial and historical accounts of events and world issues such as globalization.

The above criticism is reflective of Lugones' (2008) critique that Quijano's coloniality of power has a too narrow understanding of the oppressive modern/colonial constructions of the scope of gender. Quijano also fails, according to Lugones to recognize the gendered construction of knowledge in modernity. The perspective(s) used by Quijano in analysing gender assumes sexual dimorphism, heterosexuality, and the patriarchal distribution of power; what Lugones refers to as the "light" side of the colonial/modern organization of gender. In other words, Quijano has accepted the "global, Eurocentered, capitalist understanding of what gender is about" (Lugones 2). Lugones argued that this approach veils the ways in which non-white colonized women were subjected and disempowered.

Lugones (2008) went on to describe how the work of Oyewumi (2008) showed that colonialism transformed gender relations and definitions and created binary categories of sex and gender, which according to Oyewumi, "[encompass] the subordination of females in every aspect of life" (Lugones 7). Oyewumi revealed the need to acknowledge the transformation created by the system of gender imposed by colonialism and the general marginalization of females, a framework of analysis that can be applied within a Grenadian context. Oyewumi's analysis can be useful in the context of Grenada as it begs the question, what, if any, system of gender definition and expectations existed pre-colonization and

what role(s) did colonialism play in influencing today's perceptions of gender and gender practices?

Engaging in this process of decolonization is critical for, as Grenadians, we need to deconstruct what we have come to know and accept as sources of knowledge. Walter Mignolo (2002) spoke to the geopolitics of knowledge and tautology which limits dialogue within an anti-racist and decolonial epistemological context. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) extends Mignolo's call to action when she highlighted the need to also decolonize methodologies. Tuhiwai Smith's call to the decolonization of knowledge reminds us to be aware of the role of intellectual institutions and forums of knowledge production in the context of academia. This is important as the majority of articles, journals, books, and historical accounts that are disseminated throughout the classroom have their foundations in Eurocentric, patriarchal, and colonial ways of knowing and are rarely questioned by professors and students. The Grenadian government places a large amount of emphasis on the role of education as a tool to address social issues as will be shown (Chapter 3) in the interview with former Prime Minister, George Brizan. However if the academic curriculum and sources of knowledge are not decolonized, relying on education as a tool of colonial resistance becomes futile and counter-productive. Acknowledgement of the colonial roots and influences of education needs to be challenged. Howard Zinn (1997) said that "we publish while others perish" (624), so in the context of Grenada, who are the ones penning our histories and writing the laws? Who defines and

determines who is the “deserving” victim versus the “non-deserving” victim and the level of ‘justice’ deemed appropriate when addressing violence?

Though Grenada received its independence on February 7, 1974, the country is still very much intertwined with and connected to a Eurocentric epistemology founded on the basis of creating the “other,” either in the form of a human seen as barbaric or as an excluded source of knowledge (the issue of the geopolitics of knowledge noted by Mignolo (2002). In this case, the “other” can refer to the Grenadian woman since in Grenada there is an understanding that a female is the property of a male. For example, there is a ‘male mentality’ in Grenada that posits “If I am mining you, then I can beat you,” where “mining” refers to the male being the breadwinner, financially providing for the woman and the family. Making the connection between gender and class possession is necessary in the decolonization process because of the intersection between class, gender and race oppression(s) in Grenada.

The decolonization of knowledge and minds does not imply an outright rejection of all Western theory, research, and knowledge but instead challenges and restructures theory and research in a way that focuses on the concerns of those usually excluded such as people of colour, Indigenous peoples, women and their worldviews as foundational (Smith, 2006). As the Colombian sociologist Fals-Borda (as cited in Mignolo, 2002) suggested as researchers, we need to be concerned with the very foundation of the social sciences as compared to just the planetary expansion of knowledge for the latter does not lead to intellectual decolonization. If not, as researchers, we will end up doing exactly what Audre

Lorde warned us about, that is, using the tools of the master to dismantle the master's house (Lorde 1984, Smith 2002). As Frantz Fanon argued, the settler and the colonized are mutually exclusive and need one another to complete the colonial constructions of identity (Smith 1999). It is precisely because of this interdependent relationship between colonial definitions and the labelling of the other that we must be mindful of not using the tools of the oppressor to exclude ourselves. As Tuhiwai Smith argued, "we have often allowed our 'histories' to be told [for us] and have then become outsiders as we heard them being retold" (Smith 33). As part of the colonial project, we were made to believe that we could not speak for ourselves, and were marginalized and dehumanized. We must now be cautious in re-using those very tools.

It is important to reiterate that this colonial reconceptualizing of gender is *inherently violent, rigid and relies on the constant 'taking of power' at the expense of others; others who are usually women and other marginalized groups.* The central premise or proposition of linking gender with colonialization in the context of violence against women is that it suggests that gender relations are structured in a way that is inherently violent or at least in a way that normalizes or legitimizes male violence to women. The next chapter will lay out the fieldwork gathered while in Grenada and will illustrate the interconnections between coloniality and the ideologies, perspectives and standpoints of those interviewed and aspects of the Grenadian general public.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology, Epistemology & Social Attitudes: Nature of Violence Against Women in Grenada

Ghanaian playwright, author and activist Ama Ata Aidoo questions the notion that if the material one produces is about women, then that author and their work is undoubtedly feminist. She states “I am not a feminist because I write about women....no writer, female or male, is a feminist just by writing about women. Unless a particular writer commits his or her energies, actively, to exposing the sexist tragedy of women’s history; protesting the ongoing degradation of women; celebrating their physical and intellectual capabilities, and above all, unfolding a revolutionary vision of the role [of women],” he or she cannot be pronounced a feminist (Ogunyemi 1985 citing Aidoo 1981).

Using a decolonial feminist lens, this chapter will weave together data and fieldwork gathered in Grenada throughout this research process. By centering the experiences of women at the core of the analysis and using a feminist standpoint epistemological framework, this chapter will make visible the social attitudes and structures that condone “the sexist tragedy of women’s history” and their lives in the present. This chapter will attempt to sieve through the data to make visible the colonial influences shaping gendered practices in Grenada.

Without the stories of the Grenadian people, this thesis will only have been a theoretical venture into complicating and understanding the dynamics that create and sustain violence against women. Theory is productive and useful but what is more valuable is the crystallization of theory and epistemology in the lived

realities of people. This chapter will therefore present the findings gathered from interviews with women survivors of domestic violence, police officers and other public and legal officials to understand how violence makes itself visible in their everyday lives. Through these shared oral and written stories, I will be able to draw out some of the interconnected themes that contribute to the colonial reconceptualizing of gender.

Public Sectoral Landscape Addressing Violence Against Women

Currently, in Grenada, when issues of domestic violence arise, a woman's option for legal redress falls within the purview of the Domestic Violence Act (2001) (DVA), the origins of which are discussed in further detail below. Before the courts can play a role and the implementation of the DVA is considered, the police officer must first lay charges. In Grenada, criminal matters are the business of the state and the Commissioner of Police (C.O.P.) is representative of the broader public. In contrast, civil matters are deemed private legal issues. Due to the role of the C.O.P. regarding domestic violence, police officers have a fair amount of control in determining the progress of domestic violence cases. If there is 'reasonable cause to believe that an offence has been permitted' the police officer may or may not proceed with the laying of charges (Police Training Workshop 2009).

As illustrated by the interviews discussion below, it is important that police officers not screen cases before laying charges based on their personal beliefs

and values. At the Police Training Workshop, it was stressed to the police officers by the workshop facilitators that the laying of charges acts as a deterrent to offenders by sending a strong message to society that the law enforcement officers are taking their role in the elimination violence against women seriously. After the charges have been laid, the case goes through the legal system, at which point it will then be dealt with by a Private Investigator. The case then moves on to the prosecutor stage where the test used is a 'reasonable prospect of conviction' (Police Training Workshop 2009). Based on the statistics provided by the Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic, a large majority of cases never result in charges actually being laid, and for those that do pass that stage, a smaller number actually result in a conviction.

The Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic (LACC) continues to be many women's first line of contact with the legal system in cases of domestic and intimate partner violence. This could be for many reasons ranging from the geographic centrality of the office's location (it is located in the capital city St. George's), the long-standing history of the clinic (LACC is the first legal aid clinic to be established in the English speaking Caribbean) or as a result of LACC being one of the few spaces that offer legal and emotional support for survivors and perpetrators. Due to this, LACC was my principal site of research while in Grenada and provided an opportunity for me to engage with women who had

either encountered the legal system or were considering doing so due to their experiences of domestic violence.

LACC is also home to the support group Changes which is a psychoeducational program for female victims of intimate partner violence. It has been in existence for about 3 years and runs in 10 week increments; one evening per week, serving approximately 8 – 10 women at a time. It aims to help women who are experiencing domestic violence the opportunity to make healthier life-style choices for themselves and their children; to assist them with being able to leave their abusive relationships, and to ultimately break the cycle of domestic abuse” (Interview with Da Breo 2009). Unfortunately, due to the sporadic attendance of women and my limited amount of time in the country, I was only able to interview three female participants. Those interviews are discussed in this chapter.

The Director of LACC, Jacqueline Sealy-Burke, a lawyer by profession, does consultancy work with UN Women and also teaches at St. George’s University, which besides the satellite campus of the University of the West Indies, is the only university on the island. Mrs. Burke describes LACC as a “multidisciplinary clinic that plays a number of interventionist roles [ranging from] legal advice and representation, psycho-social intervention, advocacy and research and public legal education” (Interview with Burke 2009). LACC’s role is

to ensure that there is increased representation of the marginalized sectors in Grenada's population within and in engaging with the legal system.

UN Women Caribbean located in Christchurch, Barbados, has for years, been advancing the work of the United Nations on violence against women in the Caribbean. At its most recent Dialogue on Domestic Violence, UN Women Regional Programme Director, Roberta Clarke noted "that between 2002 and 2007, 20% of homicides were domestic-related and all victims were women" (UN Women Caribbean 2011). According to statistical records provided by LACC, in the year 2005, the Clinic attended to 111 domestic violence cases. Of those, the number of cases that resulted in a court action was 25. It must be noted however, that it is a bit unclear as to what 'court action' means as the defined 'outcomes' in the data were: 'warning', 'spoken to', 'search warrant', 'statement obtained', 'disciplinary action' and 'counseling', just to name a few. Therefore, it may be fair to assume that 'court action' indicated a conviction.

The Grenada National Organisation of Women Inc. (GNOW) is the umbrella non-governmental organization (NGO) for women of Grenada. It is a national women's organization that addresses the needs of all segments of the female population of Grenada. GNOW has been successful in securing national and international support for gender equality, women's empowerment and involvement in development including economic, social and political dimensions. It was launched on April 23, 1995 and registered under the Companies Act of

Grenada in 1996 (The Caribbean NGO Database 2009). GNOW has been very active on the ground spearheading campaigns and initiatives that address violence against women in Grenada; from grassroots campaigns to lobbying and advocacy, training and capacity building to direct intervention. Unfortunately, securing an interview with a representative from GNOW proved to be quite difficult as the women employed there were constantly required to travel across the island attending to the ever-expanding need for their services coupled with limited resources.

GNOW, one of the leading and prominent advocates in calling on the community and the government of Grenada to prioritize anti-violence against women issues and matters of gender equity, is one of the organizations to be commended for helping to see the first piece of Domestic Violence legislation in Grenada come to fruition. The current President and Project Coordinator of GNOW, Elaine Henry McQueen is also the current President of the Caribbean Women's Association (CARIWA), an umbrella organization that fosters alliances and linkages among Women's Organisations at the local, regional and international levels.

Mrs. Merle Walker is the Coordinator of the Domestic Violence Unit with the Ministry of Social Development. At the time of the interview, Mrs. Walker was the only person employed in the Unit and spent much of her time managing the unit, coordinating and planning activities involving intervention for victims such as

counselling and referrals; implementing community-oriented educational campaigns and travelling back and forth to the shelter for battered women. Multiple and competing roles has been identified as a significant obstacle by Mrs. Walker in her work (Interview with Walker 2009).

Grenada is a member of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), an inter-governmental organization created by the Treaty of Basseterre in 1981 designed to strengthen sub-regional agreements and co-operation. In 2003, the Legal Unit of the OECS Secretariat undertook a comprehensive programme geared at reforming laws related to domestic violence and other forms of family violence. This was part of the OECS' attempts to harmonize regional family legislation for all its members. As a result of this review, four draft bills were developed and submitted to the governments of all the OECS states for consideration. One of these draft bills was the Domestic Violence Bill (Grenada Progress Report 11).

The OECS Domestic Violence Bill called for greater protection for victims of domestic violence and the provision of protection orders (Grenada Progress Report 11). This led to Grenada implementing its first piece of legislation addressing domestic violence- the Domestic Violence Act 2001- and the restructuring of the Ministry of Social Development to strengthen its capacity to deal with social issues such as domestic violence.

The Domestic Violence Unit (office of Mrs. Walker) was established in April 2003 as part of the Division of Gender and Family Affairs at the Ministry of Social Development to “provide assistance to victims, their families and perpetrators through counselling and support services” (Grenada Today 2003). The unit investigates and intervenes in reported incidents of domestic violence in providing a suitable environment to interview survivors; to record information and to conduct educational and awareness programmes on domestic violence at schools, residential institutions, parent/teacher meetings, community forums and the media. The unit also helps to ensure that the Domestic Violence Act is being enforced when assisting victims through advocacy work. Besides providing support to the Cedars Shelter for Battered Women and their children- the only shelter on the island- the unit also operates a crisis line for victims or others requiring assistance and information.

In 2009, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) launched a project expected to reduce the high incidences of violence against women in the Caribbean (CARICOM Press Release 2009). The two-year project had two main goals; to establish an Office of the Special Advocate against gender-based violence and to develop and implement an advocacy and communication strategy (CARICOM Press Release 2009). This was one of the ways by which the Caribbean community expressed the need for an improved framework for

“research, advocacy, public education and policy development for the prevention of gender based violence” (CARICOM Press Release: October 2009).

In addition to the lobbying and advocacy efforts by community organizations and LACC in Grenada, there has also been an increase in grassroots mobilization across the region. Grassroots organizations such as Sistren Theatre Collective in Jamaica and the Grenada National Organization of Women (GNOW) continue to mobilize local communities around issues of domestic and sexual violence by encouraging these communities to place pressure on government and the private sector to seriously address domestic and sexual violence as key social issues. The work of these grassroots organizations also centres on public education and engagement through campaigns that call for an end to violence against women.

Grenada, having witnessed the implementation of its first Domestic Violence Bill in 2001, is still working towards ensuring that the proper and necessary infrastructure to address violence against women is in place. The government’s response to violence against women has included the development of workshops to train police officers regarding the complexities and ideal legal reactions to domestic violence, the establishment of the Domestic Violence Unit housed in the Ministry of Social Development; training on the complex nature of domestic violence and ways of addressing it for community members; and forums led by the Ministry of Social Development, the Legal Aid

and Counselling Clinic (LACC) and the Grenada National Organization of Women (GNOW) from 2008 to present. In addition, there have been grassroots campaigns such as the Love and Licks Don't Mix campaign initiated by GNOW that focuses on the hypocrisy of love and violence being equated to one another. However, interviews with some of the key stakeholders in the field, including the sole person hired in the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) as the Coordinator of the DVU, the Director of the Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic, police officers, and lawyers, have all made it clear that the political will to seriously address violence against women in Grenada is still lacking.

I anticipate difficulty in labeling and situating my research in and of the Caribbean as feminist and as a student having studied in the West. Having my perspectives and knowledge's be validated as 'authentically Grenadian' and remaining aware and respectful of Grenada as it is socially and politically located were vital throughout this research process. There has been a bit of resistance in asserting and naming ideologies, theories and discourse as feminist and further using those feminist ideals to critique the current state of affairs in the Caribbean as feminism continues to be categorized by Grenadian locals as an export to the Caribbean as opposed to an organic epistemological product patented as Caribbean. Feminism, as discussed earlier in this thesis has always been perceived as solely focusing on patriarchy and thus ignoring the racial and class realities of Grenadian women. However, it remained critical that I explicitly

emphasize the role of feminism, particularly decolonial, anti-racist feminism in my epistemological framing and analysis.

It was informative as well as interesting to be able to sit in and participate in the meetings, workshops and interview process as an insider/outsider for though I identified as a Grenadian woman, my hybrid 'Westernized'-Grenadian accent and present role as a 'foreign student researcher' brought in a different dynamic 'tainting' my location as an 'authentic'⁵ Grenadian. I was constantly asked where I was from and had to remind folks that I was indeed Grenadian. From the lingering stares as I walked into a room to my conscious attempts to mask what has now moved from a 'Grenadian accent' to a 'more Canadian-Grenadian twang' to my not being allowed to enter the main government building because I was wearing a sleeveless top. This compromising of my 'Grenadian identity' and my supposed non-compliance with social expectations and etiquette required me to place an increased effort on 'authenticating' my social location and 'entitlement' to being present and contributing to the discussions yet still problematizing that 'entitlement' and remaining aware of my privilege.

After receiving ethics approval in July 2009, I travelled to Grenada for the month of July to conduct interviews. To interview women survivors, I went directly to LACC as I knew that they were one of the first sites of contact for women and

⁵ My use of 'authentic' when referring to my Grenadian identity is in regards to someone who was born and raised and aware of the geo-political and socio-historico contexts of the Grenadian people.

that at the centre was a support group for women survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence. Any woman who stepped forward as wanting to be interviewed from the support group Changes was recruited and the possibility of receiving support afterward was presented as an option as I was also wearing the hat of a support worker⁶.

I attended the Training Workshops on Domestic Violence for police officers and visited the main headquarters of the RGPF to secure interviews. Though it was relatively easier for me to interview a healthy number of police officers by visiting their main headquarters, interviewing women participants in the Changes group proved to be more difficult as the women had to travel to and from their homes and places of employment which required bus fare and being able to get time off work to be interviewed at the Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic (LACC).

To accomplish the research goals of this thesis, interviews were sought from women participants in Changes; police officer participants at the Domestic Violence Training Workshop; the Director of the Domestic Violence Unit; the Director of LACC; past Prime Minister and historian George Brizan and former Magistrate Patricia Mark. In total, 15 interviews were completed in the month of July 2009.

⁶ I am currently a support worker and collective member with the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa (SASC). SASC uses a survivor-directed, feminist, non-medical and non-judgemental model of support to survivors of sexual violence.

The emphasis by officials and experts in the legal and social services field on the need to criminalize domestic violence confirmed the need to interview at least one person in the legal field. I was able to secure an interview with former Chief Magistrate, Patricia Mark who is known for dealing with cases involving violence against women and children with an iron fist. Ms. Mark was appointed as the Chief Magistrate with the Magistrate's Court in 1984 and served in that capacity up until 2008 when she was asked to leave by the former New National Party (NNP) administration, a situation that resulted in Ms. Mark suing the Keith Mitchell led NNP Government (Grenada Today 2008).

As a young high school girl at the St. Joseph's Convent, St. George's, we were referred to as 'Convent Girls' and we would hear stories of Ms. Mark's tough hand on the law particularly when it came to men 'who did women wrong'. At the time, we did not use the language of social justice but in retrospect, I can argue that she did use a feminist, gender analysis when arriving at and enforcing her legal decisions. On International Women's Day in 2007, Ms. Mark was recognized by the Minister responsible for Gender and Family Affairs for her contribution to the community and the nation (The Grenada Consulate Website 2007). Ms. Mark was chosen to be interviewed for this thesis because of her knowledge of the law and her role of being one of the outspoken judges in support of women's rights in Grenada. The interview with Ms. Mark took place at her home which is conveniently located near the home of Mr. Brizan.

The former Prime Minister, historian and former Minister of Education, George Brizan was another person interviewed as he is one of the only noted historians in Grenada and possesses an in-depth and thorough understanding of the political system and climate in Grenada. Mr. Brizan has authored two books on the historico-social contexts of Grenada, *Grenada: Island of Conflict (1984)* and *She Stood Alone: A Tribute to the Grenadian Woman (2005)*. Mr. Brizan's historical location and experience in the field of education and public office was evident in his consistent call for educational reform as not a panacea to, but as one of the avenues to address violence against women in Grenada.

Using fieldwork and the gathering of data this chapter will propose some general themes that were evident in the research data such as (i) the role of social attitudes, (ii) police, legal and political responses and (iii) the prevalence, normalization and denial of violence in Grenada. The discussion of these themes will begin with the stories shared by some of the women participants in the support group Changes and then proceed into the presentation of the data as categorized under the aforementioned themes.

Organically Grenadian? Colonialism, Social Attitudes & Violence Against Women in Grenada: The Stories of Some Grenadian Women

To situate my understanding and research on violence against women in Grenada as experienced by women survivors, I attended some of the sessions of the support group Changes. This space afforded me the opportunity to meet with

a small number of women who were involved with the legal system in one way or another as a result of sexual and domestic violence. Unfortunately, the cancellation of some of the sessions coupled with the fluctuating attendance of different women at various times, prohibited my ability to effectively familiarize myself with the women and to gain their trust. When participation in my research was posed to the six women in the room, only three agreed.

In sharing these women's stories, aliases will be used to protect their anonymity. At this point, I would also like to issue a trigger warning as some of the stories shared may re-enact memories of sexual violence for some readers.

Susan was the first woman to be interviewed. Susan, like so many women in Grenada, works a minimum wage job at one of the many small private businesses in the capital, St. George's. Susan's story of pain and violence as well as resistance and survival was made visible in her narration of past and current forms of abuse.

Susan is a relatively young woman within the age range 32-38, who works in a small boutique on Market Hill, in St. George's. She has three children whom she refers to as her "two handsome princes and princess" (Interview with Susan 2009). While Susan was at the Form 4 level at Secondary School -the Grade 9 equivalent in Canada- she became pregnant with her now husband's cousin and was subsequently 'pushed out' of school. I borrow the term 'push out' from critical

race theorist George Dei (2010) to shed light on the schooling institution's failure to address students' complex socio-economic and psychological needs.

It was when Susan became pregnant with her first child that she met her husband. When Susan's husband-to-be realized that she would need some form of financial assistance to raise her baby, he provided her with an "ole house" (Interview with Susan 2009) that his mother owned. Despite her husband's gesture of kindness, in the interview, Susan cautions that she fears he capitalized on and exploited an opportunity when she was vulnerable and needed support. She refers to this as him "capturing her in a relationship" (2009). Susan comments that, "if it was love, we would have been together up until now but we are not because there was no love....it was a just a need....a need to get at me" (2009). Susan goes on to explain why she felt as though this was not a genuine extension of kindness when she refers to him demanding sex from her on the basis that he had purchased material items for her such as food and the house. Susan explains that this was one of the initial moments when she began despising men and sex. This marked the beginning stages of depression and frustration for Susan and would last for many years.

Though Susan had known her husband for 16 years, she had been married to him for 15 of those 16 and described the relationship as "15 years of total harassment, 15 years of frustration, of verbal abuse, sometimes physical and I've had it" (Interview with Susan 2009). She shared multiple accounts of

sexual violence, all including the use of a weapon, primarily a cutlass (machete) and all involving an audience, be it the children and/or the community. The first story Susan shared, when asked about her past experiences of abuse is:

I often do have memories of abuse because one would cause you to remember another. One little tiny word will trigger something. Before my daughter was born and I was early in the pregnancy, probably 3 months and my brother was in the shop, closest to us.....You could see the shop clearly and I went back in the shop and I was chatting with my brother and he [husband] came and started to grab me up and cuff me up on my face and I fall. And my brother started shouting "wah yuh do that for?!" And the woman in the shop started to shout. Before I even got home, he was already there waiting for me wid a cutlass and I had to run back down the road. And my brother jumped in front...and started shouting, 'ah taking out yuh so and so..' and I said to myself...'woe that's it'. I was scared. I wanted to end the relationship then but I was scared because he threatened me that if I ever leave him or if he ever see me with anyone, he go do all kind ah ting. A whole set ah violence and abuse. I could never forget...why the hell he would do this to me when I was talking to my brother...my closest brother. I was isolated from my family. I would go see my family and he would be upset. My family would come visit me and he would be upset." (Interview with Susan 2009)

The above excerpt from Susan's interview is just one of the many experiences that she shared with me during our interview. This illustration of inhumane treatment, public humiliation, fear and isolation are aspects that Susan not only lived with in the confines of her home, but concerns that she also took with her everywhere she travelled, as the unpredictability of her husband attacking were everyday concerns in her life.

The second woman, Lorna filled out my questionnaire and returned it to LACC. Lorna was 'pushed out' of secondary school at the Form 3 (Grade 8) level and was unemployed at the time of the interview though her goal was to start her own business. The "proud mother of ten children" (Interview with Lorna 2009), Lorna had been married for twenty-four years. When asked if she had

experienced any form of abuse since her relationship began, she answered that from the beginning, she had been subjected to sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

One of the more troubling and first experiences of abuse that Lorna shared in her interview was her account of being raped by two men. One of whom was a police officer, the age of twenty-two and the other, his friend, who was thirty-one. There were three men present but only two of them engaged in the raping of Lorna; the third stood by and did nothing. The friend of the policeman held the gun to her head while the police officer proceeded to sexually violate her. All of this occurred on the streets when Lorna was fourteen years of age while she was on her way to the local community shop. "When my mum heard this, I had to shut up and don't talk. This was when I had my first son" (Interview with Lorna 2009).

The third woman interviewed, Maggie, also filled out a questionnaire and returned it to the LACC. Maggie was in her early 40s and had graduated at the secondary level of tertiary education. Currently employed, Maggie has five (5) children and is not in a relationship. Maggie's past relationships were always long term ranging from 14 years, 7 years and 5 years and she stated that throughout all of those relationships, she experienced forms of physical, verbal and emotional abuse.

Regarding the locations of the abusive encounters, Maggie stated that it happened “at home, on the street, in church, *anywhere*” (italics added) (Interview with Maggie 2009). All of the stories shared by Maggie, Lorna and Susan allude to the public yet silenced nature of violence and the continued prevalence and normalization of it. What is also concerning is the realization and crystallization of the effects that these acts of violence will have on women, their psyche, their families and their communities. It is consternating to witness how these violences have been normalized, mitigated and erased without little to no support provided to the survivors.

I was very depressed, felt degraded and ashamed to walk the street, travel go anywhere. I was afraid/ashamed to talk to anyone for fear of abuse. I felt very inferior and foolish. I started to loose my memory and feel really sick and unwanted. I lost one job due to malfunction and could not go to work. I felt really foolish and frustrated and not to love a man again. (Interview with Maggie 2009)

Considering the prevalence of violence against women yet the disproportionate provision of services to support survivors, there is clearly a need for greater political and social will to address this continuing endemic.

There is an obvious disconnect between the normative role(s) of police officers when addressing violence against women and the actual experiences faced by women like Lorna, Susan and Maggie who rely on police officers to exercise justice and fairness. Both Lorna and Susan experienced sexual violence at the hands of police officers, the ones who are supposed to ‘serve and protect’. Despite this, Lorna decided to pursue legal action after her assault and was fortunate to encounter supportive police officers. Susan, on the other hand, had

her trust in the institution of the police taken away from her when the one she was reporting her case to, turned around and assaulted her. In the interview, Susan relived the situation of being assaulted by a police officer.

One time when my mother was beating me. ah got vex and ah went to the police station. The police officer asked "what yuh come for?" It was around 8 or 9 in the nighttime. Ah come to make a report, look at my skin. Instead of having me behind my desk, he open the gate where they normally sit and asked me to come sit down and he was taking my statement. So I asked him for some water and he said go ahead...go to the kitchen. I had to pass the cell where they usually keep the prisoners and another dark part of the station so I was scared to walk through the station. Seeing me and gun no friends and seeing the gun on him and ah 'fraid weapons and the police officer came in the kitchen and asked if he could touch me. He said he wanted to have sex and I said no. That's not what I here for and ah rough him up. I said why you want to touch me? I come here for some water. He pinned me against the wall and didn't touch me but the police officer pulled out his penis and started masturbating in front of me and ah couldn't move. He then said, don't tell no one. From that day, ah never like him and ah never like police officer. (Interview with Susan 2009)

Roberta Clarke argues that "a significant factor in under-reporting throughout the Caribbean is the insensitivity on the part of the police in dealing with victims of sexual offences. In addition, women's organisations that work with sexual offence victims report that women are reluctant to report sexual offences because of their mistrust of the criminal justice system, particularly in countries where sexual offences law and procedure humiliate women and cause embarrassment in the courtroom" (Clarke 1998: 6). I would add that the fear of being revictimized by police officers and their failure to acknowledge and comprehend the seriousness of domestic and sexual violence may be significant factors contributing to the high level of under-reporting found throughout the Caribbean.

Susan explicitly and without flinching explained multiple encounters that she had had with police officers, where upon reporting crimes of sexual violence and/or domestic violence, police officers attempted to exploit the vulnerability and oppressive nature of the situation and instead made sexual advances towards her (Interview with Susan 2009). The police represent the state and through their actions, they either challenge or reproduce state-sanctioned violence. As men and through their positions of power, they perpetuated the coloniality of power and gender by participating in the proliferation and normalization of violence against women and the further devaluing of women's bodies. By using their locations of power, they legitimized the experiences of these women who relied on their roles as police officers to enforce justice.

The police officers contextualized these women's bodies as persistently available and hypersexualized and fed into the colonial and racialized view of these women having no agency over their bodies. By hypersexualizing their bodies, removing their agency and delegitimizing their experiences of sexual violence, the police officers felt entitled to assert their power over these women by sexually assaulting them. Sexual violence has little to do with sex and more so to do with power and domination. These police officers abused their positions of power and took agency away from these women particularly when they were in vulnerable situations.

Police, Legal and Political Responses to Violence Against Women

The police are another main point of contact for women attempting to access the legal system as a result of violence in Grenada. The Royal Grenada Police Force (RGPF) governs Grenada (which includes Carriacou and Petit Martinique) and is tasked with enforcing criminal, immigration and maritime laws. According to the RGPF's website, they are also tasked with enforcing;

- i. "the following core values.....in [their] public and personal personas.
- ii. Pride - Committed to conducting ourselves in a manner that brings honor to ourselves, the force and country.
- iii. Integrity - committed to the public trust by holding ourselves to the highest standards of professionalism.
- iv. Respect - committed to respecting individual rights, human dignity and the value of all members of the community irrespective of standing or status." (The Royal Grenada Force Website)

To complement the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act and the restructuring of the Ministry of Social Development, GNOW and LACC spearheaded the implementation of Domestic Violence Training workshops for police officers. As a result of victims' complaining about the reactions of police officers when addressing domestic and intimate partner violence, GNOW initiated a set of actions to help improve society's responses to and victims' interactions with issues of violence. One of those actions was the creation of mandatory training workshops for police officers on responding to domestic and intimate partner violence as part of the activities to commemorate sixteen days of activism to protest violence against women in 2008. Six (6) of the RGPF police officers

who were either undergoing or had completed the Domestic Violence Training workshops spearheaded by LACC, GNOW and the Ministry of Social Development were interviewed as part of this research process.

Before interviewing the police officers, I was able to observe their participation in the workshop on Domestic Violence Training. The workshop facilitators, LACC Director, Mrs. Sealy-Burke and LACC In-House Social Worker, Shane Joseph urged the participants to “address [their] belief systems and values in order to do this work adequately. Do not strive to be ‘objective’ but instead acknowledge [their] preconceived notions and challenge them (Workshop Notes July 9 2009).

I observed a self-awareness exercise led by Mr. Joseph, within the workshop with the officers, where each officer would lift their hands to express agreement or dissent with the questions asked. After each question, discussions would ensue where not only would the facilitators challenge the police officers, but the officers would unapologetically use that opportunity to express their views. One of the questions asked was do you think that the man should be the head of the household. Fifteen of the participating officers agreed with one disagreeing. There was a disproportionate representation of male police officers at the workshop with a ratio of about 10:4 between men and women. Yet despite this, it was interesting to see that the women participants generally agreed with their male counterparts. Below is the list of additional questions that were asked:

<p>1. Men and women are basically the same Agree: 5 Disagree: 11</p> <p>2. Men and women are equal Agree: 9 Disagree: 7</p> <p>3. Most women prefer an aggressive man Agree: 4 Disagree: 12</p> <p>4. Homosexuals are not real men Agree: 12 Disagree: 4</p> <p>5. A man is not a real man if he does not have children Agree: 0 Disagree: 16</p> <p>6. It is more difficult to be a man than it is to be a woman Agree: 8 Disagree: 8</p> <p>7. It is not normal for a man to be monogamous Agree: 2 Disagree: 14</p> <p>8. Hitting a woman is not right but it is sometimes the only way left to communicate Agree: 2 Disagree: 14</p> <p>9. Men with bigger penises are better lovers Agree: 0 Disagree: 16</p> <p>10. A man should not have to tell his partner everywhere he is going Agree: 15 Disagree: 1</p> <p>11. God intended men to be the leaders in society Agree: 16 Disagree: 0</p>	<p>12. The responsibility for birth control lies with the woman Agree: 0 Disagree: 16</p> <p>13. Boys need to learn special life skills that girls don't need to learn Agree: 5 Disagree: 11</p> <p>14. Society was better off when a woman's place was in the home Agree: 6 Disagree: 10</p> <p>15. Men need to take back their positions in society Agree: 16 Disagree: 0</p> <p>16. Men do not need to express their feelings as much as women Agree: 1 Disagree: 15</p> <p>17. The present justice system is bias towards women Agree: 12 Disagree: 4</p> <p>18. Today's women are becoming less forgiving Agree: 14 Disagree: 2</p> <p>19. A man cannot rape his wife Agree: 1 Disagree: 15</p> <p>20. Violence is a private affair and police intervention should only occur if absolutely necessary Agree: 0 Disagree: 16</p> <p>21. I know of at least one case of domestic violence where in reflection, I do not think I responded appropriately Agree: 11 Disagree: 5</p>
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The scope of the questions asked as well as the range of answers provided by the police officers in the table above, illustrate the manifestation of coloniality in people's lives and ideals. From their perceptions on homosexuality and sexuality in general, to their ideas of power sharing and power over, in interpersonal relationships to the role of organized religion and spirituality in shaping gender practices, the above table helps to make visible the far reaching and deeply embedded effects of coloniality in Grenadian society.

The answers to questions 2 and 3 suggest that the officers' definition of equality may differ based on the given context. Question 4 is quite telling when considering the role of homosexuality in addressing violence and general norms of socialization and sexuality.

During another exercise at the workshop, the officers, as a group, were given a hypothetical situation where they were forced to interrogate the worth placed on different lives. They were told that there are eight of them on a sinking boat and one by one, they had to decide who would be left to die. After engaging in some lively discussions, the officers decided that the first persons to go were the beautiful young woman (devaluing of women's bodies-possibly assumed that they can easily find another beautiful woman once saved); the prostitute (there was an immediate assumption that the prostitute was female- once again, illustrating the devaluing of women's lives).

Further, their response illustrated the placing of immorality on sex workers' bodies and the shunning of the idea of sex as a commodity); the corrupt police (corruption within the police force is a topic of everyday discussions in Grenada but not many are willing to openly talk about it. Is it possible that the leaving behind to die of the corrupt officer was a way of deflecting attention from one's own complicity); the young man with HIV (the immediate assumption that someone with HIV is over-sexed, irresponsible and deserving of their diagnosis); and the homosexual priest (homosexuality is illegal on the criminal books in Grenada and is continuously shunned socially, religiously and politically).

In question 12, all the police officers at the workshop including the women agreed that God intended men to be leaders in society. In Grenada, the Bible is used as the main source of justifying everything from the creation and interpretation of laws to the scope of the educational curriculum to everyday social attitudes and norms, therefore this unanimous testimony to the superiority of the male species probes the question of the continuing pervasive role of the Church in shaping gender hierarchies. If men are placed on a pedestal, where they are to assume a privileged stature and role in society then of course, their existence centres around one of power and domination. What happens to those who 'fail' to achieve those expectations and who exist outside the gendered, heterosexist confines depicting what it is to be male? The focus on the

dominating role expected to be engendered by heterosexual men is very much an alive and relevant part of gendered societal ideologies in Grenada.

The governing theme found throughout the RGPF's website is one of control over the populace, implicit and/or explicit, and an underlying call for repression in the name of obedience and an acquiescent populace. One of the ways in which this plays out is the preconceived criminalization of certain people and/or certain groups of people ultimately supporting social hierarchies based more so on class, status and education as opposed to race.

As George Brizan noted in his recording of Grenadian history, though the colonial slave masters living on plantations and the formal institution of slavery no longer exists, it can be argued that the police force has reappropriated the role of colonial master ensuring the existence of a colonial and repressive agenda (Brizan 79). George Brizan posited a four part distinction of the institutions that were developed to foster the control and ownership of capital and labour on the plantation which included the introduction of a policing institution. The purpose of which (institution of the police) was "...maintaining the status quo of plantation life. This mechanism of control was intensified parallel with planters' increasing preoccupation and paranoid about the slave insurrection" (Brizan 79). The introduction of the police as an institution was also accompanied with extensive rigid slave laws and the enforcement of class and social hierarchies all in an effort to control and strip the masses of their identities and social and

community connections. Given Brizan's analysis, the evidence provided in the interviews with the women as well as the feedback gathered in the Police Training Workshop, it is obvious (though not specific to Grenada) the power given to and expected of by the police force but how is that power part of a broader and systemic system of domination used to control the population and deny women of their humanity? This thread of thought and analysis is definitely worth exploring but unfortunately lies outside the purview of this thesis.

In addition to the interviews completed while in Grenada, I also attended a multi-sectoral meeting involving representatives from the legal sector, medical sector, police force and educational sector, to develop a Domestic Violence Protocol to be used across the island similar to what was established on the island of Tortola. The primary goal of the protocol is to act as a roadmap to alleviate the presence and effects of domestic violence.

Another aim of the protocol is to synchronize the roles and efforts of the *different sectors when addressing violence against women and to explicitly state the different procedures that needed to be considered.* The sectors that were present included representatives from the Grenada Junior Doctors Association; the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution; the Ministry of Health; the Royal Grenada Police Force; the Programme for Adolescent Mothers (PAM); the Association of Social Workers; GNOW; St. George's University (SGU) and the General Hospital. It was decided that In order to make the protocol truly effective,

the following tools are required: legislation, trained personnel, a support structure and the political will. Other key steps to ensure the successful implementation of protocol would require that the four (4) main entry points for victims into the system be considered: (i) law enforcement (ii) medical interventions (iii) social service interventions and (iv) the justice system. Without mitigating the importance of the other main entry points for victims into the system, for the purposes and breadth of this thesis, the law enforcement and the justice system points of entry for women will be the prime focus.

Ms. Eunice Baptiste, Officer at GNOW led with the opening remarks for the meeting and convened with three main points, that domestic violence is a choice, not a result of a loss of control; that domestic violence is sexual assault and it is alive and well in our tri-island state and finally, that domestic violence remains hardly spoken about. The points raised by Ms. Baptiste are crucial as it is due to these misconceptions, the pervasiveness and normalization of violence against women that has led me to interrogate this issue further by placing it within a racialized, sexualized and colonial framework of analysis and understanding.

Though there is limited anecdotal evidence indicative of the pervasiveness of violence against women, Ms. Baptiste's points above and the discussions at the workshop concretize the importance of this type of research. The three main goals of the meeting were (1) to explore the challenges faced by

sectors when dealing with domestic violence (2) to develop a shared framework that can be applied in this protocol and (3) to identify opportunities and recommendations for a national protocol (Meeting notes 2009).

Though one of the differences between Lorna's and Susan's stories is that Lorna is not financially dependent on her abuser, common threads in all three women's stories centre resistance and strength in the midst of adversity. All of these women have experienced violence at the hands of their abusers not just behind closed doors, but also within the public arena. Without a doubt, these public displays of violence and the subsequent devaluing of these women's lives and bodies was horrific. In addition, based on my experiences living in Grenada, the accompaniment of this violence with ridicule, shunning and the casting of judgement upon these women would not at all be surprising. All of the women agreed that 'Changes' has been a useful space for support. Lorna, at the end of her questionnaire wrote the following, "I also pray God that no woman don't go through this in life. I pray that all woman could be free from all abusive men" (Interview with Lorna 2009).

Prevalence, Normalization and Denial of Violence Against Women

This thesis began with the case of Simeon Godfrey and his attacks on his estranged wife, Andrea Williams. The horrific and public chopping off of Williams' right forearm and left thumb not only left psychological and physical scars on

Williams, but also on her children. According to the newspaper report, at least one of the children was present during the incident. This direct exposure to violence coupled with the children's continued witnessing of the violence inflicted by their father would only further destroy their lives as children (The New Today Newspaper 2010). The story of Williams is not an isolated incident and is not specific to Caribbean society yet there is a level of normalization and to some extent, denial of the violence that seems to exist in Grenada. Williams' story is the story of so many women in Grenada that go untold and/or unrecognized.

The violence faced specifically by Grenadian women must be interrogated in order to shed light on the possible impacts that this violence may have on the broader community who is sometimes forced to witness and at other times, complicit in the continuation of such violence. "Community tolerance of intimate violence has been shown to be associated with the degree to which violence, both state and criminal, occurs in the larger society (Moore 1994 citing 587 Hotaling & Straus 1990; Steinmetz & Straus 1974; Straus, 1990b). The role of the community remains a lively part of the discussions on violence against women in Grenada as women and members of the community tend to commit to three main aspects of society: the family, the community and the church (Moore, Higman, Campbell and Bryan 170). This strong dependence on family, the community and the church in Grenada as the case in many of the Caribbean islands may provide additional support for women experiencing abuse however,

it also means that their decisions to either leave, stay or file a criminal complaint are subject to judgement from those very support systems.

Another publicly reported case of domestic violence in Grenada involved the murder of Sharon Bethel-Lendore in November 2009 (The New Today Newspaper 2009). Sharon's body was found alongside her husband's, Joel Lendore by a neighbour who stopped by to see if the couple were at home after numerous phone calls went unanswered. Upon peering through a window, the neighbour saw both bodies lying on the floor. Mrs. Lendore's body was found with multiple stab wounds to her neck, chest, elbow and arm while Mr. Lendore's body had no physical injuries but was found in a "rather subconscious state" (The New Today Newspaper 2009). Ms. Lendore was pronounced dead on the scene. Mr. Lendore was rushed off to the Princess Margaret Hospital, the main hospital on the small island of Carriacou but sources claimed that he tried to commit suicide in the bathroom of the building so he was subsequently transferred to the Mt. Gay Mental Hospital on the mainland, Grenada for a psychiatric evaluation (The New Today Newspaper 2009).

The news of the death of Ms. Lendore and the fact that her husband was the prime suspect sent shockwaves across the "normally quiet and serene sister isle of Carriacou" as both persons were revered as "idols" in their community (The New Today Newspaper 2009). I focused on the main newspapers, the *Grenada Today* (now *New Today*), the *Grenadian Voice* and the online source

for news in Grenada, www.Belgrafix.com. However, it was very disappointing that many of the news articles following up on this case focused primarily on the loss to the community of such a well-known and involved former athlete, Mr. Lendore. Little to no attention was placed on the senseless killing of Mrs. Lendore. Never, in any of the articles were the terms, domestic violence, intimate partner violence (IPV) or violence against women mentioned with little to no analysis dedicated to the systemic forms of violence faced by Grenadian women and the erasure of their stories. It is true that not all cases of domestic violence result in murder but media coverage on a couple murders should not steer attention away from the multiple other cases of domestic violence that continue to occur without public scrutiny. In addition, from the story of Andrea Williams to Sharon Bethel-Lendore, the media representation of domestic violence or intimate partner violence continuously fails to identify the incident as such.

One of the statistics shared in the Domestic Violence Training workshop was that 1 in every 3 women in Grenada experience domestic violence in their lives (Workshop notes 2009). Being privy to these women's stories of horrific and continuous abuse is humbling and encourages admiration in the strength that they possess. Caribbean women and in particular, Grenadian woman have historically been exemplified as possessing strength and resilience yet at the same time, being subject to sexism and violence. There is an inequitable and problematic relationship between sexual jealousy and wife beating: "the women

tend to enjoy greater sexual freedom than in most parts of the world, there is ample evidence of the existence of a sexual double standard. He is expected to control her sexuality, but she should not be threatened by his infidelity” (Morrow 586). How can these women negotiate these spaces and identities when they are expected to exemplify what are usually polarizing character traits yet not abandon their emotional needs? Is being ‘strong’ mutually exclusive from expressing one’s emotions as the latter may suggest a sign of weakness?

The fact that these women are still in the abusive situations does not signal cowardice or necessarily a sign of helplessness. In fact, this can be their means of survival as statistics suggest that the risk posed to women’s lives is significantly increased upon their departure from abusive relationships. According to Statistics Canada “women continue to be more likely than men to be victims of spousal homicide. In 2009, the rate of spousal homicide against women was about three times higher than that for men” (Statistics Canada Website 2009).

There are very few digital and media sources that record Grenada’s history and contemporary state of affairs however, two pieces of digital media were produced within the past five years. One was a movie produced by a local Grenadian director called ‘Blinded’ that focused on domestic violence on the island. Another was a CBC produced documentary that covered women’s stories of incest and sexual violence. Unfortunately, I have yet to view ‘Blinded’ but I was able to view the CBC documentary that is no longer available publicly. As part of

this thesis' goal is to allow for women to tell their own stories of violence and resistance, this documentary provided another source of relevant data to better understand violence against women on the island.

Dr. DaBreo, the psychotherapist interviewed for this thesis, was approached by the Canadian Broadcasting Centre (CBC) to participate in a documentary, *Trouble In Paradise* (which unfortunately is no longer available for viewing). The purpose of the documentary was to examine the state of domestic violence and child sexual abuse in Grenada by following Dr. DaBreo's daily routine with women with whom she worked at LACC. Dr. DaBreo interviewed some of these women and colleagues that she works with to allow for viewers to gain a better understanding of the existence of incest, sexual violence and domestic violence in Grenada. Despite the CBC's problematic parallel of comparing Grenada to the Congo, the documentary did a suitable job of capturing the stories of some Grenadian women and their experiences of sexual violence. What the documentary also showed was the continuing cycle of abuse where many adults who are victim to sexual violence and domestic violence were abused as children (Morrow 587).

Dr. DaBreo noted during one of our conversations that she did receive a fair bit of negative feedback and criticism from Grenadians living on the island as well as abroad but that that was superseded by the overwhelming amount of support received, both locally and nationally, particularly from survivors.

However, the underlying theme in many of the criticisms were based on anger that Grenada was being wrongfully 'exposed' or that Dr. DaBreo was presenting false information. Sexual and domestic violence were seen to exist and remain in the private sphere and Dr. Da Breo's participation in and the very existence of this documentary was viewed as 'airing out Grenada's dirty laundry'. The silencing, denial and trivializing of domestic and childhood sexual violence on the island is constant and in this case used to protect the image of Grenada as a peaceful and non-violent state.

The data seems to suggest a disconnect between legal sanctions and social and economic violence. In addition, besides the revictimizing traits of the legal system, it also seems that avenues outside of the legal system that encourage financial and social independence for survivors are quite limited. As discussed earlier, the continued reliance on the law that ultimately results in stricter prison reform may only perpetuate the ongoing marginalization of women of colour and their communities (Smith 2000). Also, as shown in Susan's and Lorna's case of interaction with police officers, unexamined reliance on those who are to 'serve and protect' may need to be further interrogated.

Perpetrators of violence may sometimes use 'culture' or notions of tradition and normalcy as excuses to justify or mitigate the violence they have caused. In this instance, we see how culture can be used to justify the marginalization of women. It is not necessarily 'culture' that originates violence

and it should not be used as a means of further imposing power relations. With that said, depending on who's doing the defining and the validating, culture can be manipulated to endorse and enable violence.

When asked about men who use religion and culture to justify their abusive behavior, Brizan stated that, "...they are ignorant. The bible is talking about the family and the bible says to respect your children, respect your wife; wife respect your husband and to use passages in the bible [to engage in violence] is ignorant" (Interview with Brizan 2009). He goes on to say that some of the main ideologies that allow domestic violence to be prevalent have to do with men's attitudes towards women. "That attitude is a slave attitude; they tend to treat women as if they were slaves and in that regard they [men] are very immature" (Interview with Brizan 2009). My reading of the 'slave attitude' that Brizan references is related to men's treatment of women as household labour with little to no recognition paid to the volume and quality of the work done as well as the violence inflicted upon women as a form of control. It can also cover the lack of autonomy that some women may have over their salaries and wages as well as their bodies and reproductive choices.

Challenging this 'slave attitude' encountered by men in their lives, women like Susan, Lorna, others in the 'Changes' group, members of GNOW, and community leaders have begun mobilizing and engaging the community in a broader discussion around violence against women. Women organizing and

leading the way for social change is not something new to the Caribbean. “It is not unusual for women throughout the region to organize to improve their conditions. For example, women have been at the forefront of social movements to protest and react to the current economic crisis in the Caribbean (Barriteau citing Deere et al. 1990), and there is a history of mobilization around women's interests such as health and domestic issues (Patrick 1991). Several umbrella women's organizations such as the CARIWA and the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) connect women throughout the region. At various times, women's movements have been part of larger social reformist and/or trade union movements (Henderson 1991; Mohammed 1985). In recent years there have been movements against domestic violence in other parts of the Caribbean, such as Puerto Rico (Angueira 1993), and Trinidad and Tobago (Henderson, 1991), (Morrow 1994: 585).

Brizan was very clear in suggesting possible solutions to addressing violence against women. He spoke to the need to adequately address the role of education in unlearning dominant ideas on masculinity and femininity. I would add to this and suggest the need to challenge individual families to engage in what may sometimes be painful, but much needed discussions on types of oppressions and the multiple ways by which we manifest, and are complicit in encouraging the subjugation of others. Violence against women is reproduced through socialization and Roberta Clarke, in her 1998 report on state and non-

state responses to violence against women in the Caribbean notes that “one very potent weapon in this socialisation process is the use of violence against women. The family, as studies cross-culturally have clearly revealed, is a major site of violence” (Clarke 5). ‘This socialization process’ that Clarke is referring to is the indoctrination that occurs within the family. Clarke explains that like other social institutions, the family acts as one of the entry points by which people are taught about gender roles, gendered practices and the division of labour and access to resources based on those gendered ideals (Clarke 5). When women interviewed were asked whether they had experienced violence within their families, either families born into, or their current families, all the women answered in the affirmative.

This data has helped to inform and complicate my understanding of the colonial interconnections and influences on violence against women in Grenada and has paved the way for future research. In the previous chapters, I explored how Lugones’ coloniality of gender, and forms of decolonial, anti-racist epistemologies that challenge mainstream and inequitable gender ideologies and practices can allow us to better understand and address violence against women in Grenada. With the broadening scope of critical, decolonial theory, methodology and epistemology as well as the confronting of colonial and heterosexist standards of gender, sex, sexualities and violence, anti-violence work in the Caribbean continues to grow. Hopefully, the general public will

embrace these changes and engage in revolutionary work that will ensure the re-defining of our stories and experiences from our gazes and with our voices.

CONCLUSION

In contemporary Grenada, systems of power that were once white, colonial, and dominating are now viewed as the benefits, sacrifices, and fruits of independence, development, and modernity. Failure to link the current neoliberal and capitalist agenda with colonialism and how it influences social attitudes and ideologies around gender, gendered practices, sexualities, and power will only ensure Grenada's continued dependence on imperial states, financially and socially, as well as ensure the marginalization of women, the poor, and the vulnerable in society. Maurice Bishop once said, regarding Grenada's dependence on foreign aid and foreign states, "When North America sneezes, countries like Grenada catch pneumonia" (Brizan 396).

Slavery and the official existence of a dominant colonial administration may have come to an end but as seen through coloniality and alluded to in Bishop's quote, the effects of colonial power continue to exist through the uncritical exercise of power by the nation- state and current "post-colonial" governments.

The moment of independence was simultaneously a moment of recolonisation, as "all the leaders who came to power during the sixties did so while announcing their commitment to a moderate ideological position and to a pro-capitalist program of development for their respective countries". (Kamugisha 2007 citing Percy Hintzen 24)

One of the primary goals of the colonizing mission was to create and control a racialized labour force in the name of capitalism. This process of racialization, control, and profit making was able to successfully occur through the following:

1. a "hierarchical gender dichotomy," which was discussed in Chapter 1;

2. the creation of a binary of human and non-human, where “turning the colonized into human beings was not a colonial goal” (Lugones 744);
and
3. the tainting of female sexuality as evil.

Grenadian independence in 1974 did usher in a wave of new thinking around selfhood, self-determination, and Caribbean identities; however, to argue that independence instigated a radical shift in this thinking is very debatable (Kamugisha 22). Despite Grenada’s identity as an independent state, there still exist subtle yet persistent indicators of colonial influence. From the building codes mandating that new structures retain the traditional European styles to judges and officials of the legal court continuing to wear thick and heavy wigs resembling those of senior white Lords in England (which clearly are not conducive to the tropical climate). These constant reminders ensure that Grenada maintains an underlying and sometimes subtle colonial history that some are proud of and others are quick to do away with.

Along the road to independence, feminists had to renegotiate the terms and boundaries of their work, as feminist radicalism was viewed as subversive to the broader goal of nationalism:

The construction of the nation-state as the final victory for anti-colonial forces carried within its very conception and design several layers of enforced agreement that quickly emerged as the new and revised oppressive hegemony. Emphasis upon national unity as the ultimate social condition meant that political contests over inequitable ownership and control of productive resources, women’s objection to masculinist domination of public institutions, resistance to racism against people of African descent in everyday life, and the critique of socio-cultural privileges attained by representatives of white supremacy ideologies, were oftentimes presented as hostile to the whole national interest. Newly politically empowered men, described as ‘founding fathers’ of nation-states, who in fact

were essentially leaders of political parties and corporate institutions, defined and declared what was the national interest and how it should be protected. They alone finally determined who were the supporters and enemies of the nation, and which discourses were nation-building and which were subversive (Beckles 48).

The above quotation from Hilary Beckles illustrates the transference of power from the plantation ruling class during times of slavery to the elite upper echelons of Caribbean society under the guise of nationalism and independence. What this nationalist agenda required was the maintenance of control over the populace.

“The accepted idea that colonialism was a principal driving force in shaping women’s experiences and consciousness allowed nationalism to function for them as a splintering ideology” (Beckles 49). Nationalism was positioned as the unquestionable savior, as colonialism was painted as the sole culprit for the people’s subjugation and the forced removal of their identities during slavery.

At this point it is important to differentiate between two general categories of nationalism as defined by Aaron Kamugisha in his essay “The Coloniality of Citizenship in the Contemporary Anglophone Caribbean”: anti-colonial nationalism and Afro-creole nationalism (Kamugisha 23). The former is present among the masses and the “radical intelligentsia,” whereas the latter tends to be the mobilizing ideology of the Caribbean middle classes (Kamugisha 23). In Grenada, the socialist Grenada Revolution of 1983 represented anti-colonial nationalism and the ability to be autonomous of imperial foreign states, but this movement failed and as a result left the political left of the Caribbean shunned. What replaced this vacuum was Afro-creole nationalism, which purported that once white superiority and colonial impositions of inequality were removed, a state of “natural equality” would flourish (Kamugisha 24). As a result, “the poverty

of creole nationalism ... 'left intact the racial order underpinning colonialism while providing the ideological basis for national "coherence". It left unchallenged notions of a "natural" racial hierarchy"' (Kamugisha 24).

In addition to the maintenance of a colonial racial hierarchy, Afro-creole nationalism also maintained the unequal power differences between a rigid gender dichotomy that existed between males and females. "The ongoing projects of nation-state building that promote allegedly gender free notions of nationalist cohesion should be contested and unmasked as skilful projections of modernizing masculine political power" (Beckles 53). Part of such an ongoing project of nation-state building requires the existence of laws, policies, and norms that ensure the control of dissent and the hegemonic defining of acceptable standards of behaviour. Current laws and policies ensure the indoctrination and control of the populace. Waller argued that patriarchal society is a dysfunctional system based on domination and violence. "Dysfunctional systems are often maintained through systematic denial, a failure or inability to see the reality of a situation. This denial need not be conscious, intentional, or malicious; it only needs to be pervasive to be effective" (Smith citing Waller 17).

Grenada's history of violence and the unsuccessful outcome of the revolution succeeded in deterring any potential uprising, not only in Grenada but in the English-speaking Caribbean. The Grenada Revolution was very significant for the English-speaking Caribbean and members of the left; as Guyanese feminist-activist Andaiye noted at the Caribbean Studies Association's Conference, "Grenada in those years felt like a living example of solidarity and

transformation” (CSA Conference 2010). Brian Meeks, who participated on the same panel, noted that “the failure of the Grenada revolution left a vacuum which was then filled with war lords and criminals. It discouraged the progressive left in the Caribbean” (CSA Conference 2010).

Kamugisha noted that the fall of the Grenada Revolution,

.....traumatised the Left in a manner not adequately addressed to this day. The collapse of Grenada, coming after the murder of Walter Rodney and the electoral defeat of Michael Manley in 1980, was followed by a decade of structural adjustment imposed by the IMF and the World Bank, and ended with the collapse of authoritarian governments in eastern Europe, soon to be followed by the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Staggering from structural adjustment to neoliberal globalisation in the decade that followed, with a Left transformed or vanished and technocratic governments in place that would have been denounced as apologists for local and global apartheid two decades previously, the Caribbean state’s crisis of legitimacy is not hard to perceive. This, then, is the context of our struggle in the contemporary Anglophone Caribbean.

The Grenada Revolution should have opened up discussions of the issues of poverty, colonialism, race, capitalism, and other systemic structures; however, its failure may have yielded a silencing and to some extent, erasure of such topics. A culture of denial and silence around issues such as violence against women not only erases the lived experiences of the women experiencing it but it also shapes the oral histories and transmission of those histories to each generation. It plays a crucial role in the shaping of public thought and memory. What then is the price paid for this continuing silence and culture of denial around violence against women?

The maintenance of the idea of Grenada, the Isle of Spice, as a peaceful nation welcoming of tourists from all over the world, devoid of violence, is problematic, for what does it truly mean for the people of Grenada and their everyday experiences? How long will Grenadians be forced to keep up this

façade of a people, happy and welcoming under the golden sun, with little to no worries in the world? Whose lives and experiences are being ignored and erased to keep up this image of peace, tranquility, and public order?

This thesis began with a quote by Maria Lugones, where she referred to gender as a “violent introduction” (Lugones 186). As stated by Anna G. Jonasdottir and Kathleen B. Jones, feminist political theory has come to an impasse in that “the contention that the concept of gender is essential both to the adequate theorisation of politics and efforts to achieve a more egalitarian transformation of global power systems stands at odds with both the claim that gender is a suspect category and the argument that a more radical democratic project demands the overthrow of gender theory itself” (2). It is, however, important to recognize and problematize the existence and manifestation of power in and through gender. Gender cannot be perceived as something neutral, non-political, and devoid of power. Caribbean feminism needs to adopt a decolonial framework that problematizes sexualities, class, race, and other forms of oppression as well as the role of the state and dominating institutions of power that perpetuate violence in all its forms.

The Caribbean has produced many insightful and critical feminist scholars, such as Eudine Barriteau, Rhoda Reddock, Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, Janell Hobson, Kamala Kempadoo, Keisha Lindsay, Mindie Lazarus Black, Tracy Robinson, Roberta Clarke, Jacqui Alexander, Cynthia Mahabir, Patricia Mohammed, and Hilary Beckles. Despite some of the great work done by feminist scholars and activists within the Caribbean, the general populace may

still be a bit resistant to the idea of feminist research. This resistance to naming ideas, theories, and discourses as feminist and further using those feminist ideas to critique the current political and legal system occur for various reasons.

Feminism, viewed as the “F word”, is usually met with a lot of resistance and criticism, sometimes rightly so; for many Caribbean people, it is still seen as a North American import. In addition, the earlier beginnings of feminism in the Caribbean, though it most likely was not labeled as feminism, were based on the exclusion of Black women. The elite white women, who either migrated from Europe or were born on the islands but were part of the ruling class, consistently dehumanized and devalued the lives of enslaved Black women (Beckles 36). Therefore, it makes it quite difficult to enact change and promote progressive policies and reform using a feminist lens.

Despite possible resistance to feminist methodologies and theories, in this thesis I relied on a decolonial, feminist methodological mode of analysis: “Critical, Indigenous, and anti-oppressive approaches to research see research as part of an emancipatory commitment, and seek to move beyond a critical social science to establish a position of resistance” (Smith 9). If the goal of this thesis was to challenge current forms of domination, then challenging current research paradigms was and remains vital.

There were so many intriguing threads of thought that emerged throughout this research process that transcended the perimeters of this master’s thesis. However, my hope is that these ideas will be further explicated at the PhD level or in another research project.

Throughout times of slavery, Caribbean enslaved “women helped to generate and sustain the general spirit of resistance” (Beckles citing Bush 46) and a parallel can be drawn with contemporary forms of resistance being adopted by Grenadian women who continue to live their lives in silence. Support must be provided to these women to allow for them to feel safe to speak out and resist. Mary Prince, an enslaved woman freed in the 1800s, resided in England and was from the Caribbean, wrote in her autobiography of the “‘sweetness’ of personal freedom, and the collective desire for liberty that kept the black community in endemic opposition to the colonial order” (Beckles 47). So too must the Grenadian woman of today be able to enjoy that freedom of life, spirit, and being that is devoid of violence and subjugation. If the following statement is true, that “freedom from slavery and the destruction of colonialism were objectives for which women had fought and died, and nationalism did not secure them an equal return” (Beckles 50), then where does that leave the feminist and anti-violence movement in Grenada?

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE (Used with women survivors)

Important definitions:

Rape will be defined to include all forms of non consensual sexual penetration (vaginal, oral, or anal) obtained by physical force or by threat of bodily harm. *Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)* will be defined as any act or omission by a current or former intimate partner which negatively effects the well-being, physical or psychological integrity, freedom, or right to full development of a woman⁷. Intimate partner violence does not require sexual intimacy to meet the definition. IPV is defined as physical violence, threats of physical or sexual violence, psychological/emotional violence and sexual violence.

1. What age group do you fall within: 18-24, 25-31, 32-38, 39-45, 45-51 or older?
2. Are you currently in school? If no, what is your highest level of education?
3. Are you currently employed? If yes, are you currently working one job? If no, what are your reasons for being unemployed?
4. Do you currently have any children? How many?
5. What would you say are some of the intersecting forms of oppression that you face besides gender e.g. Economic?
6. Are you currently in a relationship?
7. How did you and your partner meet?
8. What is the status of your relationship e.g. Married, common law?

⁷ Mary Ellsberg and Lori Heise. "Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists" (2005) World Health Organization.

9. How long have you been in a relationship?
10. Since the beginning of your relationship, have you ever experienced any form of abuse? Can you describe the experience(s) illustrating whether or not it was physical, emotional or sexual abuse?
11. Besides the example of your current relationship, have you experienced abuse in other relationships? Was your abuser your partner or was it a non-partner?
12. Are/were you dependent on your abuser e.g. for financial purposes?
13. After the first case of abuse, have you experienced any other? Was it by the same partner? Can you please explain the experience?
14. What were some of the effects that you experienced due to this abusive situation? Was your personal or work life disrupted (how)? How has it affected your feelings about yourself?
15. Where has this violence occurred? In the home, at work etc.?
16. Was anyone present while this abuse occurred?
17. Did anyone try to intervene?
18. Have you witnessed or experienced violence as a child?
19. How long did this violence (experienced as a child) last for?
20. Have you ever had an encounter with the legal system e.g. Reporting to the police, being arrested etc. Can you please describe the event in detail?

21. Would you say that the police were supportive to you? How?
22. Has your case of intimate partner violence reached to the level of the courts? Do you feel as though you received fair and just treatment? Please explain.
23. What forms of support, be it through support centres, family and or friends, have you received?
24. What were some of the limitations or challenges that you experienced in reporting and trying to find support?
25. What services do you think are important to provide adequate support?
26. Looking back at your situation, what advice would you give to another woman who has just started to have these sorts of problems with her husband?
27. Are there any questions you feel are inappropriate, too personal, or that people would not be likely to answer truthfully?
28. Were there any questions that you did not understand or that you thought were confusing?

Thank you taking the time to answer these questions. From what you have told me, I can tell that you have had some very difficult times in your life. No one has the right to treat someone else in that way. However, from what you have told me I can also see that you are strong and have survived through some difficult circumstances. Please remember that you are never to be blamed for the violence that you experienced.

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