Broken Attachments of Women From the West Indies Separated from Mothers in Early Childhood

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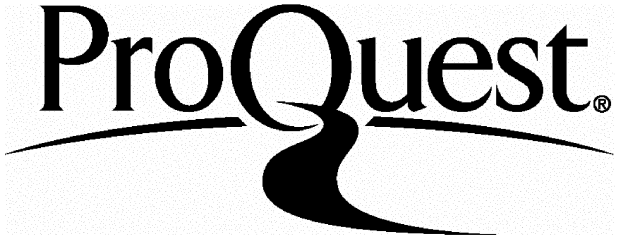

ABSTRACT

Many women who immigrated from the West Indies left their young children with grandmothers and the extended family for long periods. There then followed serial migration with children joining their mothers in England.

This study examines the meanings for the women of the separations from their mothers and carers and the expectations of re-establishing ties with their biological mothers during and following reunion. It comprises 31 women aged 35 - 50 years who had joined their mothers in later childhood and adolescence. Using a semi-structured interview schedule, narratives were obtained. The schedule was tested with a pilot study of 11 women. The main sample comprised twenty women. They were divided into two groups. Ten who were receiving or who had received counselling or psychotherapy, and ten who had no experience of therapy. The interviews covered the women's childhood experiences, the experience of leaving familiar people and environment, their experiences of reunion with their mothers and new families, their reflections on the feelings of those they had left, and on the feelings of the mothers they had rejoined. They were asked how they felt these experiences had affected their personalities. Attachment theory was the theoretical context for this study. The following variables were considered: relationship with mother before separation, age of the child when left, length of separation, the reunited mothers' emotional availability and the quality of the environment. Attention was given to the cultural perceptions of dependence and independence which might have influenced the attachment behaviour of the women.

The difficulty in obtaining a large sample was attributed to the fact that for women of West Indian origin psychotherapeutic help is recent: many were predisposed to seeing their problems in an exclusively medical context. The anecdotal evidence gathered from the women revealed that those who were left when they were between the ages 0-3 years were unable to recall any interaction with their mothers. 30% of these were found in the therapy group and 15% in the comparison group who did not have therapy. Their relationships with their mothers were problematic and there was a lack of trust which prevented the making and sustaining of relationships.

Contents

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> "Since the most favourable environment for the emotional social and intellectual development of the child is likely to be in a family setting, institutional care should be conceived in most cases only as an emergency or temporary arrangement and not as a satisfactory permanent solution to the problems of children deprived of a normal home life." (Demas 1969)

During my years teaching in a school attached to a large orphanage in Trinidad West Indies, there was ample opportunity to observe the behaviour of children separated from their parents. The orphanage was founded by two philanthropists, one Scottish the other English in 1857, to provide care for the surviving children of immigrants who died during the long sea voyage from colonial India to Trinidad. Indian labourers were sent by the English Government from India to work on the sugar cane plantations after the abolition of slavery which had resulted in a shortage of labour.

The institution was managed jointly by the Government who provided a grant for each immigrant child and the Church of England who provided limited care of the children. They were sent to work at a very early age on the plantations and there was very limited education provided for them. In time, orphans from the lower socio-economic level of the society, children of parents who were serving sentences in prison or those who were mentally ill and in psychiatric hospitals, and delinquent children were admitted to the orphanage. When the clientele changed and the immigration from India ended the government assumed financial responsibility for all the children and their education and vocational training. Great emphasis was placed on the teaching of music; the orphanage became the source for recruits for military bands and for the police service.

By the 1950s only 15% of the four hundred children in the institution, then renamed a "Home", were true orphans. Most of the mothers were single women who regarded the institution as a solution for meeting the physical and educational needs

of their children. The carers were untrained men and women who were not helped to meet the emotional needs of the children. Little was done to help the children mourn the loss of parents and homes.

Some of the mothers who found employment in other parts of the country or who decided to immigrate chose to have their children placed in the "Home" if they had poor relationships with their own family network, or were themselves orphaned. They usually agreed to make regular contributions for the children's maintenance and to keep in touch by corresponding with the children. Some did not maintain contact. Most probably they considered the children to be safe and that they would be cared for by the government and the church until they reached the age of maturity. So the number of emotionally deprived children increased.

It was observed that when children were admitted as babies and cared for by a succession of staff who worked on shifts, they craved the attention of adults, and as they grew older some, mostly boys, exhibited aggressive behaviour, while others were apathetic and withdrawn. All had difficulty in forming relationships with their peers, and their scholastic performance was poor. When there was a group of siblings the younger ones exhibited more disturbed behaviour, were disobedient, tended to be involved in quarrels and fights with their peers, found it difficult to share toys and were inattentive in the classroom.

Those children who were older on admission and who had experienced favourable family life before separation from their mothers were more able to relate to staff members and to their peers. They participated in extra curricular activities such as the Girl Guide and Scout companies, and sports teams. Their progress in school was satisfactory and they found suitable employment when they left the "Home".

Social Workers in other fields such as probation and psychiatry encountered some of these less able adolescents when they left the "Home". A high proportion of the girls, becoming single mothers, then sought admission for their own children in the "Home", because the staff there were their surrogate extended family. Some of the girls, after struggling to cope for some time with living outside of a secure

institutional environment, were admitted to a psychiatric hospital (Lloyd and Robertson 1971).

Several of the boys, when they left the institution found themselves in trouble with the law; lacking social skills they tended to react aggressively to any perceived insults, and some who were unemployed became involved in petty crimes and were detained in detention centres and graduated to prison as they grew older.

This experience in the school of the "Home" motivated my change of career from teaching to psychiatric social work specialising in child guidance. There was the hope that families could be helped through educational programmes to alert them to the emotional needs of children. Just as important was the intention to educate the community about the dangers to the emotional development of young children who experienced a prolonged stay in large institutions, and to influence policy makers to provide alternative care for children deprived of a normal home-life. This could have been in foster homes or by establishing smaller and more child friendly "homes".

Training in Britain in the 1950s there was an introduction for me to the writings of Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham (1944) who worked with children separated from their mothers during World War Two in the Hampstead Nurseries. The work of Freud and Burlingham, together with that of James Robertson, a social worker with a particular interest in children, were then part of every Child Development syllabus.

At this time John Bowlby was a child psychiatrist who was researching the effect of separation on young children cared for in institutions. He stated his belief that young children needed a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with their mother or mother-substitute in order to develop satisfactory mental health. The World Health Organisation was interested in the effects of institutional care on children orphaned by the Second World War and Bowlby was invited to carry out the research. His report, "Maternal Care and Mental Health" (1952), was a popular text used on social work courses. It generated very heated debate about the adverse effects of maternal deprivation and institutional care on young children. This was

exciting and enlightening, and in examples from studies of children in England it seemed that placing children in smaller and more child-friendly homes resulted in happier and better-adapted children.

Many children from the children's "Home" in Trinidad were exhibiting similar behaviour. It became clear to me that the research done by Bowlby was relevant to the problems being experienced by the children in the "Home" in Trinidad and across cultures.

Back in Trinidad people were following others throughout what was then the British West Indian Islands and adjacent countries and immigrating to England. (See Appendix I.) This was in response to the call to "British" subjects to join the labour force in order to rebuild the country after the Second World War. Some women eager for the opportunity to work and improve their economic conditions left their young children in the care of grandmothers and other members of their extended families and immigrated to England. They were of the opinion that their stay would be the maximum of five years since passports were usually issued with an expiry date of five years from the date of application.

Studying separated and reunited mothers Robertson E.E. (1977) found that the ages of the children who were left in the Caribbean ranged from nine months upwards to five years. It was the cultural norm in the West Indies at that time for mothers to breast feed their children and nine months was the accepted age for weaning. According to Bowlby (1969) and other proponents of Attachment Theory infants begin to show attachment behaviour - that is seeking proximity and interaction with their primary carer - from about the age of six months, and it would be fair to assume that if mothers lived at home and breast fed their babies that they would have begun to become attached to each other and would have missed each other when separated. In the study in which mothers talked about their feelings of loss when they left the children behind, they said that they had these children always in mind, and even though they knew that they were being well looked after within the family, they expressed guilt about leaving them.

Generally speaking, throughout the Caribbean, the practice of sharing the care of children is common and some children are shifted to and fro among relatives and friends of the family throughout their early lives. Senior (1991 p.15), states that,

> "The fact that so many children spend their formative years with other than their parents and are often shifted back and forth between households has many implications for their socialisation. Although no study of this phenomenon could be found the extent and nature of child shifting is thrown into high relief by a number of researchers".

A survey conducted in Jamaica (Sinclair 1978) estimated that about 15% of the population under the age of fifteen years were shifted (Senior 1991 p.15). Rodman (1971 p.184) advanced the view that:

> "Child shifting can be seen as a guilt-free problem solving mechanism indulged in by a mother who is left by the father to provide and care for the child and who cannot do both. In a further extension of this adaptation, the societies provide women, older women especially who specialise in the child-rearing role".

In the Caribbean, mothers were able to maintain contact with their children when they were left with relatives, and were able to observe their development and changes in their behaviour. When they migrated to England leaving the children in their formative years, they were unprepared for the development of the children who were later reunited with them in their early adolescence.

When the children from the Caribbean were reunited with their mothers in England, there was an expectation from the mothers that the children would be pleased to join them and most of them were unprepared for the initial withdrawn attitude and seeming rejection shown by some of the children. Living in a completely different environment and stressed by full-time employment, by poor housing and experiencing racial discrimination, some of the mothers were unable to devote time to helping their children to settle, and they relied on and expected the girls to

perform the household chores. In some instances there were stepfathers and young siblings some of whom resented the reunited children.

Sewel-Coker, Collins and Fein (1985 p.564) working in North America with families from the West Indies, observed a similar phenomenon and remarked that,

> "The difficulties of transition do not end when the parents and children are reunited....The parents may also have missed their children's formative years, but when the children arrived, the parents must undertake their parental roles. This often results in conflict around family relationships, communication and the discipline of children especially when they clash with the new culture".

These writers were also sensitive to the families' vulnerability to the stresses of urban society that did not provide support such as a welcoming church (since many of the families had set great store by their religion) or schools where teachers were known and with whom they felt comfortable when conversing, but above all they cited the absence of a supportive extended family who would share the care of the children and with whom they were able to discuss their problems.

The agency in which these American writers worked as social workers assisted the parents through counselling and encouragement to join "family enrichment groups" where they were able to discuss the possible factors which contributed to their children's disruptive behaviour, and this resulted in improved relationships. The majority of West Indian parents in Britain by contrast, struggled with their reunited children unaided by counselling services, and consequently some of the reunited children were unable to develop a sense of closeness and belonging to their families and to mothers in particular. This theme will be developed in Chapter Two.

During the 1970s and continuing over the years there has been an increasing wish among teachers, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists to understand the problems with which black families of West Indian origin struggle. From among the families, there were disproportionate numbers of:

(1) children in care of the local authorities (Lambert and Rowe 1973),

(2) women diagnosed and admitted into psychiatric hospital as suffering from schizophrenia (Cochrane 1977) and more likely to be wrongly diagnosed (Littlewood and Lipsedge 1997) and

(3) young black men referred to psychiatric hospitals with the involvement of the Police under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 (Roper and Faulkner 1987).

The reunited children were not helped by the schools. They were taunted by classmates and called racist names whilst teachers ignored the behaviour of the English children. They too (teachers) showed a lack of knowledge of other places and cultures and they often expressed stereotypical views about black people. The children having no adult support resorted to defending themselves physically. When parents intervened and tried to challenge the treatment the children were receiving, they were regarded as disruptive (Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe 1985).

It seemed that teachers were not aware of the effects of separation and loss on the children who had left a completely different environment, and that they needed time to adjust to loss of familiar family and friends. Neither were parents prepared for the difficulty of reuniting with children who were strangers to them after long periods of separation. The children who were left at an early age were attached to their grandparents and mourned their loss. Besides, when there were younger children who were born in England and to whom mothers were attached, the reunited children felt unloved by them. Some acted out their unhappiness in school and it was said that some presented problems with which teachers were unable to cope,

> "Many of the reunited children unhappy at home and feeling unattached to anyone in England were also unhappy at school and their performance in schoolwork was hampered." (Rose and colleagues 1969 p.52)

Barrett and Trevitt (1991 p.14) used the concept of attachment behaviour (Bowlby 1969) in their work of Educational Therapy with school children. Studying the specific link between a child's emotional development and educational performance in school they stated that children who did not experience a secure attachment to

their mothers (or mother substitute) tended to have poor scholastic skills. The early experience of some of the reunited children in the school context will be elicited from the participants in this research.

Attachment is not only confined to young children and their mothers in the early life of the children but has been observed across the life span. The ill effects of broken attachments on the emotional life of some of the reunited children now adults have been observed among a number of women who seek counselling now that it is more readily available. Some complain of the inability to sustain relationships with mothers and partners, a lack of trust, and have difficulty in parenting their children.

The theoretical context of this thesis is Attachment Theory:

> "The great strength of attachment theory in guiding research is that it focuses on a basic system of behaviour - the attachment system that is biologically rooted and thus species - characteristic. This implies a search for the basic process of functioning universal in human nature, despite differences attributable to genetic constitution, cultural influences and individual experience". (Ainsworth 1991 p.33).

The sample for the thesis will consist of women of West Indian origin separated and reunited with their mothers after long separation. They are convinced of the correlation between the early separation from their mothers, the traumatic reunion and the present situation. They are not at ease within themselves and have poor relationships with their mothers and with their partners particularly, and in some instances with their children. A group of women with similar experiences, but who consider themselves able to cope in their new environment without the help of therapy will be compared with the first group. The factors which may have been detrimental to the first group will be examined. The critiques of Bowlby's Attachment Theory will also be examined. Many of the reunited children were the offspring of young single mothers and had no experience of fathers or stepfathers until they arrived in England. How they related to the male parent will be an interesting variable in the study.

When the early immigrants related their experiences in England they spoke of their motivation for coming to work and to help to rebuild the mother country (Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe 1985 p.22). The analogy of a family appealed to people who grew up in a culture where the mother is held in high esteem. The next Chapter will give a historical review of the immigration from the West Indies to England.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRATION OF PEOPLE FROM THE WEST INDIES TO BRITAIN

> "The world and total environmental experience of Caribbean people incorporated other countries outside the homeland. The perception of that world and the hope engendered by it, were key elements in Caribbean migration behaviour" (Thomas-Hope 1992 p.158).

The rapid growth in the number of black people (i.e. with one or both parents conventionally regarded as black) in Britain from the late 1950s tended to give the impression that their presence was an entirely recent phenomenon, but small numbers of black people were resident in some white households during the 17th and 18th centuries when it was fashionable to possess black servants. The *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1764 stated that there were approximately 20,000 black people in London out of a population of 676,000. They had been taken directly from Africa as slaves, or by returning slave owners from the West Indies who brought some of their slaves with them. When slavery was abolished freed slaves who chose not to remain in the households of the aristocracy tried to live independently in London but found this impossible due to lack of employment at their trades. They became dependent on the Poor Law benefits.

In trying to find a solution of ridding Britain of black people, the Government decided on the strategy of dispersal and sent some of them back to Africa. Sierra Leone was chosen and a number of black men accompanied by a number of white prostitutes were sent to found the colony of Freetown. Some returned to the West Indies as free labourers. A small number stayed on in Britain; it was presumed that some of them intermarried whilst others, especially in London, penniless and homeless eked out a livelihood as beggars on the streets. By the end of the nineteenth century the black former slaves seemed to have disappeared from London (Patterson 1965 p. 43).

During the nineteenth century, seamen, seldom accompanied by women, had settled in the dock areas of seaports such as Liverpool, Cardiff, Bristol, Hull and London. The numbers of black people rose after the First World War, with the importation of labourers from the British colonies and replacements for men lost from the merchant navy (Patterson 1965 p.43). Between the two world wars, the black population in Britain was further increased by the presence of students from the British colonies. Their contacts were mainly with the teaching staff in the various educational institutions and with their landlords and landladies, and so their presence had little impact on the wider British population.

Most of the students from the West Indies returned to their various countries to practise the professions in which they had qualified. These were chiefly law, medicine, teaching, and nursing. The returning professionals were regarded by the population as role models for their children since education in the West Indies was seen as the means for social, economic and political advancement

The view is often expressed that black people from the Caribbean are low achievers and they are compared unfavourably in that respect with other groups. This ignores the fact that black professionals preferred not to remain in Britain where they were treated as second class citizens; whereas in their own countries they formed the elite members of society; in time when independence from Britain was achieved, they replaced the white colonists in positions of power in the various countries.

Migration of men from the West Indies

The islands from which West Indians came to Britain (initially as British subjects) are found in the archipelago extending from the tip of Florida in North America to within seven miles of the coast of Venezuela in South America. Jamaica, the largest, is found within the group of larger islands known as the Greater Antilles; the smaller islands further east in the chain are known as the Lesser Antilles. For geographical reasons this group is further sub-divided into the Leeward Islands and the Windward Islands. The Leewards comprise Antigua-Barbuda, St Kitts-Nevis, Anguilla and

Montserrat; the Windwards consist of Grenada, St Lucia, St Vincent and Dominica. Barbados is the most easterly of the islands, Trinidad and Tobago the most southerly. Guyana is in northern South America, and Belize in Eastern Central America, though Anglophone, is not normally associated with migration to Britain. Other islands contributing few migrants are the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Caymans, the Virgin Islands and the Bahamas. The last are the northern-most.

The Second World War encouraged the more recent immigration of people from the West Indies to Britain. 7,000 men enlisted in the Royal Air Force and were well cared for by the Colonial Office who met them with gratitude (Bonham-Carter 1987). Others were recruited to work as technicians in the various factories in the war industry or in the Forestry Commission or munition factories. They worked in Merseyside, Manchester and Bolton until they were made redundant upon the return of ex-servicemen and the economic crisis of 1947.

At the end of the war, some of the demobilised men chose to remain in Britain where employment chances were better compared with the adverse economic situation in the West Indies, and some grasped the opportunity to pursue further education. Others returned to their home countries but since, during the war, Britain had been unable to attend to developing the colonies, local employment was at a premium and many returned to Britain where the work force had been depleted during the war. Others soon followed their example of coming to Britain but there was a shortage of passenger boats and so some decided to travel as stowaways. However as accommodation for passengers on boats increased the numbers of stowaways declined.

The post-war migration began in June 1948 with the SS Windrush docking at Tilbury docks with four hundred and ninety two Jamaicans. They were mainly men, some were ex RAF servicemen, and they were both skilled and unskilled. This was followed by the SS Orbita in September of that year with one hundred and eight more workers. All of the migrants were employed quite quickly after arrival. The numbers of migrants grew over the years and so too did the number of ships. By 1955, there

were thirteen ships making forty sailings each year. Air travel was also utilised with several charter flights being arranged (Patterson 1965 pp.44-46).

Another factor which influenced the migration from the Caribbean was the instituting of legislation in the United States of America (the McCarran Act) 1952 which limited the numbers of migrants entering that country. This came as a severe blow to people from all over the Caribbean as the USA was formerly the most popular place for those seeking overseas employment. Therefore when Britain turned to the West Indies to recruit labour they found that people were eager to respond to the call. The invitation also activated their affection for the Mother Country as it had when they volunteered to fight during the war.

Migration of women

Well-educated women, teachers and nurses in the West Indies wanted to do more than hand knit blanket squares at home to help the war and so they attempted to join the services. Whilst the men had been accepted the British Government, although it was in dire need of more personnel as the war dragged on, had reservations about admitting black women into the women's services. Eventually women were rather reluctantly recruited in the latter days of the war to serve in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (Bousquet 1993). At the end of the war after demobilisation some of the women chose to stay in Britain.

In the early years of the immigration from the West Indies small numbers of women were among the migrants. From 1955 onwards there were larger numbers of women and children coming to Britain, rising to 40% of the total between 1955 and 1964 (Peach 1968 p.45). Many of the women who decided to join their menfolk, left their young children in the care of grandmothers and other members of the extended family, as was culturally accepted. Their expectations were to return home after a number of years to continue their lives in improved economic circumstances. Some travelled with older children of school age. At that time the English Education system was held in high esteem, and so they welcomed the opportunity for their

children to be educated in England. Unfortunately, they were greatly disappointed and their plans to return to their home countries did not materialise due to low pay in the jobs available to them, and after varying lengths of time from one to several years of separation from the children, decisions were made for the latter to join them.

Push and Pull factors of the Immigration

Several writers have described the migration from the West Indies to Britain, (Glass, 1960, Davison, 1962, Patterson 1963, Rose and colleagues 1969). What has been hotly debated is the reason for the migration. Were the migrants pushed or pulled? Patterson argues that there were push factors such as overpopulation and under-development, the result of which was chronic unemployment. Wages were low and there was a lack of economic diversity, of opportunity and of incentives. Added to these were the lack of opportunities for education and vocational training and the West Indians' love of travelling always in search of a better economic life. The major pull factors were the possibility of full employment which was the result of diversity in a booming economy and the movement of the British labour force from jobs with low wages to those that were better paid (Patterson 1963 p.66).

A dissenting voice to this view is that of Peach (1968 p.92) who argued that the conditions in the West Indies were improving at that time and there was a demand for labour there. He observed that the volume of the migration followed the seasonal patterns of the British economy and he suggested that there were was a solid core of migrants who would have come, no matter what the conditions and another group which he called 'floating migrants' who would respond to reports of conditions. He quotes the following figures from Glass p.5 to illustrate that the decline of the men after 1956 represented a depressed economic state in the country. It was interesting that the numbers of children arriving in the country increased (Peach 1968 p.44).

Table 1 Immigration from the West Indies to the UK in the 1950s

Year	Men	Women	Children	Unclassified	Total
1956	13,921	9,380	652	652	26,441
1957	11,412	9,385	874	802	22,473
1958	7,662	7,768	1,081		16,511
1959	10,057	8.219	2,121		20,397

Examining the Caribbean immigration in more recent times, Thomas-Hope enters the debate on the push and pull factors of immigration and states,

> "The push-pull hypothesis, a blunt and simplistic analytical tool, explaining migration from a functional perspective, explains migration as a response or reaction to events or circumstances. It does not recognise migration as being part of a process which incorporates both negative and positive elements of the environment, translating them into meaning. The meaning of the environmental circumstances is relevant not just for one particular time but in an ongoing way, as part of the culture and consciousness of society."

At the peak of the immigration in the 1950s especially as such large numbers were coming from Jamaica, the Jamaican Government seconded to Britain a Welfare Liaison Officer to assist them with problems common to newcomers in Britain. As more immigrants from other islands began to arrive the British Caribbean Welfare Service took over the Jamaican civil servant's role in 1956. In 1958 the service was extended and taken over by the Migrant Services Division of the Commission in the United Kingdom for the West Indies, British Guinea (as Guyana then was) and British Honduras. One of their main duties was to meet immigrants on arrival in Britain having been informed by the authorities in the West Indies of numbers, dates and places of arrivals. With the demise of the West Indian Federation in 1962 the service was suspended and became the Jamaican Migrant Services Office (Peach 1968 p.10). The provision of these services was an indication that the West Indian Governments sought to assist the immigrants in the early days of the immigration and

were interested in their welfare. Individual travellers or unorganised groups were not met and so it was difficult to know the exact numbers of immigrants or how to assist them if and when problems arose.

As the immigration progressed it seemed that those who had settled sent addresses back home. Davison researching immigrants from Jamaica in 1961 found that all those in the sample had addresses in England to which they could go on arrival (Davison 1962 p.59).

Housing

As all "British" citizens from the British Colonies had the right to travel to Britain there was no reason for the immigrants to be questioned about their whereabouts when they entered the country. There were no special provisions for housing on a national basis. Patterson (1963 p.161) held the view that it would have been difficult to provide provision similar to those made in the cases of the Polish Resettlement Corps or the European Volunteer Workers for British immigrants. Certain controls would have been needed and these could have been seen to be discriminatory.

There was permanent shortage of housing throughout the country in urban areas. In South London where many immigrants settled there were housing difficulties and it was not considered feasible to provide any housing for West Indian immigrants when local inhabitants were also in need. The immigrants found accommodation in boarding houses where they were accepted and these were reported to be overcrowded with some residents occupying the rooms in shifts.

> "The crowded conditions themselves, however, were the product of housing shortages, prejudice and discrimination. There was a general reluctance on the part of the white population either to sell or to rent better accommodation to West Indians so they were thrown back on to making intensive use of any accommodation that was available to them." (Peach 1968 p.87).

In time the more enterprising bought old houses in need of repair and on short leases and later long lease and freehold properties. In order to pay the mortgages and to regain their capital outlay, some of them became landlords renting furnished rooms to fellow West Indian tenants. The rents were high for limited accommodation of a room and shared toilet and sometimes a bathroom and a cooker on the landing or an improvised kitchen. As time went on and more people bought houses in the areas there was competition to attract tenants and so conditions and facilities were improved.

When the borough councils in the cities housed the immigrants they were usually placed in the poorest houses in old estates (P.E.P 1967 p.12). In some areas the attitudes of the white house owners were decidedly racist. They claimed that the value of their properties was being lowered because of the number of Jamaicans moving into the area. Many white residents moved away when immigrants bought houses on their streets. In 1961, 75% of West Indians lived in towns and were concentrated in areas in which the white population was decreasing. In time the population of West Indian would increase not only by the withdrawal of the white population, but by a natural increase in West Indian numbers. Helping to increase these numbers were children who were joining their parents after having been left behind with members of the extended family. On the other hand, some immigrants, disillusioned and disappointed with conditions in England, decided to return home.

Return of Migrants to the West Indies

One aspect of the movement of people from the West Indies that is not often highlighted is that of migrants who returned to their homes by 1959. Peach (1968 p.49) states that when the Migrant Services was disbanded, the number of West Indians who returned to their countries of origin were among the statistics which had been lost. Patterson (1963 p.49) expressed the view that some of the reasons for this return movement of migrants may have been the economic recession, and apprehension and anxiety over the Nottingham and Notting Hill race riots of 1958. It was estimated that between 150 and 200 persons left each month and about a quarter

of them were women. Some of those who stayed, sent young children and infants back to relatives living in the West Indies Patterson (1965 p.50).

Table Two: Proportions of West Indian Departures to Arrivals, 1956 – 1961

Year	Arrivals	Departures	Proportions
1956	33,400	3,600	1 in 9.3
1957	37,620	4,600	1 in 8.2
1958	20,710	5,690	1 in 3.6
1959	22,390	6,000	1 in 3.7
1960	57,170	7,500	1 in 7.6
1961	74,590	8,300	1 in 9.0

Restriction of Immigration

From the end of World War Two up to 1960, the economic conditions in Britain favoured the immigration of West Indians, but there were politicians who opposed it. In 1956 there was a demand for immigration control made in the House of Lords by Lord Elton. He saw the immigration as an 'Unarmed Invasion,' which was the title of the book he later published. Some members of the House of Commons also made demands for control. A Gallup Poll held in May 1961 showed that 73% of the electorate favoured immigration control. Members of the Conservative Party at their conference in 1961 presented 39 resolutions in favour of control of immigrants. The Conservative Government responded to the pressures about the numbers on immigrants and in 1961 introduced legislation in the form of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act which was effected on 1 July 1962.[1] Peach (l968 p.5l) expressed the view that it was clear from the debates held

[1] The Commonwealth Immigrant Act, 1962. Under the Act persons wishing to work in the United Kingdom needed work vouchers. Category A was for applicants who had a job to come to in this country; Category B was for applicants with Skills or Qualification. Category C was for those not included under Categories A or B. The vouchers were valid for six months and could be extended for up to six months if good reasons were shown (The Commonwealth Immigrants Act, Statistics 1963 Cmnd 2151 p.10).

at the time, that the purpose of the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill was not to regulate immigration per se but to restrict the movement of people from predominantly 'coloured' countries (Bonham-Carter 1987 p.2). Commenting on the significance of the Act, Bonham-Carter continued by noting that the contradiction between the immigration policy which was intentionally discriminatory and the internal race relations policy which advocated equal treatment irrespective of race. "This contradiction, so obvious to the minorities, struck at the roots of their confidence in the good intentions of the society they had joined."

The Lives of Women Migrants and Children

Describing the plight of the women who came to Britain in the early years of the immigration, Patterson (1965 p.75) claims that West Indian women migrants experienced more difficulty than the men. The majority were used to working in their own homes. Those who worked as dressmakers used hand machines in their own houses and were mainly from rural areas living in large extended families and households. These were helped by their own mothers with childcare and housekeeping. Although Patterson's comments are fairly general, for the most part they were true for many of the women had lived with their parents or lived in close proximity to members of the extended families. In the rural communities from which a large proportion of women came, if family were unavailable, friends and neighbours would have assisted them with childcare, and social networks would have provided economic and emotional support (Ellis 1985).

In the early days of the migration there were no extended family structures as obtained in the West Indies. The day nurseries were open during day time hours and for some of the women who worked long hours this service was not suitable, especially for single mothers. Some of the women relied on friends and relatives for assistance with accommodation. They shared housing which often left much to be desired in terms of privacy and comfort for themselves and their children. Many relied on their own resources in order to survive (Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe 1985).

Some women accepted the services of registered child minders (Hood, Oppé, Pless and Apte 1970). Others accepted places in residential nurseries, usually outside of the inner cities. These nurseries had been established during the war years for children from the indigenous population in areas which were considered safe. Others who lived in nuclear families shared the childcare with their husbands who were new to the caring of young children but supported their wives (conversations with mothers). When mothers had their adolescents join them, this removed some of the pressures of childcare.

Fitzherbert (1967) writing about West Indian women, observed that when mothers placed their babies in residential nurseries, they visited infrequently. She remarked that the longer the children stayed in the nurseries, the more reluctant the mothers were to be reunited with them and she expressed the opinion that the mothers separated from their children could easily have had them out of their minds. Due to misunderstanding about the West Indians' situations, this is an example of some of the misinformation then circulating among professionals. Many West Indian women strongly refuted Fitzherbert's accusation; claiming that they thought about their children continually and bemoaned the fact that they were unable to care for them during their early years. Many of them found the journey long and expensive and when they arrived at the nurseries they experienced rejection by their children, who having been cared for by white carers in a totally white environment, expressed fear and apprehension at the sight of black faces. Furthermore the white staff dissuaded parents from visiting, claiming that the children were upset when confronted with black strangers (Robertson 1975). There is little research about these mothers and children who suffered separation for long periods as a result of the children's stay in residential nurseries in Britain; whether they were ever reunited and what was the nature of their relationship with their mothers, and how many of the children progressed into long term care.

It is not known how many of the women had had family planning advice before emigrating but in the early days of the migration families tended to be large. Hood and colleagues (1970 p.38) found the families they researched consisted of a mean of

2-5 children as compared with a mean of 2-3 with their indigenous neighbours. This had implications for their economic situation. Their emotional states were difficult to assess but some of them seemed depressed and this had marked effects on their children.

Most of the research on West Indian migration to Britain stressed that both men and women had envisaged their stay as temporary, but on the realisation that it was impossible to achieve any economic improvement owing to low wages, they stayed and many sent for their children who had been left behind to join them. The children came to parents who were virtual strangers and there was difficulty in recognising each other. The parents were disappointed that the reunions were not always successful. The reactions of some of the reunited children have been researched and documented by teachers and social workers; for example John (1972), a teacher in a London school, relates that those children who had been reunited with their parents after several years of separation found it difficult to experience a feeling of belonging. Adolescence was particularly stressful as many parents tried to control their children by strictly adhering to the values which they had from their own parents in the West Indies. Cheetham (1972) working as a social worker in London during the early days of the reunion of children with their parents, commented that parents were actually disappointed with the failure of the reunions and she observed that the children were frequently confused, resentful and withdrawn rather than being grateful for or delighted by, coming to Britain to join their parents. The reunited children, having lost their closely knit families who cared for them during their formative years, their familiar physical surroundings, food, language, and customs in short, their culture, were disorientated and unsure of what was expected of them. Some of them seemed unable to communicate and this was extremely disturbing for their mothers (Robertson 1975).

Schools

School posed an even bigger problem as there was a completely different atmosphere from the formal schools in the countries from which they came. The disorientation

and bewilderment of black West Indian school children were interpreted as a sign of stupidity. Bryan, Dadzie & Scafe (1985 p.64) expressed the view that "It was the attitude of the teachers which did the most lasting damage... their concept of us as simple-minded, happy folk, lacking in sophistication or sensitivity became readily accepted". As a result of these attitudes on the part of some teachers and educational psychologists, a number of children were labelled educationally subnormal and placed in special schools (Coard 1971). Many of the parents were unaware of the consequences of the "Special" school thinking that it was beneficial for their children to be there and not realising that they would be stigmatised and would find great difficulty in returning to mainstream school. The Inner London Education Authority recorded that 3% of West Indian children in London schools were being placed in Educationally Sub-Normal schools as against 1% of English Children and even fewer children from among the Asian population (Inner London Education Authority 1971).

At the time the Department of Education and Science seemed unaware of the fact that the children had come from the English speaking colonies in the Caribbean where the education system was based on that of Britain; similar textbooks were used and in some instances they would have been taught by teachers from England. Had those children remained in their Caribbean countries most of them would have sat the same examinations as English children in England, their papers would have been marked by an English Board of Examiners and some of them would have obtained the Cambridge School Certificate, the recognised qualification at the time. Some of the girls were very disappointed and angry, acting out these feelings in their interactions with peers at school and teachers who lacked confidence in teaching children with cultural norms different from their own (Driver 1979). These were children who had been contained in schools in their countries but were disoriented in the relaxed atmosphere in English schools during the sixties.

In a study on "Ethnicity and Adolescent Identity Conflicts", Weinrich concluded that among the adolescent girls of Caribbean parentage,

"the patterns of ethnic identification conflicts differed from those in the boys...

> The West Indian girls have conflicted identifications with their parents as well as general representatives of their own ethnicity. But unlike the boys, they do not manifest generally high levels of identification conflicts with native whites. Hence of all the adolescents considered thus far. [The sample contained Asian and white adolescents as well] they will be the ones most involved with grappling with the meaning of their ethnicity."

Weinrich anticipated that some of these adolescents would spearhead informal social movements which would modify their parents' lifestyles, but some would be likely to "become short-term casualties; adolescent girls who find themselves adrift in levels of identification conflicts too great to tolerate." (Weinrich 1979 p.103).

One can only speculate that Weinrich may have been predicting that some of these women would suffer mental disorder or mental illness. It is possible that this is reflected in the number of admissions to psychiatric hospitals in the absence of any therapeutic services. Cochrane (1977) analysing hospital admissions for schizophrenia, found that West Indian women had the highest rate of admission. There has been considerable debate about the inappropriate diagnosis of schizophrenia (Littlewood and Lipsedge 1989, 1996, Rack 1982) but it seemed that little attention was paid to the reaction of women, especially to their experiences of loss due to the immigration and their depression. The impact of social change was a particularly stressful life event for first generation migrant minorities. Adaptation to a new community after migration was probably the major event of their lives and therefore it was not surprising to find high rates of mental disorder among them. What is alarming is the high rates of mental illness among the children of these migrants, (Littlewood 1992 pp.3-4).

> "People from ethnic minorities living in Britain, particularly those who are black, experience a variety of practical disadvantages, particularly in the areas of housing, education, health and employment. They can also be subject in numberless everyday contexts, to the potential experience of overt racism and prejudice in their face-to-face encounters with the indigenous population.

> Although there is little statistical information about their psychological adjustment, ample evidence has accumulated over the last few years, that to be black in Britain today is to be exposed to a variety of adverse stimuli which can add up to a quite serious hazard to mental health." (Littlewood 1992 p.3)

In recent years, some people from minority groups, among whom were West Indian women, were offered psychotherapy. However, Kareem (1992 p.28), working as a psychotherapist in the National Health Service, observed that patients who were not of European background were not helped by the kind of psychotherapy that was offered. He therefore consulted with those who attended the surgeries and who expressed their dissatisfaction. They all expressed the view that they would benefit from therapists who they felt understood them, their backgrounds, and the problems they encountered in a racist society. He therefore founded an Intercultural Therapy Centre known as Nafsiyat in 1983 in London which provided a specialist psychotherapy service to black and other ethnic minorities; it offered therapeutic help to adults, families, adolescents who were experiencing psychiatric or sexual problems or emotional distress.

A sizeable proportion of clients are from the West Indies or are children of migrants and at the Inter-cultural Therapy Centre the concept of loss was well understood.

> "Talking to many patients from many different cultures who have been reared and cared for by grandparents, uncles and aunts in an extended family, one comes to recognise that their sense of loss encompasses a much wider dimension than where there is just one individual parent. They talk of their roots, of their society, of their environment and of memories of multiple caring adults." (Kareem 1992 p.29)

Formerly many of these patients had not had the opportunity to recall their memories and felt that white English or other European therapists would not have fully understood them.

Many of the women from the West Indies who joined their parents during their late childhood and early adolescence after being reared by their grandparents and other relatives experienced these losses. Some of them have adjusted to their new environment, have benefited from the education system, are employed and seem to have acquired some measure of self-actualisation. Others have not. Some seek therapeutic help complaining of depression and unease, feeling that they are not coping to the best of their abilities. Some express the feeling that 'something is missing' in their lives, and think that the early separations from their biological mothers and their surrogate mothers in their early lives were detrimental to them and left them without a firm sense of identity. The hostile environment of a society in which racism is endemic has further eroded confidence and self-esteem in some of them. They find themselves emotionally and mentally less well than their parents and their siblings born in Britain who had never separated from their mothers and experience difficulty in making and sustaining lasting relationships.

Some women have demonstrated resilience which was a characteristic of some of their forebears who survived the institutions of slavery and plantation life in the West Indies. Chapter Three provides a brief background of black women, their lives and particularly their attitudes to motherhood.

CHAPTER THREE

A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF BLACK WOMEN IN THE WEST INDIES

> "There are many who would prefer to console themselves by suggesting that it is bad to dwell in the past - however if one seeks to understand the social dynamics of today, one must trace the major processes of history" (Manley 1974 p.145).
>
> "Within the Caribbean regional diversity of ethnicity, class, language and religion, there is an ideological unity of patriarchy, of female subordination and dependence. Yet there is also a vibrant living tradition of female economic autonomy, of female-headed households and of a family structure in which men are often marginal" (Momsen 1993 p.1).

In this chapter a brief account will be given of the experiences of black families; their mating patterns, family organisation and child-rearing practices, and to demonstrate that in the latter the leading role that women have played has been the taking of most of the responsibilities since the days of slavery.

Rubin (1959) observed that the West Indian family and its varying forms have attracted observers for at least a century. Many theorists have speculated as to whether the organisation of the West Indian family is a

1. survival of slavery;
2. of African forms of family;
3. of early European forms;
4. or whether it developed from the pressures of the plantation society.

The scope of this thesis does not permit a lengthy discussion on the West Indian family, but there is a considerable amount of literature available on the subject by sociologists such as Braithwaite (1959), M.G. Smith (1962), Henriques (1953), Clarke (1966), Blake (1961), R.T. Smith (1957), Greenfield (1966) and Comitas and Lowenthal (1973). Novelists such as Lamming (1954), Patterson (1967), Selvon (1956, 1971) have also contributed to portraying a clear picture of life in the West Indies.

According to Green (1973), in most accounts of the Caribbean family, writers have limited themselves to a study of black families in the lower social classes and this has led to misleading generalisations. She suggested that it was necessary to study family patterns in the various ethnic groups and in various other categories such as Catholics and Protestants, rural families as opposed to urban, rich as opposed to poor.

Earlier, Henriques (1953) had suggested that in research on the family in the Caribbean more attention should be paid to the middle class family. In describing the different types of households in West Indian family organisation, he drew attention to the 'Christian family' as clearly different from the others, as it was based on marriage and the dominance of the father. In this study the majority of the families came from lower socio-economic backgrounds and others who had become socially mobile through education and had moved up the social scale in their countries, but coming to Britain they had been categorised as working class and lived in working class conditions.

In the sixteenth century, during the early days of settlement in the Caribbean the planters experienced difficulty in obtaining labour. The population of Europe was limited and free labourers, necessary to cultivate the staple crops of sugar, tobacco and cotton in the New World, were unavailable in quantities adequate to permit large-scale production. Slavery was considered a solution to this problem as labour could then be enforced for whatever length of time the planters prescribed as necessary. The Europeans first turned to the aborigines (Amerindians and Caribs) who resisted the attempts to enslave them. When this venture failed they turned to Africa (Williams 1964).

Williams argued (1964) that 'negro' slavery was founded on economic grounds and not on racial ones as it was not based on colour. He maintained that the climatic theory that white labourers were not able to survive in the tropics and blacks could, was an untenable argument and a rationalisation. The climatic theory is part of an ideology which rationalises and naturalises an existing social and economic order (Williams 1964 p.18).

Through the use of black slaves, the British West Indian societies evolved to be ones based not only on wealth and class but on colour (Dookhan 1971). The pattern became one of colour-class pyramids with the white plantation owner at the apex - owners who for the most part were absentee landlords. Their white administrators, regardless of their level of education or social skills, assumed the role of master and were next in the hierarchy. Then came the mixed-race individuals, the progeny of Europeans and black women who had suffered sexual exploitation at the hands of the white masters, and blacks graded according to shades of skin colour at the base.

Women in Slavery

The slave woman was first a full-time worker for the owner, and only incidentally a mother (Burn 1937). The children were the property of the slave master and shortly after birth they were cared for collectively by older and inactive women (Hogg 1979). Since the children were valued as cheap labour on the plantations, the church assisted with efforts at stimulating reproduction by offering spiritual dispensations to the mother, to the plantation overseers or managers, but never to the father.

> "Such practices had the effect of giving legitimacy to the centrality of the mother's role, a notion which was firmly entrenched in the kin system of the West African tribes transported to the New World. (Massiah 1982 p.62).

The African slaves in the colonies increased in number from importation and also by natural means. In their early days of slavery families were not encouraged. It is alleged that the slave masters used the male slaves for breeding in similar fashion as they did their stock, and the bearing of responsibility by a father could only be regarded as a distraction. When occasionally a man was able to provide food for his family from the land he was permitted to cultivate, this was dependent on the good will of the master, and therefore he could not regard himself nor be regarded by his family as the provider (Simey 1946).

Braithwaite (1970), writing on the folk culture of the slaves in Jamaica, quotes two historians: Bryan Edwards who claimed that in Jamaica, on a moderate computation,

there were not less than ten thousand of such as were called head Negroes and who possessed from two to four wives; and Edward Long, who explained that only one was the object of a particular attachment. He claimed that the others, though called 'wives', were only a sort of occasional concubine or drudge who assisted the husband in working the land and selling the produce. He would render acts of assistance when they were needed, but ridiculed the practice of marriage which tied the two persons together indissolubly.

There are a number of factors which may have been influential in shaping the attitudes of black men towards fathering children and leaving the women in sole charge of them:

1. their African heritage of polygyny,
2. the conditions of slavery, where they were coerced by their owners to procreate but not allowed to take responsibility for their families, and
3. the example of their European slave owners, who mated outside the matrimonial home with slave women.

In the countries where the Anglican denomination was prominent there was a reluctance to convert the slaves to Christianity which of course advocated monogamy. Some Christian churches, however, notably the Baptists and the Moravians, evangelised among the slave communities from the mid eighteenth century, and made converts. Many of the men paid lip service to the practice of monogamy and some continued to father children outside the matrimonial home. Legally these children were illegitimate and the mothers bore the responsibility for them.

Illegitimacy in the West Indian family

Davidson argues that the Africans in the New World were strong and numerous enough to revive and recreate the customs and beliefs of their homelands. The majority of the slaves were taken from Western Africa where polygyny was practised. Mating patterns among the slaves, however, did not reflect merely a retention of their culture. Some stable consensual unions existed, but the incidence of unions with several partners for short periods of time was high, as was the

incidence of prostitution. A probable cause for the latter was the sex-ratio of the slave population with a considerably larger number of men. A few slaves were able to engage in a European form of marriage (Davidson 1961 p.106). There were also a disproportionately small number of white women in the colonies and the black women were used by white men.

Rubin, commenting on the incidence of illegitimacy, drew attention to the 1890 Royal Commission, which reported that 80% of the births in the area were illegitimate and noted that half a century later in 1940 the illegitimacy rates for some of the areas were still as high as 70%. From a purely pragmatic point of view, if 70% of the population were illegitimate, then legitimacy becomes a matter of definition (Rubin 1959).

The argument that legitimacy or illegitimacy does not matter among people of the West Indies has been refuted by Braithwaite (1959). He argued that the legal system reflects the basic predominant will of the particular society, therefore the discrepancy between illegitimacy and legitimacy, while it may not be sociologically significant, represents a real cleavage in the society (Braithwaite 1959).

This cleavage in West Indian society between children born to legally married parents and those born to unmarried mothers has at times presented serious problems regarding the inheritance of property if the father died intestate. When paternal relatives failed to recognise the claims of the illegitimate children for a share of the father's property, the common-law wife and their children, although they had been living as a family unit for several years, could be excluded from any benefits from the estate. During the 1970s some of the islands, for example Barbados and Jamaica, reformed the laws relating to family matters. One of the significant changes was to grant equal legal status to all children through the Status of Children Act (Forde 1981). However, the legality of a situation does not necessarily confer a feeling of belonging and self-worth.

The West Indian Family Structure

In a survey of West Indian Family Studies, Smith (1965) drew attention to the debate between Franklin Frazier and Melville Herskovits (1953). The debate was essentially directed at problems of causation and historical derivation. Both Frazier and Herskovits agreed that the Negro family in the USA and the Caribbean was especially distinctive in its high rate of illegitimacy, marital instability and maternal households. Herskovits argued that these organisational patterns were of African derivation and that they were effects or correlates of practices derived from institutional serial mating. Frazier countered this argument by assembling a voluminous collection of data on the social history and situation of Negroes in the USA to demonstrate the influence of different social and economic contexts on their families and mating patterns. He pointed to the fact that among the Negro middle class professionals in northern cities of the USA, marriage was the normal basis of family life and illegitimacy was rare, whilst among rural black families in the South, maternal families and illegitimacy were common and the rates of marriage were relatively low. Smith states that the debate between Frazier and Herskovits was inconclusive, but observed that most students of black families in the New World adopted Frazier's orientation and hypothesis. Simey, who surveyed social conditions in the West Indies on behalf of the Colonial Development and Welfare Department (1945) and Henriques (1945) both accepted Frazier's thesis that the social and economic conditions of slavery precluded development of stable nuclear families among New World Negroes and both writers emphasised that in Jamaica and other West Indian societies, illegitimacy, maternal families and concubinage or common law marriage are socially accepted and, as statistics testify, are the mode of lower class life. Both Simey and Henriques stressed differences in male/female relationships and family organisation and differences of socio-economical class. Both writers described the families as:

1. Christian families, defined as patriarchal units based on legal marriage.

2. Faithful concubinage, also patriarchal, but without legal sanction.

3. Companionate unions or consensual cohabitation of less than three years duration.

4. Disintegrated families consisting of women and their children or grandchildren.

Henriques (1949) preferred the term maternal or grandmother family to describe families without men, instead of companionate union. He stresses the authority of women in these households and argues that West Indian family life is a product of the peculiar conditions of slavery. He cites the fact that as slaves were sold at will there was no security, and unions between men and women were liable to be broken at any time. Secondly, the plantation owners and European employers entered into sexual relationships with slave women whom they set up as concubines. In describing family life in Jamaica specifically, he highlighted the ambivalence towards marriage among the lower class women, for whilst marriage improved their economic situation, they feared domination by the men as a monogamous union could be easily dominated by the husband. A study of attitudes to marriage and single status where men were only visiting the family concluded,

> "A careful consideration of views of respondents points definitely to their position that this form of family accords them a degree of freedom and independence which they hold to be greatly to their advantage. Even from the standpoint of the support of their children and the family and as a whole they maintain that the absence of the partner is by no means a disaster" (Roberts and Sinclair 1943 p.249).

Greenfield (1966) in a study of the black family in Barbados, attempted to analyse the cultural functions performed by the various members within the family structure and gives a detailed account of the mother-centred families. This he attributed to the structures imposed by the system since the days of slavery which could be the reason for the low incidence of men taking responsibility for the family.

Rural Versus Urban Families

Smith (1957) in examining the structures and activities of household groups, made a

distinction between rural and urban black families. He observed that a young woman who remained in her parents' home might bear children with different partners, but once she set up home with a partner, whether legally married or not, the relationship might endure until she came to the end of her child-bearing age, thus establishing a stable family for all the children.

The women in urban areas tended to be involved in more unions, and Smith considered that the men were marginal as husbands and fathers, thus the household group could be considered as matrifocal. Smith (1956) in Guyana and Clarke (1966) in Jamaica referred to the young man's attachment to his mother. In Guyana, the tie to his mother which involved him contributing money to her support was not easily broken and he may have gone on living with her even when he had fathered several children, thus leaving much of the responsibilities to the women involved. Clarke points out that a mother impressed upon her sons that it was their duty to make up to her for the hardships she endured as the sole or principle support of them in their early lives. This devotion or attachment to the mother on the part of many young men usually hindered the formation of stable relationships between young couples if they decided to live together. Clarke (1966) also, in studying three different communities in Jamaica, showed that the attitudes to marriage and other forms of union differed in the various communities, but that in all of the relationships the women were required to remain faithful to their partner but this requirement was not made of the men.

Women's attitude to Marriage

Many stable unions among working class couples tended to culminate in marriage when the children were grown and the family better off economically, particularly in the rural areas. Marriage therefore seemed to correlate with an improvement in economic status. Blake (1961) held the opinion that Jamaican women of the lower classes desired marriage and approved of marital union as the only form of living together. In terms of Christian teaching they disapproved of illegitimacy. She drew attention to the increasing number of marriages as women grew older. Blake's research in Jamaica was very severely criticised, and Smith (1966) asked why she

had ignored the Mass Marriage Movement which was set up by a well-meaning British Governor's wife and which was a dismal failure. Nevertheless, Blake's view seems to be worthy of some consideration with regard to the unmarried West Indian women who immigrated to Britain, many of whom tended to marry on arrival. Several factors may have contributed to this:

1. increased earnings;
2. more economic opportunities;
3. income tax concessions for married couples;
4. the improved status acquired by legal marriage;
5. the prevailing local pattern of the community;
6. the need for companionship and security in a strange and often hostile environment and
7. the absence of the extended families.

Patterson researching among the West Indians who settled in Brixton found various types of unions: the patricentral type where the wife no longer worked and an egalitarian type among the younger and more ambitious working class. In addition, she found that a small number of lower class women migrants, having succeeded in achieving financial stability and even prosperity by their own efforts, usually preferred to remain independent, taking and discarding male consorts in so-called 'queen bee' fashion (Patterson 1965 p.267).

Matthews (1953) denied that the African heritage was responsible for the nomadic sex arrangements of slavery or the initiation of the non-legal union. He claimed that the traditions of polygamy or the plurality of wives and concubinage which is cited by some sociologists was not as widespread among the Yoruba rank and file in West Africa from which the bulk of slaves were taken, and furthermore there existed public censure against concubinage, not on moral but on social grounds. Women bearing children before marriage were negatively viewed and social status was lost. The unmarried woman was considered inferior to the legitimately married woman. Those concubines who eventually married were always proud to advertise the fact of their full legal and social status.

Matthews, comparing the West Indian attitude to concubinage with that of the West African, argued that there was a great difference. Whereas in Africa it was a deliberate choice, contrary to accepted standards whereby the women were castigated, in the West Indies women of the lower socio-economic group living as concubines seemed to feel that they had little or no choice in the matter. Hence the attitude towards them of that certain kind of sympathy so difficult to describe because so complex. Complex because it proceeds from a dual outlook by which one part of the mind so to speak sympathises, and the other part disapproves on both social and religious grounds.

Presuming that Matthews' views are correct, this would explain the ambivalence with which young women in the West Indies were viewed when they became mothers and were unmarried. There was a wide belief that a legally married woman was worthy of a much higher standard of living than a concubine, and because of the poor economic status of the man, they were unable to marry until he was able to provide a house and a higher standard of life could be experienced. Another cause of local disapproval was that faithful concubinage seemed gradually to disappear and to be replaced by polyandrous unions.

Although Matthews stressed that non-legal unions in the West Indies are not significantly patterned on West African polygamy but are historically explained independently of specific West African influences, he proceeded to give examples of similarity between the mating pastimes and behaviour of the Yorubans and those of West Indians. For example, the practice of premarital sex with the prospective wife in order to ascertain her fertility; the elaborate marriage ceremony, which in some instances may be totally unaffordable and finally, the practice of the married man to engage in extra-marital relationships with one or more women who are considered as friends. Thus the ideal of a monogamous union was not realised.

Recent writings on women and family in the West Indies

In the studies of family organisation throughout the West Indies it was found that the mother role held high status and value (Henriques 1959, Kerr 1963, Blake 1975,

Massiah 1982, Momsen 1993). Women in the Caribbean have been socialised essentially for parental, conjugal and domestic roles, but historically have had to work in similar occupations to men. The success with which they have manipulated their occupational roles has in part been related to their level of formal education and vocational training, the availability of job employment opportunities and the level of earnings available. More importantly, it has been related to their ability to manipulate such personal resources as they may possess in order to exploit the available income-earning activities, whether within or outside of the home, with household responsibility. An extended family structure provides the woman with access to a source of child care and home maintenance support and permits her to experiment with alternative economic support strategies (Massiah 1982).

In Massiah's research in several of the English-speaking Caribbean islands, the data indicate that women in the lower socio-economic group who head households are concentrated in low-paid, low status occupations with no prospects for improvement. They are more likely to be unemployed than their male counterparts and more likely to be untrained for any occupation at all. The data suggests that regardless of income-earning level and socio-economic background, women who head households face similar problems, the most critical of which appear to be sources of livelihood and child care obligations. For many black women in Britain, this pattern of existence has been replicated. In the early days of the migration whilst establishing themselves, they worked a double day, combining the demands of their jobs with the demands of running a home and raising a family (Brian, Dadzie and Scafe 1985).

The Myth of the black Matriarch

Senior (1992 p.102) holds the view that the myth of the black matriarch is one of the most pervasive in Caribbean societies, and in answer to her own question, "in what does the matriarch's alleged power and dominance rest?" she argues that while some younger, upwardly mobile women nowadays voluntarily choose single parenthood and household headship, for older women there is usually no choice; the role is foisted on them by circumstances. For the region as a whole an average of 32% of households are headed by women, ranging from a low of 22.4% for Guyana to a high

of 46.6% in St Kitts/Nevis. She further states,

> "Because the majority of women are 'miracle workers', labouring long hours both inside and outside the home creating 'something out of nothing' making incredible sacrifices for their children and tolerating the vagaries of their men, yet are capable of 'raising their voice up' when aroused, the general belief is that Caribbean women are 'strong', 'powerful,' matriarchic'. The corollary is at what price? High blood-pressure, for instance is so common that it is taken for granted as something that goes with the territory." (Senior 1992 p.187)

hooks (1982 p.52), writing about the American black family, dismisses the description of black family structure as matriarchal. She describes

> "the term matriarch as implying the existence of a social order in which women exercise social and political power, a state which in no way resembles the condition of black women."

hooks continues to point out that the misuse of the term matriarch has led many people to identify the woman present in a household where no male resides as a matriarch. She emphasises that within the matriarchal society woman was always secure, but the economic situation of black women in the United States has never been secure.

> "If sociologists are to casually label black women matriarchs, they should also label female children playing house and acting out the role of mother matriarchs. For in both instances, no real effective power exists that allows the females in question to control their own destiny.... While it is true that in contemporary times more black women can be seen in the political arena than ever before in history, in proportion to the population of black women this number is relatively small." (hooks 1982 pp.72-73)

The same could be said of black West Indian women, who tend largely to underestimate their own power, despite evidence of the valuable contributions they

make to their families. This is due to their conceptualisation of womanhood. They head household units, they participate in decision-making but they still believe in the institutional position of men as head (Powell 1982).

I share the view of hooks (1982) that much of what has been perceived by whites as an Amazonic trait in black women has been merely acceptance of situations they had been powerless to change.

Changing Attitudes

In the past, many women in the West Indies were willing to work in low paid and unskilled jobs and bear the responsibility of caring for their children. Some are trying to change the conditions under which they undertake the child-bearing career and how many children they bear. These are in the main from a middle class background. They have the security of education and are subsequently better employed and they are able to plan their families with the help of birth control methods. Some make the choice of being single parents. In this respect there is not much change. The majority of those in the lower socio-economic groups remain unable to change much of their lives.

Attitudes to Motherhood and Child rearing

In the West Indian societies high value and status are attached to mothering and some women regard the mothering role as more important that being a wife (Powell 1986). In research carried out in the Caribbean it was discovered that 90% of women of childbearing age saw childbearing as a fundamental role of women (Senior 1992 p.67).

But there are other reasons for wanting to bear children. Blake (1961) discovered that the majority (90%) of parents thought that children would be useful to them when they were old; so the reasons are not only sentimental or religious but material and economic as well. Powell (1982) also advances the view that women derive power and authority from their families and mainly through the children.

"The shifting of child rearing responsibilities from the birth mother to other individuals within or external to the kinship network is a well established feature of Caribbean life" (Russell-Brown, Norville and Griffith 1997 p.223). Several reasons are given for this, some mothers may be in a poor economic situation and may place the child with a relative in better circumstances, or at times not a blood relative but someone whom they consider better able to care for the child. Grandmothers have been the main carers when mothers migrated. This will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters.

Conclusion

In the West Indies many women have exhibited remarkable resilience throughout history. Those in the lower socio-economic group of West Indian society, who were not in stable relationships with the fathers of their children, accepted the role of mother and all that it entailed and some sought assistance through enlisting the help of members of the extended family and other social networks.

Those women who are in stable unions and those of the middle and professional classes also take the responsibility of the family seriously, even when fathers are present in the home, and are the driving force in the family. From the immigration history of West Indians coming to Britain, women came and, as during the days of slavery, worked long and hard this time with the purpose of improving the economic, social and educational situation of their families. It therefore came as no surprise that West Indian mothers who had been separated from their children, by leaving them with grandparents in the Caribbean, on realising that their hope of returning was not to be achieved, did all within their power to have the children join them in Britain and tried to reconstitute their families. For many the hard and difficult situations of the West Indies have been replicated, while some have been able to escape economically as a result of education. The study seeks to examine how a sample of women who have experienced changes in family structure during their early lives coped with broken attachments. The next chapter reviews the literature on Attachment Theory.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEORIES OF MATERNAL DEPRIVATION, ATTACHMENT, SEPARATION AND LOSS

> "Children are not slates from which the past can be rubbed by a duster or sponge, but human beings who carry their experiences with them, and whose behaviour in the present is profoundly affected by what has gone before." (Bowlby 1952 p.113)

There has been little research among families of West Indian origin involving maternal deprivation and Attachment Theory. Norris (1969 p.13) writing on Jamaican family life, claims that instead of relying entirely on the protection of one set of parents, children learn at an early age to distribute their affection among the many mother and father substitutes which the extended family pattern offers them. Whilst this may be so, it has been observed in instances of multiple mothering that the child's preference for one person is usually that of the adult who mothers her/him. Usually this is the child's biological mother. There is little research on how the children as they matured, felt about being deprived of a close relationship with their mothers. The current research was designed in part to address this question.

Relevance of European Attitudes to Child Rearing in the West Indies

The attitudes towards children of parents in Europe is relevant to the people of the West Indies about whom this thesis is being written for several reasons:

Firstly, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as we have noted, Europeans were responsible for transporting Africans as slaves to work on the plantations in the Caribbean and imposed their culture upon them. The children were considered as the property of the plantation owners and during the period of slavery, women were considered primarily as workers and were denied time to care for their infants. The children were gathered in groups and placed in the care of older women who were no

longer economically active (Hogg 1979 p.19). There was little opportunity for the mothers or fathers to show tenderness to the children and to respond to their individual needs. This provision was in some ways similar to the conditions in workhouses in Britain where the bare necessities of life were provided.

Secondly, services in the West Indies developed similarly to those in England. Philanthropists, the Church and others established large orphanages in some of the islands where orphans and abandoned children were physically cared for but little attention was paid to their individual and emotional needs. The provision of services in education and health followed a similar pattern as in the 'mother' country. Levy (1980 p.113) observed that in the Caribbean the attitudes of the planters after slavery were ambivalent towards mothers. They criticised them for neglecting their children, yet preferred to employ them because their work habits were more reliable than those of the men (Momsen 1993 p.2). The ambivalence towards women has been a feature of sociological writing about Caribbean mothers. On the one hand they were praised for the self-sacrifice and the love they gave to their children, whilst on the other they were criticised as being possessive and castrating mothers especially to their sons (Mathurin 1977). Only recently has attention been paid to the needs of women and the nature of the mother-child relationship. In many instances these women were the breadwinners of their families and also the caregivers and were very often separated from their children who were reared in the extended family (Powell 1982).

In researching the feelings of Afro-Caribbean women towards children and to being mothers, Powell (1982 p.11) claimed that child rearing was important as it signified womanhood, the basis of feminine identity. This validation of femininity helped to create a positive attitude to child bearing for most women, but yet they accepted the practice of delegating the care of their babies to others, little knowing that the children would become attached to the carers and would not relate to them at a later age, but could yearn for a close relationship.

In this chapter the concept of Maternal Deprivation will be reviewed with special reference to the work of Bowlby, and the way in which he progressed to propounding

the theory of Attachment and Loss. Bowlby's seminal work influenced other professionals in the fields of developmental psychology, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, and social work to research the phenomenon of the attachment of the child to his/her primary carer, usually the mother, and the effects of separation and loss from the preferred person. Related work on loss and separation from beyond the attachment paradigm will also be reviewed.

The History of Childhood

Two well-known accounts of the history of childhood are those written by Aries (1962) and De Mause (1976). The latter expressed the view that at the time of writing the public was only beginning to awake from the nightmare of the history of childhood. He declared that the further one delved into the history the lower the level of childcare was to be found. He outlined the gradual acceptance by adults that children were distinctly different from them and had different needs. Aries considered the very concept of childhood as a recent one. He described the mingling of children with adults in the community working and playing, as beneficial to the children who learnt by imitation. This was in contrast to De Mause who saw children as victims who were given little love and affection. Aries warned against confusing the idea of childhood with affection for children. This is also a view expressed by Hendricks and Figueroa (1995 p.25).

> "Confusion has arisen because the concept of childhood as a social construct differs from the process of loving and caring for children. It is indeed an important by-product of that process since legal, social, educational and health services have evolved in a more equitable and effective way as they became targeted towards an identified social group with rights and needs."

Researching the infant mortality rate in Britain, Alvin (1982) drew attention to the fact that during the years 1839-1842, 50% of the children of mothers from the working class died before attaining the age of five. Some of the factors which contributed to this were the physical conditions under which these families lived;

insanitary and overcrowded houses, bad water supply and low pay, which meant that the parents were unable to supply nutritious food, warm clothes or heating. It was assumed by those whose experiences were different that these mothers were indifferent to their young children, but it might also have been fair to conclude that mothers were fearful of investing too much emotion into loving and caring since with the high infant mortality rate they may have feared that the children had little chance of surviving. The suggestion of maternal indifference as the cause of infant mortality remained a highly controversial one according to child-rearing manuals from 1870 to the 1950s (Richardson 1993 p.29). Badinter (1981 p.60) argues that it was not because the children "died like flies" that mothers were not interested in them, but rather that the mothers were not interested in them, therefore the children died.

Children were treated as though they were miniature adults by their parents and by the State. In the 18th century, and with the advent of industrialisation, children of the working classes were employed in mines and factories under extremely poor conditions which ruined their health, (Cootes 1985). Novelists such as Dickens (1837), Kingsley (1863) and philanthropists such as Barnardo (1845-1905) and others were instrumental in raising awareness of the suffering of children. It was significant that voluntary organisations such as The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Barnardos, the National Children's Home and Save the Children Fund were in the vanguard of providing services for children deprived of a normal home life, and not the State, which stated that parents were responsible for the care of their children. Throughout the century, there were individuals who tried to improve social conditions for poor families mainly in the fields of education and in health. The Charity Schools Movement was first in organising the provision of education for the poor. The Movement was complemented by the establishing of Sunday Schools which provided education for children who worked six days a week in the factories in the manufacturing areas of the country.

The physical health of children was sadly neglected and children died and were left on the streets. This spectacle attracted the attention of a wealthy and religious sea captain, Thomas Coram who raised funds and had built the Foundling Hospital in

1741. There, children who had been deserted were nurtured and given an elementary education and then apprenticed to a trade. Today the Thomas Coram Centre is a thriving centre for study and research on child care and child development.

Gradually the state became aware that there was an increasing demand for literate workers in industry in order to keep pace with Britain's rivals the United States and Germany. Realising that the education in the voluntary schools was minimal, reformers encouraged the government to provide more schools and to assist the existing church schools. The Education Act of 1870 gave the power to School Boards to insist on compulsory education. By so doing, it was discovered that there were many children whose basic human needs were not being met. Many children were without clothes and shoes, were starving and suffered with infectious diseases. Eventually free meals and medical attention were provided (Cootes 1985 pp.209-210). (In all these provisions there was no mention of any attention being given to the mental and emotional health of the children and their families).

The children of parents from the middle and upper classes were also subjected to harsh punishments for misdemeanours. There was little understanding of how children developed and what could be expected of them at different ages and stages of their development. Parents were not demonstrative in showing their affection and in many instances delegated the care of their children to 'nannies' who might give the children loving attention, and to whom the children could become attached. The more affluent families sent their young children away to boarding schools where discipline was strict and the children subjected to discipline and practices which could be considered as abusive. The loss of their familiar surroundings and their parents and other significant figures to whom they were attached was not considered. It was erroneously thought that the strict discipline would help to mould character and children were seldom helped to express their grief for being in a 'strange situation' with strangers.

Attitudinal Change

Change in attitudes to child health began to occur during the twentieth century when there was a move towards inter-disciplinary work in the fields of health, education and social services. Hendriks and Figueroa (1995 pp.29-30) explain:

> "The pressures came, not so much from hospital-based paediatrics as from school health services, where standards of nutrition and cleanliness were in question, from educationalists who began the task of evaluating children's 'innate capacity', and most influentially, from the juvenile justice system."

An attempt was made to put together these fields of knowledge and to distinguish between the medical study of children who in some way deviated from the norm; the range of normal behaviour and capacities, the field of the psychologist and teacher, and the context in which the child lived and developed, the province of the social worker. In those early days, the context was seen as mother first, the family second and society third, priorities which have changed and become more subtle with the passage of time. The task was seen as helping a growing child to adjust to his immediate environment, hence the name of the service.

Parry-Jones, cited in Hendriks and Figueroa, states that

> "modern students of child psychiatry have under estimated earlier medical understanding of child development and the significance of life experiences and influences, such as changing parent child relationships.... In stressing the need for drawing on the knowledge of various disciplines such as psychology, social work, criminology and services for children with learning disabilities it was necessary to include the necessity to extend the services across boundaries of race and language." (Hendriks and Figueroa 1995 p.30)

Psychology in the study of child development

Newson and Newson (1974 pp.54-55) reviewing cultural aspects of child-rearing, observed that up to the beginning of the present century, European parents were

occupied with the physical care of the infant and tended to consider psychological needs a luxury which could only be afforded by a minority of parents.

By the 1940s there was a shift from earlier approaches towards children which were harsh and lacking in tenderness and an "emphasis was placed on the importance of mother love for the normal, natural development of the child." (Richardson 1993 p.39). Gradually, mothers and professionals changed their attitudes to children. The increased interest in the field of developmental psychology influenced a growth of interest not only in physical development, but in psychological and emotional development as well.

The Influence of Psychoanalysis in the Study of the Relationship between Mother and Child

It is logical to consider the relationship of children to their mothers since in most cultures mothers are the prime carers of their young children. They provide the necessary resources for sustaining physical growth and comfort, and when emotionally available to their children, they create a secure environment which facilitates the formation of self-esteem and trust. These serve to enable the children to give and to receive love.

Psychoanalytical thought greatly influenced the understanding of how early relationships influence the life of the individual. Freud acknowledged the importance of the psychological reciprocal nature of the relationship between mothers and their babies. In the 1930s he wrote more fully of the unique importance of the mother to the child. Before this period, he had promulgated the "drive theory" which stated that since the infant is totally dependent on the mother for survival, if the mother and her breast were not available when needed by the child "tension built up preventing the release of physical energy (libido) and this resulted in the child experiencing anxiety." Freud believed that the infant associated the mother with comfort and therefore learnt to love her because she provided food and thus relieved anxiety. He shifted from this position of only the mother being important to the child for the satisfaction of

physiological needs and he stressed that danger to the relationship occurred with the absence of the mother (Freud 1926). Holmes observed,

> "The shift towards regarding anxiety as based on object-loss is a decisive move towards the Object-Relations Viewpoint that has become the predominant psychoanalytical paradigm, especially in Britain." (Holmes 1993b p.63)

Melanie Klein (1975) well known for her work in child psychoanalysis, highlighted the importance of the first year of the child's life. She believed that the young child was controlled by strong feelings of love, hate and envy and was capable of directing these feelings towards mother who was perceived as a good or bad 'object' (ie not a person), depending on whether needs were met or unmet. She held the view that breast-feeding played an important role in the development of the child's relationship to mother. When the full breast satisfied her/his physical needs she/he could love the good mother, when the breast was empty or withheld, this engendered rage and hate for the bad mother.

Winnicott, paediatrician and psychoanalyst, believed that the early stages of development of the child were extremely important. He maintained that the baby seeking contact with the mother was motivated by the desire not only for physical gratification but also for relatedness, and satisfaction was only gained through being related to the mother. Winnicott stressed that, during the first weeks and months of the baby's life, the foundation of its health was laid by the mother, after which it was natural for mother to know how to react to her baby. He expressed the view that something a mother instinctively knew was that in the early stages of the child's development "nothing must interfere with the continuity of the relationship between the child and herself." (Winnicott 1964 p.109). It seemed that Winnicott did not consider that there were some women who rejected motherhood and it would not have been 'natural' for them to react to their children in ways that would have created a relationship.

with neurotic symptoms and disturbed behaviour. He explained (1951 p.32), that by working backward into children's histories, he unearthed the common factor of deprivation of maternal care, caused either by them living in institutions or by being posted, like parcels, from one mother figure to another. Unfortunately his study was not validated by the examination of a control group of children who may have been subjected to similar experiences but who seemed unscathed by them and whose behaviour was not problematic.

Whilst in his third year as a student of medicine, he was attracted to the area of study which was to become known as developmental psychology. Holmes (1993 pp.13-36) recounts Bowlby's leaving his clinical studies for a while to teach in a "progressive school for maladjusted children", an off shoot of A. S. Neill's Summerhill. Holmes attributes his experiences at the school as influential on Bowlby's career. He met and communicated with children whose behaviour was disturbed and observed the seeming correlation between their difficulties and their unhappy and disrupted childhood. Bowlby also met a member of staff who had undergone psychotherapy and who advised him to train as a psychoanalyst.

Training in the 1930s Bowlby was exposed to the intellectual debates stemming from the writings of Freud. Bettelheim (1960) summarised the hope of those discussing the virtues of psychoanalysis as set against those who advocated social and economic revolution in the following words; "The hope was that once the majority of men had profited from its inner liberation, they would almost automatically create the good society for themselves and all others." Holmes claims that Bowlby was able to accept the practical efficacy of psychoanalysis but criticised much of its theoretical basis.

Bowlby trained and qualified as an analyst and for a while was supervised by Melanie Klein. His views conflicted with hers in respect to the scant attention she paid to the importance of the environment on the client's disturbed feelings. His early work at the London Child Guidance Clinic provided him with the opportunity to observe children closely and to develop his ideas alongside those of analytically orientated social workers. In this setting Bowlby was helped to consider the transmission of neurosis

Winnicott criticised Klein for failing to acknowledge the importance of the external environment in which the child existed and stressed that "the dependence of early infancy is truly a period in which it was not possible to describe an infant without describing the mother from whom the infant had not yet become able to separate itself." (Winnicott 1962 p.177).

In contrast to Freud, who believed that fathers were important to their young children's lives, neither Winnicott nor Klein regarded the father as having an important role to play in the early stages of the life of the child. There was the implication in their work that mother was wholly responsible for the emotional as well as the physical development of the child.

Bowlby trained as a psychoanalyst in the 1930s and was familiar with the debates, but he finally realised that his interests and views were not acceptable to many members of the British Psycho-Analytical Society. He therefore finally broke his relationship with the Society and concentrated on his work in which he studied the child in his/her environment. He observed very closely children who in their early lives were deprived of their mothers. Bowlby differed specifically from Klein who emphasised the child's fantasy life and believed that the severity of the child's superego produced guilt and anxiety. He suggested that the environment played an important role in helping to shape the child's development.

Maternal Deprivation

Bowlby highlighted the detrimental effects of maternal deprivation on young children. His early work at the London Child Guidance Clinic provided him with the opportunity to observe children closely and to develop his ideas alongside those of analytically oriented social workers. In this setting Bowlby was helped to consider the transmission of neurosis across the generations; problems unresolved in the parents' childhood could be seen to influence their reactions to the children, often adversely. Unlike Freud, who mainly worked with adults and associated their illness with some childhood trauma, Bowlby examined and treated children who presented

across the generations: problems unresolved in the parents' childhood could be seen to influence their reactions to their children, often adversely.

During the Second World War, Bowlby (1940) expressed his concern about the evacuation of young children whom he thought would suffer emotionally if separated from their mothers. At this time he also drew attention in his writing to "The influence of Early Environment in the Development of Neurosis and Neurotic Character". He highlighted the neglect of the attention of the role of the environment in analytic literature and suggested that interviewing the mothers of disturbed children was vital for understanding the dyadic relationship.

Bowlby (1944) studied 44 juvenile thieves, comparing them with a control group similar in age and sex who although emotionally disturbed did not steal. Two main distinguishing characteristics were found among the "thieves"; 14 of the 44 were described as affectionless characters. In the control group there were none to whom the description could be applied. 17 of the 44 had been separated completely from their mothers or foster mothers for periods of six months or longer during the first five years of life. Only two from the control group had a similar experience. Bowlby proposed that the very high incidence of separation from their mothers among the affectionless thieves was highly significant. The aim of the research was "to prove by clinical demonstration, his convictions that 'separation' of the young child from his/her mother or mother substitute was inherently traumatic" (Riley 1983 p.97). The study was severely criticised and Rutter (1983) was one who stated that Bowlby's evidence was not strong enough to warrant his conclusions. Nevertheless the controversy and discussion of the research of the forty-four juvenile thieves proved to be influential in drawing attention to the possible consequences of maternal deprivation on the developing child.

During the Second World War many children were orphaned and cared for in institutions and Bowlby was commissioned by the World Health Organisation to study the effect of institutional care on children deprived of a normal home life. In his

report on the mental health of homeless children reared away from their parents he laid down the principle that,

> "what is believed to be essential for mental health is that the young child should experience warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother or permanent mother-substitute in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment." (Bowlby 1951 p.11)

In arriving at this conclusion, Bowlby had extensively reviewed the evidence advanced by psychoanalysts who had carried out retrospective studies, but he also examined closely the work of those who carried out follow-up studies. He considered the work of Goldfarb as of outstanding quality because of his scientific planning to test the hypothesis,

> "that the experience in the highly impersonal surroundings of an institution nursery in the first two or three years of life has an adverse effect on personality development." (Bowlby 1951 p.36)

Goldfarb's samples consisted of two groups of children who were similar in heredity, a variable that other researchers had found difficult to control. The experimental children had been separated from their mothers within the first nine months of life, were reared in institutions to about the age of three years and then placed in foster homes. The control group had been placed directly with foster parents. The institutions were very well physically appointed but the children experienced limited contact with adults except during times when they were fed or changed, or dressed. Goldfarb concluded in his summary of findings;

> "The institution children present a history of aggressive, distractible, uncontrolled behaviour. Normal patterns of anxiety and self-inhibition are not developed. Human identifications are limited, and relationships are weak and easily broken, and the disturbed personality traits continued through

adolescence. There is a continuity of essential traits as late as adolescence. If anything there is a growing inaccessibility to change." (Goldfarb 1944 p.162)

Bowlby's criticism of Goldfarb's work was that he implied that all institutions and all the children who grew up in them were similar, but nevertheless he considered that Goldfarb's work ranked highly because of the careful planning and the meticulous execution of the research.

A number of other studies were consulted in the course of Bowlby's research for the World Health Organisation. He quoted two such studies one which had been completed a long time before his research, that of Theis (1924) and Beres and Obers (1949) which demonstrated that many children reared in institutions adapted tolerably well socially. Bowlby expressed the view that whilst these findings may meet the approval of the layman it would be well to recall that "many psychiatrically disturbed people make an external adjustment which is tolerable for a long time". He also drew attention to the fact that both studies reported a high incidence of "overt disorder which the authors regard as confirming the pathogenicity of institutional conditions for young children" (Bowlby 1951 p.39).

Bowlby referred to studies of large numbers of children who had been evacuated during World War II from all over Europe to Switzerland and other countries; studies from the Netherlands and from Spain, of children separated from their parents during the War, and they all contained evidence that "there is confirmation of the decisive and adverse role in character development played by the break up of the family" (Bowlby 1951 p.45).

Influences on Bowlby's research: The work of Anna Freud

Some of the work in Britain which informed Bowlby's research were the first recorded observations of the reactions of young children aged under four years, who were separated from their mothers and cared for in day nurseries, during the latter part of

the Second World War, 1942-1944. The children were cared for in the Hampstead Nurseries and a particularly turbulent reaction to parting was noted.

> "The child feels suddenly deserted by all the known persons in his world to whom he has learned to attach importance. His new ability to love finds itself deprived of the customary objects and his greed for affection remains unsatisfied. His longing for his mother becomes intolerable and throws him into states of despair which are very similar to the despair and distress shown by babies who are hungry and whose food does not appear at the accustomed time. For several hours, or even for a day or two this psychological craving of the child, the 'hunger' for his mother, may override all bodily sensations. There are some children of this age who will refuse to eat or sleep. Very many will refuse to be handled or comforted by strangers." (Freud A 1973 pp.182-183)

It was further reported that the children seemed dazed and for several days were indifferent to their surroundings. They then exhibited problematic behaviour. Their physical health was undermined and they suffered with colds and intestinal problems. They had difficulty in recognising their mothers when they visited, but recognised their playthings which they had before separation. When the children were returned to their homes they easily remembered their surroundings. Anna Freud concluded that,

> "the failure to recognise the mother occurs when something has happened to the image of the mother in the child's mind; i.e. to his inner relationship to her." (p.184)

The work of Spitz and Wolf

An important study which highlighted the distress of infants when separated from their mothers, and left in unchanged physical surroundings but with adequate care by a mother substitute was described by Spitz and Wolf (1946). 123 babies of women in prison were observed. The mothers were the sole carers of their babies for the first eight or nine months of their lives. The administration suddenly removed the mothers

for a three month period and the babies were left in the nursery to be cared for by other women who provided their physical care very adequately, but it was observed that the children became apathetic, listless and withdrawn. In order to emphasise the harm done to young children when separated from their mothers who had been their sole carers, the study was followed by the production of a film, "Grief: A Peril in Infancy" (Spitz 1950).

The work of James Robertson

Having witnessed the grief reactions of young children separated from their mothers, James Robertson, a social worker who had worked at the Hampstead Nurseries, and who was later to become a member of Bowlby's research team, observed the distress of young children who had to be hospitalised. When audiences of the caring professions were resistant to the talks on his observations, he and Bowlby collaborated and made a film of his observations of children which demonstrated the distressed reaction of a two-year old who went to hospital without the mother, how she behaved when they visited and how the child treated the nurses (Robertson 1952). Psychoanalysts were divided in their reaction to the film with the Kleinians refusing to accept that the separation from the mother caused the child's distress (Karen 1994).

Robertson made a successful tour of the United States of America with the film which influenced changes in the visiting policy of some hospitals there. On returning to England he then went to make another film, "Going into hospital with Mother" which was well received. The recommendations which he made for visiting policies were received by the Ministry of Health in 1959 and became policy in the 1960s.

Robertson, together with his wife, continued the work of observing how young children coped with separation from their mothers, mainly when the latter entered hospital for the birth of another child. The children were cared for by the Robertsons and fathers visited regularly, but the children showed signs of grieving for their mothers to whom they had bonded before the separation, and on reunion with the mothers, they showed disturbed behaviour. Their work culminated in a series of

films, "Young Children and Brief Separations" (Robertson and Robertson 1967-1972). Robertson recorded a sequence of behaviour in young children who had experienced a reasonably secure relationship with their mothers before separation. He described them as:

1.) Protest which began immediately on leaving the mother or later. The child would cry and seemed extremely distressed and looked around at every sound that might signal the return of her/his mother. Others were rejected or at times the child clung in desperation to anyone who showed interest.

2.) Despair This followed protest when time elapsed and the child continued to miss his/her mother. The behaviour seemed to demonstrate hopelessness and there was a lack of interest in people or in playing. ...He became very quiet, and appeared to be mourning.

3.) Detachment After the child realised that mother did not return in spite of his show of protest and despair, the child no longer rejected those who were available. The child began to accept attention and would even smile; but when mother returned the behaviour prior to the separation was no longer the same. She/he appeared to be no longer interested in her and tended to reject her and only showed interest in the gifts she proffered and remained listless in her presence. If the stay in hospital or other institution was a long one, the child may attach to members of staff superficially, but after a time seemed indifferent to whether they came or went. An interest in material things developed and when mother visited the child would show more interest in the gifts that she brought. The child would adopt a superficial cheerfulness and seemed to care for no one.

Bowlby came to the conclusion that the above sequence of behaviour was typical behaviour for a child over the age of six months when separated from her/his mother (Bowlby 1969 p. 26). He was confident of this since other researchers were finding similar patterns of behaviour in children separated and cared for in institutions. Some of the researchers were Heinicke and Westheimer who, working in the Tavistock Child Development Research Unit, observed children of thirteen months to three years who were separated from their families and placed in residential nurseries for short stays, and they recorded their behaviour in detail (Heinicke and Westheimer 1966).

Studies in various countries such as the United States of America (Prugh and colleagues 1953) and Scotland (Shaffer 1958), of children cared for in institutions and their return home, were reviewed by Vernon and colleagues (1965). It was interesting to observe that although the various studies differed in the type of institutions in which the children were cared for, the home backgrounds of the children, their ages, the length of time of separation, whether they were in good health or ill, the findings were similar.

Reunions of children with their mothers were not without problems depending on the stage at which the reunion took place. Bowlby observed that if the child had reached the early stage of detachment some time could elapse before there was any response to mother. When she/he began to respond, the behaviour showed signs of ambivalence, either clinging or showing anger and acute anxiety. If the separation lasted six months or more and an advanced stage of attachment had been reached, it was possible that the affection for the parents could be permanently lost. Bowlby recognised that there were many variables which could influence the child's behaviour during and after separation and so it was difficult to make a definite pronouncement of whether the relationship between mother and child was irretrievably lost. He explained that severe detachment of children occurred when they were not visited regularly by mother and when carers were not particularly sympathetic. He expressed the thought that the process might be mitigated if there frequent visiting and more "insightful care", but he recognised the need for more information (Bowlby 1979 pp.48-49).

When Bowlby reformulated his theory of maternal deprivation at a later date he examined the above sequence of behaviour and linked it to the pattern of mourning in adults on the death of a spouse and in this he refuted the then common assumption that children were unable to mourn.

Bowlby, in observing the children in institutions, believed that if there was prolonged deprivation of maternal care for the young child, there could be far-reaching effects on his/her character and indeed the whole future life. Writing in 1952 Bowlby recognised

his conclusions were being challenged by psychoanalysts, many of whom worked with adult patients who very often provided distorted and embittered pictures of their childhood experiences, and often their stories were discarded as fantasies. He admitted that knowledge of the details for the main proposition of the adverse effects of maternal deprivation was limited and concluded that,

> "if further research is to be fruitful, it must pay minute attention not only to the ages and periods of deprivation, but also to the quality of the child's relation to his mother before deprivation, his experiences with mother substitutes, if any, during separation and the reception he gets from his mother or foster mother when at last he becomes settled again." (Bowlby 1951 p.48)

Bowlby felt strongly that maternal deprivation could have far-reaching effects, not only in causing irreparable damage to the children but in that these damaged children could be a source of 'social infection' to others (Bowlby 1951 p.157). He proposed a number of social policies which if implemented, might curtail the 'infection' which deprived children could spread in society. Among his proposals were:

(1) an increase in foster homes for children whose parents were unable to care for them;

(2) more attention given to individual children in children's homes and hospitals;

(3) measures which promoted children being cared for within their families needed to be encouraged.

He also suggested psychological help to families through marriage guidance and special education arrangements for 'maladjusted' children and direct help to their families. Bowlby was scathing in his criticisms of the State which spent large sums keeping a child in hospital compared with the unwillingness to facilitate a child being cared for at home. He observed then that most countries seemed to prefer to ignore the existence of illegitimate children and, that help to their carers, mainly single mothers, had been "too little and too late". He advocated economic and psychological assistance to enable mothers to care for their children, and by providing skilled

services, to arrange for the adoption of those children who could not be cared by their mothers, as soon after birth as possible (Bowlby 1951 p.100).

Bowlby emphasised that it was a mistake to make the assumption that when children are removed from home they forget it. This in the past had lead to the policy of some agencies forbidding parents from seeing their children once they were in taken into care. It is interesting that the architects of the 1989 Children Act stressed the concept of working in partnership with parents for the welfare of the child; and only if there had been severe abuse to the child would contact with her/him be curtailed.

Bowlby advocated that 'case work', (as in-depth social work was known in the nineteen fifties, now replaced by counselling), should be carried out with parents. This practice had been advocated since 1929 (Healy et al quoted in Bowlby 1951) but had been neglected. He maintained that maternal care was important for the preservation of mental health and considered it important that family and child care services should be linked not only with each other but with mental health services (Bowlby 1951 p.152). Today he would have felt justified in seeing that Child Care Policy advocates inter-agency work (Working Together 1979).

The Prevention of Maternal Deprivation

Bowlby was aware that very little was known on what could be usefully done to prevent deprivation in children and he made a plea for systematic research on a similar scale to that of preventive physical medicine. He recognised that such research would be applied and operational but suggested,

> "Certain basic hypotheses which need testing: the first being that the grown-up's capacity for parenthood is dependent in high degree on the parental care which he received in childhood. If this proves true, with its corollary that neglected children grow up to become neglectful parents, understanding of the problem will be far advanced." (Bowlby 1951 p.154)

He also stressed that research was required into the most suitable method of caring for children outside their home. Bowlby recognised the difficulty in carrying out research and noted that there was usually resistance by social workers to research. The resistance, he thought was usually because of fear of hostile criticism of the researcher, and he proposed that the researchers' strategy should be one of collaboration with workers in the agencies.

His report to the World Health Organisation ended with him bemoaning the fact that there was a,

> "lack of conviction on the part of governments, social agencies and the public that mother love in infancy and childhood is as important for mental health as are vitamins and proteins for physical health" (Bowlby 1951 p.158)

and he warned against a vested professional interest in the institutional care of children.

The Success of the Theory of Maternal Deprivation

Bowlby's writings on maternal deprivation appeared in the 1950s when Britain was recovering from the shock of World War Two. Considerable disruption of families had occurred, not only with men going off to fight, but thousands of children had been separated from their mothers and families through evacuation. Singer (1992) discussing the success of the theory of maternal deprivation at the time it was written, expressed the view that it was possible that the importance of family bonds had been recognised more readily as a result of such separations. In the rebuilding of Britain in the 1950s the slogan "Restoration of families is restoration of the nation" facilitated the acceptance of the role of the mother in the home as being important. She suggested that the success of Bowlby's theory was because he seemed to be confirming the belief of a great many, that women's place was in the home caring for the children, whilst the men went out to work as the bread winners (Singer 1992 p.91). The ideology served the government in Britain well for the justification of

withdrawal of provision of crèches and day nurseries, which had been provided during the war to facilitate the employment of women during the war years. There was a reduction of funds to schools, the admission age of children to nursery school was raised, and the hours were made shorter for the children's day in school.

> "In 1950 in Britain, only 12.3% of children between the ages of 2 and 3 years attended an infant or nursery school subsided by Government - just as a reminder, in 1900 the proportion was 43.1%" (Whitbread 1972 cited by Singer 1992 p.93).

Mothers were advised and counselled on the care of young children as they were considered to be chiefly responsible for the physical and psychological health of their children.

Criticism of Maternal Deprivation Theory

Bowlby's 1951 report to the World Health Organisation was criticised on the basis of methodological deficiencies. Among the critics were Pinneau (1955), O'Connor (1956), Casler (1961) and Yarrow 1961. Singer (1992) summarised some of the criticism; the small size of the samples and the incomparable control group, and points out that the children having been placed in an institution, were deprived not only of their mothers, but fathers, siblings, and their familiar environment and were very often badly looked after. "The conclusion that deprivation in early childhood inevitably leads to delinquency and psychopathology was taken to be unproven." (Singer 1992 p.101)

Other academics and psychologists, particularly those of a behaviourist orientation, did not accept the term "maternal love" on the basis that it was unscientific (Eysenck 1975). They attributed the children's failure to develop as due to lack of cognitive and social stimulation. Clarke and Clarke (1976) were critical of the assumption that early childhood was a sensitive period in which mental health in the later life of an

individual was decided. They expressed the view that later experiences in life were also important.

The most sympathetic major critic of the maternal deprivation theory was Rutter (1972). He paid tribute to the importance of Bowlby's writings over the years from 1951 to 1969 as the most influential in discussions on mothering, and expressed the view that Bowlby's writings had often been misinterpreted and wrongly used to support the notion that only twenty four hours care, day in and day out by the child's own mother was good enough. What Rutter did not say was that this misinterpretation was particularly useful to those who wanted to penalise working mothers who requested the provision of day care facilities. Rutter objected to the term "maternal deprivation" used by Bowlby and Ainsworth (1962) which implied "some specific syndrome of the unitary causation of distress" and he advanced the argument that there were other types of deprivation besides maternal during separation. He argued that many children were not damaged by separation. He drew attention to age differences in the responses of children to various forms of privation and deprivation and stressed the fact that "children's needs differ according to their stage of development." (Rutter 1981 p.122)

Rutter also criticised Bowlby's view of the child as 'monotropic' [i.e. that the bond with mother or mother substitute has a different quality from that with others]. He disagreed that the bond was different, and suggested the argument that most children developed bonds with other members of the family, and that bonding could occur with those who were not biologically connected (as observed in foster care). Rutter also pointed out the omission, until recently, of the difference between boys and girls in their early mother-child relationships and that whilst it has been noted that the behaviour does differ, it is still not sure how, and he concluded that,

> "the concept of 'maternal deprivation' has undoubtedly been nevertheless useful in focusing attention on the sometime grave consequences of deficient or disturbed care in early life." (Rutter 1972 p.128)

Bowlby (1969) agreed with reviewers and critics that whilst his 1951 report highlighted the ill effects that seemed attributable to maternal deprivation, the processes by which the separation from mother or mother-substitute promoted ill effects were not described nor had other variables been identified. He continued to research in order to find a more scientific and reliable theory. This result of his further work was to become known as Attachment Theory.

Attachment Theory

In discussing attachment and attachment behaviour, it is usual to do so in the light of relationships of infant and young children with their parents, and with their mothers in particular - who in most instances, are the prime carers. Bowlby emphasised that,

> "Attachment Theory was formulated to explain certain patterns of behaviour, characteristic not only of infants and young children but also of adolescents and adults; behaviour that was formerly conceptualised in terms of dependency and over dependence." (Bowlby 1988 p.119)

He believed that attachment behaviour characterised human beings from the cradle to the grave (Bowlby 1979 p.129). Other researchers have also held the view that attachment exists throughout the life span. Main, Kaplan and Cassidy (1985) and Cassidy (1988) quoted in Ainsworth (1991) explored how individual children showed differences in patterns of attachment at six years old. Ainsworth (1991) drew attention to women during pregnancy who in the absence of a partner seemed to need to rely on an attachment figure, usually their own mother. Gerwitz (1991 p.11) observed that

> "attachment has emerged as a key area (for some, the most salient area) of social development. Theory and research on attachment as process and as outcome has flourished in recent years. No longer does research concentrate only on one-year-old humans with their mothers and in one setting. Work on attachment process has proliferated with a variety of other species and with

humans in diverse cultures and at various points in the life cycle including the later years." (Gerwitz 1991 p.11)

Bowlby acknowledged several important influences on his thinking and on his search for a new conceptualisation of the effects of separation, loss and maternal deprivation. Important for his studies were the writings of Ainsworth (1962) who contributed to a collection of studies commissioned by the World Health Organisation to record the several kinds of experiences covered by maternal deprivation and a reassessment of them. She then highlighted issues which needed to be researched. Subsequently Ainsworth researched the extent of the child's attachment to mother by observing the behaviour when separated for short periods and reunited. The experiment, known as the "strange situation", will be described later.

Other influences came from ethology and specifically the work of Harlow (1958) who had observed the behaviour of rhesus monkeys separated from their biological mothers and then placed with surrogate mothers, one made of wire and one of furry material. The infant monkeys could obtain their food from a bottle attached to the wire mothers, but spent most of the time clinging to the furry mothers (who had no bottle) as they would have done with their real mothers. When alarmed and frightened, they also sought comfort and protection from the furry mothers. Observation of these monkeys across the life span, revealed that they experienced difficulty in relating to their peers and did not engage in the usual play activities of young monkeys. On reaching maturity, the males were often unsuccessful in mating; and females who reproduced refused to suckle their young and were inclined to be rough and punitive towards them (Harlow and Zimmerman 1959). Harlow concluded that the factor which seemed crucial to the difference in behaviour of the normal monkeys and the experimental monkeys was the absence of a live mother. This finding was important in providing clues (although primates cannot be equated with human beings) to the concept of attachment and attachment behaviour.

The other ethologist whose work influenced Bowlby's thinking was Lorenz (1957) who in investigating the instinctive behaviour of goslings discovered that soon after

they were hatched, they followed him as they would their mother if she were present. Lorenz attributed this behaviour to the gosling's need to maintain proximity to a seemingly protective figure during a critical period of life, and he called this phenomenon "imprinting". Another observation made by Lorenz which interested Bowlby was that when the young goslings were separated from their mothers, they showed signs of anxiety by cheeping and searching. This behaviour occurred although they were not fed by mothers.

Bowlby utilised this concept in the formulation of attachment theory. The human infant was unable to follow his/ her mother or mother-substitute, but by outstretched arms towards mother, crying, crawling and following, maintained proximity, and attachment began to be formed - as long as the adult was physically and emotionally available. Responsive behaviour by mother or mother substitute, was regarded as complementary to attachment. The important function of attachment was that of protection.

Bowlby (1980 p.40) observed that geese bonded without feeding and rhesus monkeys fed without bonding and he argued that,

> "we must postulate that an attachment system could be unrelated to feeding, which, adopting a biological approach from which psychoanalysis had increasing become divorced, makes sound evolutionary and development sense." (Holmes 1993 p.64)

Bowlby's Relationship with Psychoanalysis

Bowlby was critical of psychoanalysts who emphasised the projection of 'internal' dangers, such as feelings of hatred and rage upon a neutral or benign environment, and disregarded potential threats to the individual from the external environment. According to Holmes, Bowlby argued that,

> "both Freud and Klein failed to take the all-important step of seeing attachment between infant and mother as a psychological bond in its own right, not an instinct derived from feeding or infant sexuality."

He was in tune with Balint (1964), an analyst of the Hungarian school who had advanced a view that the child showed an instinctive clinging to mother independent of feeding (Holmes 1993 p.63).

Bowlby (1982) refuted the claim made by some clinicians of whom Brody (1981) was one - that attachment theory was another version of behaviourism. He thought that the claim was based on scant knowledge of his work set out in the third volume of Attachment and Loss (1980). He attributed the misperception partly to his failure to draw the distinction between attachment and attachment behaviour.

Definitions of Attachment

Bowlby defined attachment thus:

> "To say of a child or older person that he is attached or has an attachment to someone means that he is strongly disposed to seek proximity to and contact with that individual and to do so especially in certain specified conditions, such as illness, fear or some other discomfort. The disposition to behave in this way is an attribute of the attached person, a persisting attribute that changes only slowly over time and that is unaffected by the situation of the moment.
>
> "Attachment behaviour, by contrast, refers to any of the various forms of behaviour that the person engages in from time to time to maintain a desired proximity...Whilst attachment behaviour is its most obvious in early childhood, it can be observed throughout the life cycle especially in emergencies. Since it is seen in virtually all human beings (though in varying patterns), it is regarded as an integral part of human nature and one we share (to a varying extent)

with numbers of other species. The biological function attributed to it is that of protection..." (Bowlby 1982 pp.668-669)

Winnicott (1965) expressed the view that the mother and child may be regarded as a "nursing couple" in which both make a contribution to establishing a relationship. He believed that if the mothering a child received was "good enough" that the child would develop and survive. Bowlby was of the opinion that many young children, even when mothers were not "good enough", tried to maintain an attachment to them.

Marris (1991 p.78) believed that,

> "Attachment is the first and most crucial relationship through which human beings learn to organise meanings. Since our wellbeing depends on securing the protection of our attachment figures that relationship is our central concern throughout childhood and if unresolved lingers into adult life."

Holmes (1993 p.67) stressed the spatial nature of attachment and stated that it is mediated by looking, hearing and holding which tend to promote good happy feelings; distance caused anxiety, sadness and loneliness. He considered,

> "the consummation of attachment is not primarily orgasmic - rather, it is, via the achievement of proximity, a relaxed state in which one can begin to 'get on with things' pursue one's projects, to explore."

Weiss (1982) highlighted three prominent characteristics of attachment.
Firstly, "Proximity Seeking" to a preferred figure, even though a child will engage in attachment behaviour to different persons within the immediate extended family in order to have his/her needs met, the attachment will be influenced by a number of factors such as the stage of development of the child, age, temperament, and state of health.
Secondly, the "Secure Base" effect. A secure base implies a safe environment provided by the individual to whom the child is attached. Operating from a secure

base, the child is prone to be curious and to explore the environment, confident of protection even in what may seem a dangerous situation. The child is then relatively free of anxiety and is able to enjoy playful activities.

Thirdly, he described "Separation Protest". In order to test the strength of attachment, researchers observed children's behaviour when separated. This will be described in the "Strange Situation" experiments of Ainsworth (Ainsworth, Behar, Waters and Wall 1978). The experiment has been replicated in several different countries and across cultures and classes and as a tool for assessing the nature of the child's attachment to mother when separated and reunited. It has generally been regarded as a valid and reliable tool.

Separation From Mother and Reunion

Child psychologists and researchers have observed the child's behaviour when separated from mother or carer in order to test the quality of attachment. The best known work is that of Ainsworth and colleagues (1969,1978) known as the "Strange Situation". Empirical studies were carried out first in the homes of mothers and their young children in Uganda, and in laboratory conditions in Baltimore. In the first study infants from the Ganda tribe in Uganda were visited by Ainsworth over a period of two weeks. The children were held or propped up or allowed to crawl around in the presence of several adults. By the age of six months all but four children showed attachment behaviour towards the mother. They cried when she left the room and on her return welcomed her by smiling, lifting of the arms and crowing delightfully. They cried when they were left alone or with strangers. By about nine months of age and continuing until two years infants were more vigorous in following their mothers. If left they would greet mother and quickly crawl towards her and cling to her, especially if a stranger entered the room.

In the laboratory study, the researcher admitted a mother and one year old child into a playroom for a session, which lasted twenty minutes. After the child was introduced to the play material the mother was asked to leave the room with the researcher for about three minutes. She returned and reunited with the child. When the child

continued to play mother and researcher left the child alone for three minutes before reuniting child and mother. The aim of the experiment was to observe how individual mother and child responded to separation.

In Ainsworth's original studies three patterns of responses were recorded and later a fourth was added. They were as follows:

A. **Insecure - Avoidant**: The child showed little or no distress when mother left the room and when she returned he avoided her. Play was less spontaneous and mother was watched warily but no attempt was made to make contact with her. Mother seemed insensitive as to whether the child needed comfort or not.

B. **Secure attachment**: The child showed some distress by crying and attempting to follow the mother, but responded to the stranger in the room and continued to play. When mother returned the child showed pleasure and went to mother who responded by lifting and holding and talking to him. When comforted, the child returned to play.

C. **Insecure / Ambivalent:** The child was very distressed when separated and attempted to follow mother. He was not easily comforted. When reunited with mother although he allowed her to lift him he tried to disengage from her and refused toys offered. He clung to her at intervals between crying angrily and playing spasmodically.

In the experiment about 55%-65% exhibited type B pattern (i.e. secure attachment), 20%-30% type A (avoidant), and 5%-15% type C (ambivalent).

D. The fourth pattern of reacting in the Strange Situation was described and named **Disorganised / Disoriented** (Main and Weston 1981, Main and Solomon 1990) They found that 15%-25% of infants followed their parent to the door and screamed when the mother left the room. An attempt was made to greet the mother when she returned but then she/he turned away from her and lay face down on the floor and seemed to freeze. Main (1994) claimed that this behaviour occurred if the infant had been frightened. Previously the situation became paradoxical for the child was unable to go to the parent or to run away. A number of children maltreated by parents, about 80%, according to Main and Solomon, are found in this type D category.

Barret and Trevitt (1992) observing five and six year old children in school identified children who lacked security. They often exhibited anxious and inattentive behaviour, lacked initiative, relied heavily on teachers for help and were uncooperative with adults and with peers. Some of the children had experienced numerous moves to local authority care and back to families, and the lack of a secure base, having the attachments they tried to make frequently broken, must have contributed to their feelings of insecurity. Bowlby believed that attachment takes place with the principal caregiver and this is usually the mother. This phenomenon he called monotropy, but Holmes (1993 p.69) makes the point that monotropy is usually hierarchical and may include attachment to father, siblings and other members of the extended family, pets and even inanimate objects.

An example of children demonstrating their use of a secure base is that of Anderson (1972) who observed a group of mothers with their toddlers in a park in London. Whilst the mothers sat and talked with each other, the children played and seemed to prescribe for themselves a limit beyond which they did not go without looking anxiously around in their mothers' direction. Holmes in commenting on this observation declared that,

> "attachment exerted an invisible but powerful pull on the child just as heavenly bodies are connected by gravitational forces. But unlike gravity, attachment makes its presence felt by a negative inverse square law; the further the attached person is from their secure base, the greater the pull of attachment." (Holmes 1993 p.70)

Holmes (1993 p.105), drew attention to "significant cross-cultural variations" in responses. In Western Europe and the United States of America (he did not mention the ethnicity of samples), the insecure - avoidant classification seemed commoner, and insecure ambivalent was more pronounced in Israel and Japan.

Waters (1978) believed that the child who was securely attached was able to approach the mother positively and could be comforted by her after being upset at the

separation. Others have provided empirical evidence to demonstrate that the quality of the mother-infant interaction underlies the development of secure or insecure attachment (Grossman and Grossman 1986 and Isabella and Belsky 1991).

It was also observed that depressed mothers found difficulty in interacting with their children and insecure attachment was therefore more common among children whose mothers were depressed (Radke-Yarrow 1991). In assessing maternal deprivation Rutter expressed the view that parental apathy and lack of response appeared to be more important as inhibitors of the child's attachment (Rutter 1988 pp.20-22).

Fahlberg working with children who had been separated and who were in need of substitute care observed that the foundation for the child's future relationships could be traced to the bond which had been developed by the child to his/her carer during the early years of life (Fahlberg 1988 p.3).

Schaffer and Emerson (1964) argued that the absolute amount of time spent in the company of the child did not seem to affect the development of attachment, what seemed more important was the intensity of the parental interaction. Holmes (1993 pp.106-107) in discussing the Strange Situation research as part of a larger study where mothers were visited in their homes throughout the first year of the child's life, relate that the pattern of attachment at one year correlated strongly with the relationship which the mother had to the child in the preceding twelve months.

Studies by Sroufe (1979), Main and Weston (1982) Grossman and colleagues (1986), reported that mothers of secure one year old children were responsive to their babies, whilst the mothers of insecure / avoidant one year olds were the opposite. The behaviour of mothers of those whose responses were insecure/ambivalent was inconsistent and unpredictable and they tended to ignore their babies' cries for attention. Where the child's relation was tested with both parents, it was found that children who were secure with both parents showed the most favourable outcomes (Main and Weston 1982).

Separation and Loss

Bowlby expressed the view that "loss of a loved person is one of the most intensely painful experiences any human can suffer"(Bowlby 1980 p.7). He believed that the cause of unhappiness, psychiatric illnesses and delinquency could be attributed to loss and believed that in working clinically with individuals, this was often missed (Bowlby 1953). In his early work observing children left in institutions and Robertson's observation of children in hospital (1958) they both highlighted that the children went through a process of mourning when separated from their parents and from mother in particular. When there was not satisfactory care the anger and despair could be instrumental in causing the child to turn away from willingness or the inclination to make affectionate relationships.

Salzberg-Wittenberg (1970 p.90) suggested that a Kleinian explanation would be that the absence of the mother generated anger and destructiveness in the child as the good internal mother was felt to be lost. The anxiety and feelings of persecution which follow could be so overwhelming that the individual lost hope and sometimes even the will to live. Bowlby observed that Freud and Klein seemed to have struggled with accepting the problem of young children's anxiety and phobias during the absence of their mothers. He quoted Freud (1915b SE14: 181), postulating that,

> "no external object is ever sought in and of itself, but only in so far as it aids in the elimination of the 'incessant afflux' of instinctual stimulation. Thus a mother is sought only in so far as she helps to reduce a build-up of tension arising from unmet physiological drives, and is missed only because it is feared such tension may go unrelieved."

This was usually referred to as "signal theory". Bowlby argued that this conclusion reinforced the mistaken belief that it was childish to be anxious and distressed when a loved person was absent and expressed yearning for the individual's presence (Bowlby 1973).

Deutsch (1937) believed that children were unable to mourn because of their inadequate psychic development. Klein (1940) disagreed and advanced the view that children were able to mourn and did so. Holding to her theory of the importance of feeding by mother, she claimed that it was the lost breast for which the child mourned. Although Deutsch and Klein arrived at opposite theoretical positions, their methodology was similar. They observed emotionally disturbed adults and so came to conclusions about early psychological development from their observations during the analysis of their clients. Bowlby was critical of this and thought that these two psychoanalysts failed to notice how 'ordinary' children of different ages responded to loss.

Bowlby (1998) recalled that he arrived at the conclusions about childhood mourning while working with Robertson in the 1950s. They were particularly struck by the reactions of young children when mothers appeared to be lost through separation. The reactions were those of protest, despair and finally detachment (these processes were described earlier).

He was also influenced by Marris' study (1958) of the response of widows to the death of their husbands. The responses were similar to those of the separated children. In studying the literature on mourning of healthy adults, Bowlby found that some of the responses labelled as pathological were common amongst the mourners. The responses included: anger, sometimes directed at others or to the absent person; disbelief that the person was lost and searching for the lost person, even at a conscious level. Bowlby thought that calling this reaction denial was misleading.

The comparisons which Bowlby made between the responses of children to separation from their mothers/parents and the mourning of adults were severely criticised, but over a period of time he was vindicated and his conclusions were supported by others such as Parkes (1972). Parkes also posited that experiences of disruption of relationships and loss were present throughout the life span.

The following stages have generally been observed when loss occurs: numbness, shock and disbelief; yearning, searching, pain, tension and misery; anger and resentment, and in some cases, guilt; disorganisation, despair, depression and withdrawal; adjustment, reorganisation, and, if all goes well, resolution.

Freud (1917) believed that within the individual there was some work occurring and that this was essential to the ability to form new relationships, and that identification was the key feature in the mourning period. Klein (1986) held the view that the mourner "reinstated" the missing person.

Marris advanced the view that because of the centrality of attachment to the security of the individual in childhood, it was firmly embedded in the meaning of safety for the rest of life. He claimed that,

> "Any loss which fundamentally disrupts the central purposes of our lives will normally provoke severe and long-lasting grief." (Marris 1991 p.81)

He believed that it was possible for most people to recover a sense of worthwhile life if the meaning of what is lost can be retrieved from the unretrievable past and so reform the meaning so that it becomes relevant to the present. He acknowledged that this is a painful and ambivalent process.

Attachment Theory has been studied extensively in the context of the mother and young child relationship. The 'Strange Situation' is well used in establishing immediate short term reaction to separation and reunion. Bearing in mind that attachment stretches across the life span it is important to conduct contemporary investigations of the long term meaning of maternal deprivation and disrupted attachments in adults. Holmes (1998) observes that a central concept which has emerged from Attachment Theory is that of narrative, and he argues that a person's core state is a condensed form of her/his primary relationship.

"Attachment theory has shown that self knowledge in the form of the narrative is associated with a core state characterised by a secure attachment. Narrative turns experience into a story which is temporal, is coherent and has meaning. It objectifies experience so that the sufferer becomes detached from it by turning raw feeling into symbols. It creates out of fragmentary experience an unbroken line or thread linking the present with the past or future. Narrative gives a person a sense of ownership of their past and their life" (Holmes 1992 p.150).

In attempting to investigate the long-term meaning of separation and reunion of the West Indian women in this study, narrative is seen as the most useful tool in helping them to recall and reflect on their experiences.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF ATTACHMENT AND THE PILOT STUDY

> "Until the last few years, almost all of the research into attachment concerned very young children. However, it is obvious that selective attachment is not something that applies only to infants. If it is conceptualised in terms of those aspects of relationships that reduce anxiety and provide emotional protection in circumstances of stress, it is evident that these apply across the life span right into extreme old age." (Rutter 1992 p.121).

Background

This retrospective study is of two groups of adult women from the Caribbean islands who were left as children in the care of mainly maternal grandmothers and other members of the extended family (Chapter One). After many years they experienced a second separation from their surrogate mothers and this was compounded by separation from the country and all the familiar things they knew, and they were sent to England to live with mothers from whom they had been separated for several years. They could be regarded as children in the "strange situation" (Ainsworth 1969) described in Chapter Three. Unfortunately for them the familiar carers were out of reach and they were unable to return to a "secure base" for comfort and reassurance.

It was observed whilst counselling women in a therapy centre that some of them requested a therapist of Caribbean background and most of them spoke about their early lives in the Caribbean nostalgically. Most of them were in broken relationships with partners or were experiencing difficulty with their children or with colleagues at work. When reflecting on their lives during their childhood and early adolescence, they spoke of separation and loss of their primary carers, of their traumatic reunion with mothers they had not known upon reunion in England, and the poor relationships they had with them. The women had no knowledge of the literature on Attachment Theory but most of them seem to be voicing some of the

opinions of some of the theorists, such as Ainsworth, Bowlby, and Winnicott, (Chapter Three).

The research with the sample of women of West Indian origin who had experienced broken attachments in their early lives significantly in relation to their biological mothers, is based in a loosely psychoanalytic framework in order to gain some access to their correspondingly deeper (perhaps unconscious) feelings about their early lives. It was considered important to try through in depth interviews to discover what internal representations the women had of their mothers and carer, and the meanings that they had attributed to their early life experiences.

Anthropological and Sociological Perspectives

Early studies of the West Indian family have been conducted by anthropologists and sociologists such as Simey (1946), Smith (1956), Clarke (1958), Braithwaite (1973) and Dann (1987) whose perspectives were mainly structural and functional. During the 1980s women in the Caribbean have undertaken studies under the auspices of the Institute of Social and Economic Research, at the University of the West Indies. Some covered the areas of "Women in the Family" (Durant-Gonzales 1982), "Perception of Caribbean Women" (Brodber 1982), but there is a dearth of studies in the former British islands which examine the psychological effects of the phenomenon of sharing the responsibilities of child-rearing and of shifting children among members of the extended family or other people external to the family network.

Psychological and Psychiatric Perspectives

Across the Atlantic in Canada and the United States, immigrant children from the West Indies have experienced problems pertaining to reunion with their biological parents after long separations similar to those in Britain. These families were referred to psychologists and psychiatrists, who then counselled them. Work undertaken by Da Costa at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, Toronto University, involved the examination of the psychodynamic aspects of the adjustment of children reunited with their parent or parents after long periods of separation (Da

Costa 1985). One of his findings was that in the reforming of attachments between children and parents, the outcomes were more favourable if the reunion occurred before the children were six years old and the least favourable when the children were adolescent .In contrast, Robertson(1975) researching in England, found that some of the mothers experienced more satisfactory relationships with children who were over the age of seven who were beginning to be more autonomous.

In the Caribbean, studies of parent-child socialisation, and the effects of unstable home environments are emerging. In Jamaica, in a study in which the living arrangements of children in which conduct disorder was prevalent, it was found that 92 per cent of them had experienced changes in their parental living arrangements two to six times. The author suggested that "the frequent changes in living conditions in living arrangements may have affected the quality of attachment relationships children formed with their parents" (Crawford-Brown 1997 p.217).

In Trinidad and Tobago, a child psychiatrist has drawn attention to mental health issues and family socialisation in the West Indies. She states that "mental health issues tied to attachment and loss, separation and loss are central to much of the psychopathology that may be associated with the specifics of Caribbean socialisation" (Sharpe 1997 p.266). She expressed the view that many children who experience serial losses of carers, to whom they were attached, by being shifted are vulnerable to depression and sadness, aggressive impulses and low self-esteem. She pointed out that factors such as the child's age and gender, temperament, and personality structure, and the influences of other socialisation agents will affect clinical manifestations.

In Martinique, a French Caribbean island, work on a mother-infant therapeutic programme was undertaken. Integrating a cultural-family approach and Attachment Theory the focus was on a group of high-risk infants from dysfunctional extended matrifocal families. The author identified some of the factors involved in disturbed mother-child attachment relationships and described a multisystemic approach for the remodelling of both the internal family processes and interactions between the family and the larger social system. (Cook-Darzens-Solange; Brunod-Regis 1999 pp.433-452) This study is one of the few to consider the utilisation of Attachment

Theory in examining mother-child relationship in the Caribbean context.

In Britain, some teachers and social workers were aware of the trauma which children who had joined their parents in England faced and some were referred to child guidance for help during the early years of the immigration (Stewart-Prince 1968). The children were mainly diagnosed as suffering from depression as a result of their separation from their significant carers and from their familiar environments of the West Indies and difficulty in settling in the new environment at home and at school.

Critique of Attachment Theory Interculturally

In 1992 Gambe and colleagues, in a training manual aimed at improving British social workers' practice with children and families, stated that attachment and separation were central to social work practice with children and families, but questioned how attachment theory could be transformed and deepened in order to increase its usefulness in the development of ethnically-sensitive and anti-racist practice. The writers criticised attachment theory for emphasising the importance of the attachment of a child to one primary carer, usually the mother. This was considered as a "traditionalist patriarchal view of childcare". The views were expressed that many children developed in contexts different from the traditional form with mother being the primary carer, and they appeared to thrive without difficulty. The need for a discussion of attachment to extended family members, and indeed to community networks was advocated (Gambe, Gomes, Kapur, Rangel and Stubbs 1992 pp.28-30).

There was no indication that the writers had any empirical evidence that children from black and minority groups did or did not prefer their own mothers and displayed attachment behaviour towards them when they needed comfort. Similar sentiments were expressed by Le Vine (1995 p.ix) who advanced the view that the psychology of attachment as propounded by Bowlby and Ainsworth in Chapter Three was presented as if attachment theory could be transformed into a universal biopsychology. Le Vine sees this concept as leaving the theory detached from local contexts of the behaviour of the parents and experiences of childhood in human

populations. He observed that the need to research the cultural contexts in which mother-child attachment arises and develops and the consequent behaviour of the child, has been slow in coming, and hypothesised that some psychologists interested in attachment, may prefer to believe that the process is universal.

Harwood, Miller and Irizarry (1995) undertook a study in which they examined the perceptions of attachment behaviour among Anglo mothers in Connecticut, United States of America, and a group of Puerto Rican mothers in Puerto Rico. The researchers concluded that:

> "on the basis of the existing literature, we would anticipate that warm, consistent parenting would predict Group B (secure) attachment outcomes in both groups. For both Anglo and Puerto Rican mothers, parental warmth and consistency would convey the sense of psychological safety that Bowlby and Ainsworth hypothesised to be essential to the development of Group B (Secure) patterns of attachment" (Harwood, Miller and Irizarry 1995 p.143).

This finding is unsurprising, as most studies of children have emphasised that their basic human needs must be met. It seems logical to believe that if carers are available physically and emotionally to meet the needs consistently, with warmth and positive feelings, it is likely that the children will feel good about themselves, will internalise positive role models and are more able to trust adults and be enabled to make and sustain satisfactory relationships during their childhood and also in later life with partners and their children.

Anecdotal Discussion on Mothering

Teaching child care in a Vocational Centre in West London to a group of young women who had been left behind in the West Indies and subsequently reunited with their mothers, provided me with the opportunity for them to talk informally about their early experiences. Most of them in their conversations revealed a yearning for an attachment to their mothers, even though they loved their grandmothers and others who cared for them in their early lives. Discussing the care of young children, most of them were adamant that the child's own mother should be the

primary carer in order to establish "a bond between mother and child". Which they considered as "natural" since mother carried the child throughout pregnancy. Nevertheless they were aware that there may be some factors that may prevent this, such as mothers' illness, physical or mental, or the circumstances under which the child had been conceived, or the lack of support, emotional and financial, given by the father of the child.

Theory and Practice of Child/Mother Relationships

During the last several decades, a considerable amount of research has been done on parent-child relationships. Medinnus (1967 p.v) advanced the view that among the factors which contributed to the interest was (1) the Freudian emphasis on the importance of the early years of children, and especially the effect on later personality and behaviour, (2) the focus of the mental hygiene movement (especially in America) on prevention of mental illness, which led to an interest in identifying antecedents of adult personality and adjustment.

Bowlby's writings between 1969 and 1980 which produced the Attachment and Loss trilogy stimulated researchers to continue exploring the theory. Ainsworth's device of the "Strange Situation" (1969) which focused specifically on the child's response to separation and reunion, has been extensively used with cross-cultural and intra-cultural variations, and is regarded as a valid and reliable tool. Whilst the focus of this device was with young children others such as Main, Kaplan and Cassidy (1985) and Cassidy (1988) have worked with older children and adults.

Holmes (1993 p.111) summarises the "post-Bowlbyian" conclusions in Attachment Theory which has been undertaken in more than a decade as follows:

> "Relationship patterns established in the first year of life continue to have a power influence on children's subsequent behaviour, social adjustment, self-concept and autobiographical capacity".

Influences on this Study

These findings were of particular interest in the planning of this study as they emphasised the importance of conducting a contemporary investigation of the long-term meaning of maternal deprivation, and with a sample from a culture where children frequently experience serial losses of mothers and subsequent carers to whom they had become attached.

There were three significant major experiences in the lives of the women, which occurred in their childhood, which could be regarded as factors which adversely affected their capacity for making and sustaining intimate relationships:

1. The separation from and loss of mothers in early childhood.
2. The broken attachment from the primary care givers and separation from them against their will.
3. The disappointment that expectations of mother and a caring environment were not met.

The objectives of the current research were:

- To identify the women's feelings when separated from their primary carer.
- To identify how the reunion with mothers was experienced.
- To identify congruence of the women's perceptions of attachment, separation and loss with literature on attachment, separation and loss.
- To identify the factors which contributed to the resilience and adaptability of some of the women and not to others.

Methods considered for the study

There were a number of methods which might have been used for the study:

- A collection of data from the notes of women who had undergone psychotherapy. The disadvantage of this was the confidential nature of the notes, and it might have been impossible to gain consent from the clients. Some of the notes may have been brief and the assumption could not be made that all

the issues considered important for the study would have been covered in the therapy. It would not have been possible to obtain a control group.

- A postal questionnaire, but this was rejected on the grounds that the early life histories of the women were too sensitive and might have raised feelings with which they would have been left to deal since there would not have been the opportunity for debriefing. Also it is well known that there is usually a limited response to this method.

- Hospital records since a number of women of West Indian origin were admitted into psychiatric hospitals, but there was the possibility that the information of the separation-reunion experiences would not be found in the records. There would have been difficulty in locating the women in order to obtain their consent.

- A focus group. This would have been time consuming as time would have had to be given for the group to arrive at the stage of "norming" before they were able to trust each other in order to disclose what they may have considered as family secrets.

- The use of a closed-ended structured questionnaire. The information of early experiences was qualitative and "yes" and "no" answers would not have been able to convey feelings about the issues pertaining to the separation from carers and the reunions with mothers whom they did not know and who did not know them. The problem of questionnaire based research is the difficulty of being sure that all respondents understood the questions in the same way. The breadth of the experiences to be covered would make the questionnaire extremely long.

- Narrative analysis is particularly useful in a study such as this. It provides the opportunity to obtain the perceptions of the women of the effect of broken attachments on their lives, bearing in mind that they grew up, not in a single culture, but in a mixture of social and economic contexts which invariably influenced their actions and social relations. I considered that the relating of their life stories would help the women to clarify the significant events, which contributed to making them the persons they are now. The narrative analysis

would also allow unknown factors to be revealed which may be useful for further research.

According to Holmes,

> "Narrative explanations are part of a network of representations of the self and the world, which provide a causal map which guides action and enables social relationships to run smoothly. We need to know who we are, and where we come from if we are to relate effectively to others".

He makes the point that the difference between a narrative account and conventional scientific explanation is the dependence of the narrative on human agency, which provides the link between narrative and psychodynamics (Holmes 1998 p.279). The women who find difficulty in making and sustaining relationships may unconsciously hold themselves responsible for not trusting others which perhaps is based on unexpressed feelings of mistrust of those they loved and who were responsible for the traumatic separations in their early lives.

The Qualitative Approach

The decision to design the study as a qualitative one was dictated by the nature of the data which were the narratives of the women. They were being asked to express their feelings about their early life experiences of separation from their mothers, then becoming attached to grandmothers or another member of the extended family from whom they separated in order to reunite with mother whom they had not seen for several years. The qualitative approach would attempt to capture the themes, which emerged from the narratives.

Within a qualitative study, there is a possibility of doing a statistical analysis of some responses, but this would be wasteful of the detail of the verbatim data. I was committed to producing a study rooted in reality which might be useful in helping people of West Indian origin to consider the importance of early childhood experiences in the development of adult personality, I believed it was necessary to adopt an approach which made it comfortable for the participants to speak freely and

uninhibitedly guided by a semi-structured schedule.

The Central Hypothesis

The experiences of broken attachments to the primary carer, of separation and loss, and disappointment that expectations of close relationships with biological mothers when reunited were not realised, adversely affected the women's ability to trust others and prevented them from making and maintaining close relationships.

The Separation-Reunion Interview Schedule

In order to research the phenomenon of separation and reunion of the women a semi-structured interview schedule was devised bearing in mind the advantages, namely that it:

- Facilitates rapport and empathy.
- Allows greater flexibility and tends to produce a greater amount of data.
- Helps the interviewer to gain a detailed picture of respondents' perceptions of their experiences.
- Ensures that the same questions are asked and the same ground covered in all of the interviews.
- Allows the interviewer to probe at certain appropriate points within the interview.

According to Smith, Harre, and Luk Van Langenhove (1995) semi-structured interviews and a qualitative approach are especially suitable where there is a particular interest in a complex process. They also warned that the interview takes longer and is harder to analyse. However, my experience of having practised as a Psychiatric Social Worker informed my thinking, hence the methodology for the research. Previous informal conversations with a number of women who had experiences of broken attachments in their early childhood were also considered. These provided clues for questions which would elicit the important data. The Separation-Reunion Interview Schedule was then devised. It was similar in some respects to the Adult Attachment Interview, known as the AAI (Main 1985). This

seemed inevitable since the aim of both questionnaires was to produce a suitable tool for asking the subjects for an evaluation of their early experiences and the meanings they attributed to them.

The Adult Attachment Interview is a structured, semi-clinical interview focussing upon early attachment experiences and their effects. Subjects are asked for five adjectives to describe their relationship to each parent during childhood, and then for memories which support the choice of each adjective. They are asked whether they felt closer to one parent, and why; whether they had ever felt rejected during childhood, whether parents had been threatening with them in any way, why parents may have behaved as they did during childhood, and how these experiences may have affected the development of their personality. In addition they are asked about any major loss experiences. The technique has been described as one of "surprising the unconscious" (George, Kaplan and Main 1996). As a result of the analysis of the interviews,

> "the speakers are judged 'secure/autonomous' when they produce an acceptably coherent and collaborative narrative. Interviews are classified as 'dismissing' when discourse appears aimed at minimising the discussion of attachment-related experiences. Individuals classified as 'preoccupied' while not necessarily internally inconsistent, produce narratives that nonetheless violate the principle of collaboration" (Hesse 1999 pp.397-398).

Frequently when working with black and other minority ethnic groups the criticism is levelled at researchers that they use tools which have been devised for use with the population of the dominant group in Europe and America. It was therefore decided to utilise the SRIS with women from the West Indies in this study. This does not rule out the use of the AAI with a sample of people from West Indian origin in the future when the aim is to predict future interactions between parents and as caregivers and their own children.

Structure of the Separation-Reunion Schedule (Appendices 3 and 4)

The schedule was divided into three sections with the purpose of obtaining data from three significant periods of the women's early lives.

Section A: Pre-migration

This section covered women's basic socio-demographic details as well as memories and feelings of mothers and early carers. In this section their early attachments were the main focus:

Background of the individual
Age when left and with whom
Who was primary carer?
Memories of and feelings about biological mother
Feelings of why mother was not there.
Memories of and feelings for primary carer.
Knowledge of and feelings about father
Feelings about sibs (if any)
Feelings about the environment
Feelings about leaving carer and family members and friends and familiar surroundings
Wanted to leave?
Preparation for leaving

Section B: Migration

Focus on separation and loss, and life in the new country
Age when left the West Indies
Arrival in England
Feelings about first meeting with mother
Feelings about those left behind
Expectations of mother
Feelings about life in new family
Feeling about younger sibs (if any)
Feelings about father/stepfather
Feelings about the new environment
Level of communication and with whom in the family.
Feelings about responsibilities within the new family

What missed most of life in the West Indies?

Contact with those in the West Indies?

Feelings about school life and peers and teachers

Leaving School

What qualifications

Leaving parents' home

Age when left

Under what circumstances?

Section C: Post–Migration

The focus was on long term effects of the early life experiences.

How easy or difficult to find employment.

Relationships with colleagues at work

Further education

Relationships with partners (if any)

Relationship with own children (if any)

Feelings about how early life experiences of broken attachments influenced their personalities, and affected the way they are now.

Feelings about the ability to trust others and to make sustain relationships

Recruitment of the Women

The women were recruited from various sources:

1. Therapists

Individual meetings were held with therapists in a therapy centre and in private practice and the research plan explained. They were requested to ask women who met the criteria of having been separated as children and later reunited with their mothers during immigration from the West Indies to Britain if they would consider taking part in the study. A letter was given to the therapists for the women who agreed, and those who consented passed on their telephone numbers to me in order that a brief explanation would be given to them. Appointments were made for a preliminary meeting for introductions so that the women were able to decide whether they were able to relate to me and then a date was agreed for the interview. There were a few instances when the women were unable to meet beforehand and were satisfied with the telephone introduction and fifteen women were recruited in

this way.

2. **Advertisement**

An advertisement was placed in a counselling journal. There was one letter in response in which the respondent said that she was willing to be interviewed but she failed to respond to an invitation to meet.

3. **Church**

A church with several members of West Indian origin in its congregation was approached through a member and four women expressed an interest, but subsequently declined

4. **Social Workers**

Some social workers were asked to facilitate introductions to women whom they were asked to tell about the study and who thought they might participate, but this source was unproductive.

5. **Voluntary Organisations**

(i) Newpin, a voluntary organisation which provides help for young women by offering parenting and other skills was approached, but this was unsuccessful.

(ii) A women's group which provided vocational training for black and other ethnic women.

6. **The Snowballing Technique**

After spending a great deal of time waiting for replies from possible respondents, a number of women were found willing to be interviewed. It was therefore decided to try the snowballing technique in which they were asked to suggest others who they thought would like to participate. This method yielded a number of women, mainly those who were not receiving therapy.

Size of the Sample

The sample finally consisted of thirty-two women, of whom the first twelve were selected for a pilot study. The size of the sample reflected the relatively recent trend of black women to seek therapeutic help. They, like members of other minority ethnic groups, tended to somatise their problems, (Littlewood 1982), Fernando (1988) and Rack (1982). They visited general practitioners who seldom referred them for therapy. The women who agreed to participate in the study may or may not

be representative of the population of women who experienced early separation and broken attachments. Nevertheless it is envisaged that the study will be useful in indicating trends and stimulating interest for future research.

The Interview

Some of the interviews, which lasted for approximately two hours, were conducted in the homes of the women and others in the office, whichever place, was more convenient for the women. Close attention was paid to the manner in which the women told their stories, to, for example, their body language and facial expressions, when they recalled certain memories. Care was taken to ensure that the interviewees were given time to pause and to reflect on statements they made. The women in the pilot study preferred not to have the interview recorded so the notes were written immediately after the interview. My training and long experience of counselling equipped me with the skill of recording nearly verbatim immediately after the interview. At the end of the interview time was allowed for the debriefing of the interviewees and they were reassured of the confidential nature of the interviews. It was interesting that some of the interviewees chose to add statements, especially concerning their relationships with their mothers, after the close of the interview. Some asked that sensitive material would not be recorded, and this was respected.

It was anticipated that interviewees might have been selective in what they chose to recall. I share the view of Plummer (1988) that:

> "the problems of life histories are a view of the past from the standpoint of the present and this raises the question of the accuracy of recall of facts about the interpretative framework through which memories are recalled" (Plummer 1988 p.23).

CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS OF THE PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was invaluable for providing guidance in the compilation of the interview schedule to be used in the research. It provided the opportunity to test whether there were leading questions or ambiguities, and whether the ordering of the questions was logical.

The pilot study was like the later main study in that the twelve women were divided into two groups. Group A, the experimental group, consisted of those who had received or were receiving therapy and Group B, the control group who had not received therapy. One of the women of the latter group was unable to participate as she was going on an extended holiday and it was not possible to find a replacement at the time. The pilot sample therefore consisted of six women in Group A and five in Group B.

The Demographic Characteristics of the women in the Pilot Study

The women came from four different islands of the Caribbean; Jamaica, Barbados, St. Kitts, Antigua and Grenada. The greatest number came from Jamaica and this was in accordance with the pattern of the immigration as 60% of the immigrants were from that island. Although the populations in each island are very diverse, all of the women of the sample were black and of African heritage.

Characteristics of the Women

Table 1 Age

	GROUP A	GROUP B
1.	35 years	36 years
2.	32 years	40 years
3.	36 years	42 years
4.	46 years	45 years
5.	38 years	47 years
6.	45 years	

The age range correlated with the peaking of the immigration from the West Indies to Britain in the 1960s when the immigrants realised that the likelihood of returning home to the West Indies was remote. At that time restrictive immigration laws which would make it difficult for people to gain entry were being discussed in Parliament and parents decided to arrange for the children from whom they had been separated for some time to join them.

Table 2 Civil Status		
Group A		Group B
Single	4	3
Co-hab.	1	1
Married		1
Divorced	1	

Table 3 Children		
Group A		Group B
1.	2	0
2.	0	1
3.	0	5
4.	1	1 adopted
5.	2	2
6.	0	

Table 4 Age when left				
Group A			Group B	
	Age when left	Age when reunited	Age when left	Age when reunited
1.	1 month	10 years	Baby	8 years
2.	1 year	11 years	4 years	12 years
3.	6 years	8 years	Baby	9 years
4.	1 year	11 years	5 years	13 years
5.	Baby	10 years	3 years	11 years
6.	Baby	9 years		

Table 5 With whom left	
Group A	Group B
4 with maternal grandmothers	5 with maternal grandmothers
1 with maternal great aunt	
1 with paternal uncle and his wife	

Table 6 Left with siblings			
Group A		Group B	
Left with siblings	Alone	Left with siblings	Alone
4	2	3	2

Table 7 Further Education and Occupation		
	Group A	Group B
1.	Administrator	Administrator
2.	Clerical worker	Administrator
3.	Factory worker	Factory worker
4.	Factory worker	Lawyer
5.	Mental health worker	Receptionist
6.	Student (law)	

Table 8 Religion			
Group A		Group B	
Practising	Non Practising	Practising	Non Practising
1 (Pentecostal)	5	3 (2 Roman Catholic 1 Pentecostal)	2

The First section of the Interview Schedule covered experiences prior to immigration, (Appendix 3).

Five of the women, three in group A, and two in group B were left between the ages of nought to five years. They had no memory of being cared for by their own mothers. The six year-old in group A recalled that her mother did not pay her too much attention, her father was kind to her, and she helped to look after her two younger sisters. Nine recalled that life at home with grandmother was enjoyable and they believed that their grandmothers and other members of the extended family loved them. The six year old who was left with her uncle and his wife recalled that she was very unhappy because she was badly treated in the home.

All of the women regarded their grandmothers as their mothers although they knew that their biological mothers were abroad. They were not reminded about their mothers through conversation. Mention of her was only made when remittances were received. Those who were left with siblings had close relationships with them.

Preparation for leaving

Nine of the women were not prepared for leaving home. One mother returned from England to take her and her brother back with her. She recalled that this did not make it any easier to leave her grandmother. The six year old having been so unhappy in her uncle's house approached a friend of her father and asked him to write to her father to ask him to send for her and her sisters. She was very pleased to leave the island.

Nine of the women, four in group A, five in group B, said that they did not want to leave their grandmothers. One woman in group A recalled her fantasy that everyone in England was rich and beautiful and so her mother would be. This fantasy was shattered when she met her mother and saw the conditions in which her mother lived, and she never recovered from her disappointment.

MIGRATION

Relationship with Mothers

The women joined their parents when they were approaching puberty. Nine regarded mother as a stranger, and mothers did not make any attempt to embrace and greet them. One in group B was brought by her mother, but the relationship was strained. One in group A felt accepted by her mother who greeted her warmly with hugs and kisses. There was hardly any communication between them and their mother. No one spoke about those they had left behind and they were not encouraged to speak about them either.

Ten of the women said that it was made clear to them after arrival, that they were expected to perform all of the household chores and to take care of their younger siblings. One woman in group A, said that mother did the chores and she was treated as though she was younger than her sister and brother who were born in England. She expressed the thought that perhaps her mother was compensating for having left her behind. She loved being "pampered" because she had been accustomed to "that type of treatment from grandmother".

The women who came with siblings felt very close to them and they supported each other. They spoke the same language and could talk about others at home in the West Indies when they were together and out of earshot of the rest of the family. The woman in group A, who had been warmly received by her mother, was also accepted by her brother and sister born in England. Eight of the women felt that the younger siblings for whom mothers showed preference resented them.

Relationship with Fathers

There were three biological fathers. One woman in group A reported that her father was kinder to her than her mother. Two women in group A disclosed that their fathers had sexually abused them. In one instance, one women's mother was mentally ill and in hospital and father made her occupy the marital bed. After some time she disclosed the abuse to the police, but was not supported by her mother who accused her of bringing shame on the family. The father left soon afterwards and returned to the country of origin.

The other woman said that she felt that her mother was aware of the abuse by her father, but seemed incapable of taking any action to stop it. The abuse only stopped when she left home. Both women were still very angry with their fathers, but even more so with their mothers for failing to protect them.

Relationship with Stepfathers

Eight paternal figures were stepfathers. Four women in each of the groups said that their stepfathers resented them, and there was no communication between them. They also felt uncomfortable in the presence of their stepfathers.

Punishment

Ten recalled physical punishment for "any and everything" which displeased mother. The one (in group A) who was treated favourably by mother did not receive physical punishment.

Physical Environment

All of the women expressed dislike and disappointment with their new environment, as housing was inadequate, with their families sharing kitchens and bathrooms with other families. They were cold and uncomfortable most of the time. The food was different and they disliked it. They experienced racism by being called abusive names when they walked the streets, for example "wog", "blackie" and "nigger".

Relationship with Schools

All of the women recalled school with little enthusiasm. They had little time to play because they had to return home to perform their domestic chores. Their educational progress was hampered because they had little time for doing their homework. They were subjected to racist taunts in the playground, and their accents and their pronunciation of words were ridiculed by English children. They felt that the teachers were not interested in them and had low expectations of them. One woman in group B stated that she regressed as when she came to England she had already covered the syllabus at school in the West Indies. No attention was paid to her and she went through school doing nothing, and as a result left school without any qualifications. Ten of the women left school with C.S.E. certificates and were not encouraged either by teachers or parents to pursue further education.

They made very few friends at school as very often they were the only black child in the school.

Post Migration

Relationship with Mother

Ten of the women were eager to leave home as soon as they left school between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years. The one who was favourably treated by mother remained at home until the age of twenty-two. One woman in group A was so disappointed and disillusioned with the reunion with her mother, she felt that she

needed to get as far away as possible and she joined the navy and went to sea. However, her stay in the service was short lived as she was forced to retire on grounds of mental ill health and was hospitalised before being referred for intercultural psychotherapy.

Relationship at Work

Ten of the women had no difficulty in obtaining employment, which consisted of mainly unskilled work, and their relationships with colleagues at work were satisfactory. One woman in group A was unwell and was unable to work.

Education

Eight of the women went on to further their education and obtained clerical skills which enhanced their employment prospects. One woman obtained a lower degree, the other a post-graduate degree.

Relationship with Partners

All eleven women admitted that they experienced difficulty with relationships with partners. Two women in group B had married men who had similar experiences of having been left in the West Indies for long periods of time before being reunited with their mothers. One woman in group B was married to a man from a similar racial background, but from a another continent with different cultural norms. They all divorced after the birth of their children.

The woman who had a close relationship with her mother and siblings was cohabiting with her partner but was finding it difficult to stay in the house and maintain a family life. She complained of his lack of communication, and each time there was a disagreement between them, she would return to her mothers until she felt better.

Eight women had several partners, but their relationships were brief. They claimed

that they were unable to safeguard themselves against being hurt. On reflection they linked this to their early experiences when they were "let down" by those closest to them. This contributed to their inability to trust anyone and to believe that they were loved and wanted. One woman who was homosexual felt that she was unable to enter long lasting relationships.

Relationship with Children

Ten of the women had borne children. They said that they loved them and wanted to care for them themselves as they felt children should be cared for by their own mothers. They were adamant that they did not want their mothers who had not cared for them, to be involved with the care of their children and they were critical of their mothers' ability to care for children. They claimed that they regarded their grandmothers back in the West Indies as their models for caring for their children.

Two of the women in group A became very distressed and apologised for not being able to complete the interview. They were debriefed and thanked for participating and reassured that they had been helpful and that the interview was confidential. They were receiving therapy and said that they would discuss their experiences with the therapist.

Factors Women Isolated From Their Experiences.

All the women were of the opinion that the following factors had adversely affected their personalities:

The separation from mother in their infancy.

The separation from their grandmothers and other members of the extended family.

Reuniting with mothers who were strangers to them and who showed preference for children born in England.

Lack of help to adjust to a strange and hostile environment

Lack of encouragement to talk about those left behind.

Lack of communication with firstly their mothers and secondly their grandmothers back in the West Indies.

The unavailability of anyone with whom they could share their grief and anger about their loss.

The disappointment about England generally and specifically about their immediate home environment.

Conclusion

The women said that they felt sad and angry most of the time, and had no close relationships although they had friends. Two women in Group A confessed to having suicidal ideas "to end it all" but they were prevented by their religious conviction that suicide was wrong. They believed that therapy was helping them to improve their feelings of self-esteem. Those with children said they loved their children and would not be separated from them for any length of time as they had been. They were not sure that they would ever be able to feel close to their own mothers and regretted this, and felt that their mothers perhaps felt similarly.

SUMMARY

> "It is always open to critics to cast doubt on the validity of what a patient recalls about his childhood and to question whether the sequence of events recounted had the effect on his feeling life that he so explicitly claims" (Bowlby 1988 p.54)

There is no way of being sure that the narratives of the women accurately reflected their experiences since memory may have dimmed for some events and there could

have been exaggeration of others. Nevertheless the women appeared comfortable and unthreatened in the interview situation and seemed relieved at the opportunity to talk about their lives and to feel that they were being believed.

Women's reluctance to participate in the research

Some of the refusals could have been attributed to the emotive and powerful memories which would have been evoked. One of the women who had initially agreed to participate, after reflecting declined saying, "That is past, I have got over it." Another women attributed the reluctance of some women she had asked to agree was the feeling of shame about poor relationships with their mothers. They were of the opinion that their situation was peculiar to them. Coming from a region where the cultural norm was an expectation that family members interacted and related to each other it would be embarrassing to disclose to a stranger that this was not so in their families. In reality this is not so for all families but nevertheless the feelings of the families could be understood.

It was not surprising that the church as a source did not yield any participants. It may be that if the women were staunch Christians they may have felt that it would be breaking one of the commandments of that denomination which admonishes children to honour their parents. It could have been considered as dishonouring them to discuss their parents with a stranger.

Reactions to the Separation - Reunion Experience

The reactions of the women in the two groups, group A those receiving or had received therapy and group B, those who had not, were very similar. 90% recalled their early lives with a sense of nostalgia and spoke of missing the family back in the West Indies especially their grandmothers who had cared for them and for whom it seemed they had developed an attachment and feelings of security. Only one woman in Group A recalled that she could not ever remember feeling happy as a child as her mother never showed any affection for her. She was left at six years old, but felt no attachment to mother. She felt closer to her father, but he did not communicate very

much and she seemed to exist in a state of detachment.

The women were in the age range of 32 - 47 years. The women in Group B were at the upper end of the range. They said they had often spoken to friends with similar backgrounds about their early experiences and they had been able to console each other. They had also spoken to their G.P.s about their low and depressed feelings but never considered referring themselves or asking to be referred for therapy as they thought it would stigmatise them as being mad. They were aware of the large number of black West Indian women who had been admitted to psychiatric hospitals over the years. Besides, they described themselves as strong with the ability to cope with their problems which were private to them. This attitude grew out of the cultural beliefs in the West Indies that generally women are strong and resilient and able to find strategies for managing their lives. Of course this is not always possible and some women in the West Indies do fail to maintain their autonomy and need to rely on others and the health and welfare services for assistance. The younger women in Group A could have been more familiar with the services and were willing to take advantage of them.

The average length of separation for both groups was ten years, but it seemed significant that five of the women had been left between the ages of a few months and three years. During this stage of development attachment to mother, if she is the primary carer, begins. Development psychologists state that this early relationship is the prototype for later attachments (Bowlby 1969). In terms of psychosocial development as propounded by Erikson (1963) during the ages of two to three years trust in the mother begins to develop. If mothers suddenly disappeared it is fair to assume that trust would be undermined and the feelings of mistrust would possibly be transferred to others.

External Factors

The women realised that there were mitigating factors such as poor housing, exploitative employment with inadequate pay for long hours of work, which had made it difficult for their mothers to spend time with then during the early days of

their migration. Racism which was endemic in the country had aversely affected their self-esteem and marginalised them from mainstream society. At that time it was not usual for black people to be referred for psychotherapeutic help so that those with early signs of stress had no therapy or counselling

The Interview Schedule

The pilot study was undertaken primarily in order to test the value of the Separation-Reunion Interview Schedule. It succeeded in eliciting data that was highly relevant and informative. It provided guidance for the compilation of a satisfactory questionnaire. It identified leading questions, which were eliminated in the final version. Two psychologists examined the questionnaire independently and made some useful suggestions with regard to the structure and categorisation of the questions. The schedule provided the opportunity to practise interviewing techniques for the main study, which is described in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MAIN STUDY

Data Analysis

The Pilot Study was useful preparation for conducting the main study. It demonstrated that the oral narrative was suitable for encouraging women to recall their early life experiences and to reflect on the meanings which they had for them. For some of the women it was the first time that they had spoken about their experiences at any great length. It was interesting that whilst they summoned up enough trust to talk openly about their life experiences, they were not prepared to have their stories recorded.

The Process

The women had been contacted by telephone and had understood the purpose of the request for an interview, and they were asked to set a date and time within a given period, convenient to themselves. In this way the women were given the power over the transaction. They all kept their appointments and seemed animated when meeting the interviewer. Twelve of the interviews were held in the office, and eight in the homes of the women as it was more convenient to them. In order to establish a holding environment, before the start of the interview, the interviewer thanked them for keeping their appointments and engaged the interviewee in a conversation of a general nature, for example, the weather, the ease of the journey and whether they wanted any further clarification before the start of the interview. Permission to tape-record the interview was requested and assurance was given that if at anytime they wanted the recorder turned off, this was acceptable.

All of the women were willing to tell their stories. As in the pilot study, some were talking about these early experiences in depth for the first time. Those who were seen in their own homes had the benefit of being in control of their physical space and they were at ease. The office was made as comfortable as possible, by using

comfortable armchairs and sitting alongside the interviewee in order to give an air of informality and the interviewees also seemed at ease. A boundary of time was given. The boundary of confidentiality within the research was also given.

The atmosphere in which the interview was held was comfortable and safe and permitted interesting transference and counter-transference on the part of the interviewee and the interviewer. Both came from a background with a strong oral tradition where individuals responded positively to being asked to tell a story to a ready listener.

The women were given the option of remaining anonymous and an initial would be used to identify the recording; however they automatically began their stories by giving their names, as if to establish their identities. They were asked to begin as far back in their lives as they could recall, and it was not necessary to wait for a question from the interviewer.

When the interviewee stopped and seemed to want a lead into another phase of the story the interviewer asked a question. One way of refraining from entering into a dialogue was to nod or make sounds such as 'uh-uh', 'um' in order to give reassurance that attention was being paid. At no time in the interview did the interviewer seek to control the process.

In instances where the interviewee was overcome by the memories of very painful experiences, the interviewer waited for as long as the interviewee wanted and this helped to convey the feeling of genuine concern and that the interviewer was not working on a rushed timescale.

The interview provided the opportunity for the interviewer to observe the non-verbal reactions to some of the recalled experiences. Sometimes a change in the tone of voice to dramatise an encounter with a parent enlivened the conversation.

Meaning of the narratives was construed by understanding the culturally specific nature of the background of the women. Experiences from previous research with

mothers of West Indian origin who had reunited with the children they had left behind were transferred to the present situation as they were perceived as essentially similar.

Critique of the establishing of the holding environment

The interviewer in allowing the women to tell their stories without probing may have missed some key factors but the absence of probing was measured against maintaining the comfort of the women in relating such sensitive and pain-filled stories. All of the women were not seen in a neutral setting, but those who were seen in their own home gave valid reasons for requesting to be seen there; for example children were at home during school holiday, having to leave home for work at a particular time. The women who had been in therapy may have been reminded of those occasions, but the room was made as unlike a therapy room as possible and the setting did not inhibit their flow of words.

A second interview might have been appropriate after a period of about 3 months. This would have provided the opportunity to discuss any other thoughts that might have given some more insights into the meanings that they had ascribed to their experiences. Nevertheless the data collected was extremely revealing about the phenomenon and useful when planning preventative work with families who are currently reuniting with children left behind in the immigration process.

The context of the study was attachment theory, which maintains that it is about relationships, and the evolution of the individual in kinship groups (Bowlby 1969). The women had experienced living in two kinship groups and in two cultures; this contributed to the complexity of their lives.

The content of the narratives was meticulously examined sentence by sentence and themes were extracted from the data. The themes provided the framework for the discussion of the perceptions of the women's experiences from early childhood to young adulthood, and the meanings they attributed to them.

Themes from the literature on attachment theory were also extracted, in order to confirm the relevance of the theory to the study. Three themes were selected as very important to the study:

1. The theory states that the child forms a close attachment to his/her mother figure throughout the latter half of the first year up to the third year (Bowlby 1979).

2. The theory emphasises that the way in which a parent or parent-substitute treats the individual, influences the pattern of attachment which is developed through the years of immaturity-infancy, childhood and adolescence (Ainsworth 1985), (Bowlby 1988), (Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy 1985).

3. The theory highlights the need for a secure personal base in the person of an attachment figure. This is applicable to all individuals not only in childhood, but also to adolescents and adults. According to Bowlby (1988 p.104) there are two sets of influences that are important for personality functioning. Firstly, whether a trustworthy figure is present to provide a secure base at each phase of the life cycle. These are the external or environmental influences. Secondly, whether the individual has the ability to recognise a trustworthy person who is willing to provide a base and is able to collaborate with the person in a mutually rewarding relationship.

This theme was to emerge as particularly pertinent to the study. All the women had emphasised the inability to trust others, and the problems that they encountered in making and sustaining relationships.

In the analysis of the data, examples of the themes selected above were apparent in all of the interviews. Other major themes from the narratives are discussed, and the words of the women are quoted in the qualitative discussion in the following chapter.

> "In the young child the experience of separation from the mother figure is especially apt to provoke psychological processes of a kind that are as crucial for psychopathology as are inflammations and its resulting scar tissue to physiopathology. This does not mean that a crippling of personality is the

inevitable result; but it does mean that as in the case, say, of rheumatic fever, scar tissue is all too often formed which in later life leads to more or less severe dysfunction" (Bowlby 1979 p.57).

The main study is again a retrospective one, based on the narratives of twenty (20) women. They were divided into two groups as explained in the previous chapter.

Table 1: The islands from which the women came

Jamaica	9
Barbados	4
St Lucia	2
St Vincent	1
Grenada	2
St. Kitts	1
Guyana	1
Total	**20**

In spite of the number of the islands from which the women came, they may be regarded as a group because of the similarities which they possess; their ethnicity and their ancestral origins. Their mothers had adopted a customary cultural pattern and had left them and in some instances with siblings, in the care of grandmothers and other members of the extended families.

Age When Left

The women in both groups were left at an early age and reunited when they were approaching puberty. The average length of time of separation in Group A, the ones which received therapy was seven years, and in Group B, the non-therapy group, eight years.

The distribution of age of the women in the sample was across the range from 33 to 48 years with a mean age of 38.9 years in Group A and 40.6 years in Group B.

Table 2 Age when left and age when reunited with the mother

A	Age when left	Age when reunited	B	Age when left	Age when reunited
	A baby	11 years		5 years	13 years
	2 years	8 years		A baby	8 years
	2 years	11 years		5 years	13 years
	5 years	13 years		4 years	14 years
	6 years	12 years		2 years	9 years
	4 years	10 years		5 years	14 years
	1 year	11 years		5 years	12 years
	4 years	9 years		5 years	12 years
	1 year	9 years		6 years	10 years
	3 years	8 years		A baby	13 years
	Average length of separation		Average length of separation		
	7.4 years		8.1 years		

Table 3 Ages of the Women

	Group A	Group B
1.	40	43
2.	36	40
3.	41	40
4.	38	42
5.	36	45
6.	42	35
7.	37	35
8.	38	46
9.	45	40
10.	36	33

Table 4 Civil Status

The women were mainly single in both groups. In Group A four had married, but it was noticeable that in the group there were three who had been divorced. In Group B two had married and were still in the marital relationship.

Civil Status	Group A	Group B
Single	3	8
Cohabiting	4	0
Married	1	2
Divorced	2	0

Table 5 Housing

Eight of the women owned their own homes and 12 were council tenants. They all said they were comfortable in their homes

Housing	Group A	Group B
Council Tenant	7	5
Owner Occupier	3	5

Table 6 Religion

Six were practising and 14 non-practising. Those who were practising saw it as a continuation of the norms of their community back home which they persisted in keeping as they grew up. It was interesting that five of those practising were found in Group B.

Religion	Group A	Group B
Roman Catholic	1	1
Pentecostal	0	2
Church of England	0	1
Non-practising	9	6

Table 7 Further Education and Occupation

Twelve of the women had gone on to further their education and had attained degrees, three in Group A and nine in Group B. The women in Group A were not as represented in careers as in Group B. This correlated with their level of education as seen in Table 7.

	Group A	Group B
1.	Clerical worker	Nurse/student therapist
2.	Trainee therapist	Building Co-ordinator
3.	Nurse	Business analyst
4.	Mental health worker	Nurse/student therapist
5.	Clerical worker	Social worker
6.	Teacher	Social worker/Law student
7.	Sales assistant	Psychotherapist
8.	Clerical worker	Child care organiser
9.	Clerical Administrator	Teacher
10.	Clerk/Typist	Midwife

Table 8 Knew Fathers

	Group A	Group B
Knew father	3	2
Left with siblings	7	8

Table 9 New Family

	Group A	Group B
Father in family	6	6
Step-father	1	2
New siblings	9	7

Children of the Women

All the women in Group A had borne children, ranging in number from one to five, and seven in Group B ranging in number from one to four.

The Separation-Reunion Interview Schedule (The SRIS: Appendix 4)

The amended semi-structured questionnaire which had been piloted was used to guide the interview. The women were asked to recall their early childhood experiences, their memories of their biological mothers and of care by members of the extended family when they were left in the Caribbean. Their memories of the reunion with their mothers in England, their lives in the "new families", and their perception of the effect of the broken attachments on their personalities and their emotional state of health. They were also asked to reflect on the feelings of their carers when they left them to join their mothers, and on their mothers' feelings about having left them and reuniting with them.

The Interview

The interview lasted for two hours, and eleven of them were audiotaped and transcribed. The other nine women gave various reasons for declining to be audiotaped. For example, they disliked having their voices recorded or the material was personal. Although they had been told that the interview was confidential, they were not sufficiently trusting. I therefore recorded the material immediately after the interview. This was not difficult since my experience of writing records of interviews was considerable. These women agreed that I would write demographic details and then settled to respond to questions.

There were times when some of them who had agreed to the use of the tape recorder requested it to be switched off when they going to reveal some particularly sensitive information about the relationship with their mothers. The narratives of the women were moving explorations of experiences in which some of them relived the pain caused through the separation from their grandmothers, and other members of the extended families, their friends and everything that was familiar. Some expressed their anger with mothers who were virtual strangers and who showed no affection in greeting them when they arrived. Some were sympathetic towards the mothers and accepted that they too did not show any affection for the mothers whom they did not know. Added to all this were the totally strange and often hostile environment in which their parents lived and the absence of feeling safe and secure within the new family.

Variables

There were many relevant variables in this complex situation of being separated from mothers in their early years at the crucial stages of their lives when attachment would have been beginning if they were reared by their mothers. When this had become resolved by becoming attached to substitute carers, they were separated and returned to mothers outside of a known and familiar environment with no hope of returning to the safe places they knew. There was also the expectation that they and mothers would be able to relate and as it were continue where they had had left off.

The following variables were selected for elaboration because they seemed important to the women's development and their state of emotional well being:

Nature of the relationship with mother before separation.

Age of child when left.

With whom left?

Feelings about being left.

Preparations for leaving carer and returning to mother.

Age when reunited with mother and new family.

Reception by mother and feelings about the reunion.

Relationships with other members of the new family.

Relations outside of the family, eg a) at school b) at work c) partners.

Physical conditions under which the family lived, housing and neighbourhood.
The effects of racism and how it impacted on their lives.

The Limitations of the Study

1. The sample size is small and makes it impossible to arrive at statistical generalisations across the numbers of immigrant women from the West Indies who experienced separation and reunion. However the study does suggest trends for future research.

2. There were no narratives from the mothers, so the research is biased towards the women's perceptions of the separation reunion experience.

3 Scientifically it would perhaps have been preferable to interview the women in a neutral setting but as they chose to be interviewed in their homes they experienced the feeling of being in charge of the situation and were comfortable and relaxed.

4. There was no way of knowing if those who declined to be interviewed had been more or less affected by the experience of separation.

5. The SRIS was being used for the first time and therefore its validity had not been proven.

CHAPTER EIGHT

QUALITATIVE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

"One of the primary convictions that Bowlby inherited from the psychoanalytic perspective is a belief in the abiding importance of the first 5 years of life for later social and emotional functioning, particularly the importance of the child's first human relationships." (Harwood, Miller, Irizarry 1995 p.4)

45% of the women were left at the age of one week to three years. A sensitive period in the life of the child when attachment to the primary carer who was usually the mother was being formed and 55% in the age group were from four to six years. It seemed that the younger they were left, as they became older the more "confused" they felt about why mother was not there. Some said that grandmothers explained that mother was away working and "it was for the best." Some of the women said it was an intellectual understanding which they had about their mothers' absence but this did not help with their feelings. The women are quoted in order to convey in their own words some of the challenging feelings.

Feelings About Why Mother Was Not There

A1 "I had a different understanding, an unconscious other feeling about it; maybe it was anger, rejection, ideas about love all tied up in it."
A2 "I did not have any understanding of it all it just made no sense to me. No one questioned did you feel rejected? Did you want your mum? But they reminded you that you should not be an ungrateful child, your mum was doing the best, and you should accept and have no feelings. They did not know better I suppose, it wasn't made much of, so I suppose I did not give feelings much thought."

B1 "I never missed her, I never thought about her. I never thought about her or in my mind wonder what mum is doing or when I am going to see my mum. You know they say: what you never had you don't miss."

A3 "I knew she wasn't there, I didn't understand. I don't know what age I began to understand why she went away or even that she went away."

These four different passages from four different women in the sample all point to the painful inability to understand why their mothers were not there. The dismissive nature of B1's comments could have been an attempt to deal with feelings of rejection.

Reflecting on how mothers may have felt about leaving them, most of the women thought that mothers believed that they were being well looked after by their grandmothers even if their relationships with their mothers had not been ideal. They were confident that grandchildren were loved and besides, economically the families were benefiting financially by grandmothers taking care of the children as the mothers sent money back home. Thus life was not as hard as when they left the islands.

A2 expressed the view that "the emotional side was kind of historical, it was not something that aided survival in our case. [Meaning in the case of black people who had experienced slavery.] It was about survival. You could not start lying down and saying, 'I am not loved,' there was no time for that." She was very reflective; it seemed that she was not only thinking about her family but about her ancestors and their struggle for survival often under harsh and inhuman conditions. Coming out of her reverie, she continued "maybe that is just passed on, [i.e. repression of emotions.] I think the emotional side gets ignored."

B1 claimed that she was unable to reflect about how mother may have felt about leaving her for as a child I was "too busy" enjoying my childhood, having fun, love and attention. When I met my mother I was never close enough to her to get a "feel of her".

B3 expressed the feeling "that my mother just dumped me and probably did not think about me until she wanted me to come here."

A5 said "I knew that my mother never looked after her children; my grandmother and aunt had cared for me and my older sister so I did not think she would have worried about leaving me." These examples are similar to the majority of the women who expressed the feelings that their mothers did not bear them in mind when they left them behind. In one instance where the reunion was amiable, B3 reflected that "she (mother) must have wanted to keep me in mind. She sent photographs of herself and the children born here and photographs of me were sent to her."

It was interesting to hear the women's reflections of their mother's feelings about leaving them. Robertson (1975) in a study of mothers, who had left their children behind, reported that mothers claimed the children were out of sight but never out of their minds. They frequently felt sad and guilty about having left them even though they trusted their extended family to care for them until they returned as they had not envisaged their stay in England to be permanent.

In the Caribbean, mothers rely on grandparents and kin to take the responsibility for rearing children. Recent research (Russell-Brown et al 1997) explored the perception and feelings of mothers of West Indian origin who decided to "relinquish care for their first child. The findings were that 'mothers did not readily relinquish their responsibilities, many of them said a child should grow with his mother.'" The findings of Russell-Brown et al were similar to those of Robertson's (1975) that most of the mothers bore the separation because it was expected to be temporary and they were confident that their children would not be socialised differently and would be reunited with them without difficulty. Mothers had a rigid view about mother-child love and knew nothing of the system of attachment

The Lack of an Image of Mothers

In the absence of carers talking about their mothers, the children were unable to form an image of their mothers. For some of them it was as if mother never existed.

A.3 "I cannot remember my mother looking after me."

A 4 "I have no image of my mother. None at all."

A7 "I do not know at what age I was left, I have no memory of ever calling anyone mother."

B 1 "I met my mother when I was nearly 10 and as far as I can remember I had never seen this woman before in my life."

B5 "I was about two years old when left. Later I knew I was the daughter of a nurse and the 'nurse' title gave her some status in my eyes. There were photographs of her but I did not ask any questions about her. The only thing my thoughts of her were related to was receiving presents."

The women genuinely tried to remember but found it impossible to do so. They attributed this to being engrossed in their lives with their carers and peers. In the absence of anyone talking about their mothers they did not think or conjure up any images of their mothers so that when they arrived in England they were complete strangers to them.

The women in both groups reflected on the lack of knowing their mothers in the early years of their lives and their mothers not really knowing them since they had missed out on their growing years.

B1 "Even as much as mothers here want it, the connection isn't there. There is no bonding; there is no relationship, nothing at all. For all that child knows, the only mother or father is either grandmother or grandfather or aunt."

B2 who was dismissive about not thinking about mother's feelings, continued in the same vein she expressed the view, "What you never had you don't miss, and because so many of my friends at school had their mothers in England, it was like nothing."

This dismissive attitude may have served to help her to cope with knowing that her grandmother was not her mother for whom she must have been grieving and she may have cultivated this attitude as a defence mechanism against the pain she may have felt. It was significant that she did not mention children who lived with and were cared for by their own mothers at home and whether they felt envious of them. It could also have been that within that community within the cultural norm even if mothers were not abroad the majority of children might have been cared for within the extended family.

With whom left

75% of the women were left with maternal grandmothers, 15% with paternal grandmothers, 5% with a maternal aunt and 5% with a godmother. The majority spoke of a happy childhood with carers in the extended family.

B3 who was left with siblings "we were treated much better than the other children in the family because our parents were sending money for us."

B5 "I was so well looked after and I was happy, my grandmother was my world. I remember her as a fascinating woman who loved me. It was just a warm close relationship. Down the road was the extended family, my other grandmother and her children so I used to go and see them quite a lot."

B9 When she was left with her godmother she said "I was the only young little girl; there were other bigger ones so I didn't do very much, just played."

B10, "my grandmother taught me respect for people in the family and how to perform household chores. I think I see her as my mentor really, she is the one I remember as the person who instilled all the values I hold in me."

Not all were so happy and comfortable. A2 was left with grandfather and an aunt. She was still very sad when she recalled her early childhood. She said,

"If I am honest with you, I have to say those years were hard. I suspect I never had enough to eat. All my cousins, my aunt's children would steal my food. I had problems eating and when everybody finished eating I was just staring. I was one who suffered in silence. My Grandfather would beat me and I was not allowed to sleep in the bed if I could not say the Lord's Prayer. I used to sleep under the bed."

A3 was left with her maternal extended family and there were several children in the house. She sadly said, "My grandmother had too many children to look after; there was not enough love to go around, and I felt left out."

A6 had been left with maternal grandmother and an aunt with the latter caring for her. When her aunt left suddenly to go the United States of America she claimed, "My whole world fell apart materially and emotionally. My grandmother was unable to care for us as our aunt did. She was grieving as well that my aunt had left unable to care for us."

In the main the memories of the carers of the women in Group B were more positive and the women maintained that they were loved and cared for and seemed attached to their carers.
Those in Group A perceived that they were less well cared for and seemed less attached to their carers.

Preparation for Leaving Carers

Fifteen of the women recalled that they were unprepared for leaving their carers. They did not remember being asked if they wanted to leave.

A.1 said, "They did not ask if I wanted to go to England. There was no explanation really, just that I was going up to meet my mum."

A4 "In those days, nobody cared about a child's feelings or what you were going to go through; your parents need you and you have to go."

B3 summed it up by saying, "They did not know any better because nobody had told them or taught them these sorts of things, they did the best they could."

B10 Grandmother had told her that she would be going to England but then she went to live with an aunt who did not take her back to say goodbye to grandmother,

"It was not dealt with properly. We, [B3 and her sister] didn't know what was happening. I felt like we were going to town and we were going to see our grandmother again. I can never understand why we never saw her again. It has taken me years to realise we never saw her again, how horrible that was. I used to dream about her for years and years."

Some of them were prepared for departure. B2 remembered a formal preparation. "My great aunts sat me down and told me I was going to meet my mother and I should call her mum and call my stepfather dad. I should be a good girl and I shouldn't mix with people, who are bad, for people judge you by the people that you mix with. I knew that it was going to be cold, and that it was going to be different, and there was a sister and a brother."

B5 said her grandmother prepared her in the way she thought would be helpful for her life in England. "She taught me social graces, how to use a knife and fork correctly and she insisted that I knew how to count sterling correctly. Ironically when I came, decimalisation was in place."

Reflecting on this lack of preparation most of the women accepted that it was the cultural norm that children were not consulted in matters which were considered the responsibilities of adults. Since they trusted their grandmothers they accepted what was said to them. The feelings of children were not considered and the need to say goodbye and mourn the lost of a loved one was not recognised. It was noticeable that what was thought necessary in the preparation was to remind them of moral values and to teach practical skills such as how to use a knife and fork and how to count money which would prepare them for survival in the new country.

In some instances, grandmother or an aunt accompanied them and mothers had returned home to bring them back to England but there was no preparation for the change in the physical appearance of the country and the change of climate. Those whose mothers had not sent suitable clothes for the cold weather arrived in England inadequately dressed in flimsy summer clothes and sandals.

Meeting with mothers

Children and mothers were strangers to each other. 75% of children did not recognise their mothers, and mothers seemed unable to greet the children. Of the 25% who recognised them, one woman remembered that she went straight up to her mother, hugged and kissed her as she recognised her from photographs, but the majority related a tense and unemotional meeting.

A2 recalled, "I had no recollection of who she was and I had a confusion because I had sisters who were big people and when I arrived a sister seemed interested in me. My mother never made a fuss of me."

A3 "My mother did not come to meet me because we came by boat. We actually travelled down by cab to Reading from Southampton with our aunt who brought us." Speaking of meeting her mother, she said, "I didn't know how to take this woman. I saw pictures of her so I knew her physical appearance but I didn't know her. I was ambivalent I felt this, you know, want to hug and not want to hug and kind of like hugging but my body is kind of withdrawing as well at the same time. That's how I experienced it but she was very warm and wanted to hug. I could not understand why my body fell towards her and back from her. I don't know what mother was you see. It was my grandmother was different to mother. My grandmother was Mama, and Mother was my mother a different concept of caring that I had in mind."

A6 "I cannot remember my mother holding me, and there was silence all the way from the airport; I cried all the way and nobody said anything."

The comments indicated that there was disappointment with the initial contact with mothers who showed no emotion and no ability to comfort them. Some of the children had fantasised that the person who sent money and parcels of clothes must be rich. They found that in some instances mothers were not well dressed and they were disappointed and disillusioned.. They were reluctant to address their mothers as Mum as they had been used to calling their grandmothers Mum.

B10 recalled that her mother was extremely demonstrative to her and her sister."I remember she was hugging us and saying 'Oh my God, over here at last, I have my children.' I just put up with it really it was really nice but I was more impressed with all the sweets she had packed up for us. I remember her crying and hugging us but I cannot remember thinking oh this is my Mum, I just thought she was a strange woman."

95% of the women were disappointed with the reception they received from mothers, and even with this last quote of mother trying hard to greet them with love and affection the children had detached themselves from her and seemed impervious to her demonstration of love. This reaction was similar to some of the children in the Hampstead nurseries (Burlingham and Freud) described in Chapter Three. The first meeting seemed to have set the pattern for the relationships between most of the women and their mothers, especially those in Group A.

Relationships with members of the family

85% lived in nuclear families and in 10% of these were stepfathers. 15% lived with single mothers. In both groups, life with mothers was problematic. They were in the main disappointed that there was no caring and nurturing. Communication was usually in the form of "do this, do that," there was never "thank you" or "well done."

95% of the women reported physical punishment. They knew that it was the norm among families from the Caribbean but they felt in Britain that in most cases the punishment was unjustified.

A3. "I had this idealised mother; this mother now would never smack me, everything my grandmother did of course, this mother would never do. You must realise she was like totally perfect in my mind. She would never smack me, tell me off or anything like that. It was totally unrealistic, and I have got this mother a big job she had to live up to in my mind the way I saw her and of course that just about blew it in mind. That just about blew this concept and I felt totally rejected because she did not fit into the image I had of mother. She would never hit me this mother and she hit me harder than my grandmother who very rarely hit me and she hit me harder. So I loved her and hated her all at one time, ambivalent, really ambivalent."

She explained that with her mother "With my mother it was like head on war with me, it was like I was her in some ways. It was like she looked at me and she looked at herself so she would always hit me and she never hit my sister. I would just antagonise my mother because she just shattered the concept of the mother I had in my head, I would never cry. Those people you must cry. If you want the beating to stop you must cry. With me I was stubborn as a mule, I must not cry, didn't matter how much she hit me I would not cry which made her beat me more."

B9 recalled being punished at home when mother discovered that she was involved in fights with her peers at school;
"She never found out why I was in a fight, she used to say 'I didn't send you to school to fight' and I would say that it was not my fault, they kept whatever. My mother did not want to know, and would say 'you have to rise above it you know that will happen in life, just get on with it'. She just wanted me to take it and I just couldn't do that."

A7 said "I wasn't bad or naughty, but if I did not do things on time I was beaten. It was bad and she beat me with anything she found. I suppose in today's terms I was physically abused, it was too bad."

In spite of the hurt and humiliation, B7 was forgiving of her mother and excused her in the following words,

"It was because of my mum's stress and I think impatience and lack of sleep. She didn't do it knowingly, just felt that she was keeping discipline or I would go haywire like all those other girls."

Some accepted the punishment during the early years but eventually stood up to their mothers. More often, they decided to leave home and found work and furthered their education. Some selected nursing where student hostels provided secure accommodation. Others stayed with friends whose families were sympathetic to them.

In spite of knowing that it was the cultural norm in the West Indies that children were physically punished the women regarded the way in which their mothers treated them as administering excessive punishment and doing this unfairly since in most instances the younger siblings were not treated similarly. The women recalled their anger and resentment at this treatment, which they thought served to erode their self-esteem. Communication between mothers and reunited children was non-existent so that there was a disturbed interpersonal environment, which did not facilitate the establishing of relationships

Relationship with Fathers/Stepfathers

The fathers were strangers as well to the children when they arrived. The majority had been cared for in households headed by women and most of the fathers were not there. In some instances fathers and stepfathers were kind.

A2 "My father had a soft spot for me. I did not like pears hard nor soft and he used to drive around to find these pears that could only be in between for me to eat for lunch otherwise I would not eat."

A3 speaking of her stepfather said, "He was a very quiet person, a kind man. I would go to him for my school things rather than go to her."

B5 Her father was very kind to her "He and I have a close relationship and when I left home he has always been around to do odd jobs and see to the maintenance of my house."

From the comments the women stressed the practical things which their fathers did for them and this seemed to satisfy them of their fathers' affection and attempts at caregiving.

B2 was 12 years old when her stepfather sexually abused her,
"It gradually led into a cycle of incest basically. My stepfather would start touching me. I knew it was wrong but I did not know how to stop it, so between their arguments and my mother hitting me and my stepfather abusing me every time her back was turned, sometimes even when she was in the house, he would he would creep up the stairs. What I started to do to protect myself was every time my mother left to go to work, I snuck out the back door and just wandered around the streets until I thought it was time that she got home and I would creep back in. He could not tell her that I wasn't there because of what was going on."

B10 described her father as,
"Very autocratic and he became this tyrant that lived in the house. He used to beat us even when we were much older, the last time he hit me was when I was about fifteen or sixteen and I didn't know what it was all about. I looked him in the eye and told him if he ever hit me again I would kill him, and he never hit me again."
These were very traumatic experiences for the women during their childhood and they claim that they contributed to their reluctance to trust men and enter into lasting relationships

Relationship with siblings

It was difficult for those of the reunited children who were the youngest ones and in the centre of the extended family when in the Caribbean to find themselves marginal to the new household. The experience could be likened to being invited to join an

exclusive club and not being told the rules. The rules were based more on emotions than on well thought out procedures and were therefore difficult to pass on. Besides, the reunited children were cast in the role of surrogate mothers. Their working models were those derived from experiences with their grandmothers back in the Caribbean and they expected respect from the younger children. When they reprimanded them, mothers objected with harsh words such as "they are better than you."

This comment may have arisen out of an internalisation of the belief in the superiority of the English. Children born in England by this argument then would be regarded as better than the children born and reared in the West Indies. The comment could have stemmed from mothers' feelings of detachment from the reunited children who no longer seemed as belonging to them. It also raised the question of how they viewed themselves having been born and reared in the West Indies. Resentment was therefore constantly present in the minds of the reunited children against mothers who were not conforming to the accepted norm of parenting as they had experienced it. Their perception was that their mothers showed preference for and loved the younger children more than they and therefore gave the younger children license to ask why did not the reunited children go back to where they had come from? This was extremely painful, because the reunited children were caring for the younger ones as surrogate mothers.

A2 remarked that she often asked herself the questions, "How did they manage before I came? And why are they so helpless now? I suddenly found that I had a whole heap of responsibilities, not just for myself but for my sister and the house as well."

Two of the women joined their mothers who had no other children. One remained the only child in the family and the other had a sister and brother born to mother who married shortly after she arrived. B5 said,

"I was very pleased to have younger siblings and enjoyed caring for them. By the time they were born I had adjusted to my new surroundings, had made friends at school and even though I missed her grandmother, had come to the realisation that

there was no going back. I felt that I could channel the love I received from my grandmother into caring for them."

It was as though this was an attempt to demonstrate good childcare to her mother.

A3 was fourteen years old when reunited with her parents. Reflecting on the difference of her mother's attitude to children born in England and those born in the West Indies, A3 remarked "The only acknowledgement of children was the two born in this country. The four that were born in the island as far as she was concerned they did not exist." This conveys the idea that for her and her siblings who had been reunited with mother, they were not seen and this could have eroded their self esteem and made them feel insecure within the family.

Relationship with School

75% of the women recalled their unhappiness at school where very often they were Ridiculed for their accents and discriminated against on the basis of being black. Some retaliated and dealt with their tormentors by fighting.
B9 "I can remember fighting a lot. At school, I would be teased and called names so I hit them and they would hit me back. Therefore, I would fight them. I was good at fighting and I was the biggest girl in my primary school so I could easily win."
She recalled that she finally left school with C.S.E.s because all the black girls were put in C.S.E classes. There was the tendency for teachers to steer black children into stereotyped sport.

B6 "School was very uncomfortable and I was not happy there. The teachers refused to accept that I knew enough to be placed in the class that was appropriate for me. I played tennis very well but the sports teacher refused to put me on the team and tried to channel me into athletics. I refused to run. I finally left the school and was admitted to a college of further education where I sat and passed 'O' levels."

The negative attitudes of the teachers were recalled by most of the women. These attitudes were not surprising when placed in the political context of the time. Restrictions on entry to Britain were being placed on black immigrants who previously had the right to enter the country having been British subjects during the colonial period. Racism was more openly displayed not only by individuals but also within the institutions.

25% of the women had positive experiences at school.

B2 "I loved school, it was an escape. It was so much more relaxed over here. Nobody sat down in rows and recited the tables; they just left it and I didn't learn anything in junior school. I didn't learn anything new. It was only when I went to the comprehensive school that I think I actually learnt because I had adjusted to being over here by then. My qualifications when I left, I got four C.S.E.s."

B3 "I enjoyed school. It was a place where I felt good. I had many friends and peers and most of the teachers were good to me." She obtained good grades in C.S.E.s. She was not encouraged by parents to continue studying but she attended evening classes and obtained the required number of '0' levels in order to apply for nurses' training. She was convinced that the first 13 years of her life provided her with strength to carry on.

They left school as soon as they possibly could and later attended evening classes and progressed to further education.

A8 enjoyed school but was not as inspired as she was at school back in the Caribbean. "I found that all I had to do was sit down and smile and talk. I went into regression, didn't do anything, then one day I just woke up and I thought again, I was responsible for myself." It was fortunate that the headmistress of that school had a positive attitude towards the West Indian children. When the course teachers wanted to advise her against taking the courses she wanted, she appealed to the headmistress who told her that if she wanted to do something, she could do it.

Most of the women who succeeded at school were those who had joined their parents when they were older and had a grounding in schools in the West Indies. For those who were not encouraged by mothers to stay on at school this was confusing as they had been led to believe that education was essential for their social and economic advancement. Why some of the mothers of reunited children did not encourage them to continue studying is open to conjecture. It could have been that:

They had become disillusioned with England which before they arrived they envisaged as Utopia. Perhaps they were themselves depressed and unable to fight the battles with the institutional racism in schools. They had experienced the need to work and to rely on relationships at work to avoid isolation, and may have thought this was a way for their children to go. They may have thought they had sacrificed enough through all the early years of the children's lives in the West Indies by sending remittances and it was time for them to be assisted by the grown children to help them. Besides they were still sending money for the support of to their extended families and were finding difficulty in maintaining two families.

Some of the children, who found relationships difficult at school, could have been feeling angry with mothers for a number of reasons for example:
(i) Leaving to them most of the household chores, which had to be done immediately after school so there was no time to enjoy the company of peers.
(ii) The favouring of younger children in the family.
The corporal punishment which they received frequently
The lack of nurturing and demonstration of affection.

Barret and Trevitt (1991 p.11) in discussing the experience of children referred for educational therapy state:

> "When the development of attachment behaviour between an infant and mother has been distorted in some way, problems may arise. These can affect not only first learning but also future learning patterns."

For some of the women, entering new schools in Britain could be likened to that of young children beginning school for the first time and also trying to make contact with mother. Attachment to mothers had not developed in the early years, or if they had begun to develop had been broken by several years of separation.

There was an unspoken expectation of mothers that they and their children would relate to each other instinctively. In many instances, it seemed that this was based on a lack of knowledge of how early relationships are formed and on the mythical beliefs of mother's love making all things right. Mothers were unable to be emotionally available and the children were unable to gain the reassurance, support and encouragement essential for meeting their basic needs

In the sample 12 (60%) furthered their education and became graduates, 3 in Group A and 9 in Group B. They attributed their determination to succeed as stemming from their internal working models of themselves. Their interactive behaviour with positive primary carers in the extended family in the West Indies contributed to their ambitious feelings and desire to achieve. For some, achieving academically was to demonstrate to mothers that in spite of being rejected in favour of their younger siblings born in England, and being hampered with all of the domestic chores and little time to study during their early years, they succeeded.

Relationship with peers in college was satisfactory but some of the women remarked that they always felt they were not as good as the other students, especially in expressing themselves. This low self-esteem could have sprung from the poor relationship with mother and the frequent derisory remarks made to them about their accents and their West Indian identification. There was no "secure base" to which they were able to return and discuss their concerns and to be encouraged and praised.

In remarking to B5 that in spite of the difficulty in relating to mother, one of the aims of mothers coming to England was to help their children to achieve education and enter one or other of the professions and that she had achieved this, she replied, "I

have achieved educationally but at what emotional cost. I am not wholly right inside". She said this very sadly, placing her hand on her heart.

This may be interpreted as feeling disconnected and not experiencing an affectionate bond with her mother. She had an early attachment to her grandmother and there was sorrow, which she had not, been helped to mourn after leaving her. With therapeutic help she was now trying to deal with her anger at the loss. She was also sad when reflecting on schooldays

B5 reflected that,
"It was during the black power involvement and everyone was very intense about the situation in London and they did not want what happened in America to happen here and so all the teachers were tense in terms of how they dealt with us."
The teachers used their power in omitting them from 'O' level classes. It seemed that few teachers were able to consider the significance of the effects of immigration on the children who were "anxious and in a strange situation".

Work Relationships

Work was important to the women. All were employed, 75% had left home and found accommodation with friends and started to work in a variety of jobs immediately after leaving school. Some in shops, clerical work, in caring homes, one joined the army, 25% remained at home until they were older, but also found employment. Their main purpose in finding employment was to separate from the family. Some who entered nursing lived in hostels as far away from home as possible. Their representational models of their mothers were of hard working women, often working at two jobs in order to maintain a reasonable standard of life. According to Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe (1985 p.25), describing the plight of women from the Caribbean in the early days of the immigration to Britain,

"Black women were faced with no other prospect than to fill the jobs which the indigenous workforce was no longer willing to do in the servicing, semi-skilled and

unskilled sectors. Service work was little more than institutionalised housework as night and daytime cleaners, canteen workers, laundry workers and chambermaids. The alternative to this was factory work in small un-unionised sweatshops where conditions were poor and negotiated conditions non-existent".

On the assembly line Caribbean women worked alongside other immigrants from Asia, Ireland and Southern Europe and produced the food, clothing and other goods which served to boost Britain's post war economic boom.

Morrish (1971 p.89) discussing employment of immigrants, commented,

"It is interesting to note that 60% of the West Indian women here are economically active compared with 48% of the Indian women, 53% of the Irish women and 39% of the English born women. The women were engaged in textiles, clothing, light engineering and nursing."

The women of the sample were in the main determined that they would not follow the work patterns of their mothers. In the instances where relationships with mothers were good the children were strongly advised to attend college in order to enter the professions and not be drawn into the net of low paid employment. Morrish (op cit p.80) expressed the hope that "improved education and general adaptation to English educational methods will eventually assist the West Indians to develop a greater mobility in the occupational scale".

The women of the sample fulfilled this hope. 60% had attained first degrees and the others were qualified in their chosen field. 40% of the women chose the caring professions. Nursing was a stepping stone to other professions. It seemed that these women's unsatisfied need for caring by mothers propelled them into caring for others. According to Eichenbaum and Orbach (1992 p.56)

"the daughter, as she learns to hide her needy little girl part, becomes very sensitive to neediness of others. She learns to give what others need and she gives to others out of the well of her own needs."

A2 who had no memory of herself as a child articulated this process in choosing to do paediatric nursing:

"There was a fascination about looking after babies, there was something inside of me that had to care for babies. I think I was about twenty-one years old before I stopped having to constantly care for this baby inside of me. I knew there was something I was looking for as I said there was no knowledge about me, no concept of me as a baby so I was fascinated with babies."

Work was liberating for the women in both groups. They left home where they were uncomfortable and had no sense of belonging; at work there was a social network which alleviated the isolation most of them felt within their families.

Relationship with partners

30% of the women of the sample had married but 50% of these unions had ended in divorce. 25% of the husbands had had similar experiences of separation from and reunion with their mothers and seemed to have been traumatised as well. One woman remarked that her husband seemed to have suffered more than she did as he had no siblings left with him who could have helped him with recalling memories of life with the extended family. They all experienced their husbands as very needy casting them in the role of mothers and competing with the children for attention. The one whose husband was culturally different from her thought that she was not able to trust him or to believe that she was really wanted for herself but only as the mother of their children. When they parted, her husband kept the children. She bore other children from other partners and cared for them but was not able to sustain relationships as she always felt that she was not really wanted by the men in her life. She cared for the children from the unions subsequent to her marriage without help from their fathers.

B3 expressed the view that a man would never stay with her. Seeing how her stepfather treated her mother she was determined that no man would have her work outside the home and also do all the housework. She said, "I may have had a long lasting relationship with the kid's dad but it was from my step-dad that the expectation men had of women put me off. I told my partner 'if you want to be with me meet me halfway, if you don't, just go.'" B3 said "what I have found is that the men with whom I had come in contact seemed to want to take on the role of my mum to manipulate me." She recalled the very traumatic time she had with the father of her two children. He often threatened to beat her and because of her poor relationship with her parents there was no one to support her. As a result of all the threats he made and his abusive violent language, she became fearful and so never entered another relationship. She gained strength through her devout faith that God would help her and also she would think of her grandfather to whom she was attached during early childhood and then she would feel able to cope. She also felt that her mother was extremely strong and she was a role model where accepting responsibility for her children was concerned. She has no relationship with a partner and said "I just come to this stage of my life where I could live on my own quite happily." She is comforted by being a devout Christian and is committed to doing things in the church and doing the best in her work. She has a good relationship with her children saying that she does not want to repeat her experience of not having a mother in her early life.

Two of the women, both in Group B whose marriages were intact said that their husbands were compatible and understanding and one thought that she had taken her father as a model. The other whose husband was from another culture thought that their similar interests had been a cementing factor which kept them together. She had not had the experience of living with a father.

One of the single women said she was never able to meet a man who measured up to her father who had always been kind and comforting and helpful even when she moved away from home. Two of the women seemed unsure of their sexuality. They had had heterosexual relationships but these were not sustained. It seemed that the

transference from mother to other women had pushed them into the situation of deciding on female partners, but these were also transient.

B5 expressed her attitude to relationships as follows "I don't have that sense of trust, of getting close and trusting, so there is always a part of me that knows that I am staying back and keeping back. I hug but I am also withdrawing as well at the same time."

She had had proposals of marriage but considered it impossible to imagine the person around her for any length of time. She described the fear she experienced when she thought of marriage and children and her inability to entertain the concept of being attached to anyone for any length of time. A5 finally decided that she was homosexual. Reflecting on how her mother would react to the knowledge of her sexuality, she remarked that she would never be able to accept it and thought mother would spend the rest of her life praying for her. Frequently, mother had said that she thanked God for her children who kept upright and lived a good life. She thanked God that they were neither drug users nor homosexuals. This confirmed her resolution not to disclose to mother.

The others had witnessed their mothers being violently treated by their stepfathers and were unable to trust a male partner. Unfortunately these relationships were always short lived.

In listening to the narratives of the women in the sample, it seemed that their psychosocial development had been undermined from an early stage. Their adolescence and early adulthood had been turbulent and traumatic and lonely when the development of identity and intimacy with peer groups would have been developing. They had not been able to share being themselves and in words were unable to lose and find themselves in other and so experience 'a favourable outcome' of devotion and fidelity, affiliation and love" (Erikson 1963 p.274).

Women's encounter with Racism

The women who came to Britain as children had lived in the rural areas of their countries in the West Indies where black people were in the majority. Their teachers in their infant and primary schools were black and in the 60s their black politicians were taking some of the countries from colonial status to independence.

Arriving in England, the children realised that their parents were in a minority and being discriminated against in employment and housing. They were very often living in very poor circumstances and working long hours in menial jobs. The children's fantasies of wealthy parents living in big houses and able to provide for them with material comforts were soon shattered. Thus they were indirectly victims of racism suffered by their parents.

The children experienced direct racism on the streets where they were subjected to being called racist names. In school, English children ridiculed them about their accents, and teachers had low expectations of their abilities and this often prevented them from achieving scholastically. A7, reflecting on her school days,

"found it very hard because I had done the 11+ before coming here and had passed. Coming here and they just put me in a class that they thought right for me. This class was to me a backward class because they were teaching everything that I had already been taught. I just used to sit in the back and do nothing."

Since some black athletes had shown remarkable prowess on the sports field, some of the children found themselves pressed to fit in the stereotype of loving sport to the exclusion of academic studies. B3 illustrates this in the following words, "I was good at tennis but the sports mistress refused to put me on the school team and tried to channel me into athletics. I refused to run".

The careers officers also treated the black girls less well in helping them to make choices and in B3's words "I remember going to the careers officer and there were

girls who had fewer 'O' levels than I had and they received information about working in banks and yet I was given advice to be a typist or to do nursing." Brenda felt she was being allocated her slot in society whilst white girls had "nice interesting careers". Fortunately using her initiative B3 discovered that she could study art, which she did, and finally entered Teachers' Training College where she qualified as an art teacher. She concluded her reflection by saying,

"Black kids were not badly behaved at that time; they behaved in class but after a time as we got further up the fifth year I think people just got fed up... One of my friends used to taunt the teachers a bit and all the black kids were expelled except me in the fifth year before we took our exams. It was really painful stuff."

None of the women talked of blatant racism at work but they were aware that racism is endemic in the society and were always alert to when it will impinge on their lives. This constant watchfulness creates stress and further hampers their ability to trust people generally.

Stress and Adaptation

In Britain over the past decades there has been considerable debate about mental health diagnostic procedures for West Indian families. Little or no attention had been paid to the impact of broken attachment with families and the stresses of reunification of families with children separated for several years. The women of the sample who joined families have employed various strategies to cope with stress in the strange environment (Littlewood and Lipsedge 1982, Rack 1982). Some of the women channelled their energies into educational achievement and excelling in their work which was mainly in the caring professions.

Some of the women in spite of not having been encouraged by parents to further their education recalled that their grandmothers always instilled in them the need for education in order to progress in the world.

The findings indicate that most of the children left at an early age in the care of grandmothers and extended families retained strong feelings of identification. The early positive relationships formed a solid base which assisted them to survive as adults in the face of frustrations and adversity in the situation. Conversely the women whose early relationships were negative were the ones who were unable to adapt. These were the ones who felt low and depressed most times. One woman who had attempted suicide expressed the view that there was no point in living if you were rejected by your family.

CASE STUDY: LENA

Lena was the first child of her parents before they were married. She claimed that she was unable to remember ever being held by her mother or shown any affection. Her father was always kind to her. She recalled that she took money from the till of her parents' shop and gave it to other children in infant school. When she was six years old both parents left the Island for England and left Laura and two siblings aged four and two in the care of an uncle and his wife. The "aunt" was very unkind, gave them little food and "beat" them for the least misdemeanour. Lena was very unhappy and when she was nine years old went to the policeman in the village who had been her father's friend and asked him to ask her father to send for them.

Lena described her arrival in England as very frightening as everything was so different from "back home". Her mother did not embrace her and there were two other children. Being the eldest she had to look after the younger ones. There was no communication between her and her mother, and while her father continued being kind to her, Lena could not come to terms with mother's rejection of her.

Lena left home at age sixteen when she finished school without any certificates. She said she was unable to retain anything and the teachers did not notice her much. She obtained a job as a chambermaid in a hotel. She was assaulted and raped soon after leaving home, and a son resulted. Lena feeling very lonely, and in need of comfort, spoke to one of her sisters who told her mother of her situation. Her mother arrived

at the flat and said she was taking the baby, as Lena knew nothing about looking after a baby. Lena felt helpless and unable to remonstrate with mother even though she was breast feeding her son. She was unable to visit regularly, as she was unemployed. Two years later she was pregnant again but this time she did not tell her family. She experienced a very difficult time, as her partner was violent towards her. Nevertheless she struggled on without any support from the family. The partnership ended and Lena eventually found a job and worked hard to care for her daughter, sending her to ballet and drama classes. She seemed to live vicariously through her daughter and became unrealistic about all she should do and became mentally ill. She did not seek any help, became depressed, gave up her job and finally attempted suicide by setting the flat on fire. She spent several months in a psychiatric hospital and her daughter was cared for by social services. During this time her sisters visited but her parents did not.

This further convinced her that her parents did not regard her in any esteem.
Lena made a good recovery and after being discharged from hospital, she was able to resume work. Her son, now adolescent, who had been living with his grandmother in another part of the country joined her and her daughter, but relationships were conflictual and she began to feel depressed again as she thought she was failing as a parent. She was referred for therapy and was able to talk about her sadness and the lack of family support. She felt marginal to her family and was particularly pained that her mother never telephoned her and when she (Lena) did and her mother answered, she immediately passed the telephone to her father.

Lena complained that she had no sense of where she came from. She knew nothing of her grandparents. When she asked her mother to tell her about the family background, she was advised 'to leave the past alone.' Lena said she frequently asked herself "who am I?". She was sad that her relationship with her children was not good. Her daughter preferred to stay with her friend's mother and her son stayed with friends. So she was often alone. She thought she was unable to care for her children effectively because she never had parental care. Lena constantly worried about why her mother rejected her from her earliest days and ignored her when she

came to join the family. She wondered whether her mother was jealous of her and father's relationship and said that a child always needed a mother and she could never be happy knowing that her mother did not love her.

Juliet Hopkins (1990) discussing the concept of "internal working models" as developed by Bowlby (1969/1982)[1] advances the view that,

> "If a child has experienced reliably responsive care giving, he/she will construct a working model of the self as competent and loveable, but if he has experienced much rebuff, he/she will construct a model of the self as unworthy of help and comfort".

Resilience and Survival

Some of the reunited children seemed to have had the capacity to transcend the adverse conditions of the traumatic reunion. Describing their resilient stance, those women attributed their survival to their ability to recall the memories of how they were cared and loved by their carers in their early lives. They also felt that in spite of time and distance they were loved and felt close to their grandmothers and other members of the extended family. They believed that these carers would have wanted them to succeed in their education and in life generally and the knowledge of this motivated them to do so. Their carers had inculcated in them the necessity to be

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[1] "The concept of the internal working model of relationships. Some tangible help may come from the increasingly popular metaphor of an 'internal working model'. This was employed by Bowlby 1969/1982 to account for what children need to maintain proximity to their caregivers, predict their caregivers' behaviour and so ensure survival. The concept of internal working models refers to the mental representation in light of current inter-personal experiences in the service of preparedness for future diverse interpersonal experiences. Both cognitive and emotional processes are seen to influence the way that events and interactions, consciously and unconsciously. These mental representations are perceived as organised structures and while resistant to change are also open to modification, over the course of development" Steele and Steele (1994).

independent and even though they had come to live with their mothers/parents they had not forgotten those early lessons.

When these women had acknowledged the disappointment of not meeting replicas of their grandmothers or other carers and when they realised that the siblings born in England seemed to be preferred to them, they made a conscious decision that as soon as they were considered adults they would find a place where they felt secure and independent. Some chose to train as nurses and so live in nurses' homes, others stayed with friends and then acquired accommodation and lived alone, and some found compatible partners with whom they cohabited.

Besides the women's own inner strengths there were other factors which helped in the development of resilience:

1. A sound and satisfactory relationship with a sibling or siblings with whom they had been left and with whom they had come to join parents.
2. A satisfactory school experience and good relationships with peers and teachers.
3. Employment which they had found easily and which was permanent; this helped to provide the funds for their further education.
4. Higher education which enhanced their prospects for moving into middle class professions.
5. Maintenance of contact with the carers to whom they had become attached in their early lives.
6. As they matured, practice of religion in non-conformist black led churches where they experienced a strong social network. This provided them with a sense of belonging, which was missing within their own families. They had faith in God and believed that divine guidance would help them in managing their lives.

The above factors helped to boost their self-esteem and self confidence and they became independent in spite of the hostile environment and the lack of support from their immediate family.

Some of the women possessed a keen sense of humour; were temperamentally easy going and had developed strategies for dealing with problems so as to prevent too much frustration and stress in their lives. They seemed to fit the definition of a resilient person as "one who bounces back having endured adversity or who continues to function reasonable well despite continued exposure to risk". (Gillian 1997)

Gillian writing in the context of planning for permanence in the arrangements of placing children in adoptive homes discusses "three building blocks of resilience namely; (1) the child's sense of a secure base, (2) the child's self esteem and (3) the child's sense of self-efficacy". The framework is relevant in the examination of the resilient behaviour of these women. They had been reunited with their mothers/parents in an attempt to provide permanence within the homes of their biological parents. The reunions having failed, the women had created secure bases for themselves and felt supported by their social networks and some by compatible partners. Gillian claims that most of the children needing homes were preoccupied with thoughts of their families of origin. This may be applied to these women who had a strong affinity with their home islands and their extended families and believed they had been empowered by the values which had been instilled in their early lives.

Rutter (1985) lists self-esteem among his three named characteristics of a resilient person. He regards the resilient person as not succumbing to feelings of powerlessness and helplessness, which often accompany adversity. He also includes self-efficacy, a belief in their capacity to make a difference and thirdly a repertoire of social problem-solving approach. These women seemed to possess the named characteristics.

Gillian indicates that resilience "may have a social or constitutional origin". Most of the women gave graphic accounts of the coping strategies of their grandmothers and of the survival of some of the biological mothers throughout the immigration process and so the constitutional factor in these women cannot be overlooked. The following narrative illustrates the resilience and survival of one of the women of the sample.

Nora's Narrative

Nora considered herself as having coped with her early experiences of separation from her grandmother and extended family and reunion with her parents and younger siblings in *a strange situation.*

Nora aged 38 had been left in a West Indian Island in the care of her grandmother until the age of 11, along with a younger sister and a male cousin. She could not remember her exact age when her mother left, but said she must have been a baby. As she grew up she was aware that her grandmother was not her mother and called her Dadda as everyone did. She remembered grandmother telling her that her parents had gone to England in order to work to provide money for their care.

Nora's mother never returned to visit; she sent photographs and her grandmother sent photographs of them to her mother. Her father returned on more than one occasion to spend holidays. Nora does not recall having any particular feelings about missing mother. She pragmatically said, "we just got on with what we had to do, went to school and to church." No one in the family talked about her mother, her grandmother did not talk about her mother, but acknowledged that she wrote regularly and sent money and "we left it at that".

Nora said that she never wished mother were there as she was so close to her grandmother. She was securely attached to her and did not ever want to leave the Island. One day she was told that her mother had decided to send for her. She was not asked whether she wanted to go to England and there was no explanation of why she was being sent for and not her sister. She was very reluctant and sad about leaving her sister as they had grown up together and had a close relationship. Her grandmother decided to come to England for a holiday and brought her to join her parents. On arrival in England she and her grandmother went to an aunt's house and later when her parents were at home from work she was taken to their home. She did not want to leave her grandmother but had to go with her parents. She recognized her mother from the photographs and her father had visited the island several times on

vacation. There were two siblings a brother and a sister; their photographs had been sent home so she was not taken by surprise when she saw them. She supposed her mother recognized her as she had been sent photographs. Nora could not recall the greeting given to her. Asked to reflect on how she thought mother felt on seeing her, Nora replied that she never thought about mother's feelings.

Recalling her childhood after arriving in England Nora said "all I knew was that you came up here, you have to go to school and it was not really exciting, because it was a different environment from back home." She never talked with mother about her early life or about how much she missed her sister. She used to dream very strange dreams about her sister. Nora could not recall the content, but said the dreams were "weird". She attributed this to missing her so much.

Nora reminisced about home on the island where life was fun when she and her sister could go out to play with other children and they felt safe. She contrasted the carefree lifestyle with the restricted life in England where she considered the environment as hostile. She talked about fresh food and fruits. In England everything tasted so different but after a while she became used to it. Nora was unable to identify any specific thing that she liked about joining her "new" family all she could say was that the atmosphere in her parents' home was so different from back home in the West Indies.

School was enjoyable as she made many friends and the teachers were good to her. She gained C.S.E. certificates in English, Mathematics and Geography and Art. The latter was her best subject and it had been useful to her in decorating her home. Her parents did not encourage her to stay on at school and further her education; she would have loved to; but at 16 she left and gained employment as a switchboard operator, and worked as a chambermaid in a London hotel. Her relationship with management and colleagues was good and she was able to move on to becoming a secretary. She was trained to become an invoice clerk. She liked her work.

Nora left home when she was 17 as her parents were too controlling and restrictive. She became "fed up" with them wanting to direct her social life and she found accommodation on her own. She did not sever connections with the family totally and she would visit on occasions. She formed a relationship with a young man who was born in England of parents from the same island as her family. The most enjoyable factor in their relationship was their ability to communicate about life in the island as his parents had told him about it and Nora was able to verify and fill in gaps for him. They have continued to cohabit and four children have been born to them. They have not married as her partner says he is not yet ready. She would like to be married and sometimes teases him by calling him "husband". He "just smiles." She has cared for her children on her own. She did not want help from her own mother. She felt that caring for her children was her responsibility and no matter how difficult it was, she coped. Nora reflected on the way her grandmother brought her up to be strong and independent and said "I think that helped me". She thought that her four children ages 21, 18, seven and one are well adjusted and she loved them. She always took them to visit their grandparents and they related well to them.

Nora expressed strong feelings about the advantages of biological parents caring for their children in the early years with help from grandparents so that the children know their background and their identity. She thought that when parents leave children to be cared by others, the children could feel their mothers who brought them into this world rejected them and mothers would feel hurt when they realised that on reunion they are strangers and find it difficult to communicate with them.

Nora thought that her early life experience influenced the way she was today and shaped her attitudes. She was independent and did not go running to her mother for anything. "I cope and get on with what I have to do." She considered herself as very patient. She could feel low at times especially if there were things she wanted and she was unable to have them at the time, but she tried not to let it get her down. She consoled herself that life is like that and one had to get on with living it. When her grandmother returned to the West Indies she was very sad to see her go but realised that she had to adapt to life without her being near.

Nora's attachment to her mother could be described as an avoidant insecure attachment. She did not dislike her, and visited her regularly, but found it impossible to communicate anything of importance with her. She felt it could not be helped as she grew up with her grandmother and so found it easier to talk to her even though she was so far away. Nora considered herself and family to be well ordered and their relationships were good. She thought that she was resilient enough to cope with any adversity that may arise in her life.

SUMMARY

The analysis of the interviews with the women identified some issues, which shaped their lives after meeting their parents in England.

The reunion in itself was difficult because of:

1. The separation in which as children the women had very scant memories of mothers/parents who were for most of them virtual strangers when they met. They had become attached to their primary carers i.e. grandmothers and other members of the extended family during their early years in the West Indies.
2. The expectation by mothers that the reunited children would love them and accept the rules and culture of the household, which included fathers/stepfathers and siblings who were strangers to them.
3. Lack of preparation of the children and mothers for the reunion. This could have alerted them to the feelings of strangers when they met.
4. The loss of communication with grandmothers and extended family and little or no encouragement to relate their memories of early childhood to anyone in their new family.
5. The responsibility which was thrust upon the reunited children for looking after younger siblings who very often resented their presence. This was more often than not a new role as back in the West Indies they had been the favoured ones and were looked after by their grandmother and other members of the extended family.

Mothers' Perceived Reactions

1. Many of the mothers seemed 'frozen' when their children arrived and were unable to welcome them warmly.

2. Reunion with the children constituted a major change in mothers' lives and when the children were unable to conform to the established patterns of the home and when their educational achievement did not meet mother's expectations it seemed difficult for them to relate satisfactory to the children.

3. Mothers tended to compare the reunited children unfavourably with the children born in England. The latter were considered superior to the children from the West Indies whose accents of speech were different and who were not familiar with inner city ways of behaving.

4. In their disappointment that reunions did not meet their expectations, some mothers resorted to corporal punishment for every misdemeanour. The children, who realised that their peers were not subjected to 'beatings', as the punishment was called, resented this and the relationships further deteriorated. The mothers often expressed the view that the children were ungrateful after the sacrifices they made to send them money when in the West Indies and to bring them to Britain.

5. In some families, fathers and stepfathers were the ones who mediated between mothers and reunited children. In others the poor relationship between the mothers and fathers led to domestic violence, and this undermined the mothers' ability to expend energy in making relationships with the children and some of the violence spilled over on to the children.

6. There were instances where children were victims of abuse, physical and sexual , by fathers and stepfathers and mothers were helpless to stopping the abuse.

7. Some mothers suffered mental disorder and were unable to cope with family matters. The reunited children were obliged to assume responsibility without any assistance from social services agencies because the family were unaware of the system.

Societal Factors

Schools were the main source of the children's contact with the society and for most of them the experiences there were negative. Their speech which was for the most part in dialect, their accents and their teachers' accents were variables which presented problems of understanding and communication between them. Many mothers were not confident with the English system of education and felt inadequate to approach the teachers and advocate for their children when they complained of being victimised.

For some, housing was unsatisfactory. Coming from tropical countries where open windows and doors were the norm, the confined space of a flat or terraced house was constrictive. Black families had been assigned the council's least desirable accommodation and often there was multiple occupancy with the other residents sharing the kitchen and bathroom. When families bought houses these were in a state of disrepair, therefore physical comforts were often missing. Because of discrimination in the employment of black migrants, mothers alone or with meagre salaries worked in poorly paid jobs and often felt it necessary to work in several jobs in order for the family to be financially viable. It was therefore difficult for mothers to spend time with children. One woman recalled that she had never experienced sitting with her parents and siblings and sharing a meal.

The Church

In the West Indies, attendance at church was not only regarded as important for spiritual reasons but also served as an agent of socialising with friends. In Britain, attendance became less frequent as black people experienced hostility or indifference to their future and they ceased to attend thus depriving children of another custom, which had been part of their lives in the West Indies.

When the young women left home and established their own families, some became involved in the non-conformist churches. There they felt supported and experienced a

sense of belonging; those with talents in music and preaching found opportunities to develop these.

Some of the women in Group B (who were not in counselling/therapy) claimed that their strong faith in God and active worshipping contributed to their ability to cope with the pain of having poor family relationships.

Racism in the society

There was a constant feeling of unease in the society where racism was endemic both at intentional and unintentional levels. Families felt insecure and oppressed and so were unable to provide a secure base for the children. Discriminatory name-calling contributed to their unease and discomfort. There were women in both groups who, in spite of the lack of the nurturing they craved from their mothers, had achieved academically. This may have been satisfying a search for acceptance; but academic achievement did not meet their emotional needs. There was, as described by two women in Group B, "something missing within;" and "an uneasy feeling of not being good enough".

The final chapter summarises the study and highlights areas for future research.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

> "We are all thinking, feeling beings and our thought processes in terms of self images, self concepts, internal working models and attributional styles will influence how we deal with life transitions and challenges. Because such thought processes are both, to a degree, self-perpetuating (through habit and practice) and also open to change (through the effects of new and different experiences) they will, in different circumstances, predispose to either continuity or discontinuity." (Rutter and Rutter 1992 pp.360-361)

The women of this study were drawn from seven islands of the English Caribbean Region. Each place maintains a distinctive character and there are many variations of beliefs, customs and speech among the people; but they present many similarities in their child rearing practices.

The historical review in Chapter 2 placed the women and their mothers in context and gave an indication of the Caribbean culture and child rearing practices in which members of the extended families play a dominant role in the care of the young child.

In Chapter 3, attitudes to women and motherhood within the culture were explored. There was a suggestion that the legacy of resilience of African women during slavery in the West Indies, may have been passed on through the generations, and was being exhibited by some of the women in the study.

In previous research Robertson (1975) examined the reaction of mothers to their children from whom they had separated and reunited due to immigration from the West Indies to England. They had breast fed their babies for varying periods from 7 months to 1year and had weaned them during their preparation for migrating. The care of the baby was mostly undertaken by their mothers. The reunited mothers admitted feelings of detachment when the children arrived and regarded them as belonging to their grandmothers. It is possible that some of the women in this sample

had undergone similar experiences prior to immigration, and felt similarly towards the children who had been left in the early age group of 0-3 years. This period of the life young child is considered to be significant, as an attachment relationship begins to emerge during the second half of the first year (Bowlby 1982).

The starting point of this study was the reflection of some women of West Indian origin who sought psychotherapeutic help, mainly complaining of difficulty in sustaining relationships, and as a result felt low and depressed most of the time. What was particularly arresting was their ability to make links with their present state of being and the experiences of their early lives. They had been separated when infants or toddlers from their biological mothers who had immigrated to England. They had been reared mainly by their grandmothers, grandfathers or aunts for varying periods of time (average 7-8 years) in extended families, and uprooted in early adolescence and sent to be reunited with their mothers in nuclear and isolated families in urban towns and cities in England.

The majority of the women were not familiar with the psychological findings of psychoanalysts such as Freud, Klein, Winnicott, Bowlby, but when they related their unsatisfactory poor relationships with their biological mothers in particular, they echoed some of the opinions of these writers. One opinion which stood out above the rest was that children needed to experience a close mother-child relationship in their early lives in order to feel a true sense of self in later life and prevent "the feeling that something is missing inside." (Interviewee)

The Sample consisted of 20 women and they were divided into two groups of 10. Group A (N=10) were women who had received therapy and group B (N=10) who had not. In order to understand how the women in the sample reacted to the early experiences of separation and loss due to immigration, it was decided to listen to their narratives and the meanings they attributed to their experiences.

The profiles that emerged from the use of the Separation-Reunion Interview Schedule (SRIS) were very similar. This made sense, as they had all experienced the losses and the disappointments caused during the migration process. Furthermore

their socialisation was, in the main, similar within the cultural background of the Caribbean, especially with regard to child shifting and extended family caregiving.

75 % of the women in the sample were born to young single mothers who lived within extended families in households headed by women. According to Senior (1991) approximately 50% of women in the West Indies while still teenagers begin to bear children, and it is usual for the first child to be born to the mothers still living in the family. The mother's early relationship may be confined to breast-feeding while the care of the baby may be undertaken by the maternal grand mother or an aunt, sometimes paternal relatives, or godmother or a friend of the family. Absence of the young mother due to intra-country migration in search of employment may also cause early separation and both mother and child lose the opportunity of becoming attached to each other.

In this study 6 (60%) of the women in Group A (the therapy group) had been left between the ages of 0-3 years and in Group B (the non-therapy group), 3 (30%).

Although the women of the sample who claimed that they had experienced secure relationships with their surrogate carers during their early years, and who had internalised positive feelings about themselves, did not always negotiate reunification with their mothers successfully, but these feelings had helped to build their resilience defined as "normal development under difficult circumstances". (Fonagy, Steele, Steele, Higgit and Target 1994 p.232), and they considered that they had coped remarkably well during the difficult reunions. Some exhibited more resilience than others and were found in Group B.

Those who had not experienced consistent and nurturing care during their early years before the reunion, seemed not to have internalised consistent working models of their carers and considered themselves to have been severely affected by the broken attachments Their self-esteem was low and they felt vulnerable and unloved. In stressful situations within the family, or in the workplace, they were less resilient. They complained of emotional unease, of being depressed and hopeless and were referred by their doctors or referred themselves for psychotherapy.

Attachment research has described the longitudinal behavioural and internal implications of early attachment experiences (Sroufe, 1988. Cassidy and Shaver, 1999 and Steele (in press) reiterates that

> "Out of early interactions with the caregiver are formed the child's evolving personal synthesis of meaning structures. When experiences are more- or-less sensible or coherent the child develops an organised and coherent sense of self and others that is oriented toward trust and hope and has a secure attachment. When the experiences are less sensible and incoherent the outcome will be toward mistrust and despair (the insecure avoidant or resistant patterns."

The 2 women, (20%) who recalled recognition of their mothers when they were reunited, were older age 5 and 6 years and they remembered positive experiences with them before separation. It is possible that these mothers as children had also internalised positive role models of caring; they were the ones who tried to keep the children in mind throughout the years of separation and helped them to make sense of their situation. They had sent photographs of themselves and received photographs of the children and seemed to be attempting to foster some sense of attachment from the distance.

18 (90%) of the women had no memory of their biological mothers. They had been told by their grandmothers/carers when they were old enough to understand, why their mothers were not there, and where they were, but according to Sunderland (1997) the absence of early memories has been explained by psychologists who argue that a memory is formed when there is the initial capacity to interpret what is going on, and young children lack this capacity. The autobiographical memory is not lost but never existed. This seemed to have been applicable to the women who had been left in the early years of 0-3 years. They were able to recall very clear memories of their grandmothers and other members of the extended family who cared for them and were present during their maturing years.

In trying to make meaning of why their mothers had sent for them, 16(80%) of the women believed that their mothers' need of them to help care for the younger siblings in the family was the deciding factor. This in itself was not objectionable since it was

culturally accepted that older children, usually girls, helped with the care of their younger siblings. This meant that they had lost their position in families where they were cared for by the adults. What added to their anger and resentment about this situation, was that mothers openly showed preference for the children who were born in England. The fact that mothers and these children had not been separated and had become attached to each other was not understood by the reunited children.

The other 20% gave other reasons;

1. mother had intended all along to be reunited as soon as she was economically able,
2. in order to provide the opportunity for further education,
3. to relieve elderly grandmothers of the responsibility for caring for an adolescent, and
4. for companionship to a mother who had no other children.

In previous research of mothers who sought reunion with their children the findings were that the mothers in the sample had felt the separation from their children keenly and regretted that they had not accompanied them. They had wept and grieved from the time of leaving home and all through the years. When the time came that they were able to send for the children, they had felt a sense of achievement, that they would be all together (Robertson 1975).

In both groups the reunited children experienced younger siblings in their new families; 90 % in Group A, 80% in Group B. The women recalled that when the younger siblings were disrespectful to them, their mothers/parents did not reprimand them. This was confusing and out of keeping with the cultural pattern of the West Indian countries from which they came. There, young children were taught to be respectful and obedient to their older siblings who very often were their surrogate mothers.

Sudarkasa (1997 p.361) named four cultural values, (1) respect, (2) responsibility, (3) restraint, and (4) reciprocity, which underpinned African family life. He claimed that these had been inherited by families of African origin in the diaspora. He further stated that these values had been eroded and replaced with what could be considered pillars of the nuclear family, namely individualism, isolation and self sufficiency

which have undermined black families everywhere and left the poorest exposed and vulnerable. The women of the sample who had been reared in extended families mainly in the rural areas of their countries had internalised the above named four values. In spite of their disappointment with their mothers, they had respected them, accepted the responsibility of performing the household chores and caring for their siblings, and showed restraint until they became old enough to leave the family home. The behaviour of their siblings towards them and also towards their mothers seemed to have amazed and confused them

The most vulnerable of the women found in group A, had interpreted their mothers allowing the young siblings to disrespect them as signifying their rejection by the family, and confirmation that they were not accepted as worthy of love and respect. This lowered their self-esteem and the perception of their experience in the reunited family was that they were marginal.

Although the majority of the women were approaching puberty when they joined their mothers they seemed to have had an unconscious wish to have their mothers treat them as young children. They had left the emotional warmth of the family, of peers, and of familiar surroundings and had arrived in a literally cold and strange place. They were frightened, unhappy, uncomfortable and disoriented. These feelings inhibited them and prevented them from smiling and appearing happy upon their first meeting with their mothers. They were strangers to each other. In 85% of the reunions, mothers kept at a distance, and so did the children. Mothers too seemed disoriented and frozen, and this first meeting tended to set the pattern for their future ways of interacting with each other. 3 women in Group B recalled that mothers tried to greet them but they resisted as they did not know them and did not appreciate being kissed by strangers even if they were their mothers.

The situation became more strange and complex when the reunited children found it difficult to address their mothers as Mum when they had left their 'mums' back home. In the earlier research on mothers cited above, mothers experienced great distress when they heard their children calling another 'mother'. Burke (1994) researching West Indian immigrants expressed the view that,

> "Psychologically, it seems, mothers need to be called "mummy". When mother finds the child is reluctant to call her mother, she becomes aggressive, withholds love; the child becomes rebellious, father takes sides with the child and mother becomes isolated and anxious. She feels her position threatened and she has no status;' she turns attention to the younger children and threatens to throw out the older child."

Some of the women in the sample later resolved the problem by addressing their mothers as "mum" but there was little communication between them. Lack of communication was another theme which was highlighted by the women. Mothers seemed uninterested in discussing their children's past life experiences. It is possible that this might have been too painful for them, bringing to the surface the unmourned grief of their experiences of separation during the early days of the immigration. The women recalled that mothers usually gave them orders about the household chores to be done and did not speak to them in endearing terms. When the women had newly arrived, they spoke in their native dialect; this was ridiculed not only in the family but also at school. This caused them to keep silent most of the time and feelings of inferiority were implanted.

Grinberg and Grinberg (1989 p.90) state,

> "All childhood experiences, memories, and feelings about early object relations are connected to language. Special meanings become embedded in it. The immigrant suffers when he loses, even if partially, valued symbols of the native group, among them culture and language; he(she) may experience it as the equivalent of psychic castration."

This may have been true particularly for the women in Group A.

In both groups, the women after they had left home tried to communicate with their mothers especially on special occasions such as birthdays and religious festivals. This was done out of a sense of duty for they were still influenced by the culture of the West Indies, and for those who practised the Christian religion it was imperative for them to 'honour' their parents. The women expressed the view that living away from the pressures of the reunited family, they had become more autonomous.

Maturity had improved the ability to reflect on the entire phenomenon and to recognise that their mothers too had suffered losses when they migrated and were probably adhering to the stereotype of 'the strong black woman.' Most likely this was a strategy used for survival.

A persistent theme highlighted by the 85 % women in both groups was the lack of holding. According to Winnicott, (Chapter 3) holding of young children was important as it helped in containing their anxiety. The reunited children could not help being anxious as everything was so new and strange to them. Life in the new family did not lend itself to the development of intimacy and so the intra-psychic trauma of having lost the carers, to whom they were attached, was more deeply felt. The cultural pattern of the lack of demonstrating affection with holding children when they were no longer small did not obliterate the women's psychological need for holding, especially during the early days of the reunion when they were vulnerable and helpless.

Nostalgia was the feeling that lingered with them through out their childhood and some of the women fervently wished that they would be sent back home to their grandmothers, other members of the extended family and familiar surroundings. They perceived mothers/parents as being indifferent to their feelings and their need to mourn the loss when they were encouraged to put that part of their lives behind them and to concentrate on their lives in the new place. As they reflected on this reaction of their mothers, they concluded that their mothers must have been trying to advise them to adopt a pragmatic approach as they had done in order to lessen the pain of loss due to the immigration. When they were children, needing comfort they did not appreciate that reaction and felt that they were not being cared for.

Harris, Brown and Bifulco (1986) claim that in cases of separation, inadequate care such as indifference by subsequent caregivers increased the risk of the development of depression in adulthood. In both groups the women expressed the view that the care from their mothers was inadequate.

Some of the women recalled that their mothers were not physically or emotionally available to them. 3 in Group B in trying to discover their family history, had spoken

to relatives and had learnt that their mothers had experienced very poor relationships with their mothers in their early lives in the West Indies. It therefore gave meaning to their mothers' behaviour. In terms of attachment theory, it seemed as if there was an intergenerational pattern of insecure attachment or detachment between them. Some of these mothers could have been jealous and envious of their children's apparent attachment to their mothers with whom they had had a poor relationship. Knowledge of their mothers' background had evoked sympathy and had helped in the release of the anger and resentment which they had felt towards them. This was beneficial to the women as well, for they were also able to release the feelings that victims of abuse sometimes entertain; namely, that somehow they are responsible for the abuse; in this instance, emotional abuse.

Other reasons for the inadequate care suggested by the women were, that mothers worked constantly and were therefore stressed and tired most of the time. Some were experiencing violence from their partners and were unable to escape from them because they were economically dependent especially if they had bought their own home. In two instances mothers suffered from psychiatric disorders and were hospitalised periodically and heavily medicated when discharged, and the children undertook the caregiving roles.

The women had migrated from the West Indies where culturally the mother-child dyad was generally regarded as the ideal pattern for rearing children, in spite of the practice of 'child shifting' among the extended families or interested others (Chapter 2). It was believed that mothers and children intuitively loved each other, and so it was difficult for some of them to accept the realisation that they did not love their mothers, and they perceived their mothers as not loving them. The prevailing feeling towards their mothers was anger that they were made to leave their grandmothers with whom love was reciprocal.

The poor and unsatisfactory housing in which many of the families lived did not help them to believe that their mothers had acted in their best interest. Winnicott (1958) expressed the belief that if the failure of the environment was severe and beyond the understanding of a child, then in desperation he/she could develop a strong fantasy of self-sufficiency in which in his/her mind the mother's care could be discarded.

All of the women in their struggle for autonomy, decided to leave home as soon as they left school. This seemed in keeping with the views of Kobak and Cole (1994) cited in Handbook of Attachment 1999 p.322.

> "As this autonomy-seeking process unfolds, it also appears likely to further adolescents' capacity to re-evaluate the nature of the attachment relationship with parents. With increased independence from parents as attachment figures they also come a certain degree of freedom from the need to monitor and assure parents' availability to meet attachment needs."

All of the women found employment upon leaving home, and established their independence. Later, they continued their education and embarked upon various careers.

Another interpretation could have been that the psycho-cultural processes, which helped to shape, the personalities of black African people during the periods of slavery might have been unconsciously in operation, thus encouraging the young women to struggle for survival as their ancestors had. In both instances, that of the slave ancestors and women of the sample, some of them were more resilient than others and coped psychologically.

A notable recurring theme, which emerged from the narratives, was the feeling of disappointment, which seemed to permeate every aspect of their lives. Most of the women had had strong fantasies about their mothers' physical appearance, their life styles and their economic status. These were all of a high standard based on the fact that very often the only mention they had made of mother was when her letters with money arrived, or packages of clothes which substantiated the tales they had often heard, that the "the streets were paved with gold". The reality was totally different and in many instances the social conditions were worse than those they had left in the West Indies.

They were disappointed that their mothers did not nurture them in similar ways as their grandmothers, but often administered corporal punishment to them and in their view unfairly.

The country itself was a disappointment, it was grey and cold most of the time; the houses were drab and resembled factories with the smoke pouring out of the chimneys, or prisons, as they resembled the stone buildings of prisons back in their countries. Schools did not meet their expectations; they were perceived as disorganised and the teachers seemed disinterested in their progress.

In those instances where fathers and stepfathers overstepped the boundaries of parent/child relationship and sexually abused them, they were disappointed in them and more disappointed that their mothers had failed to protect them. There seemed to be no aspect of their lives that was not permeated by disappointment.

Schaffer (1999 p.1093) claims that it cannot be denied that disappointment is an "inevitable, pervasive, more or less painful, and perhaps traumatic experience in almost every phase of life." He went on to say that fixed and hardened attitudes develop in individuals who have suffered prolonged and severe deprivation and pain in their early object relationships or if emotional needs are neglected through harsh child rearing practices. The latter seemed applicable to the women in the study, particularly to those in Group A. The accumulated disappointments they experienced in their new situation seemed to have developed in them a state of 'disappointedness'.[1]

It was apparent that some of the women used disappointedness defensively in their relationships with partners. According to Schaffer (1999 pp.1095-1096)

> "defensiveness is often expressed consciously as a profound fear of dependency or aversion to it. In these instances, 'dependency' is being used to derogate attachment to others of any sort; the goodness of others - their

[1] [1] Disappointedness is presented as a pathological organization or character disorder that expresses specific unconscious fantasies and gives rise to disruptive transference-counter -transference manifestation.' (Schaffer Roy, (1999) Disappointment and Disappointedness in "The International Journal of Psychoanalysis" Vol. 80 Part 6 pp. 1093-1104

generosity, forbearance, forgiveness and love is mistrusted, minimised, dismissed or reinterpreted as a form of gaining control."

Most of the women were convinced of the correlation between the broken attachments in their early lives and their inability to trust others. This lack of trust was a factor which contributed to poor relationships with partners; they feared that they could be hurt and rejected again and have the pain of their early lives revived. Those whose partners had also undergone the separation -reunion experience during migration, were doubly disadvantaged. They acknowledged that neither of them had developed trust and that they were experiencing similar unmet needs, hence the relationship could not be sustained.

4(40%) of the women in Group A had married but 3 of the marriages had ended in divorce and they chose to remain single. 6(60% in Group A and 8(80%) in Group B were single). All 10(100%) in Group A had borne children whilst only 7(70%) in Group B had done so. 3 women who did not bear children, 1 had adopted a child and 2 who were lesbians had decided they did not want involvement with children. As 85% of the women had become mothers, it is also probable that they had so internalised their experiences of living in female headed households in their early years that they repeated the pattern of bearing children and caring for them with fathers marginal to the family.

The 3 women (1 in Group A and 2 in Group B) whose marriages were intact, reflected that they had been reared in families with grand parents who were married and who had close relationships. They considered them their role models on which they had patterned their marriages; they had also been attached to their fathers and had warm and satisfactory relationships with them. They considered themselves fortunate in having men who had not had similar experiences to them and who had come from secure families.

Contrary to the views of some of Bowlby's critics that he believed the child's attachment was only to his/her mother; he had stated that,

> "almost from the first many children have more than one figure towards whom they direct their attachment behaviour; these figures are not treated alike; the role of a child's principal attachment figure can be filled by others than the natural mother." (Bowlby 1969 p.304)

In the sample some of the women attested to this and claimed attachment to grandfathers, fathers who shared their care and also with siblings who had been left with them in the West Indies. Nevertheless, they wished to be loved by their mothers and experienced painful feelings about the absence of close relationships with them.

> "Where a child has come to rely on multiple models to defend against possibly unbearable painful feelings, subsequent difficulties with openly experiencing and accurately modelling interpersonal relationships are to be expected. In this way the representation of past painful relationship experiences may significantly constrain the individual's potential for feeling and thinking in new relationship contexts." (Steele, H and Steele, M. 1994 p.105)

This concept seemed applicable to most of the women in Group A.

It has been argued that the practice of 'child shifting' in West Indian culture encourages independence and the development of the acquisition of adjustments of the emotional self and help to develop flexibility in dealing with the wider world (Brodber 1986). For some of the women in the sample this seemed applicable. Most of the women in Group B spoke proudly of their spirit of independence which had been inculcated in them in their early lives by their grandmothers. This had helped them to adjust to the traumatic reunion. Conversely there can also be created "feelings of anomie, of displacement, of anger, of worthlessness, of guilt which can consume a great deal of creative energy as children struggle to rebuild wounded psyches." (Senior 1991 p.24) This latter could also be applied to many of the women in the study .The women in Group A seemed to have found greater difficulty than those in Group B in rebuilding their 'wounded psyche'.

Sharpe (1997 p.266) commenting on the mental health and socialisation in the Caribbean, expresses the view that the mental health issues, attached to attachment, separation and loss propounded by Bowlby (1973) "are central to much of the psychopathology that may be associated with the specifics of Caribbean family socialization." Unfortunately the cultural norm of shifting children from home to home has not taken into account the adverse effects of separation and loss on some children. Bowlby (1979 p.81) observed that many of the troubles of patients treated by psychiatrists, can be traced at least in part to a separation or loss which had been experienced recently or at an early period in life. More recently, Fletchman-Smith (2000) a psychotherapist, working with clients of West Indian origins in London, stated that generally children seem to suffer particularly badly when problems occur in families from an 'extended network' background. [2]

The women in Group A did not consciously seek therapy to talk about their separation and loss from their attachment figures and their inability to bond with their biological mothers upon reunion. These feelings had been repressed and had emerged as the therapy progressed. Reflecting on the phenomenon they had acknowledged how hurt and rejected they had felt having been left by their mothers who upon reunion were unable to relate to them with warmth and affection as they had envisaged a mother -daughter relationship. The women in Group B when they realised that they and their mothers did not relate satisfactorily with each other, had been able to discuss this with friends, and other family members. In doing so, they had reverted to the cultural norm of relying on the social network in order to help in the solution of their problems. During the course of discussions they realised that the situation of poor relationship with their mothers was not peculiar to them as they had thought. The reunion experiences of many of their peers had been similar to theirs, and this helped them to decide that adaptation to the situation without the close relationship with their biological mothers was the way to survive.

The women in both Groups although they described some measure of emotional unease, continued to work and to care for their children without seeking help from their mothers. In this respect they were breaking the cultural pattern of relinquishing

[2] "The extended network is headed by women, and in which women take sole charge of caring for the children, sometimes including the children of several generations." (Fletchman-Smith 2000 p.79)

the care of children to grandmothers, as they wanted to develop close relationships with their children. They considered themselves to be functioning reasonably well but one of the women in Group B remarked: "No matter how successful those of us who had that experience may seem, there is always something missing inside."

The following comment seems applicable to the women

> "Stories about mother-daughter relations reveal the recurrent power of our desire for a benign force or agent out there in the world looking out for us, attending to our needs and ensuring their satisfaction. We want to be caught and held securely in an idealised mother-gaze, we ask her to assure us that someone is really still there to protect us and catch us when we fall. Finitude, evil, death, all can be transcended in the rebirth of the holy, innocent child/mother. We promise to be good daughters if mother won't abandon us. But whose voice can we really hear? An echo, a delusion, a fantasy of a childhood always ready already past and yet disabling us." (Flax 1993 pp.153-154)

The hypothesis of the study was that the experiences of broken attachments to the primary care, of separation and loss, and disappointment that expectations of close relationships with biological mothers when reunited were not realised, adversely affected the women's ability to trust others and presented them from making and sustaining close relationships in their adult lives.

The study was placed in the theoretical context of attachment theory, which (1) supports the notion that experiences in the early life of the child influence later relationships (Bowlby 1979). (2) Moving to adult attachment relationships, these are studied by eliciting the thoughts and feelings about attachment experiences through the examination of narratives (Main, Kaplan and Cassidy 1985).

The Separation-Reunion Interview Schedule (SRIS) was useful in guiding the interview with the women and ensuring that all of them were asked the same questions. The answers were coherent and the women seemed to have had no difficulty in recalling their experiences and reflecting upon them.

As the stories of the women unfolded, it became apparent that their interpretations of their mothering were based on the cultural norms of their West Indian background. For example, the unavailability of mothers due to their long working hours and sometimes working in consecutive jobs. One woman provided an example of the unavailability of her mother. She described brief encounters on the stairs when her mother returned from working all night, and she was leaving home for school. Cognitively she understood that her mother was trying to cope financially, but emotionally she wanted the comfort of mother being there on her return from school and interacting with her. Back in the West Indies their surrogate carers were less pressured with work commitments, and were able to spend more time in the home, and available if they needed comfort. In attachment theory terms there was a 'secure base' in which they lived and relationships were "mutually rewarding" (Bowlby 1979 p.104).

The marginal existence of most of the women within their homes was exacerbated by the hostile environment in schools where they were subjected to racist taunts by their peers either ignored by teachers or stereotyped into non academic activities They also observed racist behaviour towards black people in the wider community and this generated feelings of not being safe.

In considering styles of attachment those women who had been left in the age group 0-3 and who maintained that they were well cared for by their surrogate mothers were securely attached to them even though they were unable to maintain proximity to them.

All of the women reflected that they had not succeeded in getting close enough to their mothers after their reunion. One woman described her feeling as being 'disconnected' and thought that her mother "had loss the smell of me". The women perceived the mothers as loving the younger children born in England. Those women who were practising Christians and who had a strong religious faith considered it their duty to love their mothers and they did, but adapted to the situation by avoiding too much contact. Their attachment style was considered to be insecure/avoidant.

Some of the women were still working through their anger with mothers for having placed them in the reunion situation and had not given them the choice of remaining with their known family. They had repressed their feelings and had become depressed. They decided that in their mothers' and their own interests they should distance themselves from each other.

Those women whose experiences with their caregivers were negative felt that they had never attached to anyone. They tended to be dismissive of detachment. They expressed feelings of grave self-doubt and considered themselves unlovable. They never believed that a relationship with a partner would be sustained and were always questioning whether the partner really loved them. Invariably the relationships were broken.

Some of the women in Group A who sought therapeutic help when relationships collapsed, became aware that that their early broken attachments had been influential in the development of their distrustful personalities.

Attachment theory stressed that attachment between the child and carer begins to emerge in the second half of the first year. An important factor in the study was that more women had been left as children between the ages of 0-3 in Group A and they expressed more difficulty in their ability to trust others and to make and sustain relationships. It is not known what part the temperament of the children played in helping them to adapt to the reunion, but one of the women made passing reference to being of a "calm nature" which helped her to adapt to her new family, and another spoke of being "strong willed" which caused her to be confrontational with mother if she considered her to be treating her unjustly.

Attachment theory also highlighted the need for attachment figures to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of children. Most of the women reflected that in the early days of the reunion these criteria were seldom met and this confirmed their feelings of rejection.

Bowlby (1979 p.108) provided evidence from various developmental researchers which suggested that,

> "both self-reliance and the capacity to rely on others are alike products of a family that provides strong support for its off spring combined with respect for their personal aspirations, their sense of responsibility that provides strong support for its off spring combined with respect for their personal aspirations, their sense of responsibility and their ability to deal with the world."

A child's experiences and relationships in the family constitute one of the most important influences on his/her development. All of the women in the study had experienced living in two families; an extended one in their early childhood in the West Indies, and the other, nuclear during their adolescence in England. Their perception at the time of the reunion with their biological mothers was that they would experience a better quality of life economically and educationally. Life in the new families did not meet their expectations. Feelings of mistrust engendered during their early separation from mothers were possibly activated in the new situation, and they grew wary of forming close relationships lest in the process they were rejected and hurt yet again.

The findings of the study resonate with the notion that the experiences of family relationships during the childhood of the individual is crucially important for the development of the personality; and a healthy personality enables collaboration with suitable figures that are mutually rewarding (Bowlby 1979p.104).

The study raised many questions and highlighted the need for further research with regard to broken attachments, separation and loss. Suggested topics are listed in the Afterword.

AFTERWORD

The Need For Future Research

1. I would suggest that there is a need for research among children and mothers of West Indian origin on the impact of Child shifting during early childhood and on the personalities of the individuals in adult life, both in the West Indies and here in England.

2. Research on the impact on the grandmothers (or other surrogate mothers of children) when they separate from the children.

3. Similar research to this on boys and men who suffered the separation-reunion experience during the West Indian immigration.

4. Research on the involvement of the fathers of West Indian origin in child-rearing in the British environment, and patterns of infant-father attachments.

5. Research of the intergenerational patterns of attachment among individuals of West Indian origins using the Adult Attachment Interview, paying attention to cultural norms of child rearing and parent child relationships.

6. Research on the impact on the children born in England when those from the West Indies joined the family.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of research topics which may be undertaken. There is a need for more research among people who are often invisible in most of the psychoanalytic research studies in this country. In this multicultural society and with a growing population of people suffering from separation and loss, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, social workers and psychologists could usefully consider the results of this study and the use of attachment theory in planning research projects.

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Appendix One: Map of the Caribbean

Appendix Two: Distribution of West Indian Population in Great Britain

Region	Total Population	West Indian Population[1]
London and South-east	11,103,673	101,385
Midlands	4,757,346	28,287
North Midlands	3,634,195	7,850
South	2,826,496	5,808
East and West Ridings	4,171,874	7,903
East	3,736,093	5,890
South-west	3,411,138	4,867
North-west	6,567,239	8,243
Wales	2,644,023	1,414
Scotland	5,179,344	1,280
North	3,252,471	732
Total	**51,283,892**	**173,659**

Source: Birthplace and Nationality Tables, 1961, London, HMSO, 1964 and 1965

[1] More accurately, persons born in British colonies and protectorates in America

Appendix Three: Interview Schedule

Initials

Age

Civil Status

Children Ages of children

Occupation

Life in the Caribbean

01. How old were you when left in the Caribbean? Alone or with brothers and sisters?

02. With whom were you left?

03. Who took care of you?

04. Did you think your carer was your mother?

05. What did you call her?

06. What were you told about your mother?

07. Had you any idea of what she looked like?

08. What memories have you of your feelings about mother not being there?

09. What did you as a small child remember asking about your mother?

10. Did anyone ever talk about your mother?

11. Why did you think your mother left you?

12. Did you want to leave the Caribbean to travel to England to be with your mother?

13. What did you think it would be like living with your mother?

14. Were you asked if you wanted to leave the West Indies to come to England?

15. How did you feel when you were told you were leaving to come to England?

16. What did your carer tell you why you were leaving her?

17. How did you feel about her allowing you to leave?

18. How do you think she felt about you leaving her?

19. What did you look forward to when you knew you were coming to Britain?

20. How did you feel about leaving the West Indies; family, friends, the country?

21. Who accompanied you on the journey?

Life in England

22. How did you feel when you arrived?

23. Did you recognise your mother? father? If yes, how did you feel? If no?
24. Did your mother recognise you?
25. How do you think she felt at seeing you?
26. How did you feel when you saw your brothers and sisters who were born in England?
27. How did you think they felt at seeing you?
28. Did you talk to anyone about how you felt?
29. Did anyone ask how you felt about joining the family?
30. Did you recall life in the West Indies and talk about those left behind?
31. Did you ever ask to return?
32. What did you miss about West Indies?
33. Did you ever wish you had not come to England?
34. What did you like about joining the family?
35. What did you not like?
36. How did you think the family felt about you joining them?
37. How did you get on at school?
38. Did you make friends easily - Were there other children who had a similar experience of being left and reuniting with their mothers?
39. Did you and these children talk about the West Indies and life there?
40. How did you feel when in school?
41. What were your qualifications when you left school?
42. Were you encouraged by your mother / father to further your studies?
43. Did you want to study further or to go to work?
44. How easy or difficult was it for you to be employed?
45. How easy or difficult was it for you to build relationships with colleagues at work?
46. How old were you when you left home? Under what circumstances?
47. What were your feelings when you left home?
48. How do you think your mother felt? And the rest of your family?
49. With whom did you live after leaving home?
50. If with a partner, how did you relate to each other?
51. Did your partner have experience of separation / reunion?
52. Did you share and discuss experiences? If not, why not?
53. How helpful or unhelpful was having a partner of similar background to you?

54. What do you feel about who cares for young children in early childhood?
55. What effect has it on the child if not his/her mother?
56. What effect on child and mother when they reunite to live together?
57. What experiences of your early childhood influenced who you are today?
58. What connections if any do you make with your early experience and your depressive feelings?
59. How do you cope with experience and loss in your life?
60. How are your moods generally?
61. What triggers your feelings of depression?
62. How easy is it for you to trust others?

Appendix Four: Revised Separation-Reunion Interview Schedule (SRIS)

Initials

Age

Civil Status

Children Ages of children

Occupation

Religion

Separation-Reunion Interview Schedule (SRIS)

Pre-Migration

1. How old were you when left in the Caribbean? Alone or with brothers and sisters?
2. With whom were you left?
3. Who took care of you?
4. What feelings did you have about your carer?
5. What did you call her?
6. What were your ideas about mother's absence?
7. What memories have you of your feelings about mother not being there?
8. What did you as a small child remember asking about your mother?
9. What were you told about your mother?
10. What do you recall thinking about your mother leaving you? How old were you when you were told that you were leaving to join your mother in England and what did you feel about it?
11. How did you feel when you were told that your mother wanted you to leave the West Indies to come to England?
12. What do you think mother felt about leaving you?
13. What did you think it would be like living with your mother?
14. How did you feel when you were told you were leaving to come to England?
15. What preparation had you for leaving the West Indies to come to England?
16. What did your carer tell you why you were leaving her?
17. How did you feel about her allowing you to leave?
18. How do you think she felt about you leaving her?
19. What did you look forward to when you knew you were coming to England?
20. How did you feel about leaving family, friends, the country?

21. What were your thoughts about the person who accompanied you on the journey?

Immigration

22. How did you feel when you arrived?
23. Did you recognise your mother? father? If yes, how did you feel? If no how did you feel?
24. How do you think your parents felt at seeing you?

Post Migration

25. How did you feel when you saw your brothers and sisters who were born in England?
26. How did you think they felt at seeing you?
27. What did you recall about life in the West Indies and to whom did you talk about those left behind?
28. What did you miss about West Indies?
29. What did you like about joining the family?
30. What did you not like?
31. What was the family reaction towards your joining them?
32. What were your experiences at school with peers and teachers?
33. How easy/difficult was it for you to make friends?
34. What do you recall about the teachers' reaction to you in school?
35. How did you feel when in school and how did you progress?
36. What were your qualifications when you left school?
37. What support did you receive from your mother/father for furthering you studies?
38. What did you want to do on leaving school?
39. Were you helped to find work?
40. How easy or difficult was it for you to be employed?
41. How easy or difficult was it for you to build relationships with colleagues at work?
42. How old were you when you left home and under what circumstances?
43. What were your feelings when you left home?
44. How do you think your mother felt? and the rest of your family?
45. What contact did you maintain with your mother after leaving home?

46. With whom did you live after leaving home?
47. If with a partner, how did you relate to each other?
48. How similar/different was your partner's experience of early childhood to yours?
49. How helpful or unhelpful was having a partner of similar background to you?
50. What do you feel about who cares for young children in early childhood?
51. What effect does it have on the child to be cared for by someone who is not the mother?
52. What effect does reuniting have on child and mother after long separation?
53. Which experiences of your early childhood influenced who you are today?
54. What connections if any do you make with your early experience and your depressive feelings?
55. How do you cope with separation and loss in your life?
56. How are your moods generally?
57. What triggers your feelings of depression?
58. How easy is it for you to trust others and make and sustain relationships?

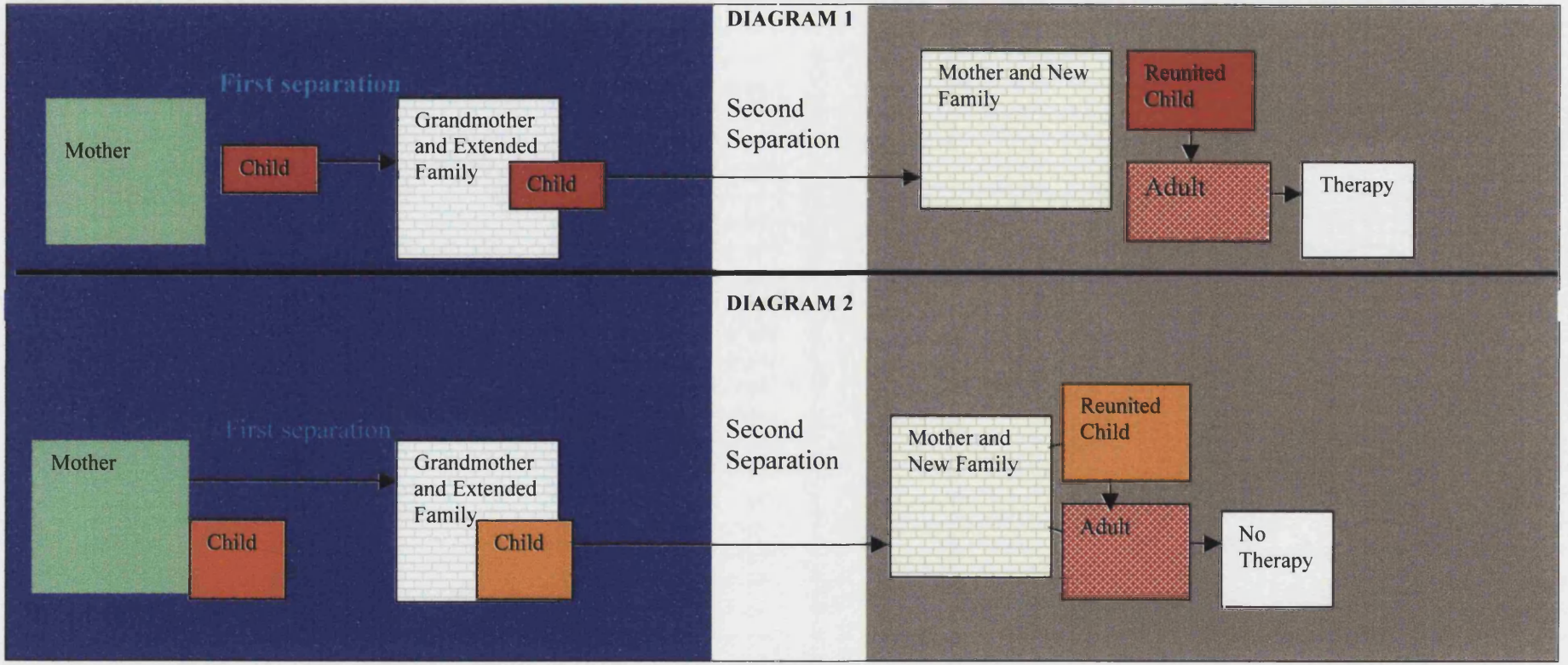
Appendix Six: Eight stages of Psychosocial Development

	Stage (with approximate ages)	*Psychosocial crises*	*Radius of significant relations*	*Psychosocial modalities*	*Favourable outcome*
I.	**Birth through first year**	Trust versus mistrust	Maternal person	To get To give in return	Drive and hope
II.	**Through second year**	Autonomy versus shame, doubt	Parental persons	To hold (on) To let (go)	Self-control and willpower
III.	**Third year through fifth year**	Initiative versus guilt	Basic family	To make (going after) To "make like" (playing)	Direction and purpose
IV.	**Sixth to onset of puberty**	Industry versus inferiority	"Neighbour-hood"; school	To make things (competing) To make things together	Method and competence
V.	**Adolescence**	Identity and repudiation versus identity and diffusion	Peer groups and outgroups; models of leadership	To be oneself (or not to be) To share being oneself	Devotion and fidelity
VI.	**Early adult**	Intimacy and solidarity versus isolation	Partners in friendship, sex, competition, co-operation	To lose and find oneself in another	Affiliation and love
VII.	**Young and middle adult**	Generativity versus self-absorption	Divided labour and shared household	To make be To take care of	Production and care
VIII.	**Later adult**	Integrity versus despair	"Mankind" "My Kind"	To be, through having been To face not being	Renunciation and wisdom

Source: Erikson (1959) p.166; Erikson (1963), p. 274; slightly modified from original

Appendix Five: Model of Relationships and Cultural Influences on Adaptation in the Full Sample

WEST INDIAN CONTEXT **UK CONTEXT**



Appendix Seven: The Separation-Reunion Schedule (SRIS)

The Separation-Reunion Schedule is designed for use in a retrospective study of adults who experienced separation from their biological mothers/parents during their infancy and early childhood for varying lengths of time in their countries of origin. As children they were cared for by grandmothers and/or other members of the extended family or nannies and were later reunited with their biological mothers/parents in a new country to which they had migrated.

The SRIS is designed especially to elicit the life histories of the respondents based on three significant periods of their lives. Firstly their early separation from their primary carer and what memories of their early attachment if any. Secondly the focus is on their feelings of separation from and loss of their surrogate carers, their social lives and emotional relationships and their reaction to reunion with biological mothers/parents. Thirdly their reflections on the long term effects of the experiences of broken attachments during their early lives.

The interview lasts for two hours and tries to capture the feelings, attitudes and understand the meanings, which the respondents attribute to various episodes in their lives. The interviewer must memorise the questions and adopt an easy conversational style in order to develop rapport with the respondent and give the assurance of interest in and belief of their stories. Time must be given for reflection on their experiences and feelings about significant figures in their lives and sensitivity shown if there is discomfort when recalling painful memories.

Recording the interview may be done by using a tape recorder, or notes which should be written up immediately after the end of the interview. Tape recording is considered the most appropriate method when the study aims to consider complex issues in depth and the sample is small. Green-Powell (1997 p.198) urges researchers to use mental notes and written notation to support tape recording, these will highlight non-verbal behaviours, passive behaviours and facial expressions of the respondents.

The interviewer needs to obtain the respondent's permission to tape record the interview. If at any time a particularly sensitive bit of information is going to be disclosed and it is requested that the machine be turned off this must be done promptly.

The transcripts of the interviews must be carefully read and analysed with the aim of "capturing the complexity of reality and to make convincing sense of it. One method of data analysis, grounded theory entails the systematic and intensive analysis of data often sentence by sentence or phrase by phrase, from the field notes and interviews." (Green-Powell op.cit.).

The interviewer needs to guard against personal biases influencing the interviews or the interpretation of replies.

Appendix Eight: Transcript of Interview with one of the women in Group B

The interviewee considered herself to be resilient in spite of the trauma of having been separated from mother at an early age and from carers, her peers and her country. Her reunion with mother was disappointing, but when she realised it was impossible for her to return to her grandmother, she adapted to life in the new country. She acknowledged that it must have been difficult for her mother who worked very hard. Their relationship was never close, but with maturity and the passing of time she had become reconciled with her mother.

Initials: T.L

Age: 35

Civil Status Single

Children: none

Occupation: Mental Health Worker

Religion: Pentecostal (Practising)

Location: In T.L.'s home.

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me about your experiences as a child in ------- in the West Indies before coming to England to be reunited with your mother.

Pre-Migration

Q. How old were you when you were left in the West Indies? Alone or with brothers and sisters?

A. I think I was about 2 years old. Had no brothers or sisters.

Q. With whom were you left?

A. To explain it biologically is hard; She was called Mum and was really my mother's step-mother-in-law, we regarded her as grandmother. She had a number of us, 3 of us girls left with her to bring up and at that time she must have been about 70 years old. None of us were sibs, the others belonged to another woman who had gone to England.
She took care of us. She was virtually housebound. I can't remember her going as far as the byway which was about a minute and a half walk away.

Q. What did you call her, and what feelings do you remember having about her care?

A. We called her Mama and she was my world. I remember her to be a fascinating woman who loved me; and I remember her as settling us down. That's how I felt. At the same time it was like an equal relationship, but at the same time she kind of encouraged me to feel I could do things. The only battle we had was that she was quite old-fashioned. I remember like my hair, she had difficulty combing my hair never the way I wanted her to.
I also remember that she was a good cook and she would always get me to eat. I think to this day I eat to please others sometimes. That was one way of showing her that I was O K, because I used to be quite sick when I was young and she would make special dishes. Whatever she made she would sit down - she wouldn't force feed me, but she would sit down and talk about how good the dishes were and how nice they tasted until I would be salivating and I would eat and it would give her pleasure when I did eat.
So yes it was just a warm close relationship because after a while, the two others left for England. I don't know how many years it was, it was just her and me making up the family. Down the road the extended family, her granddaughter had nine children. I used to go and see them quite a lot and my father's mother lived down in the next village and I would go and see her occasionally, but I didn't really like her and being with her.

I can't remember any bad treatment from her, it was just what I was used to really. The house was smaller, so it was simple things, but she just wasn't Mama, so I didn't want her.

Q What memories have you of your feelings why mother was not there?

A. My mother--- my memories of her? (pause)
Oh sorry. They mentioned her, she was referred to as a nurse and she was in England, we had photographs of her, but nobody sat down and said--.At least I can't remember it. I knew I was the daughter of a nurse and the 'nurse' title gave her some status in my eyes; that's it; I knew my mother was in England. She did not send photographs to me, but one of me was sent to her. I think I was about 4 or 5; I found it when I came here.

Q. What do you think your mother felt about leaving you?

A. Never thought about it. I can't remember consciously missing her. Too engrossed. At least my memory tells me I was too engrossed.

Q. What do you recall thinking about your mother leaving you?

A. The only thing my thoughts of her were related to was receiving presents, and the year she did not send presents, I was extreme upset; I felt really abandoned and unwanted. I had a strange--I felt it years ago, but so many years have gone. I had some art therapy but it is quite a while and I took up some relaxation. I have always been resistant to step aerobics as I think it is a lot of rubbish; but I went through the process anyway. One thing was to imagine that you were going up a high street; you go into one of your usual shops but you sort of knew it was extended at the back; you go through to this bit which was not there before, pick up an item, then you found an item that means a lot to you. To my surprise, I did this. I sort of picked up one of those old plastic things of the Virgin Mary and with that came the memory of standing on the steps of our house in the island and my cousin bringing that to me as a present when my mother didn't send me a present, and the smile on their faces didn't beam like smiles, they were like grimaces, like 'this is all you are worth. The

feeling of it was like 'this small object was all you were worth', and I hated it. (pause)

T.L. resumed. Because of the way I had been brought up, in my recollection I am smiling and say thank you politely, but in my heart I am crying and I am angry and I am feeling worthless because this object looked worthless to me. It was as if they hadn't really thought about me and just picked it up walking up the street. That's what it felt like; so to thinking about my mum, it was purely in relation to the boxes coming really and the one time she did not send it, stuck in my mind. It was not the dresses or what came out from the box, but it was just having the box.

I asked her about it when I grew up and she said it was a year that she didn't have any money and she could not afford to send anything, it was very painful.

Q. How old were you when you were told that your mother wanted you to leave the West Indies and join her in England and what were your feelings about it?

A. I was 9 I wanted to come, but it wasn't supposed to be a permanent thing in my mind. It was like, my mother sent for me. In my limited understanding without anyone sitting down and explaining exactly what was going on I didn't have a knowledge that it would be a permanent thing. I was coming to see her. She had come back to the island once and I abandoned Mama and wanted to be with my mother, but that was short-lived. I don't know if it was the first or second night, I was sleeping with her and I just felt uncomfortable and I left and went back to Mama. I remember the pain on her face. I just did not feel comfortable and had to get back to my grandmother.

Q.What preparation had you for leaving the island in the West Indies?

A. I remember Mama sitting me down and explaining to me pounds, shillings, and pence which I can't remember. When I got here it was a great disappointment they had gone, it was decimalisation. I remember her explaining to me the etiquette of a knife and fork; so there must have been some preparation for here, but talking things through and how long I was going to be and make sure you keep in contact, those sorts of things never happened.

Q. How did you feel about your grandmother allowing you to leave?

A. I thought it was only for a visit so she wouldn't mind.

Q. How do you think she felt about you leaving her?

A. I was eager to leave. I remember when the car came to get me I don't know what I said, but Mama --her words were 'like you think the streets are paved with gold.' I don't know if that 's right but I thought 'that's silly'. I don't know whether I went through a sort of rejection of her because I was going to be with my mother. I don't know but they were quite harsh words when we were parting, but I did not see it that I was coming to stay. I was just travelling to see my mother.
I think, thinking back on those last words Mama must have been upset.

Q. What did you feel about leaving your friends, the country?
A. In my consciousness I was not going forever.

Immigration

Q. Who accompanied you on the journey?

A. I came by myself. I was told that the air hostess would look after me.

Q. How did you feel about this?

A. I don't know how I felt really. At least I thought I could do it. Just did it.

Post-migration

Q. On arrival did you recognise your mother?
A. No. I don't think so. I didn't expect to be nearly her height. I was very disappointed with everything. She greeted me, but she could not do anything to please me. I was disappointed her clothes and by where she took me, where she lived.

Q. How do you think your mother felt about seeing you.

A. I never thought about it. I never knew what she thought. She never said.

Q What did you recall about life in the West Indies and did you talk about it?

A You just got taken from one place to the other. I just remember my mother saying 'this is now' you are here now. It was just like you have to get on with your life really as best you can.

Q. What did you miss about life in the West Indies?

A. I missed my grandmother. . I was not encouraged to write to Mama, so it wasn't till I left home. She was much older then and had poor sight, so others had to respond on her behalf. She died the year before I planned to return. I never did get to see her and I have no visual thing to remember her by; my memory is poor of what she looked like.

Q What did you like about joining the family?

A. It was just the two of us. I was profoundly disappointed with the living conditions it was a small space. I think initially I was happy to be here but I didn't know what to call her. I couldn't call her Mother; I couldn't call her Mum so I never really called her anything. I couldn't call her by her name, that was rude

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Q. What was it like living with your mother?

A. I did not like being here. I was quite angry as a child. Slowly as the months passed I became pretty down on her saying I wasn't going to stay here and I was unhappy, I really began to feel unhappiness. I mentioned it to one of my playmates at school and one said to go the Social Services and would send me back to the island. I went to my mother and said 'I am unhappy and I want to go back. I can go to Social Services and they will send me back' I don't know if she beat me or threatened me or something, but that made me know that that option was out, but for a while I was quite unhappy. I remember when my mother was OK she would take me out to see the sights, to the seaside and whatever. I remember that.

I did one silly thing when I was about ten years old. I set my hair on fire just to experiment. I don't know if it was connected to my unhappiness. I don't know, just curiosity. I thought put a match to it, but as I started to feel the heat I calmly damped

it down. Again I wanted to see what would happen when I was lighting the oven and I put my head in the oven and it caught fire. I hadn't thought it through. When I told her she told me she did not believe it.

For most of my teens actually my home was a very sad environment; We moved to a housing estate. My mother got married when I was 13 and she had two children, a boy and a girl. I helped to care for them I was like a parent.

Q. What your feelings about the new family?

A. My stepfather was all right but I felt excluded. I suppose I didn't want to be included. I suppose I didn't know what it was like to be in a relationship with a male and female in the home. I didn't feel I was part of a team that was caring. I always felt that I had to make my own decisions about everything, about school. She said any school and I found out where my friends were going. It was not that she was against me or did bad things; it was just that I didn't have anyone for me. Basically it was my own fault that probably stemmed from having had Mama. Every now and then my mother would try to hug me but I did not respond to her. Here I felt insecure, although I never went without, there wasn't anything I wanted that I didn't have.

When I was 11 I had my own room, my own TV. For a while I was shy about eating in front of people, so I stayed by myself and ate by myself but some of my mother's friends used to visit to play cards, and I loved to play so I would join in...Also my mother worked long hours.

Q. What were your experiences at school with peers and teachers?

A I liked school. The black kids didn't take to me too much, but the white ones did; they found me different and fascinating. I think I have a strong sense of sociability. I made friends easily. Teachers did not do much, I was allowed to sit down, smile and talk. I went into regression. My handwriting at 12 looked like my handwriting at 8. I enjoyed attending classes and enjoyed debates, chat too much. That's what I did didn't do anything. I don't have too much memory of this

Q. And what qualifications did you have when you left school?

.A. I don't know if I had failed CSE or didn't do too well, but one day I just woke up. I thought, no, I am responsible for myself, what's going to happen if I don't do well?

Am I going to grow out of my ambitions? I tried to do some exams, but the course teacher refused to allow me, saying that nobody from that school was going anywhere. I went and told the headmistress who told me "don't you ever believe that, if you want to do something you can do it." She made a public announcement about it, so I stayed on.

Q. What support did you have from your mother?

A. None, none. It was like whatever you want to do. I did very well in the lower sixth with O levels and then I was transferred to 'A' levels. I was big and looked much older than I was, much bigger than my friends sand I felt I ought not to be in school

I decided not to do the 'A' levels but to find a job where there was education attached to it. I found a job with a training scheme with an 'A' level qualification at the end of it. I went on to college and obtained a degree, and went on to post graduate.

Q. How easy or difficult was it for you to make relationships with colleagues at work?

A. I have always been able to get on with people. Just smile and get on.

Q. How old were you when you left home?

A. I had finished school, and was working. 18. I had no privacy. Mother would not knock to come in my room. I thought I deserved some privacy and respect and I couldn't say that. I had started a relationship but none of the boys were allowed in the house further than the kitchen. I had begun working and contributing towards the housekeeping but I was not getting respect and I felt aggrieved. She and my stepfather thought I was intimate with the boy I was going out with, and my mother accused me of all sorts of things. One of her fears was --when I was younger she had told me not to embarrass her. She knew a young girl who was having an illicit affair.

My mother had listened to her husband, and that for me was a betrayal of her trust. If she didn't know me well enough to know that I wouldn't do anything, and even if I did, to come and ask me. I am an open person, so I found a bed sit.

Q. How do you think your mother felt?

A. I think she thought I would return home in a few months. I can only presume. I think she always thought that I that I had much of the island, never too trusting of people constantly and not seeing the wood for the trees with people, who was who and what was what, a bit naïve. I think she thought I would be back home. But that was not on, I never went back.. I think she was upset

Q. And the family?

A. I never thought about what my stepfather thought. My siblings must have missed me.

Q. What contact did you maintain with your mother after leaving?

A. We talked to each other and I would visit,

Q Did you live with a partner?

A I lived alone, but I had a relationship, but we never did anything a lot of the time it was just staying indoors; that got me really angry.

Q. How similar/different was his early experience from yours?

A. He felt that he was abandoned by his mother and father. He was a sickly child and had to be sent to special schools. He was really damaged by his early experiences. Although he said he loved me he was unable to trust anybody enough to make a long-term relationship. It was on and off. He was in a lot of pain. We still talk to each other, and sometimes he telephones. I have always had good relationships with men and boys as they see me as a good girl friend, a good confider and have good conversations.

Then I met someone else and that lasted for 4 years. He was considered a good looking man and I didn't believe that he liked me in that way. He was ambitious and intelligent compared with other young men in the neighbourhood. He asked me to marry him very quickly but it was like I couldn't even hear that about getting married, I was expecting rejection, not a proposal. I could not accept that he liked me as a woman. I don't know how I saw myself really. I reacted to his proposal to my expectation which was the relationship was over, so I just turned my back on him and closed the door. He gave me a ring, he did not know the value of it but said it belonged to his grandmother. I did not know the significance of his grandmother

to him. I just thought it was an old ring so I gave it back. I must have said it was worthless, this is what he thought about me? He never spoke about it again.
He had made several plans to go to the registry office and have a quick marriage, but it never happened.

Q. What were your feelings after the relationship ended?
A. Looking back objectively it was like I was saying that I couldn't. I also had an inferior opinion of myself. Later I said things to myself like, 'you are always putting yourself down, it was like constantly you need to be told that you were OK. I knew how I felt but I was always able to keep my emotions in check. I loved the man but I didn't believe it was real. I expected it to end any time. There were other women who were clearly besotted by him but he only had eyes for me and I just thought he was another man who would leave me and that was what I prepared myself for.

Q. And now, any relationship now?
A. I am now committed to my religion, and would not like a relationship unless it is something mounted by God as such. Somebody from this religion or somebody with the same beliefs.

Q. You have no children but if you had (I know it is a hypothetical question) what would you think of who cares for them in their early lives.
A. I think it should be the parent. The parent should care for the child. The one thing with me having children is I want them to have a father that is involved in every aspect of their lives, not just having a mother. I don't know if I would have a proper relationship with my children. I would want the father to play a prominent part in the children's lives and that's due to me not having that sort of male relationship. That's why I sought them and enjoyed their company maybe because of not having them in my early life, I would like my children to have that confidence in that relationship with their father.
The only thing I would not do is to give my children out to a child minder unless I am really confident about their ability to look after children.

Q. And your mother?

A. I know my mother would help, but she is not a stay at home person She would not have the time and would be too tired and I wouldn't expect her to.

Q. Which experiences of your early childhood do you think influenced the way you are now?

A. Mama always said 'knowledge is power.' So I had that determination to do my degree and get where I want to. The resolve to do things and just achieve them Whenever troubles come you just go through the troubles.

Q. What effect do you think reuniting after years of separation have on child and mother?

A. From my experience I think they remain outside of each other.

When I learned about the suffering that my mother went through as a child it was difficult for her. I felt guilt about her life with Mama was completely different from mine. When they can talk to each other it helps in understanding each other.

Q How do you cope with separation and loss?

A. When my grandmother died, I really didn't deal with it. I talked to a friend who knew that I had been planning for years to go and visit her. So I just battled it out. Several years after I had feelings of being abandoned by her as well. Really. The other two girls who were left with me had inherited something from Mama and there was no mention of me. That was hard. I wasn't conscious that was what I thought but as the years and the conditions in which things happened, edit changed into something that really sort of went deep. I went on feeling hurt for a long time and then I just had to say I remember her lovingly.

I am prepared for loss when people leave me. It's kind of like if it happens, it happens. I will just deal with it.

Q. How easy is it for you to trust others and make and sustain relationships?

A. It's kinda strange. I think that I am very trusting on one hand, but there is a core of me that cools down. I think in the relationship with the partner who wanted to marry me that was the cause essentially. I do trust people but I think essentially that I now know whoever leaves me although it is painful the loss of them, there id a core there in me that will continue. Sometimes I think that my love for people is sort

of superficial because I don't ever own anybody in my life. I don't ever see that person belongs to me.