

## **INTRODUCTION**

**by**

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A serious task such as editing a special collection on wife abuse requires a declaration of one's locatedness. I am a feminist sociologist, deeply concerned about issues that degrade and injure women. Over the last fifteen years, I have been seeking solutions to women's issues through theoretical orientations that challenge the entrenched male hegemony at large as well as within the academe. I have participated in research, publications, conferences and teaching on woman-centred matters on an on-going basis. My commitment also extends into front-line efforts such as abused women's shelters, adult and adolescent work-shops and public lectures. Therefore, I view this collection on wife abuse as the natural culmination of my own thoughts and efforts as well as a pathway for my future work. In addition, I have been particularly privileged to gather works from scholars who challenge the *status quo* with their own insights. Indeed, this collection subsumes the work of researchers and theorists who have blazed new trails.

I use the attribution of feminism to this collection in its broadest sense: A deep concern for women's issues, a belief that personal and academic knowledge are complementary rather than hierarchical, and an expectation that social thought and social action are fundamentally inseparable (Bart and Moran, 1993, especially Part IV; Dobash, 1992; Spender, 1981; Yllo, 1988; 1993; Yllo and Bograd, 1988). Outside of these most basic generalities, many years of work on feminist issues taught

me that there are vital differences among feminists themselves. Despite the fact that "feminists" are often pigeonholed and stereotyped, probably no two feminists are identical in their ideological or methodological approaches. After all, each is a unique combination of thoughts and experiences arising from her/his unique location in geographic, ethnic, racial, class, ideological and personal vectors. Undoubtedly, one's choice of topics, choice of theory and methods mirror this uniqueness. The richness the feminist thought has brought to social scientific research is precisely because of the courage to recognize and respect these differences, rather than demanding artificial and simplistic adherence to "rationality," "objectivity" or "sameness" (Bart, 1971; Bart and Moran, 1993; Eichler and Lapointe, 1985; Spender, 1981). Thus, the most valuable aspect of this collection is its ability and courage to tap into theoretical and methodological debates, while keeping the concern for women's lives firmly at its core.

In addition to the variations in feminist thinkers and researchers, there are also more global changes in the feminist movement itself as it pertains to violence against women by their mates. To name a few points of evolution, the discernable shifts from earlier efforts occurred in terms of an emphasis on: -women's capacity to survive rather than their passive victimisation, -the race/gender/class multiplexities rather than a unidimensional analysis of patriarchy, - variations in sexual orientation rather than the presumption of heterosexuality, and -women's agency and empowerment. Probably more notable than any other dilemma for feminism has been the switchings between solidarity and individuation. At its inception, solidarity has been crucial in the North American as well as some European feminist agendas. A uniquely positive consequence of this emphasis has been seeking voice, safety and representation for individual woman. Ironically, the individuation has also engendered its own unique

costs. For example, caring for the victims may have inadvertently resulted in ignoring the perpetrators, and emphasizing breaking away may have deemphasized the violence itself. Fortunately, the reflexivity embedded in feminism has allowed the re-centralizing of violence and accountability of men (see Dobash et al. in this issue, also see Dobash et al., 1995; Pence and Paymer, 1993; Ptacek, 1988). These developments continue to mould our understanding of wife abuse and the ways in which we foresee to combat its consequences.

Regardless of their starting positions, contributors to this project pose new feminist questions, decipher plausible solutions and explore alternate remedies, although the questions they ask are sometimes difficult and may even appear as divisive on the surface. I am deeply grateful to my eminent colleagues for sharing their valuable work and quarries about violence against women by their mates. I hope that their combined expertise enveloped in this collection will substantially add to the interdisciplinary and cross-cultural insights desperately needed.

#### **ONE AMONG MANY: ROSIE'S STORY:**

My own experience about family violence is excruciatingly vivid, although it is second-hand. I first saw the poison of family violence when the sociologist in me was still uneducated, and the feminist in me still unawakened. Since I was raised to think, albeit erroneously, that violence and family life were mutually exclusive, I had no cognitive categories available to categorize, no concepts available to conceptualize, and no theories available to understand the event I witnessed. Now, it is almost common knowledge that abuse of female intimates occurs in one out of every four family-like arrangements in North America (Canadian Panel on Violence, 1993; Rodgers, 1994; Violence Against Women Survey, 1993; WAC Stats, 1993). Some parts of the world may be even more plagued by wife abuse. Nevertheless the suffering of most women still remains

officially unaccounted for, and politically under-recognized.

My exposure to Rosie's (pseudonym) story goes back to the early 1970s when I volunteered as a translator for a community based Social Service Agency. The first emergency involved Rosie, a new immigrant from my country of origin (Turkey). Rosie was very small, almost emaciated and looked prematurely aged. In the native tongue we shared, she told me the tortures she endured. She had known her husband from her village. He had immigrated and settled in Canada, but went back to get married. Upon his request and the allure of Canada, both sets of parents as well as Rosie were happy to tie the knot. At first, the relationship and the journey were like a dream come true. Soon after the arrival, however, fights, scorns, pushes, shoves, and accusations of infidelity have escalated. I translated her revelations to the male police officer and the female social worker who appeared professionally attentive but emotionally distant. Rosie's predicament involved routine beatings, frequent deprivation of food, a miscarriage due to a kick in the stomach, and numerous hospitalizations for cuts and fractures. Rosie was now sterile, a grave liability for a woman from a pronatalist culture. Jagged scars ranging from barely visible to raw purple attested to the severe history of her victimization. What captivated me the most was a scar on the right side of her mouth which curved slightly upward, giving her a permanent smile which eerily clashed with the liquid pain in her eyes. The left side of her mouth was torn in the opposite direction, correctly matching her sorrow.

Rosie claimed that her husband was very jealous, and locked her in the house when he went to work. Sometimes, he did not come back for days. When the social worker (quite judgmentally) asked why she stayed with him, there was a remarkable change in her eyes and a calm in the frenzied tone of her voice. She said "he loves me, he brings me roses!" She eventually went back to him, dropping all charges. At the time, victims of

abuse were expected to lay the charges against their abusers, which also meant that they could drop those charges for love, hope, fear or shame. This ominous responsibility now belongs to the police (Burris and Jaffe, 1983), however, the issue is less than settled. Recently, advocates of immigrant women have been asking for the reversal of the process (Toronto Star, January 18, 1996, p. A21), claiming that women get even more severely beaten when their abusers are charged. The public protection that is available to all seems to have an inadvertent consequence for some.

Rosie's story highlights another dimension of wife abuse which I will call the conspiracy of silence. After my jolting volunteer experience, my (former) spouse inquired into my whereabouts, and got visibly agitated by my "sticking my nose into other people's business." His reaction and the guilt it induced in me, quelled my voluntarism for a few years. Nevertheless, the dictated silence did not let me forget the rips around Rosie's mouth or the pain in her eyes. Instead, her broken body and soul still motivate my work. Her story also subsumes many of the components of the current debates on the topic of wife abuse: -the difficulties in definitions of abuse, -the inclusion versus exclusion of gender in understanding family violence, -the methods of study, -the family and conspiracy of silence issues, -pros and cons of intervention, and of course - the challenges stemming from cultural/ethnic/racial/religious sensitivities (see Gelles and Loseke, 1993 for the more intense feminist versus non-feminist versions of these debates).

#### **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND METHODOLOGICAL DEBATES:**

First and foremost, Rosie's dilemma captures the different types of suffering women endure at the hands of their intimate partners. For feminist theorists, researchers, authors, and educators, defining abuse is of utmost importance (Sev'er, 1996; Yllo, 1993). In the literature, there are ongoing debates about what constitutes abuse, and how it is the same or

different from other manifestations of violence (Loseke and Gelles, 1993). A number of scholars prefer to define abuse as the conglomeration of physical, sexual, psychological and economic control and subjugation of women (DeKeseredy and Hinch, 1991; DeKeseredy and MacLean, 1990; Jones, 1994; MacLeod; 1980; 1987). Undoubtedly, abuse is most visible in physical injuries such as cuts, bruises, lacerations, rips, tears and broken bones. At its extreme, women lose their lives (Bean, 1992; Campbell, 1992; Crawford and Gartner, 1992; Daly, 1992; Johnson, 1988; Johnson and Chisholm, 1990; Mercy and Saltzman, 1989; Radford, 1992; Staut, 1989). However, the not so visible effects of humiliation and degradation also take their toll. For instance, I never forget my interview with an abused woman (pseudonym Sue) who has endured unspeakable forms of physical and sexual attacks. Yet, the point she repeatedly stressed and distressed over was the fact that her abuser constantly has called her "a fat, lazy cow" and tormented her about her age (five years older than him). Another woman (pseudonym Ann) who is now deemed legally disabled as a result of her partner's atrocities, was calm when she told me about the repeated physical violence she had endured, including many head injuries requiring hospitalization. Yet, she broke-down when she recalled the non-physical degradation: the partner used to make her squirt herself with a water-bottle, starting from her face, moving to her breasts and crotch. These episodes took place exclusively when his drinking "buddies" were in the house. To Ann, who happened to be a very private and deeply religious person, they felt like "psychological gang-rapes." At another time, the partner drove her to a remote, swampy National Park, violently raped her, and forced her to walk behind the car without her clothes on. The naked walk was more demeaning to Ann than even the violent rape which preceded it.

Maybe those of us who have been spared experiences with violent

mates, regardless of our feminist thoughts and noble intentions, still have trouble in truly comprehending the effects of non-physical attacks on a woman's personhood. Some feminists still prefer to remain within the legal definitions of assaultive behaviour, thus avoiding the inclusion of amorphous concepts such as "psychological" abuse. Those who insist on remaining within the physical forms of abuse do so for fear of a backlash from non-feminist or anti-feminist segments of the society. The reasoning is that if we include all types of abuse, we may dilute the very serious nature of the problem. We may also open the flood-gates to the psychological "suffering" of men who may consider themselves to be victims (see recent articles by a well-known female columnist who took upon herself to become the spokesperson of "men's pain" due to partner abuse (Toronto Star, November 13, 20, respectively, 1995:A17, see Steinmetz, 1977/78 for an academic version). These are serious points to ponder without simplistic solutions.

There are also serious debates about the methods which are best suited to the study of wife abuse (Bograd, 1988; DeKeseredy and MacLean, 1991; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Yllo, 1988; 1993). Some researchers have developed ways of counting the incidence of abuse, making sure that the measures are "reliable." For example, in the frequently utilized Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) developed by researchers from the New Hampshire School (Gelles, 1979; 1985; 1987; 1994; Gelles and Cornell, 1983; Gelles and Straus, 1988; Straus and Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980; 1986), abuse is operationalized as hits, slaps, kicks etc., and there is an implicit order in its perceived severity. There is an alluring rationale for such parsimonious efforts. For example, quantification of incidents not only provide data for direct comparisons, but also give a statistical "legitimacy" to one's findings. Nevertheless, problems arise in terms of the "validity" of such measures and the superficiality of the

generalizations that are based on them. Can abuse be adequately captured by piecemeal counts of slaps or kicks without due recognition of the imbalances in power, privilege, intent, motivation, and terror that surrounds those acts? For instance, can we capture Rosie's abuse by counting her cuts and bruises? Can we reduce Rosie to a number without accounting for her frightening isolation and shattered dreams about ever becoming a mother?

In the present collection, two authors deal with the definitional and methodological matters, albeit in substantially different ways. Katharine Kelly (Ch.1) first compares and contrasts the assumptions and assertions of the "wife abuse" versus "family violence" literature along with their corresponding "qualitative" versus "quantitative" research emphasis. Her review is in-depth, and one the readers will probably cite often as a reference. What is more interesting is her candidly expressed unease with *both* bodies of literature. Part of her unease stems from the feminist emphasis on women as "victims." She proposes that feminists have inadvertently and ironically reduced women to passive social actors by overemphasizing women's differences from men. Kelly's critique does not dismiss the complex processes within which women are indeed victimised. But she pointedly insists that women are also social agents, sometimes provocative, other times abusive themselves. Social norms often require women to curb their aggression, but they are also more severely penalized if and when they do aggress. Disregarding these "other" aspects of behaviour and the consequences of socially constructed "female morality" (Gilligan, 1982) does disservice to women. Seeing women only as victims also unmuzzles loud criticisms from non-feminists who are always ready to stick another pin into their effigy of women's troubles.

On the other hand, Kelly forcefully criticizes the family violence theorists who have seen women and men basically the same, and abuse in

simplistic gender-neutral terms. She clearly highlights the pitfalls of this insistence on bogus gender-neutrality as hardly reflecting the real world (also see Berk et al., 1983; Dobash et al., 1995; Pagelow, 1985; Yllo, 1988). Moreover, she argues, despite the manifest intentions and disclaimers of the New Hampshire researchers, gender-neutrality findings are often used by anti-feminists as a backlash against women. Thus, Kelly takes the difficult stance that women are the same as well as simultaneously different from men. She maintains that our understanding of "violence" in general and "woman abuse" in particular must account for this anomaly and incongruity. Instead of women/victim, men/abuser polarities, which are only partially helpful, Kelly proposes a systematic analysis of "privileges" and "responsibilities" which often, but not always polarize men and women as perpetrators and victims respectively.

No doubt that some readers will passionately agree and some will just as passionately disagree with Kelly's suggestions. However, it is my contention that most will agree with her candidly expressed concerns. So far, neither the exclusively woman-centred nor the gender-neutral argument about inter-spousal violence has been able to account for all the complex realities in intimate relationships. Eventually, as feminists and as social scientists, we must find our own intellectual comfort zone within the multitude of definitions of abuse and different ways of studying its impact. We also have to come to terms with and conceptually account for women's agency in their own lives. In sum, we must "welcome the challenges other viewpoints pose and give them respectful consideration" Yllo, 1993, p. 60). Kelly's ideas may indeed pave a path for a healthy debate.

Alice Propper (Ch.2) also deals with some of the difficulties that surround quantification versus qualitative research choices. She also highlights concerns and consequences of different definitions of abuse. Her goal is modest, and centres on creating quantitative measures that are

reliable and valid, and allow cross-cultural contrasts. She starts from an analysis of the existing measures (ie., CTS and the Violence Against Women Survey, 1993). Propper is fearful of the possibility of diluting the social problem through the inclusion of psychological abuse, thus she favours definitions that remain within the boundary of legal formulations of assault. More specifically, she restricts the definitions of wife abuse to those acts and omissions defined in the Criminal Code sections of assault, at least for Canada. She advocates the development of new measures after a careful analysis of the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the earlier efforts. According to Propper, much can be gained from the trials and tribulations of the CTS and the Violence Against Women Survey (1993) in Canada. She provides a point-by-point summary of what the strengths are, and what the shortfalls may be (especially in the measurement of sexual abuse). Propper ends by suggesting how the strengths can be strengthened and weaknesses avoided in new attempts which may have cross-cultural applicability.

#### **CULTURAL VARIATIONS IN WIFE ABUSE:**

Rosie's story also provides a glimpse of the cultural complexities and variations. She is an immigrant woman, with norms, values, and expectations cultivated in another land. These norms and values, at times, are woefully in opposition to the ones that the host society values or demands. Rosie's ties to her husband are quite intense: she has no other social support, creating an absolute dependence on the only person who cares for her as well as abuses her. The relatives she has left behind are in favour of "preserving" her marriage at all costs. Like many others, her culture devalues women who have "failed" in their marriages. Moreover, she does not have access to the "language" of the host society, so that the extent of her pain remains mostly hidden. Her all encompassing isolation is unbroken even when she is with people who are trained to extend a helping

hand (see Chalmers and Smith, 1987; Nielson, Endo and Ellington, 1992). The agents of the society she seeks help from are far removed from the realities of her life despite their "professional" and "humanitarian" efforts (Gogia, 1992/93; MacLeod and Smith, 1990).

Unlike countless other countries that are weary of cultural differences in their midst, Canada takes social and political pride in its ethnocultural diversity (Sev'er, 1996). Rosie was lucky in a sense that the society that has welcomed her also provides some meaningful response to her individual dilemmas. Even under these commendable circumstances, however, the fit is less than adequate. How is the issue of spousal violence treated in other lands, in other cultures? What are the variations among different groups in terms of incidence of abuse, tolerance for the perpetrator, perception of the victim? What happens to immigrant women? Do legal, educational, political factions openly condemn or glean over and dismiss their suffering? Are women economically viable persons within the socio-political system? The answers to any one of these questions permutate according to the host and donor societies. What is clear, however, is that immigrant women may have to carry a double burden, as women, and as outsiders. They will be sometimes unable, sometimes unwilling to seek help until the situation becomes dire. The story of Nafisibibi Shaikh, an East Indian immigrant, speaks volumes. Nafisibibi's husband had taken her to India, leaving their 21 month old son with his parents in Montreal. Mr. Shaikh then returned to Montreal, leaving Nafisibibi in India, without money and without her legal immigration documents. Without documents or money to attain legal council, it took Nafisibibi one year and four months to convince the Canadian High Commissioner in New Delhi that she is indeed a legal immigrant. Eventually she was allowed back in Canada, to a husband who does not want her, and to a child who is being brought up without the knowledge of

her existence (Toronto Star, June 5, 1995: A9). Many immigration lawyers have stated that they know of dozens of similar cases.

Anthropologists are routinely confronted by problems stemming from cultural disparities (Counts, Brown and Campbell, 1992). There are substantial cross-cultural differences in wife abuse as there are societal convictions about its causes. Moreover, anthropologists are also familiar with the difficulty of observing others. Mind-set of a particular place and time does locate the observer/researcher and this locatedness colours and shapes the reality that she/he observes/records. Faced with cultural complexities and researcher locatedness, is it conceivable to arrive at a unified position about the depth or breath of violence against women in intimate relationships? Again, is it at all possible to conceptualize, let alone augment a positive change which can transcend geopolitical and ethnoreligious boundaries?

In the present collection, a number of entries touch upon different aspects of these socio-cultural diversities. Through an anthropological lens, Judith Brown (Ch.3) compares and contrasts numerous societies in terms of the incidence of wife abuse. She starts from questioning the reasons behind ethnographers' silence in addressing wife-battery. Then, she notes that although in most societies wife abuse appears to be a constant, there seems to be wide variations in its frequency and severity. Brown explores the factors that contribute to these observed cultural variations. Interestingly, one of the factors she singles out is the role the mothers-in-law play in spousal abuse of women. According to her observations, in some societies, mothers-in-law act as peace-makers and harmonizers between their sons and their wives. In contrast, in some other societies, mothers-in-law are agitators, peace-breakers and tormentors. Not surprisingly, Brown finds a close correspondence between the incidence of abuse and the roles associated with these older women.

Although Brown does not frame her observations within a theoretical context, two different theoretical positions on the phenomenon she observes are implicit in her discussion. The more simple and the self-explanatory positions are the Social Learning and Role Theories which suggest that patterns of behaviour are learned as opposed to be in-born (Bandura, 1979). Moreover, people learn behavioral patterns in relation to the roles they play (Zimbardo et al., 1973). For example, in Brown's examples, the agitating mothers-in-law are themselves the "victims" of an earlier generation, possibly having learned the agitator role from their own in-laws. They simply activate the role as soon as they themselves occupy the position. Brown's observations thus provide support for the inter-generational transmission of violence, albeit female violence in this case.

However, parsimony of the above theoretical stance can inadvertently open the door to the undesirable possibility of blaming the victim, a point of caution which is implicit in Brown's analysis. Even in societies where the mothers-in-law may be the agitators, one must never forget the fact that the real perpetrators are still men (their fathers, husbands, and sons, in that order). Women are the pawns, ranked in age, battling in a chess game specifically designed for the survival of the "king." Therefore, I personally favour a patriarchal power and control interpretation of Brown's insightful observations. Where the reigns of almost all power and prestige are controlled by men, is it any wonder that women find themselves in the undesirable position of desperately fighting for the scraps of recognition that remain? Indeed, the desperation for some control, some self-affirmation may turn the older women against the younger rather than unite them against their mutual oppressor. This pattern is also reminiscent of the Marxist notion of false consciousness (Marx and Engels, 1967). Parallel to the misplaced class identification of the propertyless with the economically predatory bourgeoisie, oppressed

women may identify with the oppressor (fathers, husbands, sons) rather than their own kind. The fuelled hostilities and continued agitation within the sexes hide the real power and privilege differences between them. Thus, the inequitable *status quo* is preserved generation after generation. Brown ends her paper by emphasizing the benefits of forming female alliances as a possible tool in combatting wife battery. Ironically, formation of female alliances is doubtful without a gendered consciousness of power differentiation.

Brown's contrast of societies drastically different in norms and practice from our own is an example of a Western researcher, looking outside of the Western World. Dutton and van Ginkel's (Ch.4) analysis, on the other hand, is an equally insightful example of Western researchers looking inside the ethnocultural diversity within their own society. After a careful review of numerous cross-cultural comparisons of wife assault, Dutton and van Ginkel focus on violence proclivities of five groups within the Canadian cultural diversity. Their goal is to elucidate the interactive roles of culture and personality factors in the etiology of wife assault. They employ quantitative methods and propose probabilistic inferences based on their observations.

Dutton and van Ginkel state that comparison of ethnic groups with each other is not their focus. Instead, the five groups are used to test their interactive model. They argue that there is an identifiable intra-personal proneness to abuse in some men which spans across cultures. However, the cultural prescriptions versus proscriptions will encourage or harness what abuse prone men will or will not do. When abuse proneness combines and feeds on pre-existing negative views of women and wives, some men find a sanctioned rationalization for the abuse they inflict. What differs among cultures is the extent they provide justification or constraint for abusive conduct. In turn, abusive men will systematically absorb and activate those

aspects of their culture to justify their behaviour and to transfer guilt and responsibility to their victims. According to the authors, there is a strong and consistent correlation between personality variables, attitudes toward women, and history of wife assault. The authors suggest that without sacrificing the explanatory potency of socio-cultural factors, measures of intrapersonal proclivities may help to identify high risk men, and thus serve as a tool in combatting intimate violence.

Rosemary Ofei-Aboagye and Jocelyne Scutt (Ch.5 & Ch.6) also spotlight cultural variations, in their case, from a socio-legal perspective. Ofei-Aboagye deals with Ghana's overall patriarchal structure and women's severely disadvantaged position within its grip. Scutt primarily deals with Australia and New Zealand, also comparing the socio-legal roots of those societies with Canada, England and the United States. At first glance, what is astonishing in these two accounts is *how different* women's status and experiences are. Even more astounding is the realization that once the superficial differences are bypassed, *how much overlap there is*. The overlap is in the lack of power, lack of representation, and lack of voice. Most importantly, the similarity is in the altruistic role women take upon themselves because they have been conditioned to believe that they ought to sacrifice for their families and for their men (Chodorow, 1974; Gilligan, 1982).

Ofei-Aboagye succinctly shows how Ghanaian women are "transferred" from one man to another, in marriage (betrothal) or after a deceased husband (link system). There is little or no regard to what women want. As little girls, they are often betrothed to much older men who not only "buy" their body and servitude, but also secure the cooperation of their kin through an economic yoke (Asiwa system). These transactions are according to customs women themselves had no part in developing. Neither do women have any foreseeable hope of replacing them with

practices that serve their needs. The courts feed into the system, often upholding male rights thus re-victimizing women. However, things hardly improve even if the secular law's gavel comes down on women's behalf.

What is calamitous in Ofei-Aboagye's examples is women's own internalization of the "misogynist" norms and values. I call this process the "cult of self-sacrifice" (also see Cancian, 1989). This internalization creates an unbearable burden of shame, guilt and self-blame even in those who are repeatedly abused by men. Ofei-Aboagye brings to our attention the degradation of Yaa, the subservient wife who cleans and tidies the room after her husband has sex with other women to beget a male offspring. Yet, it is Yaa who feels like a failure, since she has born "him" only girl children, the same shame that has strangled her mother when Yaa herself was born. Even when this woman escapes her tormentor and her culture that jointly subjugate her, she has a hard time escaping the psychological chains of her socialization. From Ofei-Aboagye's analysis, it can be inferred that new generations of girls will experience just as precarious positions as their mothers. From the moment of birth, they will see that the society is rigged: their mothers occupy the lowest rungs, and they are not equal to their brothers, or any other boy or man. Their bodies are for sale for the highest bidding husband, their loyalty is there for the taking. What is miraculous is that these girls survive, and as women, they initiate change albeit incremental.

The Australian and New Zealand societies that Jocelyne Scutt (Ch.6) analyzes are similar to the Western societies in most respects since the Euro-British traditions run through them all. As such, there are legal and social safeguards that harness many blatant forms of women's subjugation. For example, in all these societies, there are legal and social sanctions against blatant forms of discrimination, harassment or abuse. However, the examples Scutt pursues clearly indicate that subtle aspects

chain women down anyway. Lack of economic opportunities, lack of knowledge about their rights, and lack of legal guidance combine to severely disadvantage them. Scutt starts from Nora, Ibsen's unconventional heroine caught in the cage of a doll's house. The women in Scutt's examples bring to mind yet another literary classic: Gulliver, Jonathan Swift's hero who is caught in a world of giants who neither understand nor respect his humanness. The modern giants that taunt women are the patriarchal laws and their practitioners, the financial corporations and the banks. These giants dwarf the ones that taunt Swift's Gulliver.

What is telling in Scutt's work is the psychological chains the societal expectations place on women, and in turn, they place on themselves. Even when women understand their legal rights and understand the economic consequences they enter through legal transactions, they still feel "obliged" to serve as an economic shield for men they care about. The androcentric banks and financial agencies feed on their altruistic inclinations and cultivate grounds for their economic subjugation or demise. Like Ofei-Aboagye's (Ch. 5) case stories from half a world apart, the women exemplified by Scutt are also caught in the cult of self-sacrifice, and the financial institutions greedily exploit them.

Scutt proposes legal and social remedies for breaking the cycle of economic abuse of women. She rightly points out that women will never be free without being fully recognized and respected as economic persons, and recognize and respect themselves.

#### **WIFE ABUSE AND THE GENERAL FAMILY CRISIS:**

The multiplex factors that lead to wife abuse also form the focus of John Conway's entry (Ch.7). Although Conway's focus is strictly on Canada, his careful analysis of both micro and macro factors informs us about problem spots in general. Conway notes the United Nations' efforts to eliminate violence against women but sadly acknowledges that this type

of violence may still not be taken as seriously as it ought to be. He explores whether there is an actual increase in wife abuse rates or whether the recent recognition is an artifact of changes in reporting practices. Reporting is always a problem due to the privacy and sanctity notions about the family. Moreover, the fear of retribution the victims feel often prevent the atrocities from reaching official scrutiny and intervention. Thus, wife abuse remains to be one of the most underreported crimes, even though the Canadian estimates alone are in millions. Conway shows how resistant the patterns are, despite an unprecedented growth in social awareness about the issue. Conway's insightful analysis places wife abuse within the socio-cultural vortex of overall violence toward women, while at the same time recognizing individual pathology. He fears that we may be at the threshold of the emergence of a "Lepine Syndrome" named after the misogynist mass-murderer who gunned down 14 university women in Montreal, Canada. He summarizes the contributions from the learning theories, individual pathology arguments and feminist explanations. Moreover, he highlights the linkages among intra and interpersonal realms and the structural constraints in the genesis of abuse. His analysis stresses the risk factors of economic upheaval and the general crisis that surround the institution of family. Age and marital status are also identified as powerful risks in spousal explosions. Although there may be a debate about the order of the risk factors, there is little controversy about the consequences of abuse. Conway, keenly articulates the process as a "systematic dismantling of the victim's autonomous personality." The continuum of abuse in work, leisure and of course, familial domains makes most women fearful, although all women are not direct victims of abuse and certainly, all men are not abusers.

Conway's synthesis provides ample cautions against any reductionism in an extremely complex problem. Although individual risk

factors can be identified, violence takes place in a sociocultural conundrum. I also feel a deep-rooted unease about searching for simplistic cause-effect concepts, while at the same time drawn to the intellectual relief and methodological ease they promise. For example, despite the accumulating findings that link abuse to "personal pathology" and/or "lower class" risk factors, my unease about these type of explanations lingers. The gnawing feeling stems from the fact that there is much too much abuse of female spouses (approximately 25% according to Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993; Rodgers, 1994; Violence Against Women Survey, 1993; WAC Stats, 1992) to be accounted for. No one negates the fact that a sizeable proportion of wife-beaters are also substance abusers, engage in crime rather than work and are locked in rungs of low education and low income. However, these are at best correlations, not causes (Gelles, 1993). Moreover, these factors may more closely reflect the spouses of women who end up in shelters and/or courts thus form the readily available participants for numerous studies, as Conway highlights (also see MacLeod, 1980; 1987; Ch.8 in this collection by Dobash et al.). The well-to-do and the famous, the so called polished and adjusted men also abuse, but their crimes and their victims are much less visible and certainly understudied. The latter are less likely to appear in shelters or make it to police records unless and until their abuse turns into mutilations or homicides. They are the Nicole Brown's whose cries for help, even when recorded on emergency 911 tapes, cannot penetrate the armour of "respectability" and "glory" that shield their affluent perpetrators from public exposure. Under extreme conditions, even justice may be for sale if one can afford an army of sleek lawyers.

In the existing literature, often there is a temptation to single out those who abuse and violate women from the rest of the women and men who condemn such behaviour. The more cultural, ethnic, class and

personality differences one puts between "them" and "us," the more cognitive consistency we achieve in the "just world" we desire. There are some real differences found in the literature that pinpoint to such risk factors. However, what is more frightening, and more in need of sociological exploration is the historic relentlessness of abuse of women by men from all walks of life (Davidson, 1977; Gordon, 1989; Kelly, 1976; Okun, 1986; Walker, 1990).

### **TEARING DOWN THE CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE:**

There is a discernable conspiracy of silence, even among those who may find physical violence against women distasteful. The reaction of my (former) spouse to Rosie's case is not unique. Although he himself has never reverted to abuse, he nevertheless unequivocally rejected all involvement in its acknowledgement or its remedy in other people's lives. There are many examples of blatant forms of escapism, by prominent men. In 1954, G.H. Hatherill, a commander of Scotland Yard stated "[t]here are about 20 murders a year in London and not all are serious -some are just husbands killing their wives" (cited in Toronto Star, December 11, 1995: A17). Lest we think this is dated, here are some recent observations: 1. A Quebec Superior Court Judge, Justice Jean Bienvenue claimed "when [a woman] decides to sink, she unfortunately does to a depth that the vilest of men would be unable to attain." After much outrage, the judge apologized (Toronto Star, December 13, 1995: A2). A Nova Scotia provincial court judge, Ronald MacDonald resigned after assaulting his wife. Prior to the public outrage, he was given an absolute discharge by his colleagues (Toronto Star, October 6, 1989: A13). And most disturbing of all, here is an example from Michigan: Judge Joel Gehrke "told a man convicted of spousal abuse to roll up his shirt sleeve, then punished him with a three-finger 'slap' on the wrist and said 'Don't do that'" (Toronto Star, January 18, 1996: A13). I argue that dismissing the importance of wife abuse becomes

a part of the matrix of abuse.

In this collection, Dobash et al. (Ch.8) put the responsibility squarely where it belongs: abusive men. Dobash et al. explore the efficacy of different intervention techniques in breaking the cycle of violence. Among many insights that can be gleaned from their contribution, perhaps the ones which need to be underscored are -the theoretical maturity that has culminated from decades of their trail-blazing work in the area, -the accompanying methodological know-how they have to offer, -their success in utilizing numbers without sacrificing women's (and men's) own experiences and perceptions, and their contagious enthusiasm about the inseparability of thought, social policy and social action.

Dobash et al., like Conway (Ch.7), first identify the centrality of violence against women in their homes as a social problem, and show its relentless persistence despite the political gains made by women's groups. They go on to highlight the insufficiency of the gains made through reforms of the criminal justice system due to the subtle workings of "cultures of impunity." As a more promising alternative, they review the philosophy and techniques used by intervention programs designed for violent men. Their study remedies the most common methodological difficulties that plague the existing evaluation studies of such programs: - limited numbers and often skewed samples of offenders who are often ordered to participate in such programs, -shortcomings of one time rather than longitudinal evaluations, -dependence on quantification without the richness offered by in-depth and contextual input from women. The methodological rigor of their study allows some cautious optimism about initiating change: programs for violent men seem to reduce both the propensity and severity of future violence of a sizable portion of men who participate in such programs. Moreover, program interventions seem to be more effective than just the punitive alternative the court system offers. On

the negative side, some men continue their violence regardless of the type of intervention they receive, and continue to be a menace to their wives as well as the society in general.

An equally intriguing finding is the systematic and statistically significant differences between men's and women's accounts of injuries. Men tend to either not recognize or choose to ignore the extent of injuries they inflict, unless the injuries are severe enough to engender an independent record (ie., hospital/police records). Only then, it seems, men's accounts of the aftermath of their violence approximate the reports of their mates. These findings signify an area which beckons further exploration and again emphasize the gendered as opposed to gender-neutral patterns of intimate violence.

#### **CLOSURE AND SOME THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE:**

In conclusion, my personal journey in the area of wife abuse started with Rosie. Her broken body and soul still form a beacon for my research and teaching. So far, my efforts led me to instigating this particular collection. Whatever starting points they may have had, this collection also gathers the worthy contributions of many other researchers/ theorists.

I see a lot that is accomplished in this work. Most notably, the contributions reflect the exceptional richness of their authors in terms of specialization (anthropology, law, psychology, social work, social policy, sociology, women's studies), gender (women, men), national affiliations (American, Australian, British, Canadian, Ghanaian, German, Turkish) and race (black, white). This is truly an interdisciplinary and an international effort! Perhaps, our accomplishments as feminists, intellectuals, activists are best captured in the fact that we give words, contexts and numbers to women's screams. I thank each and every one of the contributors for their dedication and insight in making this work possible. I trust that their efforts will eventually lighten the burdens of Rosie's, Ann's, Nafisibibi's and Yaa's

of this world.

However, I also see a lot that needs to be done. We still have to deal with violence against women in our own societies as well as in the developing world where it is more hidden and possibly more rampant. We still have to keep it as a core social problem and find creative ways to combat socio-political satiation and indifference. We have to assess the rationale behind the shelters for women. Likewise, we have to assess the success outcomes of the legal/incarceration route versus therapy/training methods for abusers (Dobash et al., 1995; Ch.8 in this collection). One way or another, we have to find ways to stop the violence rather than trying to patch up the lives it shatters. We still have to find ways to untangle the multiplexity among class, race/ethnicity, heterosexism and gender, rather than seeing gender as a unilateral determinant.

There is a looming resurrection of conservatism in most developed societies. Particularly in Canada and in the United States, the social safety nets are under unprecedented siege, while the political center is shifting to the right. The relentless welfare system purges, and economic cut-backs have wide ranging implications for women in general, immigrant women, and especially for women in violent relationships. We are in an era of shelter closures as well as attacks on women's organizations. Even the progressive aspirations of the newly elected government in England will likely be saddled by the social demise left behind by their conservative predecessors. However, I find a new inspiration in these tough challenges, and trust that the feminist efforts and insights will continue to make a difference. The issues raised by the dedicated scholars in this collection form yet another step in the noble struggle toward ascertaining a safer world for women which is also a better world for all.

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Cross-cultural communication includes several components: 1. Communicative codes – verbal code (language), nonverbal code (mimics, movements, eye contact, etc.) 2. Worldview is considered to be one of the most important cognitive mechanisms that impact on communication. Worldview is the representation of the internal view of an individual or a group which is organized according to cultural conceptions, reflecting basic values, beliefs and attitudes. 3. Role relationship provides insights into the ways a culture maintains social order and control among its members. Role relationships are organi

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19. Business culture is something that anyone who has ever managed a business has to deal with. Every business has a culture all its own, and for most businesses, this culture is based on the people that work within the company and where the company is based, in addition to other similar factors. Companies that want to be successful in foreign markets have to be aware of the local cultural characteristics that affect the way business is done.

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