1-1-1985

Re-evaluation counseling as a tool to overcome the internalized oppression of an exploitative society: a case study of third world women in the United States.

Emma Ramos-Diaz

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_1

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_1/4034

This Open Access Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations 1896 - February 2014 by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.
RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING AS A TOOL TO OVERCOME
THE INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION OF AN
EXPLOITATIVE SOCIETY: A CASE STUDY OF THIRD WORLD WOMEN
IN THE UNITED STATES

A Dissertation Presented
By
EMMA RAMOS-DIAZ

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
February 1985
Education
RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING AS A TOOL TO OVERCOME
THE INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION OF AN
EXPLOITATIVE SOCIETY: A CASE STUDY OF THIRD WORLD WOMEN
IN THE UNITED STATES

A Dissertation Presented
By
Emma I. Ramos Diaz

Approved as to style and content by:

John W. Wideman
Dr. John W. Wideman, Chairperson

Barbara Love
Dr. Barbara Love, Member

Carmen Diana Deere, Member

Mario Fantini, Dean
School of Education
DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The struggle to transcend limitations requires that people join hands in alliance. The achievement of the individual results from the support and assistance of the many. Completion of this dissertation has been made possible by the collective spirit of many who contributed their ideas, time, work, energy and devotion.

I am grateful to Maurice Stein of Brandeis University because in my search to find a method to assist oppressed people he enriched my life by introducing me to Harvey Jackins's powerful and humane method of dealing with oppression, and enabling me to see myself as a teacher.

I owe sincere appreciation to Marianne Simon who strongly supported my candidacy at the University of Massachusetts and introduced me to Jack Wideman. Jack first opened the door to the possibilities of higher learning and allowed me to discover my own process of acquiring it. His enthusiasm for my work and his expectations of quality, together with his guidance and assistance, have been a tremendous resource in my work.

The deepest appreciation is willingly given to the following: Barbara Love -- for challenging me to write, for being a guiding light, and for providing continuous encouragement and valued assistance that helped me toward
completion; Carmen Diana Deere -- a model of inspiration and a fount of knowledge; Harriet Parker-Feldman my friend and teacher, who accepted me lovingly and wholeheartedly, and who recognized and challenged my intellect and creativity; Camille Kelly -- who knew me well before I knew myself and whose perception of me has led me far; Milton Shaham -- who insisted that I seek the depth of my being and reach far and without compromise; and my grandmother -- who recognized and taught me that my way is best. Her vision of me has carried me through the darkest times.

Also Eugenia Acuña-Lillo for creative criticism and excellent editing; Gladys Padró, Diana Janer and Eugenia Acuña-Lillo for continued support and thoughtful counseling in times of pain and self-doubt; Rita Arditti -- whose methodology provided a creative framework for this dissertation; Carol Smith -- for support of me and my project and for facilitating the application of the methodology; Darwin Davis for his sensitive support and skillful editing; and Peter Skinner, whom at the end, with his mastery of language, knowledge and flexibility, provided editing of the highest quality and an abundance of support.

Sulthanma Sombuntham -- who showed me how to struggle even when the system seemed about to devour me; Connie and Roberto Chene -- who urged me to trust and communicate my thinking; Esperanza Vázquez -- for belief, devotion, and
help; Hector M. Aponte -- who willingly provided technical assistance, tools and time, and whose support was effectively felt.

Joyce Duncan and Vickie Marsick -- for showing complete confidence in me and for their original contributions; Lorraine Cortes and my long-time friend Nereida Cintron -- for support and concrete assistance; Robert K. J. Wu and Lee Johnson -- for their belief that I would succeed; Nilda Ortiz -- who took on more than her share of work; PROGRESS, Inc. -- for making available varied resources; and all my unnamed family and friends who supported me and have patiently waited for my time and friendship. And special thanks to Milagros Ortiz-Gropp, without whose excellent secretarial skills, total devotion, and personal sacrifice this project could have never been completed.

I owe a great debt to Harvey Jackins, who laid the groundwork for this dissertation. His belief and dedication to humanity provides a way out of oppression -- a way which helped me and the women who used his counseling model to transcend our limitations and offer these tools to the world. Finally, I acknowledge an unpayable debt to the women who participated in the project for their courageous thinking, deep insights, and their exposure of their lives and experiences. Their trust and commitment to me made this
one of the most challenging, rewarding and growth-providing experiences of my life.

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents: Alicia Torres-Gonzalez and Octavio Gonzalez. Their struggle in life was a real model of learning for me and their love and belief in me helped me not only struggle to overcome but also to transcend my limitations. I also dedicate it to Manuel Diaz, Jr., my friend, companion and husband, who celebrated me as a woman, a thinker, a Puerto Rican and a loved human being. He not only understood and supported my right to overthrow the barriers in my path, but made personal sacrifices that allowed me the freedom to try to fulfill my human potential.
This dissertation explores the impact of a counseling model on the lives of a group of Third World women residing in the United States. The model is Re-Evaluation Counseling (RC), an emotional/educational growth and awareness process. Its main focus is on the existing oppressive socioeconomic and political environment, its effects on people and the possibilities RC holds for self- and social transformation.

The premise of this thesis is that the distresses which limit the human potential to be loving, intelligent, cooperative, powerful and effective result from the competitive and exploitative nature of capitalism. In the quest to remain human, people struggle against oppression, transcend
adverse circumstances, grow, and influence their environment. Yet, to varying degrees, the system dehumanizes and causes people to internalize negative experiences and adopt distress patterns involving false values and distorted views of self and others. Consequently, people lose elements of themselves which are crucial to their wholeness as human beings. The study explores these dynamics.

Qualitative methodology, based on in-depth interviewing, is used. The impact of this study results from the depth of the information that it presents on oppression experienced by the participants -- in the intertwining of external oppression with their personal/psychic limitations which are manifested as internalized oppression. The experiences are recounted by the women who speak on their own behalf.

The results indicate that through RC the participants in the study: (1) eliminated many of the inner blocks created by oppression; (2) became fully aware that their personal problems (internalized oppression) were the effects of an exploitative society; (3) recognized and recovered lost aspects of themselves (e.g., intelligence), and regained some of their creative powers to become more effective in changing their lives and society.

In using RC, Third World women overcome the pull to adjust to a repressive society and begin to realize that the attainment of full human potential requires a collective ef-
fort directed toward the transformation and reconstruction of the socioeconomic and political environment.

The harmful effects of oppression can be overcome with the use of RC. The model can be of significance in reaching world-wide populations. The simultaneous development in people of deeper self-awareness and new political awareness can generate greater strengths toward the creation of a more just and humane society.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## ABSTRACT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Class, Race and Gender Oppression:

#### Effects on Social Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Oppression</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Oppression</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Oppression</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Induction of consumerism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class divisions and alienation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalism uses racism</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other effects of racism</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Racism - a limiting ideology and a practice of class society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ideology that justifies racial oppression</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation poses contradictions</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Oppression</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Oppression</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Oppression</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Exploitation of women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A historical perspective of women</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergence of sexism</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexism-ideology and practice</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A gender system of class society: Oppression based on productive and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter

reproductive functions ................................................. 51
Conclusion ....................................................................... 66

III. RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING ........................................ 69

Introduction ...................................................................... 69
The Nature of Human Intelligence and the Development of Patterns .... 73
The Impact of Oppression .................................................. 78
Consequences of the Oppressive Hurts and Invalidation ............. 86
The Process of Re-Evaluation Counseling ............................... 89
Peerness ........................................................................... 93
The co-counseling process ................................................ 95
The role of the counselor .................................................. 97
The role of the client ....................................................... 115
Techniques ........................................................................ 116
Conclusion ........................................................................ 120

IV. METHODOLOGY .............................................................. 123

Introduction ...................................................................... 123
Explanations of methodology ............................................. 124
Description and selection of sample .................................... 130
Method of collecting material ............................................ 131
Analysis of material ........................................................ 135
Limitations of the study .................................................... 138

V. RESULTS OF THE STUDY ................................................ 140

Introduction ...................................................................... 140
Class Oppression .............................................................. 144
Introduction ...................................................................... 144
Class background: money, work, history ............................. 146
Basic needs ....................................................................... 149
Competition ...................................................................... 152
Alienation ........................................................................ 162
The coercive aspects of religion ....................................... 168
Conclusion ........................................................................ 173

Race Oppression .............................................................. 174
Chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class and racism</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes and experiences with racism</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalities of race oppression</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Oppression</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of women</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General comments</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarities and differences amongst women</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalized Oppression</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for selecting RC</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal of RC</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming internalized oppression</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's current status</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of RC</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results of the Study</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of findings</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of RC</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of this Study</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Further Study</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIXES:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. The Development of Re-Evaluation Counseling</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. The Structure of Re-Evaluation Counseling</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Co-Counseling: Description and Guidelines</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Counseling Techniques</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Interview Guide</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background of the problem

In the affluent United States few Third World women fully enjoy basic rights of freedom, justice and equal opportunity. Whether from formerly enslaved, dispossessed or colonized populations, Third World women in the United States live in a society hostile to their origins.

Historically, the participation and contributions of Third World women at all levels in society have been crucial in the development of the human race. Recent accounts have begun to shed light on these contributions made by Third World women in spite of the oppression they have endured; however, these accounts are limited. Rather than presenting the influence Third World women have had on society and clearly documenting the reasons and causes of the limitations they faced, most historians have distorted, mystified, fragmented, misrepresented or underrepresented these women and their circumstances. Consequently, it is difficult to gain a clear understanding of the capabilities and potential of Third World women or to comprehend how or what factors
limit or affect them. It also is difficult to develop solutions which assist or free them.

At one extreme, there has been a tendency to study the characteristics of "lower" class and racially different women and, in particular Third World women, and conclude that they are inferior, either biologically or culturally (Ladner, 1971; Reed, 1969). Members of these groups are usually blamed for the difficulties they encounter in society (Chase, 1978; Fanon, 1953; Jackins, 1976; Reed, 1969). Significant portions of the literature continue to describe the difficulties encountered by Third World women as "pathological" (Moynihan, 1965; Lewis, 1966). At another extreme, women, and especially Third World women, are claimed to possess super-strength and power and are even credited with a history of matriarchy (Moynihan, 1965; Reed, 1969; Davis, 1978). More recent accounts often glamorize these women's role in history and credit them with emancipation because of their active role against oppression and their participation in the labor force (Ladner, 1977).

The writings of social scientists frequently tend to project the limitations and emotional difficulties of Third World women as fundamentally personal and separated from societal practices (Furst, 1954; Jackins, 1964, 1975; Rowbotham, 1973). This view has resulted in the development of methods to address these difficulties which fail to
incorporate an integrated modality that relates external dimensions to the psychic and personal dimensions. A counseling model must address these dimensions if it is to be effective and enable them to create change in their lives (Furst, 1954; Jocoby, 1975).

Other social scientists deal only with certain factors of the external sociopolitical environment as the cause of the plight of Third World women. They claim either that the social and economic injustices that Third World people face result strictly from pervasive racism (Clark, 1980) or that those injustices are functions or effects strictly of class (Gershman, 1980).

While theorists such as Angela Davis (1978) have explored the interconnections of racism and sexism with class oppression at a socioeconomic and political level, the goals of such analyses have been to change only the external circumstances; they have not focused on the importance of changing the psyches of individuals as well.

This author maintains that the quality of life of Third World women is not only diminished and degraded by a class system but is also stifled and violated by unjust practices of racism and gender oppression. The operating premise in this study is that class, race and sex exploitation and oppression are interconnected. Another premise is that the external exploitation and oppression become internalized in
the psyche. This internalized oppression limits the potential of Third World women.

**Statement of the problem**

There appears to be no accurate and inclusive analysis of the external socioeconomic and political environment and its oppressive effects on the psyches of Third World women. Consequently, there are no appropriate models of education, counseling or therapy that address all dimensions of these women's psychic liberation and empowerment. The educational, mental health, and human services professions do not have the necessary resources in their professional literature to inform and guide the work of their professionals with and for Third World women.

**Purpose of the study**

This study aims to go beyond what other writers have attempted by integrating multifaceted socioeconomic and political dimensions which affect Third World women into the personal, emotional, and psychic aspects of their lives.

An analysis of the oppression and exploitation of Third World women will be presented. The subjective consequences stemming from exploitative external societal circumstances, which then become the internalized oppression, will be addressed. Re-Evaluation Counseling (RC), a peer counseling
model that integrates all facets of external exploitation as the causes of psychic and social limitations, will be applied specifically to Third World women. RC as a theory also assumes large inherent capabilities and offers a tremendous potential for liberating human beings, strengthening their positive behaviors as well as presenting a procedure for solving human problems caused by oppression and exploitation.

A main premise of RC is that all humans have an immense potential to be intelligent, loving, cooperative, powerful and zestful (Jackins, 1964). These qualities differentiate humans from all other species. RC assumes that each person, in fact, possesses a far greater potential to be intelligent than the best-functioning adult has yet been able to fulfill (Chase, 1978; Jackins, 1964; Thomas, 1980). Each individual is seen as having the capacity to take full charge of life and act powerfully to create and to enhance his or her world. RC theory expounds that class, race and sex exploitation and oppression limit human potential. The positive degree to which a given society nurtures and develops this potential is a measure of the absence of societal exploitation. Re-Evaluation Counseling (RC), both in its theory and practice, presents an analysis of the ways that particular social forces shape -- or distort -- the individual psyche.
One goal of RC is to develop and make available a peer counseling/educational model encompassing both theory and practice. People would then possess tools to enable them to participate in their own process of psychic liberation, which ideally would lead to social action to eradicate oppressive conditions.

Definition and documentation of these oppressive external forces and their effects on Third World women will be presented; in addition, a model for helping a group of Third World women overcome the oppression they have internalized will be applied and the results will be documented. The Third World participants in the study were Asian, Black, Latina and Native American women, born and/or reared mainly in the United States.

Method

This longitudinal study uses the qualitative method to explore the effectiveness of Re-Evaluation Counseling (RC). In this case, the RC counseling/educational process was applied to a group of Third World women.

The qualitative method has been used to enable the women in the study to evaluate and provide their own interpretations as to: (1) whether RC has helped them to view external oppression as a cause of their psychic/emotional limitations, and (2) whether RC enabled them to overcome or
reduce these barriers. An open-ended Interview Guide was used to allow the women to present vivid in-depth information about their experiences with oppression and the applicability of RC to their needs, issues and concerns. The guide also enables them to document the changes and growth they underwent.

This paradigm was adopted since it requires intimacy between the author/researcher and the participants to yield fuller and more candid accounts, and because the population to which the study was directed is more responsive to direct and probing questions than to structured stimuli.

Basic premises of the study

The underlying foundations of this thesis are: (1) the exploitative and oppressive society causes limitations and distresses which become internalized, and (2) people can be freed from these distresses and limitations to become empowered to seek and find means to alleviate external oppression.

Four basic premises underly these two assertions. The first premise is that the human potential of Third World women to be intelligent and loving, and therefore to function effectively at their full capacity, is at present stifled by the social environment produced by a class society in a capitalist system that uses racist and sexist practices against
them. This assumes that, to a great extent, the personal and social limitations which individuals experience stem from the sociopolitical and economic deprivations which become internalized; and that the subjective consequences can include distortion of the individual's perception of self and others, feelings of inferiority, alienation, powerlessness, fear, anger, frustration, and conflicts and tensions (Furst, 1954; Jackins, 1964, 1975).

The second premise is that the emotional distresses people acquire under hurtful circumstances must be physically discharged (released) (Fanon, 1963; Jackins, 1964). This discharge, undoubtedly a profound, complex process, is dependably indicated by interested unrepetitive talking, tears, and or sobbing, shaking, perspiring, active kidneys, laughing, angry noises, violent movements, and yawning. Along with direct external oppression, people are victimized by the conscious and/or unconscious constraints caused by societal inhibitions about these physical and emotional expressions. According to the theory of RC, the subjective consequences of exploitation and oppression, along with conditioned inhibitions about emotional release of the effects of these hurtful experiences, result in the internalization of oppression (Jackins, 1964).

The third premise is that an effective counseling model must integrate recognition that human beings influence and
shape society and that people are influenced and affected by society. Such a counseling model must take into consideration all aspects of an issue or problem, including economic and political factors, as well as the subjective emotional distress that has a limiting effect on people.

The fourth basic premise is that individuals can be freed to develop a clearer vision of themselves and of the oppressive society, and can use that vision to become empowered to seek and find solutions to their own problems as well as to the larger problems of society. Such individuals, therefore, need access to and equal participation in a model encompassing a theory and practice that allow for both personal and societal change.

Focal questions

This study will explore the perceived effects of using RC on a group of Third World women in terms of the following questions:

1. After using RC, do these women learn to view their problems as stemming from systematic oppression?

2. Does the theory and practice of Re-Evaluation Counseling help Third World women overcome the limitations that result from systematic oppressive experiences?

3. Does RC lead the women to use Re-Evaluation Counseling to change their sense of self, their behavior,
and the society in which they live and work?

4. Do they take action to improve their lives and the world around them?

**Significance of the study**

The results of this study will allow for the evaluation of Re-Evaluation Counseling as a model for alleviating the effects of oppression on Third World women in the United States, with the potential for application to other Third World people. Other contributions the study can make are:

1. Provide information about a model that encompasses both personal and societal change.

2. Add to the resources of institutions and individuals seeking alternative approaches to current societal structures, especially those affecting Third World women.

3. Provide a needed research process by documenting the participation and experiences of Third World women using the RC process. No systematic documentation has yet been done.

4. Document the demonstration of a model which will be available for replication.

**Outline of chapters**

Chapter II reviews the literature on the limiting socioeconomic factors that tend to shape the lives of Third World women. It provides a discussion of some of the particular manifestations of the political and economic
oppression of Third World women, and details some of the consequences of that oppression.

Chapter III provides a detailed description of Re-Evaluation Counseling theory and practice, and discusses the applicability of RC to individual and societal change.

Chapter IV presents description of the design and methodology of the study.

In Chapter V the women relate their experiences with class, race, and sex and how with the use of RC they came to understand and view oppression.

Chapter VI provides the results of one attempt to empower a group of Third World women by using RC to overcome the consequences of that oppression in their own lives.

Chapter VII presents a summary of the study, conclusions and implications drawn from it, and recommendations for additional studies.
"The conflict and limitations of human nature have an external and objective source and not an internal, subjective or biological source. . . . The basic contradictions of people that we know are composed of opposing practices, opposing relationships, opposing beliefs, values and mental qualities which are reflections of the contradictory human relations that necessarily arise from a system of social production that is run for individual profit." (Furst, 1954, pp. 16, 17). And, "... the origin of neurotic illness [patterns of distress] lie in violence, exploitation, male supremacy, deception, individualism and other antihuman conditions . . . these conditions obviously affect all segments of the population, although in different ways." (Furst, 1954, p. xxvii.)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Class, Race and Gender Oppression: Effects on Social Development

Introduction

A primary premise of this study is that the exploitation and oppression of Third World women are rooted in their
social environment, structured today by a class-divided capitalist system. Racism and sexism result; thus Third World women suffer from the triple victimization of class, race and sex oppression. The external oppression becomes internalized (Jackins, 1964, 1975; Memmi, 1954).

Like all people, Third World women are shaped by the type of society in which they live and by the social position they occupy. Their ideas, norms, and values take form under the influence of real material conditions. Their philosophies, education, religious beliefs and social codes are not independent of conditions of material life (Edwards et al., 1972) and of the historical factors defining their class, race and gender position (Furst, 1953).

Consequently, the growth and limitations of people are not separate from the social structures of a particular society.

Historically, there have been attempts to create nonexploitative societies; however, individuals have continued to live under oppressive conditions. In the United States the oppression, resulting from a class-divided society of a capitalist system, profits from and reproduces racism and sexism. This type of society requires individuals to assume either the role of the oppressor or the role of the victim (Jackins, 1976; chapter III), which causes both
the oppressor and the oppressed to become dehumanized.

Exploitation and oppression become institutionalized. Institutions, including legal and religious ones and even the family, are used to teach and uphold exploitation and oppression by propagating ideas, norms, practices, and roles of a particular societal interest, thus making the oppression systematic. This systematic oppression, based on class divisions and competition, limits economic means for survival as well as the resources necessary for the growth of skills and development of full human potential (Jackins, 1976, chapter I, p. 5). Both the oppressed and the oppressor are dehumanized, although in different ways and to varying degrees.

Being deprived of resources through class, race and sex oppression, along with other forms of rejection, invalidation and mistreatment cause deep emotional distress. This external oppression becomes internalized and is manifested in feelings of inferiority, hostility to self and others, self-doubt and self-blame, and in powerlessness (inability to take full and effective charge of life and environment). These, along with other distress feelings, including accidental trauma, become the distress patterns that lock and maintain the individual in the oppression (Jackins, 1976).
Exploitation and oppression cannot be maintained without a system of rationalizations created by those who control society to justify the practices of inequities of class, race and sex. These rationalizations have promoted notions of relative inferiority, mediocrity, and superiority among individuals and groups of people to reinforce the oppressive structures (Jackins, 1976; Chase, 1977).

This chapter will review the literature analyzing the structural systems that oppress Third World women, whereby external oppression becomes internalized. This review will consist of three major sections: class oppression; race oppression; sex oppression. Each of these major sections is subdivided to allow for discussion of specific aspects of the topics.

Class Oppression

To understand the class oppression and exploitation of Third World women in the United States it is necessary to begin with an understanding of the functioning mode of material production, that is, capitalism. The way in which a capitalism-based, class-divided society stunts human potential will be described.

There are three main aspects of capitalism that are important to this study. The specific ways in which Third
World women are affected can be shown by both general and concrete examples.

First, capitalism is a system of production for profit; inducing consumerism is primary, the needs of people are secondary. Second, capitalism is based on a system of private property and demands competition at all levels. Workers are forced to compete for jobs for their economic survival as well as goods and services necessary for their growth and development. Third, as a system based on private ownership of the means of production, capitalism creates antagonisms between and within classes. A class-divided society with continual struggles over distribution of wages and profits causes its work force to be segregated. It alienates workers from the production process and from the goods they produce; consequently it affects all aspects of life.

As noted above, capitalism consists of a system of class based on private property. The historical evolution of capitalism has led to the concentration of ownership of the means of production in the hands of a class consisting of only a minor sector of society -- owners. The foreseeable result is the emergence of an unpropertied class (workers) that depends on the sale of labor-power as its only source of livelihood. The interest of the capitalist class is to maximize profits. This also means that its interest is to minimize wages. The interest of workers, including
Third World women, is to earn wages sufficient to satisfy their and their families' needs. Like others, these women have no choice but to sell their labor to survive in contemporary society (Edwards et al., 1972).

One strategy of capitalists to minimize wages is to stratify the work force by assigning both monetary and status values to different kinds of labor. This hierarchical structure is demonstrated by stratification of most workers as opposed to owners, both white and Third World. Workers get assigned to inferior positions as defined by status and money. The results of racism and sexism within this stratification are that Third World people are assigned lower status positions and are paid less than whites; in addition, women are paid less than men (Edwards et al., 1972).

Therefore, capitalism in the United States has become the basis for the exploitation and oppression of workers, including Third World women. Third World women workers usually hold positions that are devalued; they are underutilized and exploited in menial and subordinate positions (National Commission on Working Women). Many of the lowest paid jobs in the economy are filled by women (Edwards et al., 1972), and especially by Third World women (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1978).

Instead of organizing production around the needs of people, capitalism is oriented toward breeding people to
produce. Workers engage in unfulfilling labor, forced inescapably on them by the need to live (Ollman, 1971). Workers spend the greater part of their lives in earning enough to purchase food, shelter and other basic necessities for the maintenance of self and family, as well as competing for opportunities to improve their living conditions by consuming nonmaterial commodities such as education to promote development of their human potential (Ollman, 1971). Most workers are pressed into sterile, common molds and forced to labor long hours at work not commensurate with their abilities, interests, or aspirations (Furst, 1954). This is the case for the majority of Third World women. Exploited as workers, Third World women consequently benefit from fewer rights. They are usually "last hired" and "first fired." They have the highest percentage of unemployment of any group in the population; they are among the poorest people in the nation. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1978) reported that "minority" female-headed families are two to five times as likely to live in poverty as are "majority" female-headed family. The report indicates that "minority" women are greatly overrepresented within the poverty population.

The value orientations and traditions that hard work results in material gain and security (Harris, 1974), even when accompanied by misery and drudgery, have strongly in-
fluenced North American life. Although exploitation is inherent in the hierarchical structure, Third World women must engage in work activity for their livelihoods and to try to fulfill their needs.

Although capitalism provides opportunities, people are limited in almost all the personally-preferred things that they would like to do. Should they choose to pursue their own aspirations and goals for self-development, they would have to suffer economic deprivation and social neglect (Furst, 1953).

In western society, people are generally defined and given an identity based on the nature of their work. Consequently, recognition and usefulness as well as economic survival is dependent on work. Since Third World women usually hold low-status jobs that are often degrading, this tends to crush the individuality and self-expression of the women who must thus earn their livelihoods (Furst, 1953). Degrading and low-status positions, often lead to and reinforce negative self-image.

When unemployed and lacking resources of work and wealth, Third World women suffer not only physical and economic deprivation; lacking access to resources often also means that they cannot adequately develop the skills necessary to negotiate and perform effectively in society. For instance, having access to nonmaterial needs such as educa-
tion allows the individual to accumulate knowledge and develop tools and skills that can be transferred economically as well as socially. Being deprived at these, whether through lack of support or access is a source of the deep hurts, mistreatment and invalidation that these women experience.

The external oppressive conditions which the deprived women internalize often cause them to view themselves as mediocre, inferior or even useless. These, along with other feelings stemming from the internalization of oppression, are often manifested as a sense of emotional loss, unfulfillment, powerlessness and spiritual disappointment (Furst, 1953; Jackins 1975). All the exploitative conditions which become incorporated as internalized oppression reinforce the premise that practices of a class society impair human potential.

**Inducement of consumerism**

Since there are oppressive class forces working against the position and needs of Third World women in the labor market and in the society, consumerism, or buying power, is a promoted practice which creates aspirations for them. But consumerism is another practice of capitalism that has detrimental effects on people. Consumerism is the process through which capitalism causes needs to be created in con-
sumers for the sake of profit for producers of goods. This is often the case even if it means that diversion of income to purchase such goods would violate the needs, values, aspirations and goals of individuals, of the family, the culture and all aspects of life (Ollman, 1971). The entire social product takes the form of commodities (Jalee, 1977). The result of consumerism is that the workers' way of life and that of their employers deteriorates into a response to the requirements of their products (Ollman, 1971).

The satisfaction of basic needs requires that people must consume. As basic needs are fulfilled, new ones are created. These are often nonmaterial needs such as education for intellectual growth. Many of these needs are important in ensuring people's self-development. However, individuals do not always determine their needs (Parker, 1978); capitalism determines many of them through consumerism in the market place. For example, the schools train people to provide their services in established jobs determined by the needs of the competitive economy. Human development is stunted by a profit-oriented society compared to what could be realized in a society that emphasized the full development of human potential.

On the ideological level, whether directed to acquiring the necessities of life such as food, clothing, or to directed toward nonmaterial ones like education, consumerism
gives Third World women an incentive to become part of the society. Like most individuals, Third World women are not generally aware that consumerism promoted for the purpose of profit instills in them unrealistic "needs" and upholds values that seldom promote the full development of human potential. For Third World women, lack of consumer power contributes to a poor self-image. Yet, the ability to purchase and consume may lead them to adopt a false image of self-worth. For them material goods, such as clothing, may represent a means of obtaining status and even self-worth (Ladner, 1971; Rubin, 1976). Like other people alienated, mistreated and cast aside by the majority culture (Ollman, 1971), these women try indirectly to take possession of part of what their labor produces by spending their wages to gain status and self-worth (Ladner, 1971). As they adopt these practices, they become trapped by the distorted values developed in the dominant culture by consumerism.

The contention that this type of society provides freedom or that it is possible to satisfy the individual according to need is misleading and in itself is a manifestation of oppression. Quantitative buying power differs according to class. The freedom manifested by individuals of higher wealth positions and aspired to by others of a lower wealth position operates on accepting oppressive values and practices as the norm. These practices continue to reinforce
the exploitativeness of a class system which becomes internalized and consistently stunts human development (Furst, 1953; Marcuse, 1971; Jackins, 1975).

Private property and competition

As a system based on the private ownership of the means of production, capitalism creates a competitive way of life which consumes the primary energies of people. This system breeds antagonism between and within classes. The class struggle pits one group against another, making each perceive the other as a permanent enemy with different and conflicting interests. One extreme of the class struggle is capitalists vs workers: the other is the majority of people competing with each other. In such a system the fulfillment of people's needs depends on giving them "rights" to compete for jobs and therefore to compete for the production of life's necessities, such as food, and nonmaterial needs, such as education.

Class division results in continual competitive struggles over the distribution of profits, wages and life's necessities, and causes work-force segregation. White male workers compete with each other as well as with white women for these resources. Both white males and white females compete with Third World workers, and all compete with Third World women. The workers, not the system, are blamed for
this damaging competitiveness, just as Third World women are blamed for wanting access to resources necessary for their livelihoods and the fulfillment of basic needs. This puts the blame on the workers instead of acknowledging the unjust distribution of resources inherent in capitalist society. The antagonisms between classes militate against alliance-building among people who, if united, might eradicate the source of their oppression. Under a highly competitive capitalist system, most forms of cooperation become difficult or impossible and the breakdown of relationships occurs (Furst, 1953; also see p. 27 of this dissertation).

Competitive systems are basically exploitative. One result is that when Third World women are denied opportunities to compete equally for jobs and for the satisfaction of their material and nonmaterial needs, their roles are further diminished and even destroyed.

Within a capitalist system, equality through competition, rights to compete, or the freedom to compete, are nebulous or limited practices. People are economically enhanced when they compete and obtain maximum access to wealth and resources but this is at the expense of their humanness (Marcuse, 1971; p. 5 and p. 28 of this dissertation). People must constantly struggle, competing with each other to fulfill their basic material and nonmaterial needs or diminish their participation in life.
Other contradictions affect Third World women. Production of goods and services occurs through socially co-operative relationships. People join together to produce for their employers. This results in contradictory and conflicting types of relations among people (Furst, 1954). Third World women, like others, are not always aware that they participate in contradictory cooperative yet competitive activities.

Like others, Third World women face destructive consequences stemming from competition as a way of life. These oppressive experiences are internalized (Jackins, 1964, 1975), and consequently limit their potential. Subjectively, these experiences are reflected in the form of distressed and conflicting ideas, values, judgments, motivations, perceptions, goals and emotions (Furst, 1954). One result of oppressive experience is manifested in being alienated, usually expressed as a feeling of estrangement from self and from others.

Class divisions and alienation

Alienation is a condition of class society which affects every individual to varying degrees. There is co-existence in nature. When disharmony occurs, such as is the case with oppression, humans, unlike other species, have the capabilities to transform the environment, and humanize it
(Freire, 1970). This ability to take charge of the universe, to be connected to it, is one of the aspects that accounts for the powerful potential of people (Jackins, 1983). In a system in which a few individuals monopolize decision-making power by means of private property, the unity between humans and nature is altered. Because alienation disrupts the unity between humans and their environment, the capabilities of people to engage cooperatively with others in changing, developing and enhancing the environment is undermined (Jackins et al., 1976).

When workers are denied any control over what is to be produced or over the production process, they suffer the disadvantage of being denied use of their creative powers. Another aspect of alienation is that workers do not see the finished product that they contribute to through their labor. This is true of workers in industry and of other workers such as clericals; all lack autonomy in their work. They complete a single task, but it is often totally disconnected from the actual outcome or objective to be accomplished. People are alienated to the extent that they lose any sense of connection between themselves and their creations. Alienation has detrimental effects on the physical and mental states of human beings and on the social processes of which they are a part (Ollman, 1971). The
result of alienating labor is that workers lose touch with qualities that make for full humanness (Oilman, 1971).

Because the productive activity of work provides the basis of social relations, the humanness of people is tied to the economic formation of society. This is as true of those, including Third World women, who earn an income as it is of those who are unemployed. Similarly, it is applicable to those who work without income in their homes as wives and mothers. These social relations shape individuals just as social relations are shaped by individuals. The development of the individual is related to the development of others because of the needs human beings have to satisfy.

In essence, social relations derive from the sum total of life. This is why a class society which relies on stratification, division of labor, and competitive practices not only alienates people from their production and creativity, but also from themselves and others. Thus what began as external social alienation becomes internalized within the psychic dimension of individuals (Kovel, 1976), becoming ingrained and affecting all aspects of life; confining, distorting and limiting participation and humanness at all levels. According to social theorists, it is under industrial capitalism that the greatest alienation, the most severe dehumanizing of the human race, takes place (Oilman, 1971; Edwards et al., 1972).
People who are limited and deprived may aspire to have wealth and control in order to obtain freedom (Jackins 1964, 1976). Owners may achieve some of their personal aims and enjoy some freedom while the workers may not. Within the context of an alienated society, these are limited gains. The owners as well as the workers are both emotionally and physically dehumanized human beings. The owners' treatment of workers as objects of exploitation in a competitive society impairs human potential in themselves as well as in the workers (Ollman, 1971). Therefore, the advantages that owners possess over workers carry their own disadvantages.

The exploitation and oppression of a class-divided society, as has been described, manifests itself in inequality, poverty, deprivation, consumerism, competition, segregation and alienation. The dehumanization caused by external social circumstances becomes internalized and takes on a life of its own in the psyche as isolation, loneliness, meaninglessness as well as in low self-worth, self-blame, arrogance, hostility, addictions, conflicts and other negative emotions (Furst, 1953). These are some of the manifestations of the oppression which people in general and Third World women in particular have internalized (Jackins, 1964, 1975). The internalization of this oppression (explained further in Chapter III) results in one extreme with individuals in the role of oppressor; in the other extreme
as the oppressed, which requires the "agreement" of people to "cooperate," to varying degrees, to be oppressed (Freire, 1970; Jackins, 1975; Memmi, 1965). Under conditions of class divisions and private property the possibilities for people to realize their full human potential are seriously diminished.

Race Oppression

Racism: a limiting ideology and practice of class society

Once a society is shaped and limited by the antagonistic and competitive capitalistic system of class, it seeks to stratify people at all levels. The majority of individuals get assigned lower status positions. Capitalism takes advantage of and reproduces racism to enhance this stratification. Three relevant considerations of racism will be addressed here. First, individual and institutional racism; second, practices of assimilation which poses contradictions; third, how capitalism uses racism. These theoretical considerations will be followed by a description of concrete effects of racism, particularly on Third World women.
Modern racism can be said to be the making of decisions and the forming of policies in consideration of race for the purpose of subordinating and controlling a racial group. It can also be described as the systematized oppression of one race by another. Racism is so ingrained in society that it is often practiced unconsciously.

Modern racism can take two forms: (a) individual racism, the overtly discriminatory ideas, attitudes, and practices of individual whites against racial minorities; and (b) institutional racism, the functioning of institutions according to operating rules that may seem fair and unbiased on the surface, but which result, often without conscious intent, in the subordination of racial minorities (Edwards et al., 1972; Ladner, 1971). Many whites may not overtly behave in a racist manner, but neither do they stand up to fight against racism and eradicate the practice from the society. For this reason, racism can also be said to be covert. It is predominantly through this irresponsibility and inaction that the powerlessness of whites is manifested, which subsequently reinforces and maintains racism.

Stokely Carmichael, Charles V. Hamilton (Edwards et al., 1972) and a brief submitted to the United Nations (1963) by Reyes Tijerina maintain that modern racism is a form of North American colonialism against Third World people who reside in the United States. While this analogy
may appear less than perfect, Third World people do suffer from the three burdens that characterize colonial status, namely, political, economic, and social exploitation. If the word "slavery" is replaced by the word racism, a quote by Frederick Douglass provides a useful explanation:

"The existence of slavery in this country brands your republicanism as a sham, your humanity as a base pretense, and your Christianity as a lie. It destroys your moral power abroad; it corrupts your politicians at home. It saps the foundations of religion; it makes your name a hissing and a by-word to a mocking earth. . . . It fetters your progress; it is the enemy of improvement; the deadly foe of education; it fosters pride; it breeds insolence; it promotes vice; it shelters crime; it is a curse to the earth that supports it; and yet you cling to it as if it were the sheet anchor of all your hopes. Oh! be warned! be warned! . . . crush and destroy it forever!" (Aptheker, 1971, p. 265).

The ideology that justifies racial oppression

A great deal of the justification for racism in modern society comes from the nineteenth-century literature referred to as "scientific" racism. These ideas permeate many of the assumptions that justify modern racism.

The ideology of "scientific" racism claims that persons living in impoverished socioeconomic conditions or demonstrating behavioral "disorders" are afflicted by inferior genetic endowments. The eugenicists' thesis is that intel-
lectual giants such as Shakespeare, Goethe, Beethoven, or Mozart were great because of their superior genes rather than their inherited socioeconomic, and therefore environmental, opportunities. After the nineteenth century, "scientific" racism became a rationale for the preservation of poverty and the inequality of opportunity (Chase, 1978). In a sense these myths have provided a rationale for exploitation by shifting from genetic deficiencies to cultural inferiority.

Policymakers and scientists have blamed poverty for all the ill conditions afflicting individuals. Banfield (1970) replaced the traditional phrase "lower class" with the word "unfit," and stated that most problems of the poor derived from one fatal flaw of their class: an extreme orientation toward the present that "attaches no value to work, sacrifice, self-improvement, or service to family, friends, or community," and which finds slum housing satisfying . . . ." (Chase, 1978, pp. 515, 519). Furthermore, he was not alone in labeling poor people faced with the lack of objective opportunities as "ignorant" (Banfield, 1970; Chase, 1978). All such thinkers contribute to and deepen the plight of the poor. The victims of these acts who are able to transcend stifling circumstances and humiliating attitudes are understandably in the minority.
The revival of the I.Q. test-score mystique, meritocracy, and time-orientation, along with the "population bomb" hysteria, helped inaugurate "scientific" racism. Jensen's (1973) emphasis on skin color rather than on learning deficits that affected millions of mostly white, poor and disadvantaged children has had detrimental consequences. It creates and reinforces the myth that Third World people cause -- and therefore are to be blamed for -- the nation's problems, such as ineffective education. Another myth is that whites, who are a large majority of the poor, do not suffer or need help and resources. In addition, both whites and Third World people are alienated from each other. Jensen (1973), not presenting new information, but merely dredging up old data, presents the view that most blacks are born with less "intelligence" than whites. Shuy, Jensen, Shockley and their followers analyzed what they thought of as black intellectual inferiority, with Shockley using his own word "raceology" for his studies of "black inferiority," and claiming that this term was not racist but genetic! (Chase, 1978). What was known as "racial degeneration" became "genetic enslavement" (Chase, 1978).

The racism applied to black Americans extends to other Third World people. For instance, to support "scientific" racism, the work of Lewis Terman of Stanford University (Chase, 1978) who tested Spanish, Native American, and
Mexican children as well as blacks, summarized that the dullness of those individuals tested seemed to be racial or inherent in them. While most of the references about racism in North America depict blacks as its victims, often the term "black" is used to mean all people of color. The "benign neglect," or lack of recognition by white Americans of the other groups that make up the Third World population in the United States, is another manifestation of racism. This "neglect" alienates people, especially Third World women, from each other and keeps them from joining forces in alliances.

All these pseudogenetic myths have influenced governmental policies as well as the attitudes of people in all walks of life. These policies have kept out Third World people and curtailed their opportunities and involvement at all levels. Historically, Third World women have stood up to combat these practices. But due to the pervasiveness of racism, it has to varying degrees caused them to internalize their adverse force -- which has kept them from realizing their inherent power and from reaching their full potential for achievement.

**Assimilation poses contradictions**

Another aspect of racism which has disadvantages for Third World women is assimilation. In one extreme, assim-
ilation into the North American mainstream culture is a primary expectation in the United States. This assimilation includes adherence to middle-class values and norms, whether or not the individuals in question are members of that class (Ladner, 1977). Yet, Third World women are rejected — primarily because of their race and skin color.

Historically, the experiences of Third World people differ from those of the majority of whites who migrated to the United States. In the past the majority of the white people who came to live in the United States did so to improve their opportunities. This majority, drawn from diversified cultures, eventually became integrated into the mainstream and gave up most practices of their traditional cultures. The early history of Third World people demonstrates significant differences. The history of blacks and Native Americans has been one of dispossession and of genocide. Other members of Third World groups now living in the United States have a history of colonization in their native lands. When deprived in their homelands, these people usually migrate to the land of the colonizer, seeking opportunities they often do not have in their own colonized countries.

Because of this history, and primarily because of their color, the antagonisms and deprivation facing Third World people not only differ from those which other groups have
faced, but persist. Rather than being the melting pot Patrick Moynihan (1965) and other "experts," have described, the United States has proved rigid, stratified and unaccepting. The reception North American society has given Third World people has been one of hostility.

Being social in nature, Third World women, like all people, need to establish relations with others. Through the process of socialization, they learn of the material and nonmaterial values of a culture, such as history, art, and literature (Harris, 1977). This recognized system of values and this real attachment to material culture gives the individual a meaningful relationship to a group. The need to receive and to pass on such cultural realities is one aspect which gives meaning to existence. For these reasons Third World women, like others, attempt and aspire to become accepted by the mainstream. But since they have attachments to cultures and histories that often differ from the majority culture, they also feel a need or desire to remain a part of their own cultures.

It is possible, in situations where differences are respected and welcomed, for people to absorb and effectively deal with the multiple facets of their cultural diversity and life styles. They can be part of both the mainstream and of their own subculture. But in the United States the majority culture poses contradictions. While there is an
expectation of assimilation, many people are rejected because of their race and class. The extreme emphasis on color, as well as myths of cultural inferiority, make it impossible for Third World women both to be fully accepted into the mainstream and to be supported and encouraged to maintain and enrich their mother culture. This rejection and denial often strip them of their own values, beliefs, language and customs.

In spite of these difficulties people manage to create alternatives. This creative process reflects the brilliant potential inherent in all people (Jackins, 1964), which results in their maintaining their own cultures and multiple life styles, such as those embraced by many Third World women. These can provide an outlet and enrichment for them to be more fully themselves. In turn, the richness of these cultures enhances the majority culture. But as Third World women are discouraged from maintaining their culture and as they are limited and even rejected from participating in the mainstream, they are further alienated. Subjective feelings, such as conflicts within and among them, are bred. Their self-image is affected and they are isolated (Harris, 1977). Often, these women are also pressured by their own group. Sometimes, because of the oppression they have experienced, other Third World people place unreal demands on their own members to abandon the majority culture and con-
form exclusively to original cultural norms, values and expectations. The women internalize not only the external oppressive circumstances from the dominant society but also the pressures from their own groups. This is often another source of conflict for them.

**Capitalism uses racism**

Capitalism both profits from racism and reproduces it. Because racism exists, Third World workers can be paid less than white workers. Capitalism produces racism because it uses it as a strategy for fermenting racial prejudice. For instance, white workers are made to believe that they deserve to earn more than Third World workers. Therefore, racial oppression is consistent with the logic of class divisions under capitalism and strengthens the assets of the capitalist class as a whole (Boyer and Morais, 1975). By contributing to divisions and antagonisms among the populations, it weakens hostility to the capitalist class (Boyer and Morais, 1975). By providing whites with a convenient scapegoat, as well as by blaming Third World women for the social and economic oppression generated by capitalism itself, racism plays an important role in stabilizing a capitalist society (Jackins, 1975; Chase, 1977).

Racism also encourages antagonism among oppressed people. Blacks are blamed for oppressing Latinos and vice ver-
A Time Magazine article (October 16, 1978, p. 48), stated that Latinos and blacks were "two groups competing most fiercely for jobs and government aid." The problem is not that these two groups "compete fiercely," but that there are shortages of and inequities among certain jobs, funds, opportunities and services. Similarly, women and in particular Third World women, have been blamed for the lack of jobs available to men. These are not causes, but effects of the oppressive system that dehumanizes men as well as women.

Other effects of racism

There are many social ills resulting from racism. One is that the contributions of Third World people frequently go unnoticed or are undermined. A high government official during the Nixon administration stated that with the exceptions of a few gifted black men such as Frederick Douglass, Malcolm X, and Claude Brown, there is no direct evidence of there ever having been any upward mobility from the lower class in America (Chase, 1978). Third World individuals merit much more recognition than they get, even though this recognition singles out individuals as achievers and neglects the great collective contributions made, in spite of oppression, by millions of Third World people. These contributions benefit not only a single race, but society at large. For Third World women, the lack of acknowledgment of
their collective contributions, because of class, race and sex oppression, is one of the most damaging forms that oppression takes. It results in the invisibility of their achievements. (See Reed (1969) on historical contributions of women; Strouse (1981) on Toni Morrison; Ladner (1971) for comments on the contributions made by blacks, and Azize (1979) on the participation of women in Puerto Rican society.)

The adverse external deprivations stemming from racism permeate all aspects in the lives of Third World women. Frequently they are confined to dilapidated ghettos or can only live in segregated and deteriorated housing; they suffer from police brutality and from racial bias in law enforcement and criminal justice, and from lack of opportunity to share in administering the system.

Inequities in formal education are another barrier that hinders Third World women. Third World women, like others, must compete with different cultural groups for access to needed services in bilingual/bicultural education, for improvement of reading and writing skills, and for other necessary developmental and social programs which attempt to correct inequality in educational opportunity. They are frequently victims (without choice) of segregated schools and colleges. Moreover, the inadequate and inferior schools they usually attend often fail to train them to master ed-
ucational skills. In fact, racist practices lead to inferior education and lack of opportunities (Chase, 1978). Often, many Third World women must leave school to provide for themselves and, in many cases, for families as well.

When Third World women are able to pursue a formal education, the majority are at least two years behind the normal grade level for their age (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1978). Third World women constitute the smallest percentage of all who obtain a formal college education. Those who complete college are likely to earn far less than comparably educated majority males. This remains true for Asian women, too, despite the myth that they have transcended this condition (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1978).

In the field of health, a number of statistics for birth, prematurity, and infant mortality point up the burden borne by Third World and poor women. The premature birth rate of the poor is two to four times as high as it is in middle-class communities; in some inner-city communities, 25 percent of all births are premature (Chase, 1978). The percentage is nearly twice as high among black mothers as among whites. The highest infant mortality is in the black community. There is a definite connection between income and infant mortality. All these are "products" of socioeconomic and environmental causes; they are not genetic (Chase, 1978). These data indicate that class, race and sex oppres-
sion are important variables in the health of Third World women.

Lastly, a source of extreme limitation for Third World women is the practice of violence. Conditions of exploitation and consequently of poverty, deprivation, and dehumanization create violence. Third World women are often its victims. Ladner (1977) reports that these women experience a high incidence of violence and aggressive behavior either directly, or indirectly in the lives of others close to them. This often includes rape, with its traumatic and damaging effects in the victims' later lives. While individuals learn by necessity to handle stress with a certain degree of success, sexual maltreatment usually leaves deep emotional scars.

The practices documented in this section have demonstrated that many Third World people, especially women and other minorities, are kept from having access to the resources of contemporary life as well as full opportunity for participation. At the same time these deprivational practices are accompanied by rationalizations that justify and maintain them.

Beliefs that capitalists and the wealthy are endowed with superior capabilities and the less wealthy and poor are victims of inferior inherited qualities are aspects of these justifications for the divisions and stratifications within
a class-based system. Similarly, the many notions depicting that the physical and mental attributes born of the hereditary superiority of whites far surpass those of Third World individuals are all myths. However, these myths reinforce a system of exploitation that blames Third World people, including Third World women, for the difficulties they encounter.

Although many Third World women have struggled against these conditions and sometimes transcend the many barriers that they face, these conditions adversely affect their psychic integrity. Even when aware that external forces exist, they internalize racism to varying degrees. Some of the negative manifestations are feelings of insecurity, anger, inability to be fully powerful, and other emotional distresses which limit human potential. These manifestations derive from the structurally oppressive social system.

Gender Oppression

Class oppression: inherent sexism—exploitation of women

Class society, which reflects capitalism as the current mode of ownership and control of the means of production, uses sexism to impose discrimination on women. Because they live and work within a limited sex/gender system, women are victims of sexism at two levels: in their productive and in
their reproductive functions. Sexism operates as a factor of discrimination against women in their productive role in the labor market by devaluing their worth. Because of their reproductive functions, women are held responsible for the sole maintenance of households and are expected to be the primary parenting agents.

In order to provide a full understanding of the oppression of women, this text presents information about sexism at several levels: first, a brief historical account and perspective of the participation of women in society; second, the emergence of sexism; third, the ideology and practice of individual and institutional sexism. The text will then provide current information about both general and specific aspects of sexism.

**A historical perspective of women**

Contrary to the beliefs that women are physically, emotionally, and intellectually the weaker sex, and the notion that women's place is in the home, the history of women indicates positive strengths and achievements.

In primitive societies the primary division of labor was very simply a sexual one, in which children also contributed their share. Men were the hunters of big game; women were responsible for food-gathering and child care.
Because of the previous nonexistence of technology to allow for the separation of child-rearing from childbearing, women were the primary parents. But it was not simply the biology of mother and child that determined the economic roles during this period. It was also the material needs of the clan (Balser, 1979; Reed, 1969). For instance, the women's collection of vegetable products and small game around the camp was a more reliable source of food than the males' occasional capture of large animals (Reed, 1969).

Analysis of early hunting and gathering societies indicate that the division of labor ran on a cooperative basis wherein the work of both men and women complemented each other. This cooperation was crucial for the survival of the clan or the tribe (Balser, 1979; Reed, 1969). In certain spheres of human relations, primitive social organizations rested upon genuine democracy and complete equality, including sex equality (Reed, 1969).

The developments and contributions of women covered a variety of fields, including botany, chemistry, medicine and the arts. They became the prime educators, passing on their skills, knowledge and cultural heritage to new generations (Reed, 1969).

During primitive society women occupied a high position of influence and respect. They enjoyed great freedom and independence. According to Robert Briffault in The
Mothers (1929), women acquired their leading place in primitive society not simply because they were procreators but because of their particular function as producers of the necessities of life. Thus, they were the founders, and leaders of the earliest form of social life because they were the producers of both new life and the material necessities of life. (See Engels in Labor Theory of Social Origins (Reed, 1969).)

Some of the aspects which characterized these classless societies were: (1) since the means of production were communally owned, every member was provided for equally; (2) primitive tribal society was self-governing and democratic; and (3) the family, as known today, did not exist. Instead, there was a network of clans, with a system of kinship in which all were identifiable not through separate family ties but through their clan and tribal connections (Reed, 1969).

In many primitive societies, descent was passed through the mother. Because women held an appropriately respected place, this may signify to some that a system of matriarchy existed (Reed, 1969). However, since women did not have power over the group, but lineage in the clan was passed on through the women, it is more appropriate to classify these as matrilineal societies (Balser, 1979).

While these historical practices expose many good attributes, women -- like men -- cannot be considered to have
had easy lives since they lacked control over both the material resources and the environment.

Emergence of sexism

As women developed agriculture and the domestication of animals, men were freed from the task of hunting. The division of labor changed. The introduction of large-scale agriculture and stock raising brought about the material surpluses required for a more efficient economy, and thus a new mode of life emerged. The father-led family displaced the clan as the basic unit of society. Eventually, beginning in the Middle East, new social forces destroyed the collectivist relations and gave rise to a system based on private property. The surpluses of food, and later of other necessities, fell into the hands of a privileged few who came to dominate and exploit the majority (Reed, 1969).

As social production came into the hands of the men, they dispossessed women from productive life and limited them to the biological function of maternity. As men took over the reins of society and founded a social system which served needs other than their basic survival and well-being needs, class society was born.

With the breakdown of the original communistic system, and with the rise of the new system of private property, monogamous marriage and the family, women were dispersed, each
to become a solitary wife and mother in an individual home. Separated and isolated from their great social force, and confined to kitchen and nursery chores, they became powerless (Reed, 1969).

The inequality of the sexes has marked class society from its very inception several thousand years ago and has persisted throughout its three main stages: chattel slavery, feudalism, and current capitalism. For this reason class society is often characterized as male-dominated, upheld by the system of private property, the state, the church and the family as a structure that supports the position of men as superior (Reed, 1969).

Most women do not realize that their dilemma did not exist before class society came into existence and robbed them of the equality they once enjoyed in primitive society (Reed, 1969). To support the unequal status quo, an ideological creed has developed to inhibit and prevent change and growth in the current society. This creed is the reactive theory that biological determinism has historically limited women. This theory assumes that aggressive, dominant male behavior and passive, subservient female behavior are consequences of natural and universal sex roles which historically arose within the family (Millet, 1969).

Millet's ideas, like those of others professing the matriarchal theory, assume that a division of labor arose within a
sexual hierarchy, and preceded class divisions. It claims that the burden of sexism evolved from the biological family. This assumes that the goal of liberation should be to change the sexual hierarchy, and not to eradicate the class exploitation which gave rise to sex oppression and which continues to reinforce it (Balser, 1979; Reed, 1969).

Women are subjugated by a structural system which is the main cause of their internalized oppression. This historical sexism continues to shape and limit women in contemporary society.

**Sexism: ideology and practice**

The ideology and practice of sexism is historical and continues, in modern times, to limit women. Sexism takes two different forms which reinforce each other. First, individual sexism through the belief and promotion of ideas and attitudes by individuals against women; and second, institutional sexism with operating policies that subjugate women at all levels of their participation in society.

Sexism consists of the dogma that males are destined to hereditary superiority and females are condemned by nature to hereditary inferiority. Certain false claims regarding the superiority of the male sex have been propagated. Male supremacy is considered to be not a social phenomenon but a claim of natural law, wherein men are endowed with superior
physical and mental attributes (Reed, 1969). On the other extreme, women are viewed as socially and naturally inferior to men because of their reproductive role and therefore must be condemned to an inferior status (Reed, 1969; Rowbotham, 1973). Such differences then become a legitimate basis of invidious distinctions between men and women. These biased, discriminatory attitudes and beliefs contribute to justifying and reinforcing the institutional practice of sexism in society (Jackins, 1976).

The institutional sexism women face can be described as a series of operating policies, properties and functions of an ongoing system of normative patterns which serve to subjugate, oppress, and force dependency on individuals or groups by: (1) establishing and sanctioning unequal objectives and priorities for men and women, and (2) sanctioning through institutional acts inequality in status as well as in access to goods and services.

Institutions have great power to reward and penalize. They reward by providing opportunities for some people, usually males, and withhold them from others, usually women, and especially Third World women. They reward as well by the way social goods are distributed -- by deciding who receives equitable employment and wages, political influence, equitable education, training and skills, fair treatment under the law, adequate services such as housing and medical
care, and moral support promoting self-respect, self-confidence, and the promise of a secure future for self and children (Edwards et al., 1972; Chase, 1977). All of these factors contribute to the worth ascribed to the individual within a given society. One of the clearest indicators of institutional sexism is the exclusion and the unequal representation of women in most positions of control and leadership at all levels in society.

Thus, three conditions which simultaneously constitute sexism are present. The use of physical difference as a justification for discrimination; the belief that cultural, moral, intellectual and emotional differences correspond to discriminative physical difference; and the existence of social, economic and political discriminative actions based on those beliefs.

A gender system of class society: Oppression based on productive and reproductive functions

Modern society further hinders women through its limiting gender system. This allows for discrimination against women both in their role in the labor force and in their reproductive and parenting functions, as well as in their roles as wives.

Every society has had a sex/gender system. This gender system is defined as:
"... the set of arrangements by which society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied" (Edwards et al., 1978, p. 342).

Where once the functions of organizing society called for balanced participation by men and women, modern society has reduced women's participation through the gender system (Edwards et al., 1972). Capitalism as a specific mode of production includes a gender system that transforms the biological differences between the sexes into structural social relations. This socially imposed division of the sexes gives particular meaning to the concepts of "male" and "female" (Edwards et al., 1972). Because of this division, gender identity has resulted in the suppression of natural similarities (Edwards et al., 1972).

The labor market's sexism discriminates against women because of their productive functions. Women earn 40 percent less wages than men (National Commission on Working Women, 1978). Third World women who enter the labor market to provide for their subsistence needs, as sole providers or to supplement a husband's income, or as single female heads of households (Ladner, 1977), are paid even less than the already discriminatory wages (40 percent less than men) earned by their white female counterparts (National Commission on Working Women 1978; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1978).
These situations exist because sex division is one of the aspects of a class system.

Throughout history owners have deliberately used sex division to divide and rule, and to weaken the workers' ability to resist (Waters, 1976). Women, particularly Third World women, who try to support themselves and their families, provide an especially vulnerable and exploitable labor force for the capitalist economy. Male workers see women as the enemy rather than seeing the entire system as the enemy -- one which uses women as one of the tactics to drive down wages. Third World women are blamed not only for robbing Third World men of their jobs, but consequently stripping them of their place within the family (Moynihan, 1965).

While many women, particularly working-class women, must be in the labor force, they are also seen as reproducers. For women, in general, this creates a tension at the ideological and practical levels. Because they are both responsible in the home and in the work force, this is often a source of oppression that breeds tension and conflict for them.

Due to Third World women's participation in the labor market and because of the multiple forms of exploitation they face, these women often abandon a gender-based identi-
ty, particularly the traditional "passive," "feminine" role assigned to women by the oppressive society.

As Third World women -- out of necessity to provide for themselves and their families -- adopt other behavior models, the male dominant structure does little to support their needs either objectively, in terms of economic means and needed services, or subjectively, by providing them encouragement, understanding and support. Instead, society assigns them the dubious qualities of dominance and exaggerated strength. Often they are blamed for the "weakness of the male and the family" (Leacock, 1979; Moynihan, 1965). Being blamed for their plight and that of others is part of the oppression which becomes internalized.

Women are further impaired in their reproductive and parenting functions as well as in their roles as wives. Historically, when women ceased to be producers they became dependent and the entire economic burden to support the wife and family was thrown upon the man. Law and religion supported the new idea that the economic support of women and children was a natural obligation and duty of men. Thus, the patriarchal principle stemmed from the owners of property (Reed, 1969). It is no longer generally possible in the U.S. to speak of the family as patriarchal because capitalism has transformed this system on both the economic and ideological levels. Employment for women in industry gave
them some independence and lessened the power of husbands and fathers over women. Continuous development in technology allowed for many women to have reproductive control, fostered the growth of mass schooling, increased life expectancy and allowed some relief from housework drudgery. The result, however, has not been the abolishment of the patriarchal system resulting in equality for women. Instead, the system of male dominance evolved from patriarchy and continues to exist in modern times (Edwards et al., 1978).

Women are therefore subjugated not only because society oppresses them in their productive roles in the labor force in general, but also in their roles as wives and mothers. Reproductive and parenting activities are hard to standardize and require considerable time. It was therefore considered advantageous for the economy to benefit from the unpaid labor of women who run households (Edwards et al., 1972). This is because as unpaid houseworkers they reproduce labor power and therefore contribute to the ultimate quantity of surplus value realized by the capitalist.

The acclaimed inferiority of women is further perpetrated through a twofold myth. Motherhood is a biological affliction arising out of the maternal organs of women. The sanctity of motherhood endows women with blessed and special "instincts," feelings, and nurturant capabilities that are
beyond comprehension and not attainable by men. Sanctity and degradation are simply two sides of the same coin of the social robbery of women under a class society (Reed, 1969).

The narrowly defined gender system affects men as well as women. Notions that women should nurture children and men should discipline them, or that men should go out into the world and women should stay home, are arbitrary. The potential to be fully human in both women and men who live in unvarying accordance with these notions is thus restricted.

Two aspects that flow from the reproductive role of women as wives are their role as providers of emotional support and their role as socialization agents.

Wives provide love, nourishment, and support to their families. This process contains aspects of positive and rewarding experiences. But, under a male-dominant society, the wife and mother is also the emotional salvager. She must provide her husband with the compassion and comfort he needs in order for him to return daily to the work place. This is the case even when the wife herself holds a job outside the home. As expected of them in a primary parenting role, women try to fulfill their children's needs for love, nurturance, support and encouragement. They also perform socializing duties to assist their children in learning expected behavior and developing the necessary social skills
of a given society. In the United States, as socializing agents, women must implement the socialization process in order for their children to internalize the hierarchical social relations of the prevailing society (Mitchell, 1971). The survival of children and women depends on learning and accepting the class inequality, competition, authority and hierarchal prejudice. Further, they must accept different male and female sex roles (Waters, 1976), as well as race, hierarchial structures and attitudes, and other forms of oppression (Ladner, 1977).

In addition to socialization into the beliefs of the dominant culture, Third World mothers learn to transmit subcultural religious and social belief systems and codes which develop out of the different experiences between their own cultures and those of the dominant society (Ladner, 1977). While this provides richness, meaning and a sense of belonging, it also produces conflicts and contradictions stemming from often very different worlds in which the dominant culture frequently rejects their subculture. Many children respond to this conflict by denying or feeling alienated from their culture, or experience difficulty in being at home in the dominant culture.

The role of Third World women in their parenting role is further complicated because of the existence of an oppressive environment. The development of children ought to
include growing up in a positive environment that provides concern and protection from painful aspects of adult life and responsibilities. But in a hostile social environment, a casual, sustaining and protective childhood is not always possible for the majority. Third World women are often unable to offer enough "protection" and comfort to their children because of their own vulnerability to the discriminatory practices of the larger society. In fact, they are often harsh with their children to prepare them for the cruel world of racism and classism and, in the case of females, from an aggressive, male-dominated society.

Children are by necessity taught maneuvers and postures to cope with the brutality of practices in the dominant culture. As Ladner (1978, p. 58), states: "The consequences of the powerlessness of black parents and their inability to adhere to the standard child-rearing norms, necessitates that they devise their own patterns of child socialization."

These patterns were primarily predicated upon the principle that children in the black community must be taught to survive in a hostile society. Therefore, different patterns of child-rearing can be observed among various social classes and ethnic groups within a society (Ladner, 1971).

These circumstances both enrich and limit. Third World children must mature emotionally, but they also may lose their childhood at an early stage. This loss can have dev-
astating effects throughout life. Children must also expend a great deal of energy in self-defense in a society hostile to them. This energy could be used for growth in other areas. The psychic consequences could lead these children to lose trust in others and in themselves. They may become unable to open themselves up to total life experiences and relationships. They are consequently deprived of a rich, wholesome life. These consequences may not be reserved strictly for Third World children, or particularly to females. (A recent book, Children Without Childhood (Winn, 1981), addresses the loss of childhood and its consequences for middle-class children.) But since Third World children experience so many layers of oppression and obtain such limited encouragement and resources, these experiences are accumulated. Without viable outlets, release of feelings, and support mechanisms or systems, the chances for limitations are greater.

With regard to systems for internal support, Third World people experience a loss in the breakdown of the extended family structure. The family as an institution in the lives of Third World women has often differed in its structure from the present-day family of the dominant culture. Rather than the nuclear family, the extended family has been a cultural norm maintained by Third World people. However, the extended family continues to yield to the nu-
clear family, with the result that many Third World people are experiencing an emotional loss of family ties. Although the extended family offers much more nourishment, support, cooperativeness, and many more models of behavior than does the nuclear family, society at large does not encourage or support this structure. In many ways, it even oppresses it by denying it recognition and needed support, such as larger living space, financial benefits, or insurance coverage to sustain all its members. Therefore, if this system is to survive, individual sacrifice must bear the economic and social burdens of maintaining it. However, this more nurturant and supportive family structure is now being left in isolation, without public support.

The sexism Third World women face is manifested, as has been explained, in both the productive and reproductive functions. Particular emphasis must be made regarding their reproductive rights as a way of their taking powerful charge of their lives. Women are struggling in a sexist society for reproductive rights which will enable them to have control of their bodies, particularly their reproductive functions. Given the lack of reliable and safe contraceptives, one aspect of this choice is the right to safe, economical abortions. This right, along with access to proper and reliable birth control methods, is significant for many Third World women because an overwhelming number of them are vic-
tims of sterilization abuse. According to Chase (1977), Third World women, and particularly the poor, are subjected to sterilization by coercion, not through choice. "Third World welfare recipients under age 21 underwent sterilization with greater frequency than did whites in the same age group" (Chase, 1977, p. 56). Gail Kennard (1974, p. 66) stated: "According to a 1970 National Fertility Study sample, twenty percent of married black women practicing contraception had been sterilized versus only eight percent of married white women."

Another recent report (Health/PAC Bulletin, No. 62, January/February 1975), showed that of women with less than four years of high school, 31.6 percent of black women as opposed to 14.5 percent of white women, have been surgically sterilized; of Puerto Rican women aged 15 to 44, 35 percent are sterilized, 33 percent of whom are under age 30.

While poverty, regardless of race, is an indicator that cannot be overlooked in sterilization abuse, racial disparities are absolutely apparent. It is also a fact, as documented in this chapter, that Third World women are victims of sexism. This is a source of conflict as well as fear for them.

As indicated in chapter I, a primary problem in dealing effectively with the oppression of Third World women is that only certain factors of the sociopolitical environment and
personal dimensions which limit them are addressed. Sexism is one of the practices which is not generally included as a major oppression affecting Third World women. Obviously, it does affect Third World women, and presents a controversy. Often the oppression is manifested in the failure and denial by many, including Third World women themselves, that they are affected by sexism.

Because the majority of Third World women must work, and since they have historically struggled against race oppression, their experiences and often less passive behavior make them appear "liberated." Part of the problem is failure to acknowledge that many of the goals of feminist liberation are applicable to Third World women, because of the strict emphasis placed on the participation of the large number of Third World women in the labor force. Third World women, whether single or married, have needed to work. They are fundamentally paid workers in the labor market before and after they are anything else (Ladner, 1977). Women who work do not always depend on their spouses for complete economic support. These women achieve the status of money-earners, and they gain some independence, which is important within a capitalist structure. However, merely to work within capitalism does not bring liberation. It is often a form of oppression because of the discriminative nature and
conditions of employment as well as the added expectation that women also be wives and mothers.

Denial of sexism and conflicts with sexism are part of the oppression these women face. Some of the dimensions Third World women face take different forms from that of middle- and upper-middle-class white women due to historical, class, cultural, and racial differences. However, the discrimination based on sex faced by all women must be acknowledged. At the same time, the different experiences and forms of exploitation must not be denied by lumping all women together as having been afflicted similarly, thereby denying historical, cultural, race and class differences.

The racism Third World women experience in the society must be understood. Third World men in the United States historically do not control the socioeconomic political system and, therefore, have not kept Third World women in bondage by exercising institutionalized sexism. The sexism Third World men exhibit is primarily attitudinal. They have been socialized by a sexist society that seeks their "cooperation" in maintaining existing patterns of oppression. These men may become oppressors since the dominant culture inculcates in them a system based on behavior expressing male supremacy. Third World men, downtrodden as they are by racism, class oppression and by the unreal expectations of "maleness," may feel a need to play out the role of being
oppressive men. But the role of being a man is distorted and dehumanizes them. Third World men, like other men, play a dominant role by subjugating women. Capitalism reproduces the property relationship in the home by supporting men's treatment of wives as property.

The contention that Third World women are already liberated because of the particular material conditions which force them to be in the labor market, is based on the classic assumption that the participation of women in the labor market is a precondition of liberation. It is clear from the experience of Third World women or any worker that participation in the labor force is not a sufficient precondition for liberation.

At an individual level women's participation in the labor market may have provided them with some economic autonomy. Because they take a more active role and have not always been subjugated to traditional "female" roles, it is falsely assumed that they do not endure other consequences and limitations which stem from the alienating society. These women are still part of a competitive capitalist society which uses sexism, as it does racism, to make sure they earn the lowest wages, remain in the worst jobs, and obtain the fewest nonmaterial goods, and hold the least political and economic power. It places household management and child-rearing entirely on them. Employment alone does not
eradicate the whole system. In order to include all women, liberation from sex exploitation depends on changes which aim at reconstructing society by ending class oppression, along with racism and sexism (Balser, 1979; Reed, 1969; Rowbotham, 1973).

The lack of acknowledgment of their sex oppression represents an additional form of casting blame on the victims. Third World women are further alienated and abandoned. Part of their alienation is manifested in the divisions in ideology and nonalliance amongst many Third World women, between Third World women and Third World men, as well as among Third World groups that are potential allies. The consequences, therefore, impair and limit everyone to some extent.

The multiple oppression, which results in its internalizations, leaves Third World women few means of escape from this systematic exploitation, and few places to nourish and develop themselves. For Third World women living with minimal or no aspirations, coping with each day as it comes, adapting to the constant possibility of imminent death, accepting limited circumstances and their own limitation of potential as the norm, the results are feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness, abandonment and inferiority. These feelings are indicative of the adverse external practices of the society which become internalized. As is the case for
all people (Jackins, 1964, 1975), Third World women need to be recognized as full entities entitled to access to resources and appreciated, valued and nourished for what they are. They need to believe that they have a purpose. This recognition from the outer world contributes to the inner self, to a healthy self-esteem and self-appreciation which reinforces their empowerment. In fact the sense of self-esteem is augmented by external sources commencing in the formative years and reinforced thereafter throughout life (Jackins, 1964).

**Conclusion**

This chapter attempted to define and document a conceptual framework to substantiate the position that the social and psychic limitations of people are the consequences of exploitation stemming primarily from class, race and sex oppression. These problems are neither fundamentally personal, nor separated from the practices of society. Third World women who react to existing societal conditions are blamed for their plight, are considered unstable, and labeled as "pathological." The antagonisms inherent in the society are blamed on them. Similarly, Third World women who must adopt nontraditional female passive roles and behaviors are accused of displacing others of their participation in the labor force. They are also indicted for causing
men to be displaced and stripped of their place in the home. These rationalizations, along with those depicting women as inferior, are justifications that reinforce exploitation and oppression. The antagonisms and contradictions they face are a major source of conflict for them. The external destructive conditions are internalized and manifested in feelings of self-doubt and self-invalidation, passivity, powerlessness, anger and hatred, frustration, conflict, contradiction, alienation, isolation, and hopelessness (Fanon, 1963; Furst, 1954; Jackins, 1969, 1976; Memmi, 1954).

This thesis is based on the premise that to be successful with Third World women, any counseling or educational model must consider the social matrix of these women and take into account their class, material and economic, historical, cultural and social conditions along with racial and gender factors. Assessment must include an understanding of personal, experiential, familial and even language histories.

Such a model must provide Third World women a vehicle for understanding their own particular experiences, and provide information about the external exploitative and limiting society in order to synthesize a picture of what her psyche and her social practices are really like. In addition these women must be provided access to a model that helps them eradicate these internal consequences to free
themselves of the internalized oppression, with the goal that they may move to take effective action against the external societal conditions.

Re-Evaluation Counseling (RC) deals with all these dimensions in that it integrates the personal dimensions, the socioeconomic and political aspects, along with the counseling practice, and provides Third World women with tools for their participation in the process. Because of these strengths, RC has been applied to assist a selected group of Third World women overcome the limitations imposed on them. Chapter III will define the theory and practice of RC; Chapter IV will describe a study employing RC with a group of Third World women.
"Chance has never yet satisfied the hope of a suffering people. Action, self-reliance, the vision of self and future have been the only means by which the oppressed have seen and realized the light of their own freedom."

Marcus Garvey
(Manley, 1979)

CHAPTER III

RE-EVALUATION CO-COUNSELING

Introduction

Re-Evaluation Counseling (RC) (appendix I) was selected as the primary intervention methodology for this study for three reasons. First, it offers a rational view of human beings prior to the limits imposed upon them by oppression, and assumes that everyone has the vast human potential to be brilliant, loving, cooperative, possess natural zest, energy and the capability to be powerful (Jackins, 1964). These qualities have been blocked and obscured in adults as the result of accumulated distress experiences caused by both physical and emotional hurts, most of which stem from oppression. Thus, RC is a philosophy of viewing human potential and capacity for growth, power and development. Second, the RC model provides a theory of exploitation and oppression. This theory explains and develops an awareness
of the social conditions which limit people both from full growth and development of their human potential and from effective participation in life.

Third, it includes a methodology that aims at giving people tools to undo the distresses, the majority of which are the consequences of an exploitative society whose hurts individuals internalize. This internalized oppression is manifested as feelings of inferiority, acceptance of visible limitations as an inherent human condition, and placing blame on self and others who are affected by the oppression. These, as well as other accumulated subjective feelings of distress, are the rigid patterns of internalized oppression which inhibit the natural intelligence, zest and energy of people and leave them powerless to varying degrees. Therefore, the external conditions take on a life of their own in the psyche as internalized oppression which becomes self-perpetuating. The goal of RC is to overcome the internalized oppression and to restore to people their human potential of intelligence, cooperation and power -- with the ultimate purpose of freeing them to humanize and transform themselves and the world.

The RC model posits that, to a large extent, the personal and social limitations Third World women experience stem from exploitation caused by oppressive socioeconomic conditions and the political environment. It also holds
that in spite of oppression these women can and do contribute to, influence, and shape society. RC does not aim to make people conform or adjust to the present structure of society, but to enable them to transform their psyches and to take rational action to change society based on a recognition that both the internal aspects of human beings and the external aspects of society must be changed (Jackins, 1973).

Unlike counseling models which rely on an unequal therapist/patient relationship, RC engages the counselor in a reciprocal relationship with the client (Jackins, 1962). This model of mutual exchange among peers breaks down the oppressed-oppressor relationship inherent in the hierarchical structure found in society and which is duplicated in most service-oriented structures. RC thus empowers people by providing the tools for their liberation, namely, experience, knowledge, information, and expertise.

The RC model enables people of different backgrounds to participate. Clients do not need sophisticated verbal skills to participate since the method of discharge does not require verbalization. This is particularly important to large numbers of non-middle-class people (Jackins, 1965). Rather, it is similar to cultural, religious or spiritual practices of some Third World people that allow emotional discharge like shaking or sweating, evident in practices
such as "Curanderismo," "Espiritismo," "Santeria" and evangelism (Kiev, 1968; Argandoña and Kiev, 1972).

RC aims at developing a community of people working with each other in a supportive network. The process is aimed not only toward individuals, but also toward families, friends and activists who can participate and learn to work together. Participants in the process are not blamed for their limitations, or seen as inherently inferior, or categorized as sick or deficient. Rather, people are viewed as affected by the social environment; their potential and capacity are seen as separate from emotional distresses. In addition to freeing Third World women from self-blame, the model gives them access to information about society along with specific skills enabling them to take charge of their lives and not remain victims (Jackins, 1965, 1978).

For these reasons, RC is viewed as an educational model that also provides emotional healing. It is an in-depth, long-term process that deals with historical circumstances and their effects on people.

This chapter presents both the theory and the practice of Re-Evaluation Counseling. It includes a description of the basic theory, the development of patterns, people's relationship to an oppressive society, and the mechanism of internalized oppression. It also discusses the distinctive
features of the process, the role of the counselor and cli-
ent, and the basic skills and techniques.

The Nature of Human Intelligence and the Development
of Patterns

This theory presents a model of what human beings can
achieve in their interaction with other human beings and
their environment.

Each person possesses flexible human intelligence to an
extent that is normally associated with "geniuses." This
capacity is destroyed or diminished permanently only by
physical damage to the forebrain (Jackins, 1965). The lim-
itations that people manifest prohibit them from actualizing
their human potential. These stem from lack of resources to
grow and develop, from interference and inhibition due to
the distresses people experience; they are not attributable
to innate differences in intelligence. The key feature of
human intelligence is its ability to devise a flexible, cre-
ative, successful response to each situation the person
encounters.

Each person has a vast capacity to obtain and to absorb
information from the total environment and to file it effec-
tively, often without direct awareness or emphasis on learn-
ing. Information from positive experiences is effectively
stored in memory and used in handling future experiences.
However, when the individual is hurting, all the information from the environment, including the entire episode of hurt, with its sensory input, such as smells, sights and sounds (Jackins, 1965) gets "mis-stored" and remains unsort-ed and unevaluated.

Severe hurts begin early in life, sometimes even before birth, and continue repeatedly throughout life. These hurt-ful distress experiences, both physical and emotional, cause the flexible human intelligence to stop functioning effec-tively. Because of this hurt, there is a temporary "loss" or "shut-down" of intelligence (Jackins, 1973).

A child who is hurt can recover from distress spontane-ously by emotional discharge (crying, trembling, raging, laughing, perspiring, talking or yawning, or a combination of these). However, this natural process is often inter-fered with as well as inhibited. Well-meaning adults and older children often stop others from discharging with com-ments and messages ("Don't cry," "Don't be a scaredy-cat"). They erroneously equate emotional discharge, which is the healing of the hurt, with the hurt itself (Jackins, 1965).

When adequate emotional discharge can take place, the person is freed from the rigid patterns of behavior, can re-evaluate the hurtful experience, and can then store the in-formation in memory for effective future use. When undis-charged, accumulated hurts become the source of emotional
blocks and inflexibility in the individual. According to RC, when these physical and emotional needs are unfulfilled, undischarged and not re-evaluated, needs can become "frozen" at an early age of the child's development. These accumulated hurts are variously described as "distress recordings," "recordings," "distress patterns," "rigid patterns of behavior" or "patterns."

If undischarged, this accumulated distress may be triggered repeatedly when an individual encounters situations that remind him or her of the original hurt. This triggering effect is known as "restimulation" (Jackins, 1964). When restimulation occurs (through any incident that reminds the person of any aspect of the hurtful experience), the entire distress recording is played out. The individual responds in a distressed and, consequently, in an ineffective manner. He or she acts unsuccessfully and feels inadequate without the ability to take effective charge of a situation. In a sense, "the feelings take over" and the person loses control. This adds to the hurt. The individual who has experienced many hurts is thus subjected to more hurts, frequently as a result of restimulation. Each restimulation experience leaves the person systematically predisposed to be upset or hurt -- with a snowballing effect (Jackins, 1965).
Inhibition of the discharge process is reinforced by certain social practices which individuals are taught to accept as the norm. For example, in most contemporary societies males are told they are weak if they cry. Poor people, women, Third World people and particularly Third World women often suppress their own discharge and that of their children in an effort to "harden" themselves against the conditions of class, race and sex oppression in order to survive. Such conditioning includes learning to go without sufficient food or hope of obtaining it on a regular basis. Sometimes children from poverty backgrounds may be taught to internalize deprivation by equating it with a human virtue, e.g., "We may be poor, but we have dignity." Accumulation of hurt occurs when there is a lack of security, safety and/or when the individual is not nurtured and when the hurts that occur are not discharged. Hurts occur and accumulate also when a person is not able to fulfill nonmaterial needs such as education, to develop knowledge and skills or satisfy intellectual and creative needs and curiosity for learning. Work, social relations and self-esteem are all affected by such deprivations.

People who continuously face these conditions as a way of life may not perceive the deprivations as hurts which they endure. If they acknowledge these deprivations, individuals may adopt rigid attitudes to cope with the situa-
tion, without proper discharge, and may blame themselves. It is part of the oppression to tell the victims that the deprivations are "their own fault," and thus create self-blame for their plight. Part of the oppression is also to condition people to feel grateful for the minimal benefits and niceties they obtain in a given society. Consequently, people facing the aforementioned conditions may not perceive the need for emotional discharge. When people are aware of the deprivations and conditioning, they may experience feelings of guilt for their dissatisfaction, knowing that others may have worse situations. All undischarged experiences and feelings, including self-blame, add to the accumulation of hurts. Undischarged and unresolved, these patterns, which begin early in life, hinder potential for action in later life.

The undischarged hurt recordings operate in two modes: intermittent patterns, which often have less accumulation of distress and can thus be discharged in a shorter time; and chronic patterns, which usually result from a larger accumulation of hurts and can require more time and persistent counseling to remove. The pattern, which is still intermittent, only comes into play when a particular incident triggers it off. Individuals who have acquired a fear of high places provide an example. They only experience this pattern when approaching heights or when hearing or thinking
of high places. Patterns which have become chronic are in restimulation all the time. People tend to identify themselves with their chronic patterns, e.g., "I have always been an angry person," as opposed to "I have to discharge a lot of anger to be free of the ways in which I have been hurt."

Most such patterns or "recordings" push persons to lose sight of their intelligence and power and succumb to oppression. The hurtful nature of living in an oppressive society results in people having large numbers of patterns which limit and inhibit their potential and which affect many different phases of their activity.

The Impact of Oppression

Any distress pattern limits a person's true potential. These patterns take the form of rigid, passive, powerless, destructive, or ineffective feelings and behaviors in the victim (Jackins, 1964). Initially, patterns instilled by oppression often contain a "survival" component in that people's lives or well-being were threatened if they did not go along with the expectations and demands placed on them. Such patterns are often recordings of the inaccurate and unsuccessful attempts individuals make to resist oppression. Often these attempts add to rather than divert the oppression (Jackins, 1965). For instance, a person who senses
that the available educational process is an inhumane one may choose not to pursue a formal education at all, and then suffers the consequences of inadequate training.

The socializing role of families is one of the structures which contributes to the earliest distress patterns children develop. Being themselves dehumanized by the capitalist society, parents are unable to provide full access to society's resources. This, along with their own unresolved tensions and feelings, often makes them unable to nurture, support, and help children who rely on them heavily to fulfill most of their earlier needs.

One of the most devastating hurts children endure is the personal invalidation of being undermined, negated or degraded morally, intellectually or physically. Invalidation includes verbal abuse as well as deprivation of needed resources and being socialized into limiting roles of class, race and gender. Invalidation results in patterns which obscure people's vast human potential.

Adults are often critical of what children do, how they act, look, talk and walk. They are often harsh with children. They take out their own hurts and frustrations on children, or project on them their own unfulfilled dreams. Invalidation sometimes results from a perceived need by parents to be harsh in order to "prepare" their children for the injustices in the world.
The father, intimidated and conditioned by cultural expectations of "maleness," burdened by the irrational, excessive expectations placed on males, and kept from participating in intimate and nurturing relationships with the entire family, can be a source of hurt for children. Fathers often seem invisible, or appear only in the role of disciplinarian. This makes the whole family feel isolated.

Individuals experience hurts in relation to specific people, ideas, and things which they value highly. For Third World females, for instance, if the mother is highly valued in the family but does not appear to value her daughter, the daughter is intensely hurt.

Hurts also stem from disappointed expectations. These are often unrealistic when applied to the nuclear family, particularly when the mother is the source of nourishment for almost all of a child's physical, emotional, intellectual and social needs. This is especially the case when socioeconomic circumstances deprive the family of supportive resources such as child care, preschool and other educational services. When parents fail to fulfill adequately their children's emotional, material and nonmaterial needs, both children and parents may feel unworthy, angry or guilty. This is true particularly with the primary caretaker.

When children's physical needs for food, shelter, safety and security, as well as their emotional need to be
loved, nurtured and accepted, are unfulfilled, they begin to internalize self-invalidation. Children internalize the external deprivation and see it as an indication that they are unworthy, limited or unimportant. They often blame themselves. When children's physical and emotional needs go unfulfilled, or they have not discharged and evaluated, they may develop rigid (frozen) patterns early in life. As adults they develop rigid expectations to be loved, accepted and protected in the way they should have been as children. They may be unaware of this phenomenon and may even deny these "old or frozen needs." Parents or caretakers in varying degrees deny children's need to be loved and welcomed as the center of their own universe.

If these needs were met, children would grow up to be at ease, believe in and like themselves, be centered in themselves and be in tune with the universe. From this nurturance and support, self-validation and appreciation ensue.

The unfulfilled needs of an oppressed, inadequate childhood can never be authentically satisfied in the adult. Rather, the hurts attached to these unfulfilled needs must be discharged. To the extent that these deep hurts are discharged, adults become freer to be powerful, to act outside their distressed emotionalism and to take effective action.

Perhaps if the family were the only source of oppressive distress and invalidation, Third World females and oth-
ers would more easily be able to rid themselves of hurts and maximize their potential. But schools are also formidably oppressive.

Schools function largely to prepare children for their adult roles in a hierarchical, competitive social order (Katz, 1971; Bowles and Gintis, 1975). In the course of their schooling, students internalize this society's values and learn to accept their place in its class structure.

Schools are hurtful to children in many ways. Children are given little or no freedom to create or to choose what they are taught. They are denied experiential learning, including cultural experiences, in favor of book learning. Their affective skills are ignored or minimized. They are subjected to endless memorization and repetition which results in boredom, one of the most painful emotions they endure. Crowded classrooms deny children space for dialogue or to process information. They are continually forced to compete. Having been hurt, children strive especially hard, even destructively, to prove their own worth, and often accept the idea that destructive competitive practices are necessary for producing and excelling. On the other hand children may blame themselves or become listless if they feel unable to compete. Fear, which ends up paralyzing people, is used to control behavior. Society inculcates in children the belief that God, adults and even government
will punish deviation from the established norm. At the same time, society does not admit that the norm is seldom very healthy or represents the best in human nature.

Children are kept in their "proper" place by classism, racism and sexism. Classism -- and for Third World children racism also -- hinders children from impoverished backgrounds by limiting what they are taught to mostly rudimentary skills. This lack of expectation for higher performance and achievement limits their human potential. Racism and sexism create narrow standards of beauty, size, and physical strength which often cause children to develop unrealizable expectations and have feelings of inadequacy if they do not meet these narrow standards.

Finally, different male/female standards and "training" result in girls tending to develop affective skills while boys develop cognitive skills. This has contributed to the prevailing notion that females and males are inherently different in thoughts, perceptions and emotions. Since all human beings have the natural ability for both affective and cognitive skills, an emotional and social dichotomy results when these are not fully nurtured in both sexes. Third World women are not expected to take charge of the universe; thus they often fail to effectively master the objective social world.
Hurtful experiences are not always those in which mistreatment is directed at the child. An important source of hurt and limitation for children is their witnessing the mistreatment of others. Children do not start out accepting the cruelty and deprivation of oppression. They make attempts at intervening. But often the forces of oppression are so strong that they observe in a helpless way the mistreatment of others, particularly their parents. Witnessing this mistreatment, children experience grief, anger, and fear. Because they were unable to stop the oppression of their parents they may develop patterns of helplessness or self-blame.

Children try to express and release their stored-up feelings and emotions; but adults usually confuse or misunderstand the importance of this release. For instance, when children express feelings of anger, parents confuse this with lack of respect, or believe that they are losing "control" of the child. Undischarged anger toward parents often causes children to feel guilty and may lead them to identify themselves as enemies of their parents. Undischarged, these feelings may become internalized as self-hatred, and may even cause children to become oppressors in adulthood.

All of these hurts and invalidations -- which include negative body language, projection, judgment, and outright rejection by others -- may begin even in the preverbal
state, and continue into adulthood. In spite of all these obstacles, and because of their struggle against oppression, Third World females retain some humanness, learn to survive, and even retain some of their abilities to learn. They may even become actively effective in their lives. On the other hand, the lack of resources for growth and development lead to the accumulation of hurts, particularly when the hurts from the deprivation are not discharged. These hurts become the rigid patterns of internalized oppression described by Lipsky (Duncan, 1972). The internalized oppression is often accompanied by frozen needs. In children, those patterns manifest themselves in frustration, listlessness or depression. Some children will turn against others and against themselves in hostility, hate and violence for being deprived. Most children, however, end up with patterns of powerlessness, often expressed by fearful and passive behavior. Patterns of powerlessness, including hostility and hate, manifest themselves in many ways, with some individuals exercising partial degrees of effectiveness in certain areas of their lives. However, in most, power and abilities are stifled.

Because of their internalized oppression and frozen needs, female children of Third World background become more and more vulnerable to personal and societal victimization and exploitation. They mistrust themselves, and later in
life may cooperate with their own exploiters, either with the belief that the established practices are the norm or by succumbing because of powerlessness and self-blame. Intimacy, relationships, sexual expression, work, learning, play and activities related to social change may be affected by early undischarged distress patterns.

Consequences of the Oppressive Hurts and Invalidation

Many kinds of exploitation in contemporary society lead to internalized oppression. One of the most detrimental is society's assigning people to class positions. As a result, certain people control the resources and wealth while the majority occupy positions which, through poverty, material insecurity, and degrading work, result in a drastic limitation of human potential. Internalized oppression also results from racial and sexual oppression because myths of inferiority lead to practices and attitudes which diminish opportunities for growth, development and participation.

Oppression causes people either to become victims (oppressed) or to play the role of oppressors. Because of hurts and invalidation, an oppressed person may appear to "accept" or "agree" to be oppressed. For example, the factory worker, faced with the worst wage-earning conditions, "feels lucky to have a job." A woman in the role of wife
considers herself fortunate that, although treated brutally, she has a place to live.

Sometimes when people are oppressed, they respond by adopting the role of oppressor. The majority of oppressed people do this to some extent. They will act as an oppressor to those over whom they exercise some control. For instance, children who are mistreated and abused, without adequate discharge and resolution, may on the one hand abuse children younger and therefore less powerful than themselves. On the other hand, they may become adults who oppress their own children by mistreating and abusing them, re-enacting their own patterned hurts. Generally, patterns play out on those who are less powerful than the initial victim. It "feels a little better" to be in an oppressor role. Examples such as impoverished white men oppressing Third World men; Third World men oppressing Third World women; blacks and Latinos mistreating each other, and members of the same group being pitted against one another, provide illustrations of this. This is one of the ways exploitation continues -- by securing the "cooperation" of oppressed people to oppress each other. While this process is usually an unaware one, it prevents unity, strength, and cooperation among people to eradicate the system that oppresses them, and keeps the internalized oppression intact. One role of
RC is to produce a change in the state of awareness so that people may change both themselves and their environment.

Even persons born into materially secure circumstances are not free from oppression. For example, an individual mistreated and abused from childhood may be a victim of "adultism." RC theory holds that oppression of children by adults (adultism) is the basis through which acceptance of oppression is inculcated into children. A person who was once oppressed as a child and conditioned to accept the false and inhumane value system inherent in class privilege may, in defense, later strive to occupy the role of oppressor in that system. Though a person with economic resources will have more opportunities to become an oppressor, individuals from all class positions may aspire to or succeed in occupying this role.

Oppression cannot continue to exist unless individuals "help" by playing a role in maintaining a divided classist, racist, and sexist society (Jackins, 1973). As Memmi (1957) states, no system of oppression can exist without the oppressed "agreeing" to it, and therefore behaving as the oppressor wishes. Both the victims of direct exploitation and those in the position of oppressors lose their humanness and internalize oppressive values by acting in accordance with prescribed roles (Freire, 1970; Jackins, 1965, 1976). Because individuals come to accept or go along with oppres-
sion, it is perpetuated, particularly as people are assigned to or move into the role of oppressor (Freire, 1970; Jackins, 1976; Memmi, 1957). The demand placed upon people to perform in molded fashion, according to the norms and expectations of an oppressive society, stunts all who experience it (Marcuse, 1971).

The Process of Re-Evaluation Co-Counseling

The use of Re-Evaluation Counseling generally proceeds in several discrete states. The first is the recognition of one's hurts, and that these hurts have become fixed patterns. It is not required the people beginning to use RC be aware that most hurts stem from societal oppression. Seeing the connection of patterns with oppression may be slow and a person may have to use the counseling process for some time before this realization takes place.

Second, individuals begin using RC by having one-to-one sessions and by participating in groups. They discharge distresses through the natural processes of crying, shaking, talking, laughing, or yawning. As discharge occurs, the rigid, compulsive patterns of behavior slowly dissolve, leading to re-evaluation of hurtful experiences and insight into those experiences (Jackins, 1965). With ongoing use of counseling, they can identify new or other hurts, and the process continues.
Finally, participants are encouraged to begin to change society at their own pace (Jackins, 1965). One way that distresses affect people is to make them immobile, reluctant to act; or, if active, to choose activities with which they are "comfortable." As people use the RC process, they become less rigid, less blocked, they recover more of their inherent qualities and abilities, and are freed to take action in their lives. Since the "comfortable" position is often a form of co-option, people are challenged to choose activities with enable them to grow to their maximum potential. RC also encourages them to take risks and prevent oppressive situations from continuing.

Although action is important, it is also necessary for already active people to allow time for discharge and reflection. This may sometimes entail inactivity on their part while they reassess their involvement in activities. This is an important point since clear, rational, creative, long-term thinking and action go hand in hand with an ability to live up to one's convictions and aspirations for political and social change. Active individuals can use RC to free themselves from rigidities and dogmas, to become more aware and effective in building alliances, and to establish deeper human contact in their political relationships, as well as in their daily lives.
As those who use RC are encouraged to take action, it is also important that they give thought to determine the scope and the pace of the action they decide to take. For instance, a Third World woman may not be clear initially as to how oppression has affected her and others. She may first need some time to sort out the information and clear away some of the feelings. For example, a Third World woman who has been frequently beaten by her husband, in addition to undoing the distress in a counseling session, would have to learn to stand up to the threat and situation of future beatings. Or in another situation, a Third World woman, seeing a member of her group being victimized by racism, instead of ignoring the situation, needs to take action which would include encouraging and expecting others to stand up against the racism.

Any action against oppression interrupts powerlessness. Not to seek this action, according to RC, is to allow internalized oppression to dominate the individual, who then remains a victim (Jackins, 1973).

Perhaps the action of the Third World women using RC can best be described as taking place at three levels: (1) the level of the self, e.g., standing up to an abusive husband; (2) the level of the immediate environment, e.g., supporting other women connected to them, relatives, co-workers, etc.; and (3) the level of society, e.g., taking
political action such as joining an organization or group that is striving to change the oppressive conditions of women but which also includes long-term goals for the transformation of society.

The aim RC is to provide tools for self- and social awareness and realization. People using the process must, eventually, recognize the implications of the theory for understanding and stopping societal oppression and not remain at the "personal" level. In the long term, only through this recognition and subsequent action will they reap the most benefit from RC.

The patterns that people develop do not have a life of their own, rather they are due to accumulated distressful feelings. It is important that the person and the patterns be separated in the counselor's mind (Jackins, 1973). The pattern is the block, or feeling, that takes over and inhibits the natural processes of thinking creatively and flexibly, and acting effectively. There are not, for example, inherently angry or "unthinking" Third World women. Rather, these are women carrying distresses which are often unrecognized but limit and control their lives. Such distresses can be discharged and evaluated, leaving the women free to be their powerful and intelligent selves.

Because RC places the blame for people's limitations on society, while simultaneously recognizing individual respon-
sibility, it thus frees individuals to take the necessary actions to resolve the circumstances. It also relates individual hurts to societal circumstances. It leads the individual to say, in effect: "It is not that there is something inherently wrong with me that I must hide or learn to live with; it is that these individual feelings result from an oppressive societal situation." While recognizing the oppressive nature of society, the individual obtains tools to work on self.

**Peerness**

RC practice is not limited to academically trained, credentialled and licensed psychotherapists or mental health practitioners. Instead, members of the RC community are empowered to counsel each other. A leader, chosen for experience in RC and capacity as a teacher instructs a class of peer counselors in the basic theory and practice of RC. Members of the class work in pairs, taking equal turns as client and counselor, putting into practice what they are learning.

Equal time is considered crucial both for class training exercises and for regular out-of-class sessions: every period of time a person works as a counselor he or she receives an equal amount of time as a client, counseled by the partner. In this way, no status differentiation develops
and no one accumulates either a burden of gratitude to the
counselor or a role as a "dependent client." Even when one
calls on a partner for a "special session" to help with a
危机, that person gives his or her partner equal time as a
client (in that same meeting, or as soon as possible there¬
after). In this manner RC practice expresses and consis-
tently maintains its fundamental philosophical convictions
about the equal rights, status, and resources of human be-
ings and their inherent desires and capacities to help one
another in their common struggles for a better world.

In RC, people, regardless of age, education or experi-
ence, can learn to exchange effective co-counseling. RC
accepts that the majority of people, given access to the
tools, can have beneficial sessions by interchanging the
client and counseling roles. In the counseling setting,
however, people may be at different stages of development at
any one time.

Those involved in RC receive and give each other ses-
sions from the start. The newer co-counselors begin with
basic theory. By sharing information, teaching and learning
from each other, and by promoting new leadership and ex-
changing roles, RC gives new and less experienced people the
opportunity to develop. New people bring with them the im-
portant contributions of freshness of thinking and different
creative styles (Jackins, 1962). This is significant be-
cause there cannot be liberation without peerness and the participation of equals at all levels.

The co-counseling process

All those using the Re-Evaluation process are trained by participating as clients and using the process themselves, and by assisting clients as counselors with the use of the process (see appendix III). Each person learns by watching other experienced counselors demonstrate the process of counseling as they counsel others in front of the group. While individuals receive information on theory and practice from the available literature on the subject, they learn primarily by using the process. A person is allowed to teach counseling or lead counseling activities only when he or she has demonstrated adequate mastery of basic theory and practice.

The client decides what to work on. Given an opportunity to talk, the client can begin to be counseled by telling the story of his or her life. The client will give counselors signs that show where he or she needs guidance and support for discharging feelings (appendix III). The one acting as the counselor listens, draws the other out, and permits, encourages and assists emotional discharge. The one acting as client talks, discharges, and re-evaluates.
To assist the client discharge, the counselor needs to do three things. First, pay enough attention to the client to see clearly what the distresses are. Second, think of all possible ways to contradict those distresses. Third, contradict the distresses sufficiently. The client will always discharge when the contradiction is sufficient.

This precise assistance from the counselor enables an individual to discharge, release and become freed of stored-up tension which has held patterns of hurt in place. The client will then think through the experiences of hurt until he or she understands them, i.e., re-evaluates them. The experiences will then no longer affect the client in rigid or compelling ways, but only as memories that can serve as information in future events (Jackins, 1978).

The counselor's effectiveness in helping the client discharge his or her feelings is to a great extent determined by the quality of attention paid by the counselor, plus the general safety of the environment. The counseling relationship must be characterized by trust, confidence, and reciprocal caring (Jackins, 1962). The counselor's attention must have the qualities of awareness and reassurance, thereby eliciting confidence and trust on the part of the client. Discharge is dependably followed by re-evaluation.
With experience and increased confidence and trust between co-counseling partners, co-counseling sessions work better and better. The person who learns to co-counsel well in a fundamentals class in which basic theory and skills are explained and demonstrated can become part of a local community of co-counselors, which has close ties with other such communities in many parts of the world. Co-counselors in these communities share many ongoing co-counseling activities. Those who join the RC "communities" can attend weekly classes, workshops (one day or up to seven days), and can participate in "support groups." The counseling activities can be used to enhance general improvements or be specifically related to particular forms of oppression, e.g., class oppression, women's issues, or to specific populations, e.g., children, women, Third World individuals and families (Jackins, 1978).

The role of the counselor

Beginning counselors can start to learn the process at a "permissive" level (interested listening), and let the client fully determine the direction that the counseling sessions take. In this manner new people are encouraged to take charge for themselves and to find the safety they need to discharge. In addition, new counselors learn not to intervene in ways dictated by their own distress patterns.
Permissive counseling will bring discharge, enabling the client to feel better and think more clearly, but stubborn or chronic distresses will require the counselor to move beyond this point. Helping a client to achieve long-term breakthroughs and decisive movement will require that the counselor have knowledge of the complexity of the process. Active, intuitive and assertive counseling is often required to help the client move through deep or confusing distress, especially in chronic areas. Important breakthroughs may require considerable amounts of heavy discharge by the client.

Another significant factor which counselors must understand is that current feelings or "later" hurts, experienced as a result of existing oppressive conditions, restimulate earlier hurts as well as reinforce them. For instance, an analysis of difficulties in current relationships often suggests that such difficulties stem from hurts and disappointment in earlier experiences. Regardless of how limited current relationships may be, and in spite of existing barriers in society, the counselor can, with thought and awareness, encourage the client to discharge both the distress of the present difficulties and its roots in the earlier experiences of distress.

Counselors need to recognize any patterned limitations in the client's functioning and plan how to help the client
move beyond them in order to develop his or her human potential. For example, counselors must ensure that clients do not remain stuck in a "victim" pattern. Since, to some degree, the culture in the United States gives women permission to cry, a woman client may get "stuck" in this more comfortable phase instead of moving against fears about not living up to her potential. This calls for a different kind of discharge, usually shaking. When the tears are exhausted, an aware counselor must furnish the help to move on to discharging fear, encouraging the client to move against her feeling of victimization and perhaps to speak boldly and "sound angry" until she can shake with fear. This will enable her to move further beyond the oppression.

A counselor can effectively assist a client through use of directions, a specific RC tool consisting of phrases the client is asked to repeat in order to contradict the feelings to be discharged. Since a pattern is composed of many types of feelings, the client is assisted in many forms of discharge. The counselor can assist the client with phrases such as: "They had absolutely no right to disregard my opinion"; or "It was incorrect to put me in that situation," or "No more!" These directions aim at moving the client beyond the victim pattern and enabling him or her to see the possibility of becoming free of the victim pattern.
To act angrily or express anger will, for a considerable period, bring grief or fear discharge rather than anger discharge. Grief and fear must be largely discharged before the client can discharge anger, since grief and fear are "heavier," more basic hurts.

Women need to understand and be in touch with the reality outside the distressed feelings in order to help contradict the distress that needs to be discharged. A women who usually dramatizes (rehearses) aggressive attacking feelings which "seem" to manifest anger and rage needs to be assisted out of this pattern. Such a woman may appear more "in charge" than one that acts out of timid pattern, but she is actually also in a pattern, endlessly acting out what someone else originally did to her.

Being in a victim pattern often causes the individual to endlessly "fight back" and feel caught as the victim, even when this may not be necessary. While there is sexism and women have been its victims, a married woman may identify her husband only as part of the system that oppresses her even though he may be a supportive and committed male who strives to overcome sexism within himself and the environment. This woman may well see "men," instead of the sexist and oppressive system, as the enemy. She categorizes her companion and potential ally as someone from whom she must "defend" herself. She is unable to conceive of entering an
equal partnership and combatting the oppressive forces that work to limit both men and women. In "fighting" the potential ally in order to "defend" herself, she misses the opportunity to be in a committed partnership where both work to combat the oppression. In so doing, this woman is reinforcing her own oppression. An aware counselor can assist this client to discharge the distress, and this discharge will enable her to recognize and act in keeping with her real interests.

Whether or not the counselor is from the same background as the client may be irrelevant if the former has sufficient awareness about the issues involved. Since racism has been practiced against Third World women, they need to take, or may already be taking, action against racism. But because they have been affected by the racist practices they may also have, to some extent, internalized the oppression. It is possible that they not only invalidate themselves and each other, but also have developed rigid patterns of "fighting" every white person. Such a client has difficulty seeing white people as potential allies because of the deep hurt. Since white people have been taught, overtly or covertly from childhood, to be racist (and this is one of the patterns that white people must eliminate), a Third World woman sensing their racism may get
trapped in her own pattern of rigid resentment or fear that will keep her in a pattern of endless conflict.

A Third World woman may also compulsively feel that she is a "traitor" to her people and race should she decide to rid herself of the pattern that keeps her "hating" white people. (Something similar can happen to women who begin to see the possibility of alliance-building with men.) A woman who behaves as described, often without awareness, embraces and prolongs the patterned behavior, rationalizing it by thinking her survival depends on staying in and with the attitude of resentment. Thus the Third World woman can remain trapped in a pattern of living as a victim of racism. Because the pattern has a tight hold on her, she will not be as effective and powerful in eradicating racist practices from the society.

A Third World woman in the counselor role needs to recognize that she is affected similarly. Without this awareness the Third World counselor may not be able to assist the client, and both will remain trapped in their patterns of oppression stemming from racism.

White counselors must acknowledge the need to move out of their patterns of racism or else remain caught in them and be less able to help Third World clients. A white and a Third World woman with distresses will tend to relate to each other as if each reflected only their own patterns of
behavior rather than relating as people affected by different ends of the same spectrum of oppressive practices which they have internalized. The unaware white woman may treat the Third World woman with arrogance, resentment, in a paternalistic manner, with a guilty attitude, or with fear. The white person is likely to be treated by the Third World woman with hostility as the enemy, as being irrelevant, or admired as superior. (Similar patterns exist regarding class oppression.) Such patterns need to be recognized as internalized oppression limiting the individual, but they must not be accepted as if they were inherent realities that cannot be changed.

The counselor must recognize that although a client may take action against oppression on the basis of resentments, this is not enough. "Angry" behavior is often a dramatization of fear, sometimes a fear of vulnerability.

A client may feel that the resentment provides a measure of "safety." She continues to act "angry" instead of discharging the fear in order to be free of it. Acting "angry" may be a cover up for grief, fear or other feelings that appear too hard to handle.

Another aspect is that individuals in victim patterns have been oppressed historically, and probably are currently experiencing oppression. Counselors who simply reassure clients that they are justified in feeling the oppression
since it exists are not assisting them. Indeed, the counselors should show empathy toward the clients and express understanding of the nature of the clients' oppression. But because counselors realize that to varying degrees the clients have internalized external oppression, the counselor must persist in getting the clients to discharge the distress acquired from the hurtful experiences, particularly the earlier hurts. The victim pattern is diminished only if these discharges are achieved.

A young woman, victim of adultism, for instance, may not acknowledge that she was mistreated by her mother and may persistently seek sympathy or reinforcement for her plight, or claim she is correct in feeling continuing dislike or resentment towards the mother.

In the counseling process it is not necessary to prove the legitimacy of a client's sense of having been oppressed; a person does not feel oppressed without actual experiences of oppression. A person who seeks understanding for mistreatment but who does not get assistance to discharge the resultant distress is being abandoned to the pattern which ensued from the terrible experiences of mistreatment. The client's insistence indicates the degree to which he or she has, from childhood, fought to survive the neglect, invalidation and possibly even cruelty inflicted by the mother. The client hangs on to the pattern of insistence, often with
outward pretense ("protective pattern") of having transcended the hurts and other feelings. The client may even adopt a pattern of extreme confidence. But this client, who unwittingly protects the patterns and "hangs on" to them, thereby submits to the same. This individual remains unfulfilled, and thus a victim, with insatiable and "frozen" needs to be approved of and welcomed.

This type of persistence presents difficulty and appears to be one of the biggest challenges to the counselor. The counselor must provide enough safety and establish enough trust to get the client to understand the necessity of acknowledging hurt in order to discharge it and be free of it. In some situations it may help the client to discharge if asked to state how the pattern "protects" since some patterns have a perceived survival component. Thought, persistence, commitment and probably a close relationship of dedicated peer friendship, which amplifies the usual RC co-counseling relationship, may be necessary to break the barriers so that the client is not permanently abandoned to distress.

A purposeful, directive counselor focuses on the underlying distresses, not the content of a pattern. Discharging the earliest, underlying distress will often incidentally, and without the client's awareness, clear up later incidents of hurt. A client may experience jealousy and feel what ap-
pears as anger toward the person over whom jealousy is felt. The underlying issue is not the anger but the chronic distress resulting from the competitive society, e.g., the internalized oppression, including the frozen need to be accepted and loved, that makes the client feel rejected, inadequate and insecure. Getting the client to discharge feelings of inadequacy will be a significant step in pulling the client all the way out of the chronic pattern. At the same time that the counselor demonstrates persistence, he or she must also provide active support rather than confrontation or rendering comfort.

Chronic patterns tend to be interconnected. Because of this interconnection, long-term counseling assists the client in becoming free of all aspects of these chronic patterns. But in order to provide effective assistance to the client, it may be necessary for the counselor to "push" the client to counsel on areas of distress such as frozen needs that clients may, consciously or not, neglect or avoid. Because one of the aspects of oppression or severe distress is that it has a "numbing" effect and lowers awareness, a client can find it very helpful to have as a counselor someone outside his or her distress. Such a counselor can provide assistance against this unawareness. While a client may experience occasional insights into these chronically unfelt, unaware or "numbed" areas, and gives the counselor
occasional subtle clues, the client will tend to move on to "safer" or more awarely felt aspects of the distresses. The more a client is in touch with hurtful experiences, the more easily he or she can discharge them. In listening to the client discharge, a counselor can miss the subtle clues to the heavier, more numb areas. Because discharge is such a centrally important aspect of RC, a counselor may feel satisfied with any discharge, and may let the client continue to discharge only the most immediately felt distresses. Thus a client, feeling lack of support against their distresses, may avoid discharging them, and therefore cannot be freed of the chronic impairing patterns.

Counselors need to be aware of and provide contradiction against the chronic, underlying hurts. Encouraging a client to pursue new challenges in his or her life will help to contradict the chronic, numbed areas of hurt, making these hurts more available to discharge.

There are many situations in which clients do not recognize their own brilliance, even when their performance proves it to others. Such clients live out and identify with patterns of internalized oppression, believing that they are less intelligent or less able than others. They are unable to see themselves as the powerful, capable individuals they may be. This belief continues to reinforce their distress. The clients are not aware that it is an ef-
fect of the oppression. Because the belief is such a heavy hurt, this "acceptance" of being only of mediocre intelli-
gence remains "numb." These individuals do not pursue liv-
ing and acting in ways that challenge them beyond minimal intelligence. Remaining at this level may provide "safe" or "comfortable" ground, probably due not only to socialization but also to a frozen need to be liked. These individuals perceive the levels at which they function as the "normal" extent of their potential.

Sometimes such clients have an attitude of pretense, which is usually an unaware denial of feelings. Pretense is one of the ways in which clients settle for a limited level of performance. A client may rigidly hold a smiling "all's well" attitude.

Clients may remain at the level of "blaming" the exter-
nal circumstances that caused the limiting patterns. It is a fact that external circumstances limit, but the client who remains at the level of blaming circumstances is submitting to the oppression, rather than discharging the internal patterns in order to find solutions and struggling to move beyond the distress. By being in tune with the client's quality of life, the counselor is better able to assist the client out of the limitation.

A committed counselor, who thinks well about the cli-
ent, can be amazingly effective in providing assistance.
There are several ways in which a counselor can support a client in contradicting the neglected and numb areas. These ways of counseling a client are advanced, and require mastery of co-counseling skills.

A counselor may give a client directions such as: "Maybe not all is well in the universe," or "What if I have been hurt?" or "Do I dare let myself know how awful I feel for thinking that I'm not smart enough?" If the client is ready, the counselor may give a more intense direction, such as, "I'm the most brilliant person you'll ever meet." This direction may help guide a client to feeling his or her fear of succeeding. It may also help the client to recognize his or her deep-seated fears or guilt that there is something wrong or evil in wanting to excel. This is part of the internalized oppression that stems from the oppressive society. Since the society functions through tactics that are often destructive and competitive, an individual wanting to excel -- to be the best person he or she can be -- may not differentiate between enriching his or her own growth potential and having to do this at the expense of others. These undischarged feelings perpetuate patterns of holding oneself back. The client may be asked to repeat the phrases proudly. Such directions (see p. 99) will include using a certain tone of voice, and/or body posture.
The counselor can assist by initiating discussion and exploration of the client's feelings in the neglected areas. The counselor must be persuasive, but also encouraging and supportive.

All of the above aim to help the client discharge and be free of the distress. Where there is no clear information to guide the counselor, he or she may have to have several sessions with the client in order to explore the hidden chronic aspects. One strategy may be to ask the client to talk about goals and long-range planning. The client is asked questions that would help him or her think in these areas. Such questions can include: "What keeps you from moving in this direction?" Or, "If you could, what changes would you make in your life?" "In society?" "What fears do you have?" "What were your childhood dreams? Talk about them." "What fantasies do you have about your life?" "Your future?"

A counselor may also observe a client struggling for years with the idea of obtaining a high-school diploma, learning to write, or leaving an extremely oppressive relationship that continues to be stifling. Because a client is "stuck" it may not be possible for him or her to seek the needed support and resources. If this client continues to give or take counsel in other areas, but neglects crucial ones that would create great movement in his or her life, he
or she will remain stuck. In such cases, the counselor needs to play a significant role by exploring with the client areas that would maximize his or her growth.

A counselor who makes the assessment that the client is stuck in a particular pattern may also suggest that the client act as well as discharge. It may be necessary to get a client to act boldly, particularly in areas where he or she has been held back by unawareness, or by denial of or lack of resources. Action contradicts distress; it enhances discharge while it helps to move the person beyond the limiting, numbed and rigid patterns. The counselor can play a crucial role in helping the client obtain information, set goals, acquire experience and use directions to discharge and evaluate.

A woman experiencing difficulties with writing, for instance, may get the direction (p. 99): "I have something important "to say to the world," or "I will write all the important things I need to say to the world." Along with counseling sessions, this individual will have to take action away from sessions to pull herself beyond the distress. The woman who has blocks and cannot seem to write, but who may express a desire to do so, should be asked to pick up a pencil and actually start writing. As the counselor provides attention and support and assists the client, profuse discharge may occur.
In this case both the discharge and the skills (action) are pursued. Discretion is used by the counselor in paying attention to the client as to how much counseling on the feelings and how much action should be pursued. At times it may be necessary to pursue the subject of obtaining the skills, even encouraging the client to seek the material resources by finding programs, or individuals who can provide actual assistance. This is particularly important when working with people whose access to resources has been limited or impaired.

When two co-counselors become totally committed to each other, they can move each other boldly. This will require that they pay attention to each other's way of life. It requires that each knows how the other lives. Each encourages the other to take challenges and risks, despite feelings of discomfort, instead of letting the other seek safe (or comfortable) situations. By being bold, by acting rationally and effectively outside of patterns, the counselor challenges self and client. Both then can struggle more powerfully against limitations (Jackins, 1965).

While the client does not have to be verbally proficient to use the RC process, the counselor must be able to relate to the cultural and ethnic dimensions of the client's experience. It is sometimes necessary for the counselor to "speak on behalf of" the client. This can happen only
through the understanding of the symbols to which the client responds. For example, a counselor may say to a woman, "I know you must be hurting badly about your daughter's not wanting you to speak Spanish in her friend's presence. Please tell me of your hurt and sadness." The counselor may follow up by providing the direction (see p. 99), "I don't want to lose my daughter" or "I want you back." With these directions the counselor helps the client discharge her feelings such as grief, isolation, fear and abandonment.

It is often better for the client to be given a general direction, rather than a set phrase. For instance, a woman with feelings of resentment is encouraged simply to stop submitting to the conditions she resents. She may need to begin by simply talking about the resentment, until she feels safe enough to speak out loud, or make angry movements, such as flailing her arms, or hitting on a pillow.

Assertive counseling requires that counselors think about clients as complete persons while they also think about and provide ways to assist them to discharge distress. It means that counselors are aware of what is going on for themselves in relation to their own distress, and become able to avoid bringing their own distress into their client's session. A counselor who is being timid in relation to the client needs to make a decision in his or her own sessions to think deeply about the client and make a
commitment to go all the way with the client. The counselor puts personal chronic distress aside until his or her turn as a client. On some occasions it may be necessary for the counselor to switch roles in the middle of a session and, as client, clear up an interfering difficulty. This will help the counselor to restore strength and awareness needed in the role.

A well-trained counselor can give almost any client an effective session that can have an impact on the client's life. The counselor can offer flexible thinking and unbounded confidence that things can go right, and can express total belief in the ability of the client to discharge the chronic patterns. The client can be reminded that his or her potential remains; it has not been lost, but simply obscured by the accumulated distress from oppression.

As feelings are tapped and discharged, the client will begin to get a clearer vision of the previous confusion. The client can be encouraged to reach for his or her full potential and begin to nurture it. To connect the client this potential through caring counseling helps the client to discharge from a sense of power. It pushes the client to live according to the conviction that he or she does matter, and that others do care. In this manner the client transcends the hopelessness and isolation imposed by the internalized oppression. Experience, commitment to the client,
persistence and continuous careful thinking make the counselor effective.

Counselors must recognize the types of conditioning and hurt the client has undergone from the many dimensions of class, race, and sex oppression. Possessing technical counseling skills without understanding the socioeconomic and political dynamics of the client breeds blind or shallow perceptions of the problems clients face. Clients are being abandoned when they are told or are given the message that: "There's nothing you can do about the world situation, but let's see how we can help you!" Only when the objective socioeconomic factors are taken into account can the distress related to them be fully discharged and the client become free from patterns which result from these external circumstances.

The role of the client

Co-counseling is a team effort. The counselor and the client both think effectively of ways of freeing the client. This takes different courses. The client is always doing the best he or she can to be aware of and manage patterns. But because a client is "inside" personal patterns, the counselor who is on the outside and has a more objective view must provide thought and direction. While it is expected that the counselor brings maximum skills and effec-
tiveness to bear, the client must take charge of his or her counseling. For a client to wait for an effective counselor to "help" him or her out of the distress, particularly when counselors may be temporarily unable to do so, would be to surrender to feelings of powerlessness.

It is best, as far as possible, for the client to orchestrate the counseling, particularly when reaching areas that the counselor has not worked through. The client may get a regular counselor together with one or more others, to advise on counseling: what to do, how to do it, how much, and what not to do. The client encourages the counselors to be loving and fierce with the patterns. Assuming full charge of the counseling is a powerful perspective for a client to choose. It often brings discharge since it is a total commitment by the client to believe in and trust self wholeheartedly. Once a client begins to see beyond internalized oppression and decides to act against it, progress is unstoppable (Jackins, 1973).

**Techniques**

The techniques used in RC aim at helping the client to discharge the patterns which result from hurts and oppression. Taken together, these techniques are a way of looking at the world and being in charge of it. They help counselors and clients to define issues and themes that need to be
clarified. Devoted and careful thinking about the client, and spontaneity, flexibility and creativity on the counselor's part, make these techniques useful and effective.

One of these techniques, Complete Self-Appreciation and Validation of Others, is among the foundations of the RC process (Jackins, 1973). The purpose of this technique is to combat internalized oppression. Even people who may be aware that society is the cause of their oppression, often still unconsciously believe they deserve ill-treatment from others, or from themselves -- as manifested by self-hate, guilt, etc. Often people accept of their own or others' limited level of functioning as a norm. Similarly, they may blame the limitation on the people who manifest it, including themselves. Therefore, most individuals exercise invalidation of self and others. Complete appreciation of self, accompanied by positive words and gestures, is something that few people readily accept. Usually a person "pretends" to give acceptance to self and to others.

Most cultures, societies, and religions would consider it arrogant and unwise to be fully appreciative of self and others. This is because many are accustomed to cooperating with the oppression and internalized oppression as the norm. RC, however, emphasizes appreciation and validation as a contradiction to oppression, and as a way to assist individuals to get in touch with their power. This contradiction
of the invalidating patterns often brings profuse discharge. As is often the case, if clients feel the oppression so heavily that they find it almost impossible to see themselves and each other outside the oppression, it is necessary that they validate themselves and each other for their qualities, achievements, and contributions. Examples are "Black is Beautiful," "Women are strong, capable and can run the World." These directions (p. 99) of appreciation are often followed by positive actions towards goals that affirm them.

People are asked to be genuinely sincere with each other. Validation is not merely an intellectual, positive exercise, but is aimed at moving people. It has to come from the heart and soul.

The techniques of appreciation are often used as a group activity, with an open expression of goodwill and affection among the members. People stand in a circle or sit close together and take turns expressing approval to the group or to members of the group. Each person participates in giving and receiving validation and appreciation. This may also be a time when individuals are asked to do self-appreciation. This process, along with appreciation of others, is encouraged at all co-counseling sessions as well as in every aspect of co-counselors daily lives.
There are many other forms of using validation. A client may use the phrase "I'm absolutely beautiful," to contradict feelings that she is not attractive. The tone of voice and posture must also express the beauty that she is reaching for. The direction (p. 99) and method used varies according to how the person needs to reach for self-appreciation.

RC uses many other techniques to contradict invalidation. The client may be asked to recall times when he or she was able to remain completely powerful, or to scan any memories of being validated, accepted or welcomed.

It may also be desirable to allow the client to face self-hate during a session, particularly if the counselor is experienced and can furnish simple contradictions. The client may need to contradict the rigidity of pretense. The direction may be phrased as a realistic admission of how awful the client feels about himself or herself. The client is not always aware of carrying awful feelings that control and limit life. The patterns of self-hate are manifested in many different forms, i.e., passivity, pretense, rebellion, anger, and even arrogance. The client may be asked to say aloud all the hateful things he or she feels about him or herself and be encouraged to express anger, bitterness, and contempt. The counselor, of course, must make it plain that he or she does not agree with these negative self-judgments,
but rather that he or she knows that these are feelings of the internalized oppression which need to be discharged.

One powerful way a client can be assisted to begin to discharge these feelings is to have the client and the counselor exchange roles in acting out the pattern. The counselor becomes the client, while the client verbalizes to the counselor the internalized "hate" pattern. In "becoming" the "hater" and directing the hate at the counselor, the client gets "outside" of the usual role in the pattern in order to discharge it. This technique should be used only as a beginning, and the counselor must be thoroughly educated in the RC process. It is important that the client not remain "stuck" within this role of invalidating self and others.

Sharing in groups and assisting other co-counselors whose experiences and challenges differ from one's own is particularly useful when working on various types of oppression. These experiences help to open up to view new areas of distress as well as new possibilities for action and change. Appendix IV describes additional techniques used in Re-Evaluation Counseling.

Conclusion

The RC model chosen has helped to reveal that the effects of oppression are interrelated. One result is that
the oppressed internalize the limitations and accept them as "normal." Another is that having been oppressed, an individual is then predisposed to playing an oppressor role. Therefore, hurts are passed on by recreating the original hurts, and the oppressed individual, given any access to resources, plays the role of the oppressor. RC provides tools to deal effectively with these results of oppression.

The Third World women described in the ensuing study must be viewed on the one hand as being limited because of the distresses they have acquired from an exploitative system and, on the other hand, as a liberating force. It is through the struggle against oppression that people remain human, which ultimately leads them towards achieving transformation of self and society.

RC is more than "talking therapy." It is an in-depth process which allows people to uncover their true selves from the historical effects of hurts. Its goal is beyond discharging to "feel better." RC does not accept the idea that life is simply to survive; it does not advocate that either individual change or political liberation should precede the other. Social conditions must be changed and, simultaneously, individuals must get rid of their patterns of victimization as well as "oppressor" patterns. Thus RC holds that individual patterns need to be discharged as part
of any liberation movement to change the social and political society.

However, while advocating social action, RC does not propose any particular political program that people must commit themselves to following. Rather, RC provides people with an environment free of dogmas and rigid political programs or actions which they must accept. Thus, people using RC are provided with an emotionally safe place to rid themselves of the distresses that interfere with their taking charge of their lives and participating in aware, effective action to change the oppressive social conditions. RC does encourage people to join and create organizations outside of RC which engage in liberation.

A group of Third World women used RC to free themselves of oppression. Their experiences are recorded in Chapter V. The explanation and details of the methodology used to record their experiences follow in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the efficacy of Re-Evaluation Counseling as a counseling/educational process for achieving the psychic liberation of oppressed Third World women. The method of the study is essentially the conduct, analysis, and reporting of open-ended, semistructured, in-depth interviews with Third World women who have had substantial involvement with RC, asking them to detail their experiences, learning, and changes that have derived from this involvement. The method and the rationale for the study will be explained in the next section, followed by description of the sample, the methods of data collection, and analysis of the limitations of the study.

This study, which encompasses the exploratory field study method, seeks to discover what is rather than to predict relations. The study is an ex post facto investigation of experiences in life situations which most closely reflect real life. Therefore, the author used this qualitative
method in order to represent the participants in their own terms by simply depicting their lives and RC experiences, and including interpretations and analyses. This qualitative research is thus based on the value of the experiences of the subjects in the study. It also accepts the fact that the researcher holds a viewpoint and has certain sets of values. By prior acknowledgment of a personal value system, a meaningful study can be developed within that framework (Patton, 1975).

To date, only limited research has been conducted on RC. This study will generate and record valid "material" on Third World women that is not yet documented. Although its characteristics differ from research as traditionally defined, it provides valuable information that contributes to the development of hypotheses which other researchers can test empirically. Finally, the study will provide a model which will be available for replication.

Explanation of methodology

Evidence presented by researchers in the last few years has indicated that quantitative research is not the only valid research methodology. In his book, The Psychology of Science, Maslow challenges the orthodox methodology that governs the sciences concerned with human personality and behavior. He states, "I believe mechanistic science..."
to be not incorrect but rather narrow and limited to serve as a general philosophy" (p. xi). Further, he states, "Reliable insights into the world require a never-ending interplay of theoretical abstraction and the stuff of experience." (pp. xi- xii). In many cases, qualitative methodology provides a less mechanistic and therefore more flexible way of looking at human experience.

As summarized by Rubin (1976) in addressing the legitimacy of the qualitative method, "The only answer to . . . criticisms lies in the quality of the work itself -- in its ability to persuade by appealing to a level of "knowing" that exists in all of us but is not very often tapped; in its ability -- to borrow a phrase from psychology -- to generate an "aha experience." In referring to quantitative methods, she notes that it is not that these studies fail, but that their design provides for only a fragment of knowledge: "Qualitative studies capture the fullness of experience, the richness of living" (Rubin, 1976, pp. 13, 14).

The principles for this research have been laid down in Michael Patton's Alternative Evaluation Research Paradigm (1975), and Patricia F. Carini, Observation and Description: An Alternative Methodology for the Investigation of Human Phenomena (1975).

Patton presents a description and analysis of two contrasting paradigms: the scientific method, which has
emerged as the only legitimate path to cumulative scientific knowledge; and the alternative (methodological) paradigm.  

"The alternative paradigm stresses understanding that focuses on the meaning of human behavior, ... an emphatic understanding of subjective (mental, not nonobjective) states, and the connection between subjective states and behavior . . . recognizes the importance of both an inner and an outer perspective of human behavior" (Patton, 1975, p. 7).  

Introspection and imaginative reconstruction of the situation are key, placing regard on insight as the core of social knowledge. The alternative paradigm gives the evaluation researcher an active, involved role by being on the inside of the phenomena to be observed. "It is participation in an activity that generates interest, purpose, point of view, value, meaning, and intelligibility, as well as bias" (Patton, 1975, p. 8).  

Carini suggests a phenomenological descriptive inquiry as an alternative to logical inquiry that can provide a vehicle for reform and evolution. She believes this method is more flexible and comprehensive in practice than the utilization of abstracted models. Carini states that "the basic phenomenological process allows for immersion in direct observation of a small number of cases over extended periods of time within their natural settings . . . " (Carini, 1975, p. 5).
While the basic phenomenological process, through direct observation of a small number of cases, goes against those who view research strictly in terms of empirical data, applicable to normative statistical treatment and replication, ". . . all the major breakthroughs . . . have occurred . . . not from empirical studies . . . but from intensive observation and reflection upon a few cases. Freud, Kepler, Wallace, Jung come immediately to mind . . . ." (Carini, 1975, p. 6).

Significant research fundamentally built on the "field" or "qualitative" method include such classic and major modern works as Erving Goffman's *Asylums*, William Whyte's *Street Corner Society* and Frederic Thrasher's *The Gang*.

Because this study consists of a small sample, with a detailed and descriptive content as opposed to an inferential content, content analysis will be employed. The main focus of the study will be to provide information about Re-Evaluation Counseling in terms of its adaptation/applicability and implementation to the specific issues, needs and life circumstances of Third World women. Because the qualitative method seeks to discover what is, the major source of information will be the Third World women's extensive experiences and their evaluation of their own process of growth through the use of Re-Evaluation to overcome the limitations born of systematic oppression.
For the last seven years the author, in her role as researcher, has conducted a pilot project involving 10 Third World women, primarily Asians, blacks and Latinas. She has had the opportunity to work with people who developed the applicability of Re-Evaluation counseling to Third World people. This has resulted in the expansion of the scope of the model to enable it to be used with persons other than the white middle-class population who are usually first to embrace it.

The author has had over 10 years of leadership involvement in RC and has used the process extensively in peer counseling. This consisted of self-involvement in peer counseling with most of the participants in this study. It may appear that this intimate involvement over the years could diminish the researcher's "objectivity" in perceiving, interpreting, and reporting the material. Yet, this intimacy enhances the gathering of qualitative material through personal experiences, and yields fuller and more candid accounts than could be obtained through other methods. The qualitative method has been adopted for just these reasons; it calls for the researcher to have been close to the people with whom she interacts and reports on.

Being close to people is defined by four types of proximity. These are: (1) physical face to face; (2) physical proximity over a significant amount of time and variety of
circumstances; (3) established closeness in an intimate, confidential manner, having access to the participants' life activities; and (4) recorded activities giving close attention to minute matters (Lofland, 1971). Therefore, what may be considered lack of objectivity is an asset. As Patton states, the lack of objectivity or certain degree of bias "in no way suggests that the researcher lacks the ability to be scientific while collecting data [material] ... it is crucial for validity -- and ... consequently, for reliability -- to try to picture the empirical social world as it actually exists to those under investigation, rather than as the researcher imagines it to be." (Patton, 1975, p. 8).

In commitment to the discipline of both qualitative research and RC, the researcher will make every effort to acknowledge her own point of view and values and report the material as accurately as possible -- the objectivity called for in the research is very much the same as the candor and interpersonal honesty required and practiced in RC.

This study will explore the effects of RC on a group of Third World women in terms of exploring the following themes:

(1) Viewing their personal problems as stemming from systematic oppression;

(2) Overcoming of personal limitations that result from systematic oppression;
3) Looking at the effects of RC in terms of changes in the sense of self, behavior, and society; and

4) Increasing commitment to change self and society.

The experiences and material provided by the women, elicited through an interview guide and brief life histories will be analyzed as described in Analysis of material, page 136 of this dissertation.

Description and selection of sample

All the women in this study were initially contacted and recruited personally by an RC participant who felt that because RC was helping her, the women would also benefit.

The study is longitudinal, constituting 10 self-selected Third World women who engaged in the RC process for a period of two to seven years. They attended weekly classes and regular extensive workshops. They have all been interviewed about their experiences in the program and in using the RC model. Of the ten women in this study, five were Latina, two Asians, one Native American, two Afro-American. The Latinas were two Puerto Rican, one Chicana, one Chilean, and one Brazilian; the Asians were one Indonesian, one Chinese. The two Puerto Rican women reside in New York City, the Chicana on the West Coast, the Chilean in the East Coast, the Brazilian in Connecticut, the Native American
woman lives in the East Coast (she is of mixed heritage, one parent being Puerto Rican); both of the Asian women reside in Massachusetts, and the Afro-American women were both reared on the East Coast. Of the ten women, two are unemployed; of the eight who are employed, five are in professional employment and three in clerical fields. Of the two unemployed, one (on welfare until recently) has begun her own radio program; the other is a full-time student on grants, and supports a daughter. From their initial involvement in the RC process all were or are continuing to work hard at achieving a formal education. Two of the women were able to finance higher education through working. The others still struggle financially and emotionally to overcome hardships to obtain higher education. Of the eight working women, seven are under great stress financially. Their class status is one of having access to resources rather than possessing resources. The women's ages range from 25 to 52 years old. Of the ten women in the group, one has recently married into a pre-existing family; nine are currently single, six have been divorced. Of these six, four are mothers and heads of households.

**Method of collecting material**

Given two general ways to seek information from people -- ask questions or ask people to respond to structured
stimuli -- the author chose to ask questions as this allows for directness and depth (Kelinger, 1979). The questions were incorporated into an open-ended Interview Guide (appendix V).

Operating on the assumption that this population does not always respond to formal questionnaires and because detailed information is necessary, the author verbally administered open-ended interviews on a one-to-one basis.

These open-ended questions enabled the women to make spontaneous statements about their backgrounds, events, life experiences and their experiences with the RC model. The questions also allowed for the recording of other insights and information that the women had to provide. An example of the open-ended interview process follows:

First, each women was asked:

"Are there any differences in your life because of your participation with the Re-Evaluation project?"

For example, if a person stated,

"I am more assertive in my relationship with my husband";

Followup questions included:

(a) In what ways? Describe them;
(b) When did you notice a difference;
In order to have a cross-reference for the questions to be asked, and to ensure a minimum of bias in the interview, questions covering major themes, such as class, were asked in a number of different ways.

For instance, while the women were asked specific questions regarding class, race and sex oppression, such as: How were you oppressed or hurt by the class structure? They were also asked general questions that allowed them to expand on their own views. Some of these questions were: How have you been hurt? What were your most difficult experiences growing up? How were you oppressed?

The women were also asked to tell their life history, but without any specific structure. This allowed them further opportunity to raise their own issues and themes. The information they provided was coded according to the major oppression themes of the study.

Lastly, everyone was asked to define in their own words major concepts and themes, particularly oppression, internalized oppression, class, race and sex oppression. This allowed them to relate in extenso their own understanding of the issues and themes which were being explored. It also minimized the interviewer's point of view on their answers and the imposition of preconceived ideas.
In order to give the women participating in the study some degree of control and empowerment over their lives and experiences, the author followed a model provided by Sidel in *Urban Survival*. Each woman was therefore given a copy of her in-depth interview for her comments or changes. Self-expression is empowerment and is consistent with RC teachings and practice. There was consensus that the retention of spontaneous answers was significant; it enabled the women to capture the essence of their experience.

All of the participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to record their experiences with the RC process and how they were affected by it. They were all aware of the expectations and the degree to which it entailed their getting emotionally involved. Each interview was tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed. Each life history and interview guide took at least six full hours. About half of the interviews were done on the same day for each woman involved. The other half were conducted on separate days. The six-hour interview allowed for breaks and to ensure that the participants would obtain support when or if they became emotionally upset, since they were reliving hurtful experiences.

All of the women expressed great enthusiasm in being part of the study. The names have been changed to ensure confidentiality.
Analysis of material

The alternative paradigm, as described by Patton, relies on field techniques from an anthropological rather than natural science tradition. It relies on techniques such as participant observation, in-depth interviewing, detailed description and qualitative field notes (Patton, 1975).

A guide for analyzing the material compiled in this study is John Lofland's *Analyzing Social Settings*. In the qualitative study the researcher seeks to provide an explicit rendering of the structure, order, and patterns found among a set of participants, done in the context of four significant features of this method. In addition to the first (already mentioned), e.g., being close to the people being reported upon, they are: second, that reporting must be truthful and factual, stating what the reporter believes went on; third, descriptions of actions, activities and the like must be included in significant amounts. Fourth, direct quotation of participants' answers should be used in order to capture reality.

A major methodological consequence is that the qualitative study of people is a process of discovery, learning what is happening. A large part of what is happening is provided by people in their own terms, rather than having
the author/researcher impose upon them preconceived motions of what they are like.

The qualitative study, which differs from quantitative ones in techniques and technology, does not aim to acquire measured and controlled variations in dependent and independent variables. Therefore the goal is not to acquire systematic quantitative data in quest of causes. Although the primary task of qualitative studies is not to search for causes, it is a legitimate task to devote a portion of the report to conjectured variation and auxiliary causal accounts. For instance, the researcher may start out with a variation and retrogress for its causes. Since both the researcher as well as the participants notice variations and wonder about causes, they tend to develop conjectures, theories and hypotheses of variations. "It is humanistically important that these be documented" (Lofland, 1971, p. 63). Therefore, it is appropriate for a researcher to be curious about causes as long as he or she acknowledges that whatever explanation or account is developed is conjecture -- and is labeled as hypothesis or theory (Lofland, 1971). A relevant question in the search of causes may be: What are the circumstances or conditions under which specific distresses are likely to occur?; e.g., as in experiencing poverty.

A similar situation exists with causes. The author/researcher may seek consequences and, rather than trace back
a variation, the variation from the perspective of what may happen as a consequence of its existence. Typical questions may be:

What may be the outcome given certain circumstances or conditions?

Were the women weakened by the experiences with oppression? Where they strengthened?

The participants' accounts and ideas about consequences are given full consideration.

The researcher combines descriptive reporting rich in detail and vividness with abstract conceptualizing in order to provide a "what it is like for the participants" narrative (Lofland, 1971).

Qualitative analysis strikes a balance between abstract and general concepts, using both broad description and direct quotations from participants. Quoting and describing are the heart of qualitative analysis. The most significant caution is not to provide excessive description. In order to accomplish an analytic aim and a concise descriptive component, the material must be connected with analytic categories, concepts and themes. This organizes the order and provides an explanation of the material. This method requires disciplined description that employs richness and detail for specific analytic purposes (Lofland, 1971).

All material from the Interview Guide and life histories was subjected to content analysis. The researcher
identified major categories of recurring themes and dimensions elicited from respondents. Each question was coded in keeping with a code book that categorized: (a) major themes and dimensions, and (b) the frequency of occurrence. A series of issues was looked at: whether or not the respondents had experienced concrete changes in their lives in terms of awareness and behavior; whether or not all participants had experienced similar consistent changes; and whether or not these changes occurred for the group, only individually, or both.

Rubin's book *Worlds of Pain* and Ruth Sidel's *Urban Survival* have served as models for this dissertation. Most of the material in *Worlds of Pain* rests on an intensive study of fifty white working-class families. The information compiled was based on intensive interviews in order to link attitudes with behavior and to obtain in-depth knowledge of the people who participated. *Urban Survival*, also based on the qualitative method, provides vivid and intensive accounts of the struggle and survival of eight working-class women.

**Limitations of the study**

This is an exploratory, experiential study to be viewed as a pilot project. Limitations are: first, the small, self-selected group of Third World women in this study had
already committed themselves to personal change with the use of RC. This same appeal, motivation and commitment may not be found randomly in the Third World population at large. Second, there has been no recording of the challenges and risks women have undertaken through action and activities which have enhanced their growth, development and participation. Therefore, it is difficult to separate which aspects of their change and growth are specifically attributed to the use of RC and which may be the effects of real life experiences, and whether the action they took is a result of the use of RC. Third, there has been no follow-up to investigate whether or not further movement and growth has occurred in the participants' lives since the material they provided was analyzed.
"... is it necessary to reaffirm that suffering may and often does ennoble? Is it not clear that... while oppression victimizes, the one who suffers is not simply a victim? Is he [she] not also a human being who, therefore, resents and rejects and battles against the attempted dehumanization?


CHAPTER V

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Experience with Class, Race and Gender Oppression:

The Source of Internalized Oppression and Limitation

Introduction

In this chapter the Third World women in the study relate their experiences with class, race and sex, as elicited by the Interview Guide (see appendix V). This study, which uses a qualitative method, explores the perceived effects of RC on these women in terms of four focal questions:

- After using RC do these women learn to view their problems as stemming from systematic oppression?;
• Does the theory and practice of Re-Evaluation Counseling help these women overcome the limitations that result from their systematic oppressive experiences?

• Does RC lead the women to use Re-Evaluation Counseling to change their sense of self, their behavior, and their society?; and

• Do they take action to improve their lives and the world around them?

While this chapter does not follow the listed sequence of the focal questions, all of them are answered, and further analysis of the women's experiences with RC is provided.

Chapter IV of this dissertation detailed the methods used in the study. These included participant observation, in-depth interviewing, qualitative field notes and detailed description. As explained in the section on analysis of the material, all the answers the women provided, together with information from their life histories, were transcribed. Major categories and recurring themes were identified and were coded and analyzed. Because the study uses qualitative analysis, a significant portion of this chapter quotes the participants directly, presenting descriptive material that the women themselves provided.

Without any prompting, the women used words almost identical with those of the hypotheses and premises of this dissertation to describe and depict their own personal experiences with oppression and the effects it had on them.
Because the author encouraged authentic and spontaneous answers from the subjects, many statements contain several categories and dimensions of information on class, race and sex oppression. Even though the major portion of the material was categorized, it was difficult to separate and categorize all the answers. In addressing this problem, the author decided that the most practical compromise was to let multitopic statements remain intact because the participants themselves responded by weaving themes together.

The first section of this chapter summarizes what the Third World women stated about the class system and its effects on their lives. In terms of work and money, the women stated that the class system caused them to lack adequate resources to satisfy basic survival needs such as food, shelter, warmth, and clothing. They emphasized the detrimental effects this lack had on them. Such basic and nonmaterial necessities as health care were often inadequate, if not unavailable.

The class system, along with practices of competition and consumerism, caused most of their emotional distresses, such as the alienation that limited their human potential.

In the women's own words, none of these issues were free of sexist and/or racist aspects. Their statements identified class oppression as commencing in early childhood. They saw institutions such as the family, church and
schools as socializing agents reinforcing their oppression. This section will note that all the participants perceived these elements in their lives as largely reinforcing class oppression, and also promoting racist and sexist practices. The major sections on Class, Race, and Sex oppression will each present a brief conclusion.

In the second section, the women relate experiences with racism and its effects on their lives. They address issues such as the assignment and reinforcement of inferior status positions as defined by low level jobs and inadequate money and recognition; separation from the majority culture, pressure to assimilate, language oppression, neglect and invisibility. They report the many adverse consequences of limited resources, inferior social treatment, and describe the psychic burdens imposed by all these conditions.

The chapter's third section presents the women's reports of their experiences as they address sexism with its corollary of low wages, inferior positions at work and biases in roles within the family. Also treated is sexist stereotyping that undermines the women's potential for acquiring and gaining advancement. They provide information of the external deprivations and negative experiences which led them to internalize the oppression. The women also identify specific factors that have helped them to struggle and overcome imposed limitations and obtain material
resources as well as moral encouragement and support. Throughout, they demonstrate their strength as they struggle to make themselves the empowered women they know they can be.

Class Oppression

Introduction

In relating their experiences with class oppression and the consequences of their internalized oppression after using RC, the women define class as follows:

One of them stated:

"The class situation is the crux of all the oppression. Basically, it's a matter of those who have and those who do not have. Racism and sexism as well as adultism feed into the class issue. People are kept pretty much preoccupied with many other themes of oppression so that they cannot really deal with the class issue. The class system is simply a matter of I don't have, you do have, and you do not want to give anything up, even when it is what was taken from me."

"Where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. It's a contradiction -- the greatest majority of people in the world produce everything and get a disproportionate amount."

"When you have money, more options to pursue happiness are available -- not only material goods, but increased options for living, such as education and culture. Socially one knows more famous people, interacts more, and can pursue intellectual growth. This gives one a sense that one can transcend limitations and achieve more."
A second woman said:

"The nature of class in this society is defined as power. Ultimately, it is the power which divides. Even rich women have power over poor men. And class is ultimately the decisive force between rich countries and poor countries. It is a class issue also in that a rich country can manipulate and influence a poor country just like rich people can manipulate and influence the laws and the enforcement of those laws by the fact that they are rich and powerful."

Another woman stated:

"People in higher level positions of class have resources of the highest level. The rest of the population has much less. This stratification, although not always obvious, is like the law in that this is the established order. People pretend that there is a lot of freedom. However, in reality, one only gets the resources if you're born into the upper class. People are very class conscious. Every one wants to move up. No one wants to be associated with the lower ranks. Class distinctions promote the idea that certain things are better, that certain types of people are better, and certain races are more worthy. However, classism exists even within the same ethnic group. It is crucial to understand that Third World elites exploit too."

Confusion is one of many consequences of class oppression reported by the women. One of them claimed that people were confused regarding their position and status in a class structure. She stated:

"I came from a very strong working-class background. Having achieved a four-year college education, I am not sure where I belong right now; maybe I'm lower middle-class. I have an education, and I am employed. I have the possibility of moving upward a bit to a fairly comfortable level. However, I was born in a certain level in the class structure and I earn very little money. I would say that I have more exposure to resources such as being capable of making more money than my
parents did. However, given today's higher cost of living, I am not sure that financially I am doing better."

Class background: money, work history

Of the ten women, six reported growing up in working-class families. Of the six, only one had a parent who had a skilled trade (carpenter); the others were either factory workers or in service positions. Of the four who reported growing up in middle-class families, two had parents (of only limited educational backgrounds) who owned small businesses; the other two were from professional families.

Eight of the women reported that they had been raised poor. One reported that her family's poverty was so extreme that they had to emigrate from Brazil to the United States. The two women who claimed they were not raised in poverty noted that they had experienced hardship: one while in her teens, the other when she was eight and she and her family emigrated from Chile to the United States. Both of the women whose parents were professionals had experienced poverty, mainly because the parents were struggling students and were supporting extended families. One of these two women reported that she was not aware, until she joined RC, that she was raised poor. The other of the two with professional parents reported that although her mother had possessed some money, the family had spent it and her parents had subsequently experienced financial hardship.
The women's work experience has varied. However, at the time of the study, they all continued to struggle and faced many limitations. Three of the women were on welfare, although during the course of the study they found better work or educational opportunities. One of the three felt that she had a professional status, but when employed earned a low income. Upon becoming unemployed she went on welfare and struggled as a student to change her work and earning status. She said that like her mother, she earned less money than a man and felt exploited because of that. The second, who was seeking employment and further educational opportunities, recently started her own radio program. The third of these three women was a student looking for employment. She too became employed in a low-level clerical position during the study.

Nine of the women are at present employed; the tenth has recently been able to secure financial assistance from her parents and was able to stop working in order to complete a doctoral program. Two of the nine hold clerical positions, the other seven reported that they had worked their way up to become social service workers or had achieved low professional status. Even though all nine of the women had completed at least one year of college, at the time of the study none was earning a high salary.
In discussing their work history, all the women recalled having had degrading experiences. The first woman who related her experience said:

"I started my first job real early and was extremely exploited. I got a job as a mother's helper, and all the promises were broken: I was going to have two days off; instead, I got one. I was supposed to take care of only one baby; I ended up with three babies for the same money. In my second job, as secretary, the supervisor never paid me for the first three weeks. He said he knew I was illegal without a social security number. I told him I did not have money to buy any groceries. He did not listen and I began to shoplift for food. I had no one to help out. The manager caught me. His punishment was to take me to the warehouse and try to rape me. I left that job."

One woman connected the whole issue of low pay, discrimination and unemployment with racism. She stated that she took a civil service test and had excellent skills. She typed 65 to 70 words a minute when the requirements were 40; took 120 words a minute shorthand when the requirements were 80. She passed all the tests with excellent grades; however, she was offered a clerk's position. She then found out that the only secretaries were middle-class white women.

Another of the women reported that after ten years, she wanted a job that would pay decent money and would not be too oppressive for her. She did not want anything that would continue to make her feel dependent, as she had felt while she was on welfare. A second woman who had been getting welfare said that although she became employed and was
given some titles, the paychecks were still the menial pay-
checks that they had always been, yielding barely enough for
her to survive.

While obtaining their education, the women worked for
subsistence wages. One of them who did not get very much
help from her parents said:

"Although I had a scholarship, I also worked the
night shift in kitchens at various jobs. I could
hardly do any studying."

For another, work began early:

"I worked in grammar school as a maid for my
teacher. That was oppressive, but my mother told
me I should be grateful. I've always had to work
hard. When I was going to college, I was working
three jobs and going to school full time. I
didn't have time to do my school work or get in-
volved with learning. Sometimes there just was
not enough time to study or even sleep. I had no
luxury of time for myself. For instance, I
couldn't hang out with someone that I was going to
school with."

All of the women confirmed the hypotheses and allega-
tions of this dissertation that Third World women could ob-
tain only low-status jobs and inferior wages.

Basic needs

The job/class backgrounds these women experienced lim-
ited their means of securing basic necessities, particularly
food, heat, health care, and clothing. This further im-
printed the stamp of oppression onto their early and current
lives. Two of the women reported living in debilitating fear because they had no security as to availability of food. One feared that she and her entire family would not survive:

"There was always impending doom in the air. My mother, myself and three sisters resorted to shoplifting in order to survive. I was extremely embarrassed because my mother was seen as a beggar, always asking for whatever leftover vegetables the stores had."

Another woman, whose father got the best food available at the table, grew up very resentful:

"I felt deprived as I would get leftovers or whatever my father did not consume from his meal. If I asked for better food, I would get beaten."

Regarding warmth, clothing and health care all the women felt short changed. One of the women summarized her experience:

"Being poor was not having heat and being cold all the time. It was feeling that you could not come out of the shower because you'd never get warm."

Eight of the women reported that lack of or inadequate clothing was a hindrance in their lives; most of them claimed they wore hand-me-down clothing, experienced lack of protection from the weather and felt degraded. As one of them stated:

"The main preoccupation in our life was with the material necessities we needed to survive."
As a result of poverty and racism, all the women, as well as their families, experienced great difficulties in obtaining needed medical services. One woman reported that her mother was always ill: She first had cancer, then TB and finally pneumonia. For another there was great deterioration in the health status of the whole family. Two of them stated that one of the results of poverty was having poor teeth. Similarly, another woman reported needing braces and not ever being able to afford them. One woman stated:

"If I had had money and had been viewed as part of the mainstream, I would have had less physical problems today. However, I am still burdened by ailments that were not detected early enough and which are preventing me from performing at a higher level today."

Other results of poverty and low class status for the women in the study included not having mothers who were able to attend to them at an early age because always working. For one whose mother worked and was never home, it caused confusion and she felt deceived. When she began studying in the evenings, she claims she rarely saw her mother.

A deprived environment caused other problems. One woman spoke of being affected by the ugliness of poverty:

"Everything seemed dull and dingy in the surroundings; streets were dirty and garbage was piled up."
Two of the women reported that poverty meant they moved around a lot and that it was very difficult for them to make friends since they were not in any one place for long. One of them described it as living like migrants.

All of the women suffered deprivation in terms of basic material needs. Thus these women reinforce the allegations of this dissertation: poverty has devastating effects on those who are afflicted, causing them to internalize the mistreatment and inadequacies.

**Competition**

All the women reported that competition was primarily a destructive force. They came to recognize competition as stemming from class oppression and permeating all aspects of their lives. However, some of the women also specified that competition had some aspects that they found beneficial.

According to most of the women, they saw competition as mostly negative:

"There was just something always not right about competition. It puts the value on the wrong thing. The value is more on what you are in relationship to something rather than on your capacity to do something important for yourself and your accomplishment. It made me feel bad because I felt the focus was more on the competing -- on the thing that you are competing for -- rather than on the actual joy and the actual value of what one was doing and what one was trying to accomplish. I don't like the feeling of competing for things. Of course, this could have something to do with the fact that I felt inferior in a lot of
respects. So I never felt that I could compete even if I wanted to achieve."

To another woman, competition was unhealthy, because it carried a high price tag:

"If one takes the ball and gets the goal, then it's always at the expense of someone else. The price tag is when you carry the ball to the goal line. You win the trophy but someone has to lose. That's generally how competition operates."

A third woman said:

"I have been aware of not being competitive, and of trying not to be competitive. I accept or lay back, which is even worse. I consciously frown on it as not being the human thing to do."

Eight of the women stated competition was divisive and destructive. Most of them stated that competition was also felt most keenly through jobs. In particular, the women expressed their concern with regard to employment practices, commenting on competition within the Third World population. One pointed out the entire issue of class divisions and racism, which intertwine with competition, played a major role in the division between Third World men and women. Another woman added:

"There's a lot of talk about how women have castrated Third World men -- how it's because of women that men have not been able to be as strong. That Third World women rob men of both their due pay and jobs. This is simply not so. For instance, in some towns in Puerto Rico and in the United States, the women do not get the same pay as men even if they work in the factory and do similar work. Therefore, the employers, knowing that women must work, kick the man out of the job, because they can pay her less. At the same time, the man who has been the breadwinner all his life
and needs to support the family, is displaced as he competes with a woman also in need of work. They are pitted against each other, all fighting for a piece of pie, rather than looking at the entire destructive structure. It's society that has really knocked down the men, and uses women to do their job."

This is the case with all groups, not just Puerto Ricans. Overwhelmingly, the women stressed that society promulgated competition not for the purpose of people fulfilling their full potential, in striving to be as good, powerful and as skillful as they could be. Instead, competition was for resources, jobs and basic opportunities to survive, and if lucky, to be able to move beyond that. The competition deriving from and fed by class, race, and gender considerations permeated all aspects of the women's lives.

All ten women specified that they experienced competition in school. Two said it was there that they faced the earliest and heaviest competition. One found school competition very frightening because there was so much of it. She said:

"I spent many years of my life competing in order to do well. Yet, I always felt I never had a chance to compete with the white kids. I felt I was always behind and it was very frightening. Making the effort was so unfair because it was always such a struggle. Just having to fight and fight to stay on top. I never wanted to compete. I just wanted to fulfill a task, to use my intelligence. I ended up doing better than other people, but felt bad about it because other people felt bad that I did as well as I did. On the other side, I couldn't stop competing because other people were competing with me even though I was just doing something important to me as best as I
could... So on both ends it was bad. It was completely frightening to spend primary years in school where so much of life and energy was spent, in intensive competition."

Another said:

"In school I felt that I didn't like to compete with white boys that were raised upper-middle-class and were going to grow up to be scientists. Yet, I did compete with them. It almost made me have a nervous breakdown because I was trying too hard to be better and fulfill the expectations."

One of the women reported that most of her life she avoided competition:

"I felt I was a good writer, but never compared my writing to other people's. They would show me their writing and I would comment on it on its own merits. I was just not invalidating their work. I never thought of it in terms of being better or less than anyone else's. This was so especially about other women."

As has already been stated, the women saw competition as detrimental to Third World women, encompassing not only class but also race issues. As one stated,

"Competition alienates and divides Third World groups from each other. Everyone was always fighting for small accomplishments, small amounts of money for programs, as well as politically competing with each other. There is always a fight amongst groups as to who gets the biggest piece of the pie, when the big struggle really ought to be taking a look at why it is that there is no equitable representation of people across the board in society. Everyone has the same rights to obtain the needed goods and services. Instead of divisions, competition and accusations, we ought to look at the oppressive practices."
Competition was promoted and manifested itself in racism through skin color, which was used to create divisiveness, turning groups against each other. The skin color issue is played up very competitively; people who are lighter or fairer get treated better. Three of the women specifically reported that skin color, as an aspect of racism, was a very detrimental element of competition. They stated that Latinos of lighter skin were held apart from darker skinned ones.

As one women said:

"Being a Brazilian woman of lighter skin, I felt that the color issue was used to divide us. The competition that existed in society for jobs and for other services played itself out within our own groups."

Another stated:

"There was a lot of competition between Latinos, in terms of class and racist practices. Latinos of lighter skin can get into better working opportunities than dark-skin Latinos. Therefore, racism divides us and creates a lot of resentment. The color issue between people is divisive and alienating. We give up on or doubt either a light-skin or dark-skin Puerto Rican."

The issue of color has promoted and perpetuates a divisiveness and resentment between the groups. The color issue is also used amongst all Third World people of the same group. It is very isolating; it keeps people feeling that there is a superior-inferior line, and they are either above or below it.
Skin color and attitudes regarding this issue affects everyone to varying degrees.

"The issue of skin color, for people of lighter skin, meant that they were closer and more acceptable to white people; being darker gives one the feeling that there is no way in hell that one has a chance to make it."

Another said:

"I internalized equating being white with being better because those were the models around me. Basically, I wanted to be white, and be around white people because I felt that my own Puerto Rican people had a lot of the same racial biases that whites had; they didn't identify with me as much because I had darker skin. I did not realize that my people were not the ones who created this problem and that we blamed ourselves and each other for the difficulties rather than look at society at large and how it promoted those aspects."

As one woman said:

"The practice which competitively divided people as it assigned different positions and status within the groups was also felt in the separation of the races."

A native woman related her experience:

"My father internalized the oppression that was manifested in the same divisiveness that surrounded him. He used to take out his own frustrations by putting down other ethnic groups or blaming them. He used to make my blood boil. I didn't understand the total dynamics, but I knew something was operating."

One woman stated:

"The competition which causes Third World people to be divided, contributes also to the division between men and women."
This skin color-based competition contributes to the stereotype that demeans people's participation and makes them think men and women are eternal enemies. As a Third World woman said: "I'm particularly affected by both oppressive competitive tactics of racism and sexism."

All the women in the study strongly expressed their opinion that many of their emotional distresses were due to competition related to sexist practices. In reference to the competition among men and women, one stated:

"There is a lot of competition between men and women that seems unnecessary. It's so pervasive throughout the Third World community that it has not allowed people to be creative, to make real contributions to their communities, to their families. It hasn't allowed people to find self-fulfillment."

Sexism effected everyone to some degree or another. Within the family it caused divisions between and conflicts among family members.

"... competition gets into the home as to who gets father's or mother's attention or who's the favorite one. Having the father absent meant more competition for him because his worth was valued as a better human being."

Regarding the family two of the women mentioned competition within their family was strongly felt, specially for the father's attention. As one woman stated:

"I dealt with competitiveness real early in terms of my relationship with my father I competed for his attention and love. I had conflicts with it because I would get into things that were of interest to him, only to gain his attention."
Another said:

"I was raised in a very competitive family where the girls had to show who was going to be the most important in Daddy's life. My father perpetuated this notion. He like all of us competing for his love. at the same time, he was always complaining that he had no sons, only daughter. That was extremely alienating and competitive."

The woman emphasized that Third World men and women like other groups:

"... consistently compete. There is no real constructive way in which they compete. Instead, it's destructive and they end up, in some extremes, in jail. I've learned that this is a social ill, not something in the genes. It is a real manifestation of the oppression that ends up destroying people."

Pertaining to competition amongst women, one of them captures the feeling well:

"I feel this horrible thing of competing with other women. It's an ugly feeling. I start to measure them up and then I start to measure myself up. Then I feel like somebody is measuring us both, especially men, to see which of the two he really wants. Women get pitted against each other also. Women are viewed in terms of beauty. If I was around a pretty woman, I would prefer that she would get the man rather than go through the thing of competing for something."

Another emphasized a different dimension:

"The way people are pitted against each other and the way certain things are more valued than others has created bad effects on me. My best friend would rather go out on a Friday night with an awful boy rather than spend the time with another female who was her best friend. This has been very painful for me."
A second woman expanded on this thought:

"The divisiveness keeps women from being strong allies to each other as well as from being good allies and developing healthy relationships with men. If affects both the men in their attitudes and practices, and the women, as both are isolated and alienated from each other."

One of the women explained that machismo, a highly reinforced practice within the Latino community, places the blame on the male for going along with and adapting to the insensitive pattern as they defend it by embracing it.

"The effects of the deprivation of the male, not only through a system of class but also a history of colonialism, make men feel less competent. Rather than aspiring to develop their full potential as human beings, including their gentle human qualities, men move to one end of the pattern, developing aggressive qualities and making victims out of others such as women and children. The 'macho' pattern keeps men in a self-punishment pattern. Casting blame on the men for embracing the oppression in the 'macho' role is not as helpful as describing and understanding it and helping them to begin to take responsibility to discontinue the practice and strip themselves of that role. Women often get caught in their hurt feelings of oppression and fight one another, meaning men/women, rather than the system that oppresses both. As women, we cannot let ourselves be caught as the victim or behaving as if the situation is hopeless or impossible to eradicate."

The five women who had avoided competition reported it as being a contradiction in that there was a positive, as well as a negative, aspect to competition. One said:

"The bad aspect of competition was growing up with my best friend who always competed to be first in her class; we were always competing academically or at least intellectually. A good aspect was when I saw my friend doing really well and I became real happy for her . . . I felt that
that enhanced me, too. I felt better about myself."

Another said in regard to the contradiction:

"My older brother and I were very competitive. I felt competitive in school for grades; that may not have been as good. I also felt very competitive with my husband. He would get real upset if he lost. I also didn't like when I lost. A positive aspect of competition was that I liked sports, and competition was friendly. I competed in gymnastics all through college as well as in judo."

Another woman stated:

"For the longest time, I was trying to fool myself into thinking that I'm not competitive. I did this for many years like a denial; being a girl, you're not supposed to be competitive. When I got into the women's movement I realized I was trying to do the best that I could, then I acknowledged that there are good and bad aspects to competitiveness. The good ones, I think are very healthy for me. The bad, I've been able to expel. Now I can be the best that I could be."

As has been recorded in this section, all of the women felt that for the most part, competition had had detrimental effects on them. In their view, in addition to work, it permeated all aspects of their lives; family, school, and friends. In particular, competition was viewed as playing destructive roles in practices that reinforced not only class oppression but racism and sexism as well. Some of the women reported that competition had some enjoyable and worthwhile aspects; they found competing to achieve, to excel and in wanting to be the best was positive.
The women felt that society ought to encourage people's concern for excellence and for trying to maximize their potential. But society ought also to distinguish between the need to excel and the competitive practices that pit one individual against another, because the resources needed to allow for full growth as opposed to monetary gain are not available and accessible. As one of the women summarized it:

"Intellectually, I think we can all express our being and our creativeness as well as our lovingness without it being a destructive, competitive, monetary thing."

All the women viewed competition as it was described in chapter II -- as predominantly oppressive, limiting participation and growth and having negative psychic effects.

Alienation

All of the women in the study stated that alienation was a type of estrangement from themselves, from their work, as well as the fullness of life, including family. It permeated cultural and national differences as well as gender. One woman defined it:

"Alienation -- is to feel estranged from life, either in the work I'm doing, from people and from all else. The job that I do is mechanical, mundane, monotonous and also very demeaning. I don't connect with it. I do it, but it doesn't make any difference since it doesn't fit into anything else in my life. It's a big corporation and it's like being a little cog in a bigger cog in a great big machine or something, but without meaning. It
pays my bills. I don't feel that I'm accomplishing anything for myself. I feel alienated from myself. I don't feel loyalty to my work. I try to do a good job, but the alienation is that my heart is not in it."

Another woman described it:

"I believe that everyone in the culture is alienated and isolated from other people and from different cultures... certain people, like working class people, women, and Third World groups for instance, get assigned to the bottom of the pile and are thus alienated from life."

A third said:

"The class issue keeps us alienated from one another. It promotes the notion that each one should lead their own life in their own way. 'I lead my life, you lead your life!"

Being Third World caused all the women to relate alienation to their nationalities. As one woman put it:

"I felt that the color issue was an issue between all Third World people. It was a way of isolating and dividing us. We relate differently because of the differences in tone or colors. It's a very alienating and isolating society that uses skin color as an issue to keep us competing with one another and remain divided."

One woman pointed out that:

"... Native American people felt isolated and abandoned because they are separated from their own tribe and from other Third World people. Any attempt that a Third World person makes to join together or join in alliance is not allowed in this country. The issue of racism totally alienated my family. There is a total division between us. It completely tore it apart."

Another woman emphasized that her entire family also was affected:
"The strongest thing in my life is isolation. I feel isolated first because my family does not relate to me, so I didn't feel a part of the family."

Many of the women spoke movingly about their feelings of alienation because of the racial issue:

"An aspect of alienation had to do with feeling that I was not around many people of my own race, like the Portuguese-speaking or Brazilians. . . . It is very painful and very frightening. It also made me feel powerless."

"I felt pretty alienated growing up as a Chinese woman. Most of my life I spent in a white culture with no other Asians around. I also grew up not having an extended family and I did not realize how many relatives I had until I went back to China. That's when it dawned on me I was part of something much bigger. It's much bigger than just this. But not knowing that, I grew up very alienated."

"I grew up feeling that blacks stayed with blacks, whites stayed with whites. There was a great alienation from other Third World people. Being Chinese, I felt somebody wanted me to play a certain role, providing a function and filling a quota but not being allowed really to be all of myself."

For another woman, her alienation stemmed from feeling that she was not like everyone else.

"I did not fit a particular mold or stereotype. I didn't act in a certain expected way. I did not have money. I did not have the expected attitude of the majority culture, thus I was not fulfilling those expectations and was left out. I feel sad for white people because they have to fulfill a particular role. At the same time, there isn't that much respect for someone like myself, who is different. Alienation and isolation, to me, are the very same thing. And it hits everyone."
Another added:

"Not fitting the stereotypes, even in my group, made me feel pretty alienated from them and also from whites. They could not stereotype me in a typical black situation, since I had attended a parochial private school, was raised Catholic and also read books."

Another woman who also felt alienated from white people as well as from other Third World people said:

"I felt I was very different from my friends. I was also set apart and was categorized with labels, even though these labels are supposed to be positive ones, like being intellectually gifted or being special. Being put into special education I was no longer a human being and felt like a token."

Another said:

"I felt alienated from myself for being a dark-skinned person in a white and light-skinned environment. I felt isolated because I was different from all the white girlfriends with whom I attended school. It gave me an awful feeling of being very different, as if there was something wrong with me."

Another added:

"I've been alienated from many things, including Indonesian society. It was a very class-oriented and sexist society where the rich would look down on poor people. I was alienated because of the roles that I played as a woman. Because of the role that I saw men play. I became very alienated with the political work that I was doing. There were a lot of opportunistic people who took advantage of others, as if they were not connected to what they were doing."

Alienation was also felt by women kept from other women, especially Third World women.
"We felt that we were being kept apart, like trying not to let us organize to fight whatever the oppression was out there."

The competition and divisiveness which became internalized and which affected the women's lives manifested itself in feelings of isolation, alienation and estrangement from themselves and from others:

"The whole issue of being black pointed to something incorrect in this particular society, but I didn't know just exactly what. I always saw it in terms of '... well, I have this bad feeling about myself, so it must be my own individual difficulty; it doesn't have anything to do with this overt practice in society and in the world as I have come to realize it.' Consequently, I always had this feeling of being disassociated, as if it was happening to someone else, and my own life did not exist."

One woman expressed alienation as follows:

"I always had a feeling of loneliness and of being unable to connect with other people."

Loneliness, as two of them said, was not simply because of their early difficulties and deprivation that stemmed from home and parents. They definitely connected it to racism. For instance, one of them related differences of race and racist experiences in school:

"The girls and the boys were dating, but I did not fit in with any of these groups and when it came to dating, they just never even approached me."

Several of the women summarized alienation by saying:

"I have never felt that I am part of the mainstream; it is like always being on the fringe."
"There are aspects of the alienation that are a great source of pain for me. I felt absolutely alienated from the mainstream culture, from the concept of God and the way it was used against me; from the concept of color and how that was used against me, and from the concept of what my sex is and how that was used against me."

"I carry heavy alienation from individuals and from this particular society. One of the effects is in my own restlessness. I have a feeling of being displaced, of wanting to be someplace else and with other people. A feeling of not belonging, not wanting to belong and not accepting what is around me. I have such heavy isolation patterns because the alienation is from people and from society. It makes me feel that the better deal is just to have myself and sometimes not even be with myself . . . and I believe that isolation has been the main problem all my life. That it is a main, chronic distress. It feels like in the ultimate instance, I am alone, cannot trust anyone, cannot depend on anybody. That was pretty much the predominant message I received throughout my life, so that I had to be tough, do it alone, and create that sort of mentality."

Alienation is another phenomenon which all the women experienced as an outcome of oppression. This fact further confirms the validity of an important aspect of this dissertation's basic premise: the alienation that results from class oppression affects all aspects of life. As stated above, alienation was a major obstacle in all the women's lives. They felt estranged from themselves, from work, from people of their own race and from their own cultures, as well as from the majority white culture. Sexism also divided and separated them from other women and from men. All
the women experienced alienation in every aspect of daily living.

The coercive aspects of religion

Although some of the women viewed religion as providing meaning and support, all of them also felt that religious beliefs and practices to some extent contributed to and reinforced class, race, and sex oppression.

The women reported that religion played a major role in their socialization. Five of the women were raised Catholic, two of the families converted to Catholicism, one having been both Evangelical (Pentecostal) and Presbyterian, the other Baptist. One of them was raised and remains a Baptist. The religion of the two Asian women is unknown. Five of the women attended parochial schools for all or the majority of their secondary schooling.

Some of the women viewed religion as being a catalyst to upward mobility. In order to become upwardly mobile, one family first practiced Evangelism (Pentecostal), then Presbyterianism and then became Catholic. One woman stated that her mother was basically looking for an alternative to the Baptist religion, which she felt wasn't quite upwardly mobile enough, and thus chose Catholicism.

One woman who viewed religion as providing meaning and support and a way out of misery explained:
"I went through an identity crisis when I was fifteen or sixteen, and I couldn't figure out what was my purpose in life. I must have been pretty depressed and lonely then. A coach in my school, who was sort of religious, encouraged me to come to a Bible study class he had. I became very, very religious. This lasted for about a year. Bible study was a way to talk about the reasons for things even though I wasn't satisfied with the answers that people gave me."

Another woman said:

"Both families on my mother's and father's side grew up in the Baptist church, and both of my grandfathers were very active and preached like lay preachers. The Spanish Baptist church is very different from the American Baptist. The strictness of the culture is felt very much within the church. Things that are permissible within the American Baptist church are not so in the Spanish church. But the Spanish church also rendered a very supportive atmosphere. Everyone was Latino(a), the majority were Puerto Rican. Support was given by family members, aunts and uncles who went to the same church... I'm very connected to that part of my life... ."

However, most of the women stated that religion contributed to and reinforced oppression. Its practices induced guilt and punishment as it sought conformity and used fear to control behavior and inhibited anger. It promoted sacrifice and suffering with a promise of rewards in a future life for those who suffered in their present lives.

"The church put a lot of pressure on me because I felt that if I didn't work to my full capacity or to perfection, then I would always feel guilty, like I was sinning. I'd never be good enough. I'd never be a saint and never make it to heaven," said one woman.

Another exemplified how religion was used to inculcate fear:
"The nuns hung a large calavera (a death mask) in front of their room to remind one of death and it was very frightening. When I went to bed, and had to go to the bathroom, I wouldn't get up and covered my head until I went to sleep."

"My brother, who was five years older, who played the parent role, used to set up a podium to give sermons. In a rigid and dogmatic way he sat us there for hours as he kept us in line. He would threaten us with all kinds of religious horrors he read from the Bible and frightened the hell out of me. That was oppressive."

For a third woman traditional island beliefs of some aspects of Puerto Rican religion came into the picture. Both her grandmother and mother were very religious. But her grandmother talked about African spirits, along with Christianity:

"My grandmother had the candles and it was spooky. She used to attribute power to statues. She had a special little area where she kept everything. I felt that that area was alive and I was afraid to go into it. My mother was very Catholic and she was very puritanical and repressed. There was a lot of superstition and a lot of fear that they both indoctrinated into people . . . the fears are implemented through school systems, and Catholic school systems specifically. That was very painful because it was rigid and it didn't take into account the needs children have . . . the idea was to control them. I felt controlled. Every person that I've known that has had to go through that school experience has become very bitter about religion in general because the whole concept of God was used against them."

Anger was an emotion that religious practices also shunned. In order not to feel guilty, one woman reported:

"I learned real quickly to hold anger in and not to show it. I started to have physical symptoms because I held in my anger."
Another felt it was evil to be angry at her mother, and that a terrible punishment would ensue.

Regarding sacrifice and punishment, one woman reported that at the time that she was in a very oppressive marriage, she attempted to talk to a Catholic priest. The priest responded by saying that she was supposed to stay in the marriage forever. She therefore sacrificed herself as she lived with her husband for eight years and bore a son and two daughters.

Another reported that she had a lot of fear and was lonely after being abandoned by her mother and separated from her siblings. After being placed in an upper-middle-class Catholic boarding school, she began to suffer from nighttime urinary incontinence. On one occasion, she states:

"... after the beatings, I was thrown into a cold shower. After giving me a cold shower, the nuns stood me up on a chair in a big dining room with a wet sheet on my head. The kids screamed: 'You're a fish, you wet the bed, you smell like fish. I carried this punishment with me for a long time."

Suffering, the women said, was promoted and encouraged:

"I was hurt real early through guilt trips by learning that suffering was the way to be forgiven, and the only way to go to Heaven. The way to deal with the world was with this whole martyrdom concept; to deal with my oppression as a Third World person, religion was a way of being. I had to be able to accept it by saying, 'Well, I deserve this or even if I don't deserve it, if I go on and suffer like this, I'll get rewards later on!' For instance, when my father was trying to
approach me sexually, that, in itself, was not as hard as trying to deal with accepting that it wasn't my fault because at that time my mother and father were reiterating that it was my fault. I just accepted what they said because, in placing the blame on me, they were reinforcing my Catholic training. This sexual abuse and putting the blame on me, I felt, must be penance for something I did, it must be the pay-back. Basically I felt that my whole family was not going to make it to Heaven, no matter how good they were, and I too, probably wouldn't make it. This isolated me all the time."

"Religion kept me from getting in touch with my spirituality. I sought to take a different route from my brothers and sisters and challenged religious conditioning. At a very early age I decided that there was a lot of hypocrisy going on in the church. My family was affiliated with the New York City Mission Society, of predominantly white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, upper-middle- and upper-class background. These people had certain stereotypes about the people who live in the ghettos. I experienced racism, which was subtle. I was able to think about it many years later as I tried to think of some of the things that had gone on. It was like being subjected to their notions of people, of stereotyped Puerto Ricans, poor Puerto Ricans. Although racism was present, it was not something of which I was aware."

"The oppressive part of religion has been the part that has forced me to tune out my innate spirituality, which I feel is different from the commercial religion sold to me."

One woman summarized the role of religion:

"Religion is the cause of the greatest grief in this world. As a tool of oppression it makes people believe that if they play their cards right and live in a certain way or abide by certain rules, they will enter into the pearly gates of Heaven. This keeps them from having to deal with what is going on in the world. In that sense it is oppressive because it keeps people from relating to the oppression that they are living under and keeps them from expressing their dislike, their rage, or their views that there is a need
for change and it's holding back the progress of humankind on earth."

The women stated that their experience of religion contributed to shaping their lives. It appears that although some aspects of religion rendered them support, religious practices primarily had negative effects on them. In particular, they stated that practices which inculcated fear, guilt, selflessness and punishment were controlling factors in their lives. In sum, they reported that religious practices upheld oppressive structures which contributed to the internalized oppression as they blamed themselves for being evil or worthy of punishment. All of the women stated that religion was an oppressive tool that kept them unaware of the exploitative structures it upheld as they blamed themselves and waited for redemption in the promised future.

Conclusion

All the women in the study confirmed the premise that external oppression, in this case class oppression, diminished their opportunities for growth and development. All of them provided vivid accounts of their individual experiences, which they described as having internalized.

The women clearly recognized that their class backgrounds and job status resulted in their being limited to
substandard material resources and their facing limitations in access to nonmaterial resources. This was particularly true with regard to education, as will be seen in the section on Racism.

One women provided her perspective in regards to class:

"... people that are not Third World, who are not working-class and who are not poor, see us in a bad light. I would like to communicate to them that people from these backgrounds love the same things that they do, the theatre and the arts — that we all work hard, are interested in being educated, helping society, and are making contributions to society... that in spite of oppression, we are people of intelligence; we are talented: we are artists, actors and actresses. The greatest change will be the acceptance by other people that we are exactly the same as they are. I would like to teach them that they have to question themselves as to why if we want the same they do, why then are our lives as limited because of our class background?"

Race Oppression

Introduction

A capitalist structure based on a system of class reproduces and reinforces racism. Such a system assigns Third World women to inferior jobs and low wages; it also reinforces inferior social and image status. Consequently, to a large extent these external practices and attitudes become internalized racism.

In this section the women address how the external oppressive situation, stemming from a system of class, intertwines with racism. They relate their experiences with
The women also describe the struggles they undertook to retain their humanness and transcend the limiting situation.

The following passages are excerpted from the women's descriptions of the effects of racism on their lives.

"I describe racism from a colonized point of view. There is always something or someone who knows better than Third World people about their own lives and circumstances. The power that Third World people have over themselves and their lives is taken away. It is as if Third World people themselves don't have the capacity. Third World people, and in particular Third World women, must deal with the colonial aspect, economically, politically and socially, of being robbed of their resources and of their ability to be powerful and have self-determination."

A second woman states:

"Historically, my people and I have been hurt by cultural genocide. I have gotten it from both sides, being Native American and Puerto Rican. Both of my cultures have faced historical difficulties. The first one has been almost annihilated, that is, almost extinct. The old people know the Native American culture and language, but unless they pass it on to their children, since society at large does not help to treasure and retain it, it will disappear. Being Puerto Rican, on the other hand, has one positive aspect. In spite of the historical repression, the struggle to maintain the language has been successful."

A third woman says:

"Racism is something that occurs for all of us every day. You don't get away from racism at any point in your life. It's always there whether
it's subtle or direct. It is something that's going on all over the world. It is as if somebody sat down and made this world-wide master plan: 'Okay, this is how racism is going to look and all these people are going to be made inferior.' It is not our inherent inferiority. It is an external situation."

One woman stated her concern in regard to white people:

"Racism is white people being trained to think of themselves as superior. This means that there is a great separation between whites and Third World people. This creates hostility on my part and that of my people. It is a racial barrier, a bridge that has to be overcome. One of the difficulties that white people face in regard to racism has a lot to do with the misinformation and distorted views they have of Third World people. They are the ones that should be doing a lot of work to try to bridge the gap and try to overcome the problems of racism which dehumanize white people as well, although in a different form. They need information and must come to understand that ignorance, neglect or playing host to race oppression has a dehumanizing factor not only for Third World people but for them as well."

All the views the women expressed regarding racism coincide with the stated premise of RC as defined in this dissertation. Racism as described by the women is not simply an attitude: it is an institutionalized practice as well, which has detrimental psychic effects.

Class and racism

All the women stated that their experiences as well as most of their parents,' in being mistreated in the labor market, or assigned low status or dead-end jobs, was due both to class and race oppression. They all stated that not
only did they rank low in employment status but also in income. It was their opinion that not having access to adequate salaries and status positions contributed to a lack of usefulness, low self-worth and devaluation of the work they did. Another difficulty they found in the job market was that of always being treated like tokens, in order to fill a quota: "One is never an individual."

Having experienced poverty most of their lives, the majority of the women reported they still struggle to improve their income and resources. In terms of racism, one of the women stated:

"There is a kind of false notion given to people that in this country anyone who tries hard can make it -- that there are opportunities for everyone regardless of skin color or any other difference -- and that everyone can succeed in climbing the ladder. This is a farce. A Third World person who strives to do better begins to fall and begins to then invalidate himself or herself instead of looking at the structure and its practices. Wherein there are no equal opportunities for everyone based on need or hard work."

With regard to the issue of earning a living to fulfill basic needs such as food and clothing, the women stated that racism as well as classism limited their earning capability. Having been raised in poverty, they had lacked adequate food and clothing. Five of them stated that they developed inferiority feelings because of lack of proper clothing -- clothing that was warm, comfortable, and attractive. All stated that clothing was symbol of status; it contributed to
the self-worth that they felt others around them had, but they lacked. Specifically similar statements were made by Ladner (1971) that through some aspects of consumerism or buying power the women sought to develop a positive self-image. The women's statements thus confirm the allegations set forth in chapter II of this dissertation.

Attitudes and experiences with racism

The women told countless stories of difficulties with racism both overt and covert. The relationship of racial attitudes to class oppression was very apparent to the women. One stated:

"I remember always being condescended to by whites, but I also make a distinction now between working-class whites and upper-class whites; the responses from white working-class people are better. I identify more with working-class whites in terms of communication and similarities in lifestyle than with whites of another class, middle- or upper-class, who I find almost impossible to communicate with because of their attitude of superiority."

A second woman stated:

"I lived in a white middle-class neighborhood separated from other black people and in a section where the kids had never seen any blacks before. They didn't realize they did not know how to deal with me. They were trying to be nice, but they were very awkward and ended up being insensitive in trying so hard. The children at least tried; however, once the parents found out that I was black and not middle-class, the children then had more problems dealing with me, as a consequence of their parents' own difficulties."
Another woman stated:

"... the issue of both class and race was very evident in a school setting. My teacher approached me and paid me to clean her house once a week. She was stressing my lower-class status, as well as racism."

Three of the women recalled racism as a heavy burden because of the stereotypes that were promulgated. Among these stereotypes were beliefs that Third World women were not as intelligent as others, that they did not behave appropriately under certain circumstances, or could not take charge of situations effectively. As one said, "It was like one could not speak, master the language or possess communication skills." Another one said that by being assertive and abandoning the passive role they were expected to assume as women -- especially Third World women -- instead of being seen as assertive they were viewed as hostile. The women perceived this not only as having sexist but also racist implications. These statements also confirm the examples provided in chapter II of this text.

Another woman said that the stereotyped viewpoint held that all Third World people looked alike, that all had the same dark skins and the same features. She felt that part of what was going on for her and for other people of lighter skin was that it gave them a sense of being invisible. They recalled people talking about other Third World people in front of them, as if they weren't there. Being treated as
invisible was hurtful: a woman who claimed she did not really look like the expected Native-American type stated:

"I was an invisible human. Because I did not walk around with feathers in my head, and did not go around in a ceremonial Native-American costume, they thought that I was not Native. I got a lot of distorted perceptions of what Native people are really like. This has had devastating effects on me."

Invisibility, one women said, also occurs when other languages are not given credit.

"It contributes to the invisibility not only of people but of their contributions as well. The stereotype that gets promulgated is that we are not writing books, writing our histories and talking about our particular groups. For instance, many Latin American writers who have been acclaimed as powerful writers in their own cultures and have made important contributions are not always recognized by the majority culture. This really reflects an ignorance of other cultures and languages. In a way, it's a cultural deprivation of the mainstream white culture, but it gets turned on us as our deficiency."

One woman said that racism often operates in the way that society singles out one group from the Third World population. She said:

"People act as if we are all either black or white. The many shades in between, the many other colors, like the red race of Native-American people, the yellow race of the Asian people -- all these people, and those who are a composite of white, red, black and even yellow -- like Latinos, are neglected. This adds to divisiveness and makes people feel invisible and alienated."

Three of the Latina women expressed the same concern. As one put it:
"Whites didn't know how to relate or deal with a Latino/a. Are they white, are they black? What are they?"

An Asian woman described similar experiences:

"How does one relate to the issue of someone being different, of not being considered white, such as the Asian people, but not being of black skin either? This sets us apart as Third World people and makes it difficult to build alliances to support one another."

Another said:

"Racism was also promulgated by standards of beauty and physical appearance. For instance, my mother, in trying to get me accepted, was always attempting to correct my appearance. She would pinch my nose to make sure it did not spread, and was constantly telling me to hold in my lips so they wouldn't get too big. She wanted me to look as white as possible. She was trying to protect me from the racism, but did not realize how her own internalized oppression was affecting her and was being passed on to me. I felt rejected by both Third World and white standards of beauty. I wasn't acceptable to either group."

Some of the general aspects of feeling the racism were described as: "Being made fun of because I looked Chinese"; "Children wouldn't play with me because they felt that being from another country meant that I was dirty"; "... not being able to date anyone because you were from a different group."

Overt and covert racism, whether expressed through external socioeconomic practices or through attitudes, deeply affected all the women, making them feel confined, limited, and inferior. The women also reported undergoing phases of
unawareness of racism. This was part of their alienation as described earlier in this chapter, in the section on Class. All the women came to view unawareness as part of the manifestation of oppression which they had internalized. (This will be described in the last section of this chapter.) One woman said:

"For a long time I was unaware and maybe even denied that racism affected me. It was like I was disconnected and alienated from what was going on in myself and in my life. I never felt that racism was really clear to me at all. It was like I would read things about blacks in the newspapers but I never connected it to me. It was happening to this little girl far away."

A second woman expressed a similar situation. She could see it happening to her father, to other Native American people, to Puerto Ricans in the neighborhood, but just did not know how it was connected to her or how she was affected by it. As one woman who claimed to have always been politically informed stated:

"I was not aware that the division within myself, with other groups and within groups stemmed from systematic oppression which we internalized."

As depicted and documented, class has a direct relationship to racism. Class further compounded and reinforced racism. For instance, the alienation stemming from class oppression was further reinforced as the women were isolated, treated as inferior and given fewer opportunities.
These women therefore provide further examples to confirm the hypotheses of this dissertation stated in chapter II.

Assimilation

All the women stated that assimilation practices were a major factor and difficulty in their lives. They experienced a pull to become like the majority culture. This pressure to assimilate often led them to feel separation and isolation from their own cultural groups.

One woman said:

"I've never felt or thought that I had complexes in general relating to whites. For a long time I was part of the mainstream, which is what everybody wants. As long as you don't fall out of the mainstream and become something unique and different, you have no problems with whites -- they will accept you. It's when you fall out and try to create your own that the difficulties begin."

The women stated that pressure to assimilate and the larger society's expectation that they conform led to oppression related to their use of their mother tongue. They felt that society oppressed people for wanting to retain their mother tongue. One woman stated that assimilation pressure affected her as there were few Spanish-speaking people around and she was isolated from her own culture and her language -- and she found it difficult to retain and maintain them. Another, who as a child migrated to the United States, said:

"Coming to this country and not knowing the language and feeling the pressures for assimilation
into the so-called 'melting pot' put a lot of pressure on me and caused me to feel like I was forgetting my language, my culture and my music -- that I lost the festivities and the celebration of who we were. It was very difficult for us to live in this country feeling like you can't even think in your own language having difficulties learning from the other culture and feeling that there is something wrong with what you have and what is yours."

As one woman said:

"... being expected to think in the dominant language, rather than in my own, gave me a feeling of not being able to think in either language."

The resistance from the majority culture to nurture culture and language plurality often caused the women to reject their mother tongue.

"What I most regret is that my mom, out of fear of racism, did not teach me Chinese, and tried to raise me in an atmosphere that really was North American and not Chinese. I lost a lot of information that could have made me very proud to be Chinese, so now I am struggling to learn it and recover it."

The women, expressed their sense of being oppressed because of language as follows:

"Those who mastered English had power over those who did not master it as well."

Another said:

"I was always being looked down on for having an accent or for not mastering English in the same way."

Others, although born and raised in the United States like Afro-Americans, also related to language oppression due to class. As one woman said:
"If you're black or Puerto Rican and do not possess what others believe to be a better command of the language, you are put down and treated as inferior."

All the women who retained their mother tongue expressed that they were not against becoming part of the mainstream or learning English. Instead, they did not want to give up their real selves in order to become something or someone else. They all expressed a need to retain their own culture as well as to become a part of the majority culture. For instance, in their struggles against oppression the women also recounted positive aspects in that many of them retained at least aspects of their cultural pluralism and were enhanced by it. As one stated:

"I was able to retain the culture and values of Puerto Ricans because I lived in a highly supportive Puerto Rican area that allowed for that. This should not be looked at as undermining anything or anyone. This enhances me and the society at large."

The women stated that language oppression had left deep scars which hindered them in their lives. Because an individual's ability to conceptualize is largely determined by the character and structure of language, and because language provides the tools for communication, negation or limitation of its use effects people not only emotionally but intellectually as well (Ramos-Diaz, 1975).
As stipulated in chapter II of this text and as confirmed by the women, assimilation practices hindered their potential for growth at many levels.

Generalities of race oppression

The women related other aspects of racism. One of the more significant aspects concerned migration practices. One woman who migrated to the United States when young experienced many difficulties in adjusting and in obtaining resources. But she reported an additional burden. As illegal aliens she and her family faced the constant fear of being deported. She said:

"We were even afraid to get a traffic ticket because just stepping out of line meant being sent back to a life of extreme poverty. We grew up with feelings that no matter what happened, or how much victims of injustices we were, we were lucky for the privilege of staying in this country."

In addition to inferior job status, poor wages, and deprivation of material resources, the women reported that it was very difficult to obtain needed education and other nonmaterial resources vital to their development. Even if obtainable, these resources were often inadequate.

While all the women believed that their class and gender were primary reasons for encountering difficulties in education, they, unlike the majority culture, faced further hardships because of racism. Therefore, they stated that
class, race and sex oppression were significant factors to be endured as they struggled to become formally educated. For instance, the two women whose parents had achieved modest professional status felt that their own difficulties with education reflected more than a class issue; racism was also operating. As racism basically affects educational opportunity, education will be treated in this section.

Eight of the ten women said they were the first in their family to have obtained a high school diploma. To all the women, education was perhaps the most significant resources they sought to obtain for their development. They reported extreme obstacles in securing education, but also great success in overcoming the obstacles.

Although all the women were determined to go to college, most of them faced resistance and were pushed into the low-skilled, nonacademic service areas. This they attributed to class but also to racism. They stipulated that elements of sexism were involved in this diversionary pressure. Many of the women claimed that they were discouraged even before college registration, when their teachers realized that they had academic skills and ambitions.

One woman who had attended parochial school referred to her disappointment at not being able to go to college. Part of this was due to a lack of belief in herself, particularly in her intelligence. She said:
"I recall being called brainy as a child because I did my work and I was an achiever. Once, I failed a math test and the nun sat me in the corner with a dunce cap. The children made fun of me. There's a lot of terror attached to this incident, and as I see it, that's where the difficulty with my intelligence first began for me. And it continues to be an area of distress. It's a chronic pattern. The other part was due to financial difficulties as well as racism. Because there were no other accesses or opportunities available that would offer more, I went to business school in order to develop skills."

Another of the women said that because of all the doubt that she experienced and the put-downs and the lack of belief in her because she was a female and racially different, she began to incorporate those limitations in herself.

"When I was applying to the better schools, I put the best schools in the last categories on my list just in case all the people who had negative opinions about me turned out to be right. In spite of the fact that those were my last selections and the fact that I felt bad about myself, I got into a good school."

Settling for low expectations and less fine schools resulted in settling for mediocrity:

"I was put in a mediocre environment where the type of jobs, the training, and the educational system carried less expectations. I began to feel like I could only pursue goals of low standards."

A woman who felt pushed into a poorly funded bilingual educational setting said,

"It was very clear to me that those of us who were being prepared to be teachers weren't getting the kind of needed training, due to low funding and low priority given these programs. The mediocre education that I have obtained has made it difficult for me to continue further education."
There were tremendous gaps in my educational background."

Another said:

"I attended a community college where the level of expectation was very low. If I got an A, I felt my performance was the equivalent of a C, based upon what I understood and knew about other colleges."

Several women reported that getting a poor education meant not being able to obtain resources that would allow them to travel or to acquire valuable experience and useful knowledge.

Just as being limited to mediocre educational environments and low expectations was a problem, so was unreal or extreme pressure for performance very difficult. Part of the difficulty experienced by some of the women was related to pressures they felt of fulfilling quotas:

"I was no longer a human being; there were special pressures put on me. I was categorized as intellectually gifted. That was an economic decision because, being from a poverty background, they needed someone to fulfill a quota, to perpetrate the notion that fairness in education and the opportunity to move ahead is given to all people, including those of different ethnicity and lower income background. I, however, experienced that the system, at the same time, does everything to knock you down. And that is what happened to me, as I failed."

One woman experienced conflicts and contradictions:

"Unrealistic achievement expectations as well as lack of expectations and support for performing, along with competition, thoroughly confused me. It was difficult for me to put things in perspective. As a consequence, I experienced tremendous academic failure most of the time. Once I was
placed in a reading clinic when I failed one of my courses. I stayed in the same place for very long time without the help or expectations that I would move beyond that. It was a kind of giving up on me. Yet, at an earlier time in my life, I joined the performance arts school. There was so much pressure on me to excel that it created a great deal of stress. In trying to overcome my previous failure I took overloads and burned out trying to prove that I could be good in science and math, and not just stick to music. In my mind this is where the confusion lies; I had to be as good as the white boys in order to really make it in this society, and music was not enough. Financially also music was not it, unless I was born to be a rich person's protege."

Certain factors assisted these women in overcoming obstacles of oppression. Support and encouragement provided them with motivation to struggle against the limitations as they sought to improve their situations. The women declared that their parents, particularly their mothers, were often a source of support and motivation, although they were not always fully understanding of their goals or knowledgeable about educational opportunities. The majority of the women who reported that their mothers were a source of encouragement felt this may have been due to their mothers seldom having been able to obtain an education themselves. As one stated:

"Actually, that was the only area in which my mother had a positive attitude. Maybe it was because she herself wanted an education so badly."

In those cases where the women did not either have a mother or there were other difficulties in the home, they
stated that at least one other person was the source of support for them. One of the women reported her father was her support:

"My father was a strong motivating force and a catalyst in my developing discipline and getting over the obstacles by sitting down, reading and tackling problems. That prompted me to do more reading and to do well in school."

Another declared,

"My uncle would come and visit and just the mere fact that he brought a book encouraged me tremendously."

For one of the women, being supported by a teacher who discovered that she had writing skills and could express herself well helped her to open up to educational aspirations. Another expressed having no one, but she had turned to a minister from the church when she was exploring whether college was an obtainable goal. She says:

"I didn't know anyone who could inform me other than the minister from my church, who was going to a community college. So when I was getting ready to go to college, I knew I could talk to him."

A source of encouragement that helped the women achieve educational goals was often financial aid, such as scholarships. They stated that obtaining concrete resources along with emotional support was very helpful. As one woman emphasized:

"I knew my mother could not afford anything. But since I got quite a few scholarships for having done well in school and I had a part-time job, I then decided to go to college. It was either go to college or work to support my family. And I
felt that I needed to go ahead and this was my chance."

It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of this support and encouragement. All the women who pursued educational goals said that it was the single most significant factor contributing to their decision to continue the struggle for education. The support they received clearly helped them to transcend many obstacles in securing education. The growth the women demonstrated confirmed the value of their educational pursuits and the success they achieved.

However, since the women were both encouraged and discouraged, contradictions were observable. Some of them consequently manifested ambivalence about education. The best example of a contradiction, resulting from alternately lacking and receiving support, is described by one woman who stated:

"I did a lot of reading on my own. This was one of the ways in which I found release from the oppression. My mother got very angry because she believed that I was wasting a lot of my time, that I should be helping in the house and getting things fixed and doing other more important things."

In the course of the study the same women said:

"My mother struggled a lot to get me to go to school and to remind me that I loved math and reading."

The woman's contradictory experience of lacking and receiving support from her mother can be explained thus: her
parents viewed education primarily as a survival tool to ensure a good living, not a means for self-growth. For instance, the same woman stated:

"Because illiteracy was a problem in my family and they suffered deprivations, I was encouraged to get an education to get a better job, live a better and a more decent life than my parents did. But education was not seen in terms of developing and getting a better sense of myself and the world around me."

The women described other contradictions and conflicts that they had internalized. One said:

"I like school very much. But I mostly did not like it. I found it very oppressive."

Four of the women made similar statements about hating school. Yet, they knew it was significant for their growth as they pursued opportunities and fought obstacles. Their conflicts and contradictions are explained as their statements indicated that they hated oppressive practices inherent in educational institutions, but liked the learning process itself.

The women described school as being an environment where information was not easily exchanged and where they experienced a great deal of submission and humiliation. Punishment, the inculcation of fear, rules and control were more emphasized than learning and growth. For instance, those that went to parochial schools stated that although they had obtained a better education than they would have
had in public school, it was not really worth the stress and punishment they endured. As one declared, "In fact, it may have been a mistake."

An important and obvious quality all the women manifested, although difficult to measure, was their sense of struggle. This sense of struggle helped them overcome their limitations, regardless of the oppression they endured:

"I got myself into college in spite of every effort that was made to keep me out. I was going to work in a factory the same way the rest of my family had done. But then I began to take active steps in terms of becoming an independent woman, caring for myself, providing for myself, and speaking up the way that I wanted to for myself."

"I was able to go to college and change my work role from that of my parents as well as my entire family before me. I accomplished that on my own. I had always been very determined to pursue what I wanted. When I realized that my home situation was not right for me, I decided to work hard to get myself out of it. That was very painful in many ways, but it was a very important step for me to take."

Another woman said:

"I've been doing my dissertation and I'm not going to get stuck. Despite the fact that the graduate director has tried to get me out, has insulted me, and many times questioned my ability in the program. I'm going to show him, no matter how hard it is for me, that I will get it done. I'm going to show the world that I can do it, that I can be in a difficult field and get a Ph.D. It's very tough. It's a tough struggle, but I will make it."

Another said:

"There was a conscious effort to really give myself an education, to build my own knowledge bank."
Through I was in a program that was disappoint-
ing, I continued to push for myself. I have
learned a process by which I can continue to de-
velop myself and obtain the skills that I need.

The findings this study demonstrate that in a consump-
tion-oriented class society, education is a nonmaterial re-
source necessary for the growth and fulfillment of
individual potential. Education is necessary in obtaining
the skills needed to qualify for good jobs and reasonable
wages, and to be able to fulfill material needs. Education
contributes to the development of meaning, purpose, and a
positive self-image. However, the hardships the women en-
dured in securing education deeply affected them.

The women's experiences in securing education are full
of conflicts. Because they faced extreme oppression, they
were kept from achieving and fulfilling many aspects of
their potential. The pain they suffered often caused them
to settle for second-choice goals. Rather than pursuing the
sciences, they settled for social services. Most of the wo-
men were also unable to maintain their schedules for com-
pleting their education as they also had to accomplish other
goals. All of them made sacrifices to secure time for
study; they had minimal, if any, time for socializing with
peers or for other growth activities.

At the same time that the women faced these limita-
tions, which affected their self-image as they internalized
the oppression, their accounts emphasize another important fact. Their desire and motivation to learn, along with their sense of struggle and with the support they obtained, provided a way out of oppression and resulted in positive growth.

All of the women had finished high school; most of them were the only one in their entire family to do so. With the exception of the women whose parents were professionals, the women academically far surpassed their parents and other siblings. For example: nine of the women have completed higher academic work in education; seven of the women have four years of college; three others struggled to obtain financial support to return to school. One of the women has a high school diploma and business school training. Of the seven with bachelor's degrees, three went on to master's degrees and a fourth is completing her Ph.D. For these women the process of education has meant much more than acquiring credentials. They all stated that education has opened up the world for them. They learned to view themselves and the world around them differently; education helped them to fulfill more of their potential as they developed greater awareness and skills.

The women stated that class and sex oppression were present in the difficulties they experienced during their educational development. They also reported racism was an
added dimension that they as a group experienced differently than did members of the majority culture. The difficulties they experienced affected them both intellectually and emotionally. However, the women struggled to overcome obstacles; all of them achieved some success. One of the most significant observable factors which helped them to transcend and overcome obstacles was their having gained financial resources as well as moral support and encouragement.

Conclusion

The women's awareness grew as they saw how society functioned to keep people divided through competition, divisiveness and blame. They grew to understand how oppressive a system was that required people to "cooperate" with the oppression. The women learned that white people also were affected if they allowed themselves to remain passive, hopeless and silent, or participated in the role of oppressors instead of acting powerfully against racism. All the women reported that through RC they lost the feelings of powerlessness that had caused them to view racism as a way of life. As one woman put it:

"I used to think racism would never be eradicated. In gaining RC tools, I have learned the techniques of how to work on white racism. I have learned that people don't have to be that way, that they can really get rid of racism permanently. But those who are victims of it and those who have been because of racist patterns, i.e., those oppressed by racism and those in a position of op-
pressing others through racism, are dehumanized human beings, all needing to be freed."

Gender Oppression

Introduction

In this section the women share their experiences of sexism and its effects on their lives and psyches. They discuss how the class structure makes use of sexism and reinforces it as they experience discrimination over work and money. They speak on their views of their own worth as reflected through work, as well as the meaning of work, and how their assets and skills have been undermined or neglected.

With regard to their reproductive role, the women discuss child-bearing, nurturance, socialization, and household duties, and how these activities exemplify the sexual roles assigned to them.

They address issues in the context of a society that reinforces concepts of sexism — specifically concepts of beauty — that establish women as property and possessions instead of as human beings. The women address the issue of violence and other extreme difficulties in their lives. They address experiences with adultism, as victims and as perpetrators; then describe experiences with extended families and the limitations they faced in maintaining them.
The women compare sexism as it affected them with how it affected white women and other Third World women.

Lastly, the women describe their struggles as they tried to overcome the obstacles imposed on them.

The women highlighted their concept of sexism:

"Women feel and are oppressed by men in a patriarchal society. The society is originally ordered according to lines drawn by men with very little regard to the rights of women, their needs and full participation."

"In the United States, sexism affects all women. What all women have in common is their second-class citizenship status. They are an afterthought in regard to nearly everything. At the same time, women have full responsibility to bear the brunt of raising families."

Women who are victims of racism are also oppressed as women. The nature of a class structure that uses and reinforces sexism is per se negative in its effects on women. Some of the effects are that women in general "are not supposed to be the thinkers"; "are treated as sex and physical objects and as private property for the pleasure of men"; and, "All women, regardless of the rung of the ladder they are on, are affected by sexism."

As one women said:

"The way that women rear sons as opposed to the way that they rear daughters is an indication of sexism. The oppression has made them think that the man is worth more than the women in their lives. That cuts through class. It keeps women powerless and not feeling secure without holding on to a man in their lives. It is not merely a system created by attitudes. These are trans-
formed into the systematic oppressive structure, whose practices keep women from developing as full humans to their maximum potential."

One woman declared that the society promulgates the inferiority and second-class citizenships of women through justifications and rationalizations. The church, schools and the family are probably the most direct agents in reinforcing this situation. The church, as already depicted in the class section, also hinders women on the basis of their gender.

"Women felt pressured to conform to the expectations of the church. There are lots of fears that women have about everything which are often reinforced by the church. The church is a very hard place for women. They have religious pressures, as well, in terms of God and the woman's relationship to the man. The way God saw it, the man was the head of the household and the woman had to respect him and listen to him. If the women wanted to be more independent and more in charge, the church says it is God's will, that staying in the submissive role is the best and it is woman's place. It was not stated that way, but it is the message that was given to women."

Schools, as demonstrated in the section on Racism, further impose barriers as they promote the inferiority of women academically and attitudinally. The family, as will be depicted in this section, in its socializing role prepares girls differently from boys, thus creating and reinforcing society's discriminatory practices.
Sexism not only acts against women as a whole, but by weakening or destroying their potential for alliance and unity, promotes strife among them.

"Middle-class women, including Third World women, look down on women of working-class background. If women are middle-class and they have made some accomplishments, have gained some skills, they act as if they are better than women in lower circumstances and often even blame them for not having made it. This oppressive attitude transcends race and color."

"The issue of class also brings in the commonality of working-class women and Third World women because an extremely high percentage of Third World women are working-class."

As was true with racism and class oppression, the women felt that sexism devalued their worth as workers. They pointed out that because of sexism they earned less than men, even when doing the same work. Women did not have as many employment opportunities in higher income jobs as men had. In fact, there were not even enough jobs of any sort for them, which helped keep women poor and in low-class status. The majority of them, like their parents, spent most of their time struggling to survive, though trying to realize additional accomplishments.

"I have spent my entire life having to be preoccupied with working -- sometimes with as many as three jobs to be able to provide for necessities."

Work they declared, provides meaning, purpose and self-worth. All the women agreed that women's work is devalued both in the work place and in the home. Although women have
to earn income to support their families, the few job opportunities, low pay and low status devalue their worth. The women reported that this devaluing contributed to inferiority, hostility and even led to giving up, to feeling hopeless and powerless.

"I received low pay and I saw men earn more for the same work. That contributed to the whole promulgation that men must be better if they get paid better."

Regarding skills and training, the women felt that gender, along with class and race, played a part. There was no room for them to aspire to get the resources needed to train for nontraditional female professions, such as medicine or high technology. One of the women reported:

"I just did not get the proper advice. I feel like I got cheated, I could have been a gymnast, or gone into a profession requiring high-level skills on my part."

The role of women

Regarding their role as nurturers, as child bearers, housekeepers, all the women felt that the entire structure fell upon them: nurturing the family and all the household chores were assigned to women as their duty;

"...my mother was an example of being almost Superwoman. She could work outside the home and still be responsible for the entire family. For the longest time, she was my role model. Then when I myself was in a marital situation, my husband was not supportive after I became pregnant. I came to realize that without any support and encouragement from my husband, I had to carry all the burdens. I chose to get out of it."
Another pointed out:

"One particular day, I had been out and I was carrying one of the children. My husband had a bag of groceries which he gave me so I could trudge up the stairs with the child and the groceries and he went off to play a game. Never would he think to carry the groceries upstairs or even consider carrying the child. It just was not his role to perform any household duties except go off to work. The rest is up to the woman."

The women experienced difficulties in the nurturing/emotional role in their relationships with men. These they expressed in stating that men did not hold up their end of the relationship.

"Not only do most of them not contribute and participate in the families' emotional well-being and growth, but they continue to feel that it is up to women to take sole responsibility to turn a relationship into a healthy, mature one."

This lack of emotional responsibility in relationships was found to be the case even for those not in marital situations.

A woman who raised a family and often provided financial support for her husband, declared:

"I would function and take care of everything and never allowed myself to fall apart. I held a job with responsibilities, took care of a family and nurtured my husband, as well as all the children, even though my income was low. Taking care of three children was difficult; it was hard to survive."
All the women reported that they received very early training and were socialized solely for their role to nurture, support, encourage and raise families:

"The notion that my mother conveyed was that to be a woman meant being fully dedicated to domestic tasks. She prepared me for it and then my brothers and father contributed with their expectation that being female meant that I was there to please them. There is no other message in being a woman that was conveyed to me what it was like to be a woman -- other than this."

Being assigned a role is not merely having to function for a certain amount of time in a certain way, and then be able to step out of it. The individual worker in a working-class role, or woman as housewife or mother, is defined by these roles. The treatment they secure in these roles affects their life styles and all else. As the individual incorporates the expectations and behavior of the role, she (or he) becomes the role. All the women reported they had experienced this.

General comments

The women stated that several aspects of sexism affected their abilities and potential. Sexism added to the burdens they endured. Among these sexist burdens was the concept of beauty. Few of the women could meet the expectation to be beautiful and feminine in a particular way, to have a certain type of appearance and certain features. It
was difficult to satisfy the emphasis on beauty because the concept of beauty was a white one:

"Being a black, Latina or Asian woman, meant one could never really achieve the standards of beauty. This is one of the ways that the stereotypes of sexism and racism intertwine."

"Often this creates a concept and feelings that white women look better than Third World women, as the standards of beauty are more applicable to them. However, white women also face the same difficulties because of the standards of beauty they must fulfill. Women become things rather than human beings."

The pressure for assimilation also affected the women. Historically they were part of extended families; but they found they had to reduce their role and participation, which they felt were sources of fulfillment for them. As they emphasized, society did not support the extended family concept; rather, it put a heavy economic burden on them and on their parents:

"My family had to be solely responsible for the support and care of their extended family — brothers, sisters, aunts. They did this out of duty, at the cost of depriving their own children."

Most of the women stated that the difficulty was primarily one of money and resources and not simply that the established attitudes and practices of the majority culture did not allow and encourage the extended family concept.

The women reported that ageism was another significant oppression that they experienced. They suffered more from
this than did men. They stressed that although men were al-
so victims of ageism to some extent, men -- as opposed to
women -- are viewed as distinguished and still eligible as
they grow older. This is particularly the case if these men
are financially secure.

Violence is a major manifestation of an oppressive so-
ciety. All the women described violence as a dominant fac-
tor in their history and experience. As children and when
growing up, all ten women experienced violence. They were
physically beaten or saw others beaten or suffered incest,
rape or sexual abuse, or were battered wives.

As several stated, rather than being talked to when
misbehaving or disappointing their parents, they were phys-
ically beaten. Regarding physical violence toward others,
they all claimed this was an everyday experience. One who
experienced it in her home said:

"My uncle had a violent temper. He would beat
up my father all the time. I grew up being really
terrified of all the violence."

Five women reported themselves as being victims of
incest. In some cases this criminal abuse occurred when
they were babies, in others when the victims were still
young children, and, in one case, during the teen years.
One of these women stated that incest was part of the op-
pression of adultism that children experience. Several of
the women stated that they perceived adultism as the
practice of overpowering children to the point of making them victims. Violence, they said, is an extreme manifestation of adultism.

The material that follows describes the women's experience with violence and its effects on them. One of the women, abused as a baby, recalls:

"I remember my father in a bathtub, but the rest is not clear. I am still working to recover my memory. This is the way it affected me, primarily in denial, by wiping out the fact the something had happened. I remember pieces of it, but not the end, not the beginning. And it took my sister to help me recall the incident. One of my blocks has been that I'm not supposed to tell. Not talking about things like that has been real inhibiting for me and my recovery."

Another reported:

"When I was a young girl, my father related to me on a sexual level. He got very intimate in a way that I later came to associate with the way men would get intimate with women and not with children. Always, when we were alone, he'd caress me. I got a very strong sense of something strange or something wrong with that. It made me feel funny about being a woman."

A third woman, also a victim of incest as a teen, declared:

"My father was very obsessive with me. He had a real hard time seeing me with another man. My mother was working afternoons and evenings and I was home watching the kids. My father started approaching me. Eventually, he jumped me and I left home. Both my mother and father blamed me. That left me pretty lonely and isolated."

Another woman, a victim of rape, said:

"That was the first time I ever had sex. I though it was my fault, the way women had been
brought up to think that it was their fault, when it happened."

Another woman, who experienced physical violence, claimed:

"These violent experiences I suffered as I was raised, got transferred to a relationship I had with a white man where I felt overpowered and very frightened. I felt very invalidated during the entire relationship."

One of two women who had been a battered wife said: "It took a very long time to even begin to talk about it."

The women reported that among the effects of this abuse was temporary occlusion and even a denial of the abuse. All ten women endured victimization through violence. All stated that it was a contributing factor to fear, anger, sadness and self-blame, ultimately imposing limitation.

**Similarities and differences amongst women**

The women claimed that they shared similarities with most other women: "Women experienced common patterns of upbringing, such as being raised to please men"; "... all women are oppressed by a sexist society"; "... we are more in touch and encouraged to deal with our emotions"; "I'm not sure, but I think that we're stronger physiologically"; "... we're all oppressed as mothers"; "... as women we also have a lot of energy and vitality"; "The oppression also hits us and then makes us objects, makes us
act and feel that we are less." As one woman summarized the issue:

"... we are exploited as workers, face many of the same stereotypes, seek achievement and a rightful role in society, are concerned for the family, have similar sexual feelings and desires, have similar wishes to achieve, progress and have our own self-identify as women, and we have the same wish to have our children do better than we did."

There were also many differences that all of the women acknowledged between Third World women and white women. All the women stated that the greatest differences among women pertained both to their class positions and racial backgrounds:

"Oftentimes the man is going to support the wife of middle-class background. She may be more likely to stay home, if she desires it. I see that this is also negative and creates dependency; but there is more of an expectation that it is possible, particularly if the woman wants the chance to be with her children. Yet, for the working-class woman, it is not a decision whether she goes out to work or not. She does not have that choice. Usually she needs to work in the labor market."

As some of the women mentioned, another difference for middle-class women with some education and skills is that though they have more chance of diversity in their work, sexism still presents limitations. For working-class women this diversity is seldom possible. The type of jobs they obtain are more likely to be in a factory, or in semiskilled service positions in hospitals, stores, and restaurants.

When it comes to class, added one woman:
"There is no comparison between the middle-class or poor. For instance, in the ways that women handle different social situations, or the kind of power that some women have -- like a white woman of upper-class backgrounds could have power over Third World men -- as well as Third World women, for that matter."

To a great extent, the women pointed out, class also determines the level of access to information they obtain and the resources available to help them develop their skills.

"Going to college or travel are some of the ways developing the skills, and this is not so for most working-class woman and poor women."

In discussing difficulties caused by race, the women claimed that white women are not affected by racism; it was one less oppression that they had to deal with. "The attitudes on the part of most white women warrant changing," was a statement overwhelmingly supported by all the women. One of the women stressed:

"White women in the women's movement are more likely to shove racism aside and not deal with it because they must get to their issues first and racism clouds their issues. They call on Third World women to first deal with the issue of sexism without necessarily seeing that their involvement in eliminating racism, by standing up for their rights as full human beings, is also their issue -- not merely sexism, but racism as well."

Again, when it comes to earnings, to who gets paid more, the white woman will do better than the Third World woman. The same applies to resources and access to
opportunities; the situation is similar to that described above with regard to class differences.

In discussing child raising, all the women affirmed that race and class backgrounds gave rise to substantial differences:

"Those who are white and those with resources are worlds apart in terms of education, housing, neighborhoods, health services and other things."

"You can take one particular issue -- health, for example -- and in terms of child rearing you see tremendous differences because of class and race."

All the women stated that although many differences exist among women because of oppression, class, and employment, it would be a mistake to view more fortunate women as eternal enemies or think that women's liberation issues are not applicable. Instead, as one woman emphasized:

"It is simply that those differences have to be recognized. One cannot lump all women together. People are isolated, and abandoned to their circumstances and their problems. You must see other women's issues; their plight and what they want to combat and overthrow."

As another pointed out:

"It's a sort of a neglect that makes us abandon people. We must recognize differences so we can work to eradicate them. That will be the only basis under which alliances can be made."
Conclusion

The women described many experiences of gender oppression which they internalized. External limitations, commencing with class oppression which reinforced sexism as the women were assigned to inferior jobs and status, helped limit their lives at many levels. The women declared that society condoned their treatment as an inferior subpopulation and thus diminished their opportunities for growth. This had an adverse psychic effect on them. All of the sexist practices they endured added pressures to their lives and limited their human potential.

In discussing their struggle to overcome oppressive conditions all the women emphasized how important material and emotional support and encouragement had been. As women, they found the support they derived from closeness with other women and with their mothers was very significant:

"I had the privilege of growing up in a house which was predominantly female. It was very good because many times the four of us would come together, support one another and stand up for one another. There was a lot of intimacy between the four of us. We all understood everything that was going on, even in terms of my father."

Some of the women noted that they had obtained much support and nurturance from males in the family -- a brother, an uncle or -- in many cases -- a supportive father.
Internalized Oppression

This section will provide the women's descriptions of internalized oppression, together with examples of how the process of internalization operated for them.

Some of the women noted society's tendency to believe that the difficulties people experience are often internal and personal in nature. Too few analysts of human behavior objectively investigate society at large as the primary cause of the oppression which limits people as they internalize it. The women came to the realization that no oppression can exist without the distress recordings of internalized oppression whereby the individual "agrees" to being oppressed.

According to the women, they were limited in many ways as psychic/emotional feelings developed that became manifested in confusion, anxiety, impatience, lack of self-worth, lack of expectations, settling for mediocrity, hostility, burn-out phenomenon, guilt, blame, divisiveness, alienation, contradiction and powerlessness. All these limiting conditions became more damaging as rigid patterns developed.

Given below are some of the women's descriptions of internalized oppression.

"A syndrome that affects everybody's psyche, like sitting down and with one hand you are pushing yourself up and with the other you are pushing yourself down";
"... damaging information handed to you by your parents and other elements of society, like peers, and beginning to identify with those stereotypes and definitions as you treat yourself in the same way";

"... believing that we don't have a place in society, that we are an invisible group and acting in a self-destructive manner . . . .";

"... being like a cat among a group of dogs and learning how to bark, barking all the time and still being a cat . . . .";

"... gives us a distorted image of ourselves";

"... the belief that the best thing I could do is be a secretary and that my only role in life is to be at home and bring up a couple of kids and spend my life devoted to the family . . . .";

"... passivity, sitting and letting the world go by, letting other people take charge, sort of like a seaweed that the tide moves one way and the other . . . .";

"... to have no concept of my size or self when I see my reflection in the mirror . . . .";

"... feelings of inferiority and worthlessness";

"... a person who gives up the fight and just buys into the oppression . . . .";

"... identifying with the oppressive images of what one can or can't do and seeing these as insurmountable barriers . . . .";

"... the inherent put-downs."

The women described some of their patterns of internalized oppression resulting from class, race and sex oppression. Regarding class, one woman affirmed that although she and her family were very poor, she had the perception of
being wealthy; in this way she denied her oppression. Another reported that her feelings were always that she deserved less money and was not worth much in terms of resources or money. She said:

"... being part of a lower-income milieu meant that one got middle-of-the-road education, jobs, and income, but I internalized that it was because I was inferior. The way I was treated is the way I perceived myself."

Others stated their pattern was one of shame of being of working-class background. One said that being with her working-class parents was so hard she then tried not being around any working-class people, thus rejecting her own kind. Many of the women internalized negative attitudes regarding work. Three of the women stated they devalued work. The saw their own and their family's work as inferior. As one said:

"I think because my family worked in factories and were not able to master the technology, like not being able to operate a bank machine, I felt we were inferior. I also devalued the work that they did, when people made fun of it . . . ."

Another woman claimed feeling inadequate, believing that hard work seven days a week was normal. If one was not performing at that level, then one felt and was seen as lazy. Therefore, she equated hard work and sacrifice with self-worth. One woman said that because her parents looked like immigrants, she internalized that they were not as good as other people.
Some of the women felt that their parents had suffered harsh difficulties in their own lives. Because these women perceived that their parents had done the best they could to provide for them, they — as children — internalized the deprivation and harshness without complaint.

At least five of the women stated they never asked for anything and had come to realize that their being grateful for anything they got was part of their oppression.

Many reported that their internalized oppression was in the denial or giving up of their needs. They experienced inability in being able to ask for anything or have expectations for self-fulfillment.

"It was like not knowing who or what to complain about," one of them said.

Five of the women stated that without an outlet the deprivation led to a lot of anger -- mostly turned against themselves. As one woman said:

"My anger is related to being too understanding. No matter how I'm hurt or deprived I'll understand."

While the women related their internalized oppression to class oppression, they declared that racism added another layer. They stated that the practices and negative attitudes of racism, such as stereotyping, had major adverse effects on them.

One women emphasized that it led to lot of self-hate:
"I learned real early to chalk up white people as ignorant in the form of naive children. Therefore, I could still love and cherish a child and forgive a child. So you did the same with white people. I've come to realize that that was my internalized oppression, that that was a form of self-hate."

Another said that the invisibility women and Third World people faced, which was accompanied by the false notion that they have no history as a group, led to feelings of inferiority. Invisibility, another stated, caused her never to pursue more or better rewards in life. Because of racism, she did not expect to get more.

"Growing up never seeing a lot of my people in very visible, important roles, nor getting the encouragement and support I needed or even having information that things would change, I internalized that everything was hopeless and that there was no end or possibilities for change."

Hopelessness about resolving racism was shared by the majority of the women. One stated:

"The effects of early deprivations and rejections, such as being abandoned by my mother, and separated from my siblings and father, gave way to feelings that made me vulnerable to later oppression, such as racism. Here I was by myself: no mother, no father, and not having a place in the world where I felt I really belonged and was wanted. Later on this led to a feeling of being rejected and not wanted because of racism, as I was left with no language, and no commonality with people. That only reinforced my earlier deprivations."

Many other examples were internalized, such as being of dark skin or having white features made them feel inferior.
All ten women claimed that RC helped them develop awareness about the effects of sexism on themselves. All of the provided many examples of self-invalidation. One woman, speaking about internalized oppression, said: "I accepted mediocrity -- the whole notion that some people were endowed with more capability than others." As one said, "There are feelings that men or that whites are better or superior." One woman stated that her mother hurt her by wanting her to be a boy, so she internalized wanting to be a boy rather than a girl. Another thought that she should aspire or live up to the superwoman syndrome.

"... the Superwoman raises a family with major child-rearing responsibility, works outside the home, may attend school, or a training program, is socially active, and expects to be always pleasant regardless of the numerous pressures and demands placed on her."

"Internalized oppression often detains a woman in a limiting or abusive relationship, although intellectually she may realize that is is having a harmful effect on her. Even when she decides to take action to end the relationship [she is likely to enter another where] she is once again undermined and mistreated."

Another pattern is believing that individuals, like men and groups who behave as oppressors, are eternal enemies who can never become allies, thereby giving in to hopelessness and despair.

Patterns take many forms as hurt and mistreatment are experienced. At one level a woman stated that internalized
oppression often immobilized people by leaving them unable to take political actions, thus remaining secluded in a victimized and powerless pattern. One manifestation is the feeling of not knowing enough about the political aspects and passively waiting to learn more. At another level, an active, involved social change agent reported: "... I burn out and exhaust myself in trying harder to eradicate oppression." She did not feel that anything she did was good enough.

One woman stated that she observed that internalized oppression had an addictive aspect. Her experiences confirm RC theory, in that patterns have an addictive pull that traps the person inside the oppression so that he or she resort to the same inadequate and limited behavior as if in comfort.

Internalized oppression also leads people to addictions such as alcohol and drugs. For one of the women the addiction was maintaining a pattern of overeating to the point of mistreating herself:

"In my belief, having been poor -- deprived of resources such as enough food -- reinforced earlier experiences and feelings of rejection and abandonment. This ultimately led me to establish an irrational pattern of eating, making me overweight and thus reinforcing my negative image of myself."

All of the women felt that the extreme difficulties they had faced as children kept them from enjoying their
lives and being fulfilled, both as children and as adults. For instance, two of the women who had grown up lacking resources also had to care for younger siblings. Although both stated that responsibility had helped them develop positive skills and maturity, the demands that these responsibilities made on them robbed them of their own childhoods. Both stated that even to this day they are unable to be playful. Their internalized oppression consists of their having great difficulties with relaxation and enjoyment, feeling that they are not entitled to leisure time. Both expressed resentment at not having had their own lives and not having been allowed to behave as children. "The extreme demands and expectations on me caused me to function as an adult at a faster pace." They both believe that they still have a "frozen" need to be children, although they function as responsible adults today, though often in a compulsive way. These experiences had contradictory effects; there were negative aspects, but also positive ones. The women felt invalidated and unimportant; they stated that these experiences led them to develop a need to fix the world, but that they were left with the feeling that anything they accomplished was not good enough. They viewed their attempts as inadequate and insignificant. However, they also reported that they developed motivation, insight, and a sense of struggle against injustice. The contradiction they
experienced by feeling insignificant yet strengthened by their attempts once again proves the major hypothesis of this dissertation: While oppression limits people, in their struggle to overcome, people also gain strength, thus demonstrating their resilience and potential.

The women also indicated that one component of the pattern of internalized oppression is an attempt to survive or contradict the oppression. This may be the case in situations where in lieu of being punished an individual adopts a pattern of being passive. Internalized oppression causes people to fear dealing with intense hurts and emotions and instead retreat until these are controlled; they may even deny having these hurts. For others it may lead to an inability to operate outside of painful emotion and they may appear unable to handle situations, as if overwhelmed by their feelings. At another level, as three of the women stated, people develop intellectual patterns as a defense that provides an "escape" from the oppression. These patterns "help" them to appear in charge of situations although there is a dichotomy (part of the result of oppression) between emotions and thinking. Thinking therefore becomes rigid. The women stated that these were only a few of the patterns which immobilized or limited their potential to be powerful.
All of the women became aware that it is people who must overcome the system of oppression. Oppression is not something that people are born with or a situation in life that exists beyond the power of our humanness. The reality is that oppression can be overcome, regardless of the differences between people -- whether rich or poor, black or white, men or women. The women in the study said they fully expected others in an oppressed society to become the allies of women as they, too, would be liberated through the struggle to overcome the limitations.

Conclusion

As demonstrated in this chapter, all the women explained and confirmed that the main difficulties and limitations they faced stemmed from external oppression, particularly that of class, race and sex. The experiences of the women as described in this chapter confirmed the premises of the study. A system of oppression was the cause of their internalized oppression; this had begun early in life and continued to be reinforced throughout their lives. This became a vicious cycle that caused the women to collude with the oppressor and "agree" to being oppressed.

After using RC, all of the women in the study confirmed the premise that external oppression, largely resulting from class, race and sex oppression, became internalized and
diminished their opportunities for growth and development. All the women provided vivid accounts of their individual experiences with oppression. They clearly recognized that their class backgrounds and job status resulted in their obtaining substandard material resources and that in addition they faced limitations in their access to nonmaterial resources. This was particularly the case with education. The women internalized these deprivations and inadequacies, which were part of the institutionalized practices of class, race and sex oppression, and which were further complicated by societal rationalizations and justifications. These included blaming the afflicted, claiming that they were inferior.

The hostile attitudes of the majority culture, as well as those of people against whom these attitudes are directed, become one of the ways in which the oppression and its internalization are reinforced. Oppressive practices are not merely attitudes: they are structured realities in a system that diminishes their victims' participation in life. Whether or not one person has more resources and access than another is due to a system that promotes competition whereby everyone is pitted against each other. All of the women agreed that a system based on competition consumes the energies of people; such a system turns everyone against each other rather than encouraging them to look at the sys-
tem, and join in alliances with different groups to transform society and maximize human potential. A system of class, the women confirmed, uses and reinforces racism and sexism. Ultimately the oppression becomes internalized as feelings of limitation lead to blame of self and others for their circumstances. This creates a vicious cycle.

It is important in evaluating the content of this thesis to recognize that while oppression limited the women's fulfillment of their potential, it did not result in their destruction. The women who endured the oppressive practices fought back -- sometimes destructively -- as they suffered from internalization of the oppressive acts committed against them. At the same time, their attempts and struggles confirm that they tried to overcome and create as they sought to transcend oppression. This may account for the dialectical phenomenon of oppression. For instance, the results of this study confirm that a significant aspect of self-realization was the women's decisions at different points in their lives to act powerfully on their own behalf against the limitations imposed by oppression. These decisions to act powerfully were of great significance for the women's growth. Although oppressed, these women were not totally defective humans, lost because of the oppression:

"I have always struggled to overcome class, including poverty, as well as sex and race obstacles, although I was never as clear as I am now";
"Women have always learned to be strong in spite of oppression; we hold together families, we are creative, we rebel against the oppression."

As stipulated in RC's concept of choosing one's point of view (appendix IV, no.V), in spite of oppression the individual can, and often does, decide to be powerful instead of remaining weakened by the victimization.

Third World women have a history of involvement in the struggle to change conditions. Accounts of individual women, as well as the collective efforts of many who have fought against racism and other aspects of oppression, provide examples which have led and inspired mass movements. These include the struggle against the war in Vietnam. Action against recognized wrongs has inspired women to change their oppressive circumstances. These efforts inspire, teach, and aid the cause liberation, benefitting everyone.

Therefore the women in this study demonstrated that given resources, encouragement and support -- and particularly because of the RC process -- they were able to struggle against limitations. Chapter VI depicts some of the change and growth the women underwent with the use of RC.
"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it." (Goethe, Collected Poems)

CHAPTER VI

RE EVALUATION COUNSELING

Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to evaluate the effects of Re-Evaluation Counseling in the lives of ten Third World women who used it from a two year to five-year period. They assess its value as a tool they applied to help them make changes in their lives, achieve progress, and accomplish goals.

The women's assessments of where they were in their lives when they began RC, their experiences with the use of RC and their judgments of its attributes follow. The women discuss their internalized oppression, identify the patterns it related to, describe what they judge specifically helped them to reduce it, and evaluate the changes they underwent. The women cite directions and aspects of RC which helped them to change their sense of self and of society, and they depict the improvements they made in their lives. They also
indicate their present situations and what they either found limiting or warranting change and development in the Re-Evaluation Counseling process.

**Reasons For Selecting RC**

All the women in the study claimed that prior to RC they were dissatisfied with themselves, with their lives, and their environments. They all stated they were in need of self-change. They perceived a need to seek solutions, and gain the information that would enable them to understand their difficulties and the world. In terms of where they found themselves, the women made comments such as: "I was unhappy with myself," "I was seeking solutions to my problems," "I was confused," "I was looking to gain more independence," "I was feeling that something was missing in my life," "I did not believe in myself," "I was lacking a lot of information," "I felt very powerless and hopeless about my situation and that of the world," "I felt alienated and disassociated from myself," and "I could not enjoy life and I did not feel I deserved anything better." One of the women stated that she was dissatisfied with therapy and was desperately seeking a way to get help. Some of the women were also experiencing difficulties with their parenting. Three of the women who were politically active and aware
said they felt something was missing and they were dissatisfied with how people functioned politically.

The Appeal of RC

All the ten women were recruited into RC by female friends who thought that they would benefit from RC as they themselves had benefitted.

In recording what they liked about RC and the main aspects which attracted them, the ten women all stated that the important factors included the premises of RC regarding the potential of every human being for brilliance, creativity and ingenuity, for flexibility versus rigidity, and RC's belief in inherent capabilities for being zestful, cooperative, and loving. They were attracted by the RC assumption that potentially people are completely powerful.

They reported that another attractive attribute of RC was its position that limitations of human potential were caused mostly by societal oppression and its internalization by the victims. One woman stated that RC's total emphasis on the humanness of people, in spite of the distress, inspired her. Another put it in these words:

"The model of the human being as good and caring, loving, intelligent, all the positive things I did not feel that I was, appealed to me. The real promise and vision really shined through. We are capable, if we work long enough and hard enough, of unlayering the distresses from oppression."
In recounting other ways in which RC had encouraged them, the women stated that another strength of RC was that it gave tools to people directly, particularly to Third World people. As a result, they could work with other Third World people, not only with whites. As one woman stated:

"I had two white friends who supported me -- and that was very significant. However, being in an all-white RC class made it very difficult for me. It was safe to know that a Third World population existed and that I could start a class to make that possible for myself, as well. It was very important to bring Third World people together to counsel each other and increase awareness of liberation issues."

According to one woman, Third World workshops where cultural sharing took place (e.g., people talking about where they were coming from, their histories, their backgrounds, their difficulties, regaining pride, being able to share their pride and celebrating it with others), helped her gain insightful information about her fellow participants' societal backgrounds, their cultures and their struggles at large. She stated that this had been a very important aspect of Third World liberation for her. All the women stated that this important aspect did much to help them remain in counseling. Particularly important was the process of mixing people of all backgrounds. One woman said it was the reunion of Third World people, "sharing our struggles and our joys." Another stated:

"The community building and support, with cooperation and caring in order to help each other
break through the barriers of divisiveness, alienation and isolation, is a powerful practice that has had tremendous effects."

"It has helped us create a network of Third World people and to learn of the possibilities of sharing the innermost, in being able to work together . . . to make things happen in the world. As we learn about each other, the implications are that these insights and practices can be applicable towards liberation."

The women reported that all these workshops like those dealing with class oppression, and even education were successful in creating awareness and growth.

All the women claimed that they made major breakthroughs after the discharge and re-evaluation of past distress. One stated that the concept of RC with its emphasis on discharge was not often viewed as applicable to Third World people. This, she felt, was due to the emphasis in Third World cultures on being in touch with feelings and allowing people to be emotional. Yet, she claims, manifesting emotions in itself is not enough. As one woman stated:

"We may give attention to those feelings that are easier such as laughing, and we often, at a moment of loss, even cry with grief; we, however do not pay attention to those feelings that are not as accessible due to the oppression. Allowing oneself -- and getting support -- to openly express or work through with each other's deep emotions of hurt such as feeling inferior, marginal and alienated due to classism and racism is virtually impossible. We fear that in expressing such deep feelings and emotions we would be seen as weak or be taken advantage of. We often take pride in being strong, acting as if unaffected, and thereby equate inhibition of some feelings as a sign of strength without realizing that we are embracing the oppression . . . ."
Another woman stated that although the fear she carried was always on the surface, she could never let anyone know about it because it was a terrifying thing to admit.

For all the women, dealing with intense emotions proved to have had great significance. One woman stated that she learned not to fear any of her emotions, that "emotions are not demons." Regarding feelings of anger, a second woman stated that discharging anger and understanding it better made her more willing to try to find ways of dealing with it other than striking out in anger against persons or things. "I am not putting the anger aside and treating it as if it's not there, instead I am dealing with it in a qualitatively different way." In regard to feelings, another said: "I am politically active and very aware. However, I used to have a lot of confusion. Getting rid of deep feelings has made me less confused." Most of the women stated that getting rid of anger and fear was extremely powerful for them.

As their answers show, all the women consider that a key factor in RC was its emphasis on feelings and discharge: this helped them to overcome and break the barriers that kept them from being powerful. One of them stated that placing the focus on the internal along with the external, gaining information, as well as the discharge and the re-
evaluation, helped her not only to clarify her oppression but also to integrate her knowledge and her being.

All the women stated that RC's emphasis on oppression and liberation was a key factor that kept them in RC and helped them to overcome their barriers, to make changes and grow. One woman stated: "Working to eliminate my barriers from sexism, racism and particularly class oppression enabled me not to be stamped." With regard to RC's analysis of sexism, several of the women stated that it shed valuable light on male/female issues. As one of them stated, it improved awareness of the humanness of men and the possibility of their being allies for women.

Along with the support they found in RC, four of the women stated that having nonjudgmental space allowed them to stay with and benefit from the process. According to them, RC's emphasis on realizing inherent power by taking charge was a concept that showed appreciation of people and their thinking; and even applied to the women taking charge of their own RC sessions. RC acceptance of the belief that the individual knows best provided the women with space to grow and find their own process.

Other attributes of RC they included the idea of non-verbal discharge: they could cry, shake or laugh and not verbalize their thoughts until they became able to do so. This practice often reflected their cultural usages.
Important also were RC's ways of communicating ideas and information verbally. RC did not deny the importance of theoretical information gained through literature; rather RC emphasized the importance of sharing experiential information. As one woman said:

"... to resort only to sharing information which is written in volumes and volumes of books leaves out my family and many people in many sectors of my population who are not yet able to read. I think if we sit down with them and talk and provide the learning, they will listen. There is something very significant in sharing verbal knowledge and information. It is like an older woman who can pass on her knowledge and history and that of her ancestors!"

The women found the concept of peerness in RC to be valuable for them. One commented:

"Seeing the validity of the individual in their own life, in their own space, without the point of view that someone is superior and can dictate or have knowledge about them that they do not have about themselves, has been very significant for me . . . ."

The women said RC's low fees and thus its accessibility to people was very valuable. Financial support through scholarships was very important: "... not only for myself," as on woman said, "but for other people whose growth, I can see, has benefitted themselves and others greatly."

RC's capacity for enabling people to make personal connections locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, giving them wider perspectives, was seen as valuable. All the women agreed that having individual, personal, and
close support helped them stay in RC. Others mentioned that having friends who introduced them to RC and who stayed with them made the RC process much easier and more positive.

In sum, the women gave credit to RC for providing them with real movement, change and growth -- which they felt was reflected in changes in how they lived their lives.

Overcoming Internalized Oppression

The women reported having minimized or reduced internal barriers though the use of RC. They also stated that they grew in awareness regarding class oppression, poverty, racism, sexism, internalized oppression and other issues, such as blaming themselves and others who were also oppressed. Those who were politically aware and involved were able, as they developed greater self-awareness, to integrate their political knowledge and grow qualitatively in their understanding. One woman stated that she grew in the awareness that:

"... most people don't accept the fact that oppression hits everyone across the board. They deny that it affects them, and this keeps them from changing. What happens in RC is that people are given the information that oppression affects everyone to varying degrees. That it also affects white people as well as men ... ."

In commenting on their growth in awareness regarding poverty, three of the women made the following statements:

"I had a great deal of conflict. For instance, I didn't mind growing up poor. I knew that I
didn't have any material resources, but I grew up with the belief that I didn't mind being poor. Now looking back, I realize that I would have had more to eat, had been able to afford good doctors and been healthier had I not been poor. I did not have to accept those deficiencies; "I grew up poor, but thought I was middle class. I realize now that I have been raised poor; it was a myth to believe otherwise";

"I grew up feeling we were poor but that I wasn't that affected by poverty. I think I'm very much affected by how poor we were but this awareness didn't catch up with me until very recently."

Another said:

"I'm more politically aware and less inclined to just take things for granted because they come from 'authority.' I have gotten political. I have helped to organize the Asian community. Oppression and liberation are key factors to be dealt with, and taking on the struggle against that oppression is part of my growth and development."

Another woman stated that she became more effective in her political activity and was much more visible; while another admitted that:

"I thought I was aware of racism, but I since have learned that I was not really that aware. I did not know that racism was a whole structure and a system of oppression, rather than an individual practice or attitude."

The women acknowledged RC theory's proposition that internalized oppression does not only give rise to a negative self-concept but also leads the individual -- when in a position of control over another group or person -- to adopt the behavior patterns of an oppressor. This is the case in
"standard" classist, racist, sexist and adultist behavior patterns, in which people categorized as having a lower class status -- Third World people, and women and children -- are made victims.

Even when an individual has no control over economic or other resources, as is the case with most Third World men in the United States, they exercise some control over Third World women. For example, one woman recognized that men in a sexist society often work off their personal frustrations with oppression of their families by bullying or dominating them. The continuing battle between men and women reflects the basic powerlessness caused mainly by oppression. In fact, a major way to promote patterns of internalized oppression is to maintain divisiveness between men and women.

Several women said that they had come to recognize the positive side of Third World men and now viewed them as possible allies. One woman stated that because internalized oppression is accompanied by feelings of blaming the victim -- and these are often directed at one's own group -- she used to blame Third World men. Now she recognized that they were also victims of oppression, deprived of resources, and hard pressed to cope with the problems of daily life. For instance, machismo, a product of socialization, is more a manifestation of oppression than it is an authentic practice
of a particular culture. Machismo is a pattern of dehumanization that requires men to agree with or to accept a type of behavior and action that dehumanizes them. Men are individually blamed for this inhuman practice. In blaming individual men, the women recognized that they were not looking at society which peddled and sold this concept as though it were an acceptable and legitimate group culture. They accepted that they ought to recognize the elements of oppression within the society that used sexism to reinforce machismo practices. All the women reported that they had been able to put sexism in this perspective. As one stated:

"I never really realized that sexism had had such an impact upon my life, which is why I probably spent so much time studying and reading about it."

All the women became much more aware that it was possible to combat and overcome sexism. They came to realize that their existing limitations were not inherent or irreversible. For instance, with regard to men, one woman declared:

"I did not come to realize that sexual harassment -- sex and violence -- was part of the oppression and not an inherent condition of men."

"Part of my unawareness was that I was not able to see men as human beings. I have come to realize now that men are not supermen. They are not able to do everything and leap tall buildings at a single bound, or anything like that. They are human beings with many of the same distresses that women have. They just have been trained different and they deal with distresses differently."
In essence, all the women agreed that they came to accept the possibility of men becoming able to give up their oppressor roles, becoming more human -- and allies of women.

One woman recognized that her role as a parent put her in the pattern of being an oppressor, manifesting oppression through adultism. She stated that she was able to give up her "age chauvinism" in order to improve her relationship with her daughter and treat her rationally. Another said she became a better parent as she discharged and her awareness grew.

Two of the women claimed that they gained the ability to recover from their accumulated oppression. For one, attending Third World workshops where discussions and discharge took place, hearing people sharing their experience with oppression, enabled her to recognize her own internalized oppression. This helped her to place her oppression in perspective and break the limiting isolation and alienation. Thereafter she began to make decisions about herself, broke off an oppressive relationship, and began to develop her potential more fully. Two women claimed that they were able to recover occluded and repressed memories regarding incest and other sexual abuse. Another said:

"Working on oppression and internalized oppression, helped me to remember my past. Before RC I felt like I had really had no history, that it was completely gone -- there was absolutely nothing -- I even had amnesia about the rape that happened when I was a child."
One of the women described herself:

"... I was ignorant and covered up a lot of what had happened to me. I was viewing the world with mistrust. That was a heavy burden to carry. It was taking an accumulated toll on me. Now I can trust myself fully and feel that it's okay to be human. I can relax with myself. I like myself. ... RC theory about personal liberation has had wonderful effects on me and knowing that changes like those I experienced can happen in society is very appealing."

Another woman recognized:

"I used to be very strict with myself. I translated it to all my relationships ... to my daughter, my parents, my boyfriend, my work, everything. Now, there has been a lot of relaxation in that area. I have been able to stop being so hard on myself and others. ..."

Other changes the women underwent deserve brief comments. One participant gained skills that helped her to think and to communicate better; another is writing more; one now appreciates aspects of herself when a child. Others stated that they could see themselves as being absolutely powerful women; one now saw herself as a powerful instead of as an angry woman.

One woman added: "... I've come to think that struggle is not something awful. My struggle has helped me to shape the person that I am ..." All of the women stated that they had made more connections with other people, especially with other Third World people.
The emphasis on bringing different oppressed groups together resulted in alliance-building. This helped the women become aware of aiding other groups while working for their own liberation. As one participant explained: "... being able to think simultaneously of my liberation as well as that of others has been a very powerful dimension which helped to overcome internalized oppression . . . ."

A significant factor confirming the premise of this study is the women's declaration that the RC model was effective in helping them integrate their knowledge, their perceptions and their actions, and enhance how they felt about themselves, and clarify how they saw the world. Five of the women stated that the integration they had achieved has helped them to connect personal change with political change, and has enabled them to sort out and integrate their political activities. As one woman put it:

"I have come to ask if intellectual awareness, political awareness -- is this good in itself? I think not. I have stopped the process of putting myself down internally and rid myself of the impatience which is an act of violence against myself and others. I was extremely impatient about what I knew and how to put it into action. I have become much more directed in my connection between my work and the way I use RC and how that helps me. I realize now that a great deal of my impatience had to do with feelings regarding expectations. I now see that the feelings are connected to myself and my own expectations about myself. So I have slowed down from the compulsive attitude of expecting unreal things from myself and from others. I understand and accept myself more fully. I am more aware of my own process. I have come to realize that patience versus impatience affects
politics in a much more positive way. Integrating external vision to internal concept and applying it to myself is a must. Otherwise, I cannot be politically effective. I am much more aware about oppression because I can see what is missing in the personal part of the politics. I believe that personal change is vital to societal liberation.

A politically active woman stated:

"The relationship between intellectual awareness and the integration of this awareness and knowledge and the implementing of these into one's own personal life and action are significant factors. In doing political work, I've also been feeling very isolated. I now see that I have more rights to be more connected to more people. It is important to put into action what I intellectually know, but also applying it to myself."

Another woman added that RC had helped her link the awareness of internalized oppression with the causative external oppression.

In fact, all the women reported that integration was a major accomplishment of their work with their internalized oppression and ongoing external oppression. Discharge, reevaluation, and gaining information helped them eliminate their internalized oppression.

Taking action was seen as a very important aspect of RC. While counseling emphasized discharge, taking actions without allowing restimulation and distress to immobilize or limit them as they pursued their goals in the world allowed the women to create major changes and accomplish great movement in their lives. One woman who was about to complete her dissertation admitted that managing to concentrate on
her goals was very significant. For another, goal setting and action led to discharge -- often without her attention on the discharge -- but with powerful results.

One woman analyzed the significance of discharge that enabled her to act:

"Discharge of painful emotions and continuing to evaluate ... to take a look at the distress in a clear way. Removing more of the distortions of the perceptions to clear up my intellectual and emotional intelligence -- the direction to carry on those insights into daily living, and follow through the actions in an integrated fashion, is a very valid tool that I have never seen anywhere else."

All the women highly praised the RC technique and its emphasis on powerlessness without limits and commitments (appendix IV), which they claimed gave them tremendous support to make changes. According to them, they were able to set up their own goals, move at their own pace and evaluate their own growth; they no longer accepted themselves as victims. All of them stated that the concept of changing their point of view, taking full charge and responsibility for their lives (appendix IV), regardless of the oppression, led them to grow and take necessary risks in their lives.

Women's Current Status

Brief personal reports from the women on where they are in their lives follow. All claimed a higher political consciousness; five considered they were doing more effective
political work towards liberation; and four saw themselves in transition. Although the women consider that they were living their lives more powerfully than ever before, they were continuously evaluating their perceptions and the actions they wanted to take in politics and in their lives. They were interested in improving the political activities they had undertaken in the past. One woman who was politically inactive prior to RC and remained so, stated that she understood the process she was undergoing and that it helped her to continue to develop herself.

Nine of the women worked full time either in professional or clerical positions. One reported that she was organizing herself to write as well as to continue evaluating her goals. One woman was in the process of changing her profession.

With regard to education, one woman is a full-time and another a part-time student. Another is considering alternative goals in education; one said she was hoping to return to music, which she had once loved but had since had to drop. Two others were trying to meet financial needs and then return to school.

In reference to personal relationships, one woman stated that she was improving her parenting as she developed a better relationship with her daughter. Several other women who were parents claimed that they were developing better
relationships with their children — and pointed this out as an important stage in their development.

A few of the women reported that they were establishing healthy relationships with men, with one thinking in terms of a permanent relationship.

All of the women praised RC highly, stating that the process was working for them and that they were fully aware that their growth process was an ongoing one.

Limitations of RC

In considering actual or potential limitations of RC, one woman stated:

"It is important in counseling that we contradict not only feelings for discharge with verbal directions, but that we create physical space, and include insulation of rooms and windows. This would reduce inhibition and fear of being heard, thus encouraging heavy discharge."

One woman felt RC ought to pay attention to the body, seeking to ascertain where its rigidities lay, as well as exploring more ways of developing better communication with it. As an example she noted:

"A client I once worked with claimed that as he reclaimed his affection for his father, the use of the right side of his body returned. It would help people with physical difficulties and problems with their health to recover by working directly on those physical areas as well as seeking discharge."
Pertaining to racism, one woman stated that a higher level of growth was needed. Often, she said, experiences with racism made it difficult for Third World clients to find safety and remain in RC. Further, another added, that while RC was the only process she knew that was applicable to and reached Third World people, the very small number of Third World people in RC was a great limitation. One woman stated:

"It is possible for RC to be as safe a place for Third World people as it has been for women. For instance, in spite of sexism in the world, there is a lot of safety and support for women to do what they must do with the theory and practice of RC. Women in RC generally feel that it is their process and they own it. Putting energies in this area for Third World people would result in major breakthroughs for the entire RC community."

As another woman added:

"Without this growth, it is difficult for both whites and Third World people to work together to eradicate the many problems that affect both groups, such as class oppression . . . ."

All of the women reported that while racism presented difficulties during their participation in RC, racist behavior was not related to the theory and practice of RC, but that it was indicative of the need for growth among white counselors. A few of the women stated that sometimes, perhaps because of a desire to build a community of Third World people, they felt pressure to take on leadership when not
fully ready, or to recruit new people for RC, instead of being encouraged simply to use RC for their own growth.

The level of effectiveness in counseling was a second area in which most of the women found a need for change. Several stated that they would like to see significant growth in the level of development and use of RC tools. A woman stated that timidity too often took hold and people did not counsel their clients with boldness. Another pointed out that:

"... Some co-counselors' superficial use of theory and seeking to help clients discharge primarily light experiences does not allow them to work on deep distresses of oppression. . . ."

Therefore, the counselor's fear often made him or her act superficially or insincerely. She adds:

"... I think that fear scares Third World people away because they are confronted daily with oppression . . . it is not only discharging their past distress, but also having to deal effectively every day with the oppression. These heavy emotions cannot be put aside until lighter ones are out of the way. Too often, the counselor gets scared or feels to blame for the oppression of the client and thus abandons the Third World client to the distress."

This situation is not limited only to white counselors; it also applies to Third World counselors -- they too ought become bolder and more effective. Several of the women stated that often Third World people got in touch too fast with too many deep emotions that dug at the roots of their
oppression. If they did not right away get the level of support they needed, they got too scared and ran out.

One woman reported leaving the RC group for a short while because she needed help to deal with heavy, painful emotions. Right after getting a grip on them, she returned to RC. She commented that no other process so successfully integrated world issues with personal development. She stated that although many people using RC still needed further development to become effective counselors, RC was a very powerful tool that changed people very positively. She recommended that RC leaders continue the direct emphasis on training counselors to deal with all aspects of oppression as bold, effective counselors. This emphasis would in turn be transferred to co-counselors and thus strengthen them and those whom they went on to counsel.

Another suggestion to help overcome limitations in RC was that counselors should take a more flexible and natural as well a more direct approach in order to enhance RC's capacity to reach people.

One woman said the real problem was that people in RC at the same time were at different stages of growth and had different backgrounds and needs, as well as different points of view. This required that different issues and problems be raised and dealt with openly. The further development of RC requires placing emphasis on handling conflicts more
openly and effectively, so that they would be fully resolved. Because the practice of RC applies effective tools to important worldwide issues, a demonstration of how RC achieved the resolution of conflicts and the solution of diversified problems among groups would provide a useful model for social change.

Several of the women wanted RC to place more emphasis on spirituality. One stated that she saw the positive potential of spirituality and wanted to see more celebration and integration of spiritual aspects in connection with RC and its emphasis on discharge, movement and action. A second woman stated that RC did on occasion use aspects of spirituality, such as making a circle round a person for whom healing was sought. This practice reflected the concept of getting rid of the evil spirit (i.e., distress) and positively acknowledged some deep and widely held cultural beliefs. The woman stated that she wanted to see more of these forms incorporated in RC; she believed that cultural forms when brought into RC provide relief from distress.

A third woman stated that to incorporate spirituality into RC helps not to open the door to false notions of spirituality that would confuse and distort basic RC theory. It could also help other possibilities of developing the personal spiritual concepts so necessary for growth, but which are often denied or obscured by oppression.
None of the ten women in the study found any major flaws or basic problems with RC theory or with its techniques. Instead, their comments were primarily related to the need for expansion of the practice of RC and continuing growth in the individuals who now use it. The women's main concern was to see an already powerful process that addressed their needs continue to develop its thrust and effectiveness, thus benefitting others.

Conclusion

This chapter confirms RC's premise that individuals must try to correct their perspective and, for example, fight the concept of supposed inferiority as an inherent condition, and must struggle against feelings of powerlessness and despair caused by external oppression. If they do not, they would never be freed of the distress and rigidity. They would remain in the "victim pattern" of oppression.

All of the women reported that RC helped them to gain insightful awareness of oppression. Even those women who, prior to RC, were politically knowledgeable benefitted further as they become clear of and got rid of internal barriers. Subsequently they were able to integrate their knowledge more fully, freeing themselves to be more effective in improving their lives and strengthening their actions.
In using RC, the women did not use it as an end goal in itself. Instead, they viewed RC as providing a process that they could personally master, and that would help them understand internal as well as external barriers. Knowing how to use RC they could become aware of the pain they had incurred, learn ways to combat it, determine how to act powerfully in spite of distress and oppression, and become aware of their progress. In sum, RC gave them a tool they could "own" and use to transcend internalized oppression and limitation, thus moving to eradicate the causes of external oppression.

All the women claimed that they had integrated RC into every aspect of their lives, stating they applied its philosophy and approach to their work, family, friendships, and efforts to bring about social change.

The strength of the women in this study is very obvious: all overcame aspects of the oppression they currently faced or had earlier internalized. A significant result of RC was that in spite of their oppression, the women struggled to remain human. Most probably a vision of the possibilities of life, of humanity and society outside the oppression, aided them in this. The women had a clear sense of injustice and believed they and others deserved better treatment and the resources necessary to enable them to maximize their humanness. The results of the study indi-
cate that making decisions to act powerfully in spite of and against the oppression, and moving towards the direction and goals they wanted, were determining factors in promoting and supporting the women's growth.

Although all the women in the study acknowledged class oppression as being the crux of all oppression, they appeared to be primarily concerned to eliminate internal barriers resulting from race and sex oppression. RC is a relatively new process for Third World people and they have not yet developed their own groups nor organized around their own primary concerns in relation to it. Because racism still exists within the nation's many communities, it remains difficult to provide Third World clients with the safety necessary for them to deal with issues such as class oppression. The women often have to concentrate their energies in obtaining safety and making a place in RC. Perhaps a subsequent study concentrating on class oppression could address the extent to which it is possible to use RC toward eradication of the class-based system. However, despite the limitations of this study, it confirms that all the women grew in awareness of class oppression.

The women's statements shed light on several aspects of RC. First, their comments validate RC's claim that it does not claim to take away feelings and emotions. It recognizes that these are authentic to and inherent in all human be-
ings. Rather, RC aims at undoing the accumulated distress that stems from painful emotions; it seeks to rid the individual of painful feelings. Second, RC functions from the standpoint that humans are, or can be, completely and fully powerful. It does not agree with any of the societal, cultural or religious views of any other philosophy that either assumes limitation to be part of the human condition or denies the "normality" of all people having intelligence and inherent power. Third, RC does not claim lack of validation, appreciation, cooperation, or inadequate relationships to be the cause of the problem. Since these adverse manifestations result from oppression, RC focuses on the oppressive society that causes them. Thus, RC's techniques and methods aim at ridding people of the internal distress that blocks their successful involvement in social praxis.

In essence, RC gives people tools; they can then break down the hierarchy of negative values that the oppressive society imposes. RC makes more than one person/counselor in a peer relationship available to an individual: thus it eliminates or diminishes dependency on someone to figure things out for them. RC provides a systematic, long-term, inexpensive process to undo distress and achieve emotional breakthroughs. In summary, RC creates a supportive network which aims at reaching diversified groups and identifying and explaining differences and commonalities among them.
The study showed that RC has not established itself as the panacea or cure for any particular society. RC makes no claim that, in helping individuals recover lost aspects of their humanness from the internal oppression, it has in itself resulted in the creation of a better society or in societal liberation. RC does not propose reflection at the expense of action. Rather, reflection and awareness were to be used to support action in eradicating social oppression -- the primary cause of human limitation.

RC holds both the internal and external aspects of oppression must be identified and transcended for real personal change or empowerment to occur. The reports of the women in the study confirm this hypothesis. Although at different stages of development, rather than seeking comfort and adjustment, they were aware that they must have acted, or be ready to act, to transform oppressive society.

RC is powerful in that it discards what it refers to as "pseudo-reality"; it exposes the basic oppressive values that reinforce the societal status quo. It provides a way of deepening individual and group awareness through information sharing and discussion among peers. This analytic discussion of oppression, along with the discharge and evaluation of historical/past distresses, enabled the women to discard pseudo-reality. In sharing new information, in considering new possibilities of how people could live their
lives, in proclaiming people's potential for richness and brilliance, RC emphasizes the human reality outside the distress. RC raises people's standards and expectations about themselves, about others, and about society. This expanded vision does not derive only from the information and knowledge themselves. The process allows for the integration of intellectual knowing with the emotional being. Perhaps the key revolutionary aspect of RC is that as it gets rid of the blocks, it replaces the value content of words and meanings, enabling people to create positive values and productive norms as they seek liberation of themselves and transformation of the oppressive society.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The premise of this study is that the quality of Third World women's lives and their human potential to be loving, intelligent, cooperative, powerful and effective has been limited by a class system that is competitive and exploitative, and has been impaired by unjust practices of racism and gender oppression. As has been shown in preceding chapters, class, race and sex exploitation and oppression are interconnected. Although people struggle to transcend adverse circumstances and the limitations these cause and though they fight to influence their environments, dehumanizing experiences have damaging effects on their psyches as they internalize the external oppression.

This study seeks to determine whether Re-Evaluation Counseling, a peer counseling/educational model, goes beyond other attempts to integrate multifaceted socioeconomic and political dimensions with personal, emotional and psychic aspects, particularly for a group of Third World women. The ten participants in the study were self-selected; they were of Asian, black, Latina and Native American backgrounds.
The qualitative method was adopted for this study. It was applied to the interview and response analysis components to enable the women to evaluate the effectiveness of the RC peer counseling/educational model. This model gave them the tools to participate in their own process of psychic liberation. An open-ended Interview Guide enabled the women to evaluate in their own terms their vivid experiences with exploitation and oppression and the permanent outcomes that resulted from them. The qualitative method made it possible for the women to provide in-depth information on the applicability and usefulness of RC to their concerns. It also provided them with an opportunity to explore and document the changes and growth they underwent.

Results of the Study

The focal questions of this study addressed the perceived effects of RC on the Third World women. The preceding chapters reported the women's findings in several important areas. They are summarized in the paragraphs that follow.

First, after using RC, the women came to view their personal problems as stemming from oppression. In those cases where the women were already knowledgeable about political oppression, they reported undergoing qualitative changes as
they grew in awareness and integrated their political understanding with their personal growth.

Second, all the women reported that specific aspects of RC helped them to overcome psychic limitations resulting from oppression and its internalization.

Third, all the women demonstrated that with the use of RC their sense of self underwent a change as they became more aware and more powerful. Their sense of their own behaviors and those of society was transformed as they perceived social conditions more rationally; they became more effective as they came to view themselves as powerful instead of as victims.

Fourth, the women are now either engaged in making changes in society or are in a transitional stage whereby they are evaluating themselves and their options and making decisions to act and improve their lives and their world. All of these represent the contribution of this study in adding to contemporary understanding of the problems of and the solutions to institutionalized oppression.

Discussion of Findings

The women in this study personally confirmed that the majority of their hurts stemmed from oppression. In relating their experiences and the consequences of those experiences they confirmed the premise of this thesis: that
class, race, and gender oppression had detrimental effects on them.

They viewed capitalism and class oppression as both limiting their material resources and causing them to be mistreated. These deprivations, along with the mistreatment, led to distress and to limitations of their human potential. A social system based on private property promoted competition that increasingly forced them as workers to compete for economic survival. Because of pervasive socioeconomic stratification, the women were assigned inferior positions, as defined by money and status. Lacking resources of work and wealth they suffered physical and economic deprivation. They subsequently internalized the oppression that resulted from the low-status, often degrading jobs that they and their families had to endure and survive on. Their basic need for work that would provide a livelihood and sustain self-worth was frustrated, undermined, or only poorly met. This situation contributed to and reinforced negative self-image.

Competition for jobs and for basic necessities such as food and for nonmaterial needs such as education (which for most of the women had been inadequate) caused them to spend the greater part of their lives struggling to earn enough money to secure these needed resources. Yet, like others, they were blamed in a larger sense for depleting resources.
Competition, they learned, bred antagonism between and within classes and groups as these were pitted against each other and as everyone perceived others as enemies. In this type of stratified society, racism and sexism meant that Third World people were generally assigned lower status positions and were paid less than whites, with women paid less than men. Capitalism can thus be seen to reproduce and reinforce both racism and sexism. Competition necessarily became basic to life, and thus affected all aspects of it. The women observed and reported the effects of competition in education, housing, and health; even in the family as children they and their siblings had had to compete for attention and resources. Relationships at all levels broke down; the possibilities for alliances diminished.

Alienation is a consequence of a class-based society; it is promoted by stratification, division of labor, and competition. Workers do not decide what is produced: they suffer psychological injuries in never initiating plans or making decisions. Their creative powers are diminished; because they do not see finished products, they lose all connection with their work and lack any sense of creativity.

The women highlighted alienation as a problem; they reported being confined, limited and facing distorted values at all levels. Alienation adversely affected all areas of their lives; they emphasized feeling divorced from their
creativity, from each other, from family and friends, from society as a whole. They even felt estranged from
themselves.

At the ideological level, consumerism gave the women an incentive to become part of the society. Throughout their lives they lacked consumer power; deprivation was an everyday experience. They reported that they often felt almost unaware of deprivation or felt unworthy of having access to resources. Consequently, this caused them to have low self-esteem. Consumerism and consumer values seemed to offer the promise of supplying needed goods, and benefits such as education.

The women provided examples that demonstrated how a class-based society took advantage of and promoted racism. They stated that in their own experience class inequities were continually manifested in racist practices and that they, as workers, were underemployed and further devalued. Racism, they stated, was used as a means of fermenting racial prejudice and thus reinforced divisions and antagonisms at all levels. Blame was placed on those afflicted; in essence, society blamed the victims -- because of their race and class -- for the assaults they suffered. Other experiences, such as pressure to assimilate, the women perceived as reflecting a hostile society that sent conflicting and
contradictory messages, rather than as an acceptable aspects of a "melting pot" society.

Society's justification of the inequities provided an excuse to reinforce racism; the assumption was promoted that Third World people were endowed with inferior intelligence, that they were culturally or language-deprived, and were somehow less human. Even skin color -- lighter vs darker skin -- was used as a divisive, competition-producing weapon.

The women's reports demonstrate that all these practices, which influenced society's policies as well as its attitudes, deprived them of access to external resources and caused them emotional and psychic harm, further reinforcing alienation. The women reported feeling hopeless about the possibility of racism ever being eradicated: they believed whites would leave them isolated, victims of inhumane practices of racism.

The consensus opinion of the women was as that as females they held only second-class citizenship. They described facing discrimination in their productive roles as their worth was devalued at all levels to an extent greater than their white counterparts experienced. Having to work for bare subsistence, rather than for gaining support and resources, these women were depicted first as enemies, robbing men of their jobs and resources, and second as Third World
women, robbing Third World men of their place in society and in the family.

Whether the women worked in the labor market or not, they were seen as the responsible agents of household maintenance and as primary parenting agents. Not only did the socially imposed division of the sexes, based on gender identity, dehumanize and limit men and women, it also resulted in the suppression of natural similarities. In placing a heavy burden on women, this division substantially contributed to their isolation.

It is noteworthy that all ten women in the sample interviewed for this thesis were victims of violence, either physical or emotional. This violence was manifested through rape, incest, or through being a battered wife -- or, in the most tragic cases, a combination of these assaults.

As the women internalized the oppression they experienced, they developed distress patterns. As the oppression was exacerbated and reinforced by society's systems of justifications and rationalizations, which permeated the attitudes of church, school, family, and other institutions, the distress patterns became chronic.

The women reported that internalized oppression resulted in a variety of effects on their self-image. Some felt they were not smart enough and that they should settle for less or not expect their needs to be fulfilled, as though
they did not deserve success. Because of difficult family conditions and often hostile environments, parents had been very harsh with these women during their childhoods, placing excessive demands on them and expecting them to take on adult roles. While this contributed to the development of many positive strengths and skills, it also cost the women any chance of normal childhoods. Some of them reported that this caused them to internalize the harshness they had experienced, and develop frozen needs to have a childhood or to re-live what little childhood life they could recollect.

All the women struggled to overcome the inhumane conditions of their lives, all claimed that their awareness developed as they came to understand that the internalized oppression, as stipulated by RC, led to a damaging link between two extreme types: oppressor and the oppressed. They recognized that they had "agreed" to be victims, or had subsequently adopted a role of oppressor, primarily in their role as parents, in which capacity they often behaved as adultists. In their findings, the women emphasized that oppression affected all segments of the population, although in different ways.

All the women in the study concluded that emotional distresses and limitations of human potential had external and objective sources, not subjective or biological ones.
All found that the RC model incorporated this consideration. Thus they felt attracted to RC and were prepared to use it. The women found the principles of RC to be valid and effective and they integrated RC into every aspect of their lives. The significant finding is that in spite of the oppression, the women had struggled to remain human; this was their primary strength and greatest victory. Making decisions to act powerfully in spite of and against the oppression were also the most significant demonstrations of the women's growth.

Conclusion

This author/researcher considers that the reports the women in this study have made of their experience with RC confirm the validity of and reinforce the main premise of RC. That is: inherently powerful human beings face limitations of their potential as a result of the stifling effects of an oppressive system that becomes internalized. The hypothesis holds that natural emotions face constraints and become part of the oppression. The women's experiences confirmed this; they had to delve into their pasts to get rid of old feelings and blocks that kept oppression intact. Subsequently they struggled to overcome obstacles and to transcend circumstances and thus influence their environments and the larger society. The women's experiences show
that with the use of RC people can recover aspects of their potential to be intelligent and powerful, and can be freed to act on their own behalf as well as against the oppression. Each individual should act on his or her own behalf; each will succeed to a different degree. However, all can make personal changes and also seek and find the means to change society.

RC's role in providing people with tools and thus enabling them to participate in their own process of self-development adds to its effectiveness: the women gain additional strength through knowing that they are taking charge and managing much of their growth and change.

As is the case with many people facing oppression, the women in the study spent most of their lives in a continuing battle for existence. Their struggle was possible only because they did not accept their dehumanization as a reality, although it was an objective fact. They recognized their distress and difficulties resulted from unjust practices that had engendered violence even in the oppressors. This in turn dehumanized the oppressors as well as the oppressed.

Because oppression is a tangible distortion of being fully human, sooner or later the oppressed struggle against the conditions that made them victims. In the struggle for humanization, in overcoming class exploitation, race and sex oppression, and seeking to affirm themselves as human be-
ings, the oppressed realize the possibility of transcending their circumstances. RC is a model that can help oppressed people to accomplish these goals. All the women in this study sought to fulfill higher aspirations as they struggled to overcome the limitations imposed on them and fought to obtain the means and resources to develop their potential. Therefore, on a long-term basis, they demonstrated that life is not merely the struggle for survival. To accept survival as the only goal in life is to collude with the oppressor. The women, believing that life is meant to be fully realized, had the vision and courage to try to transcend their oppression.

The women claimed that RC helped spark the vision and provide the courage. Thus, RC can be of value to millions worldwide. The counseling process gives rise to the development of new self-awareness; from this, new political awareness can result. People who have emerged from an oppressive society can bring new strengths to bear in fighting to create a more just and humane world for everyone.

Application of RC

This in-depth study of a small sample of Third World women shows RC to be effective in helping the women strengthen their self-images, cope with problems, achieve positive results in understanding and transcend adverse ex-
periences. It is a model that can be applied to other women. Although no other in-depth study has been done on RC on a group of this or similar composition, a great deal of concrete work has been conducted by RC participants in other countries. These participants are applying RC to the gender, cultural/ethnic class, age and liberation issues that affect them and their particular countries. Similarly, the applicability of RC to education in order to enhance reading and writing skills and to help people to overcome learning blocks must be recognized. RC can be used externally to change or eradicate oppressive educational structures.

Though RC is described here in relation to women's struggles, it is not limited in its scope to one sex. An increasing number of men are using RC to help them overcome their limitations and act more powerfully. Many are concerned to end sexism and other oppressive structures which continue to keep millions of people powerless. Middle- and upper-class people have also found RC to be an effective tool in their struggle to end dehumanization of themselves.

RC is also being used by groups that seek to work on issues of sexual abuse such as the experience of incest or rape. RC is widely use with families and children, particularly with parents who are trying to overcome their experience of oppression and combat the isolation it forced upon them and which now, as parents, they wish to overcome.
Physicians, mental health professionals, university lecturers and teachers are also applying RC concepts and techniques in their professions.

Appendix IV depict some of the techniques diverse user-groups are employing with RC. The literature available on the application of the RC model to different groups and issues, derived from the responses of thousands who have used and benefitted from RC, is obtainable from Rational Island Publishers (see bibliography).

Significance

As this study has demonstrated, RC is an effective tool in linking personal emotional hurt to its most common source: societal oppression. RC can therefore correctly claim that external oppression is the major source of the distresses and limitations of ordinary people. If properly used, RC is a powerful tool for social change. This model for change could be applied to other Third World women in the United States, as well as to Third World people internationally.

RC is an excellent model for positive change in other contexts. It can help political activists to avoid organizational platforms born of dogma or painful emotion, and to work to free people from internalized oppression and to enable them to make alliances not only with their own group
but with others. Thus activists can transcend group differences and operate out of fraternity rather than paternalism or liberalism, concentrating on building coalitions; e.g., working class, women, Third World men, etc.

Long-term organizing could call for a program to seek unity among all groups -- working class men and women, Third World women, etc. However, effective RC-based change will not occur without consistent, patient action and thinking. The first requirement is to encourage people to commit themselves to pursue the struggle to victory. This means developing a program for liberation that includes the goals of all peoples. Such programs must be easily understood by all who will be affected. Their planning requires patience, dialogue and willingness to change policy when basic elements are found to be incorrect or inadequate. The inclusion and participation of all is the key tenet of RC; RC holds that full liberation can only by accomplished when all oppressed groups are liberated to create an egalitarian society.

Limitations of this Study
A. No measurements have been made as to which aspects, or the degree to which certain aspects, of the RC process benefitted the women's growth process. For instance, did counseling on later hurts from class, race and sex oppression prove more significant, or only as signif-
icant as counseling on early childhood hurtful experiences that created frozen needs?

B. What activities other than RC were going on in the women's lives that could have enhanced their growth?

C. If the women had disagreed with RC theory, could they have still made the changes and experienced the growth they claimed without using RC?

D. No documentation has been compiled as to the effectiveness of providing RC information and tools to individuals who resist undergoing emotional/psychic changes, or who do not admit that external pressures require using internal methods to free the psyche.

Recommendations for Further Study

No in-depth study of this kind of oppressed Third World women has ever been conducted before. To extend current knowledge, it would be useful to: (a) examine and track another group similar to that which who participated in this study, and concentrate on levels of development, with emphasis on specific aspects of RC that helped them develop and grow; and (b) study a comparable group who dropped out of RC and record what other experiences or conditions in their lives helped them grow.
An obvious quality that all the women in the present study exhibited is personal strength. Although no formal measure was made of the dynamics which may have produced this strength, to attempt such measures in a future study may prove beneficial.

Two other significant areas for further study might be:

A. What significant steps or motivating factors lead individuals to become politically active in non-status-quo activities, with the purpose of ending societal oppression and deformation?

B. Why does the same oppression: (1) cause some individuals to become stronger and more resilient, better able to combat their own and others oppression, and (2) cause other people to become destructive towards self and others, and ineffective in taking charge of their lives, or even cause them to join the exploiters and become oppressors?
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Chicano Communications Center, ed. *450 Years of Chicano History in Pictures*. New Mexico, 1976.


Duncan, Joyce, ed. "Internalized Oppression," In Black Re-emergence, vol. 2, pp. 5-10. Seattle: Rational Island Publisher.


APPENDIX I

I. The Development of Re-Evaluation Counseling

In 1950, after considering certain almost accidental experiences with a person whom deep distress had rendered non-functional, Harvey Jackins of Seattle concluded that people could spontaneously improve their thinking and free themselves from distress if they were listened to open-mindedly and permitted to do the crying, shaking, laughing and talking that they tended to do spontaneously.

Jackins had been a union and political organizer and aware of the oppression many groups of people in contemporary society experienced. Thus, from the beginning, he was interested in how Re-Evaluation Counseling (RC), which he had developed, could be used to promote the liberation of such people from oppression.

After some twenty years of the theoretical and practical development of RC in Seattle, people began to teach what they learned about RC to people in other parts of the United States and, eventually, in many other countries. At present, several hundred thousand people in some forty countries regularly use Re-Evaluation Counseling.

As RC spread to new localities, students, faculty and professionals were the first groups to participate; but RC
is now practiced by people of all backgrounds. In the last few years, many Third World women have participated in RC. Some individuals -- including this author -- are seeking to extend its use and development specifically for Third World populations.
The structure of Re-Evaluation Counseling

Re-Evaluation Counseling is a theory and practice whereby people take turns listening to each other and assisting each other with emotional discharge. The Re-Evaluation Counseling Communities is a loose association of people who learn from and assist each other in carrying out Re-Evaluation Counseling, primarily in a Co-Counseling mode. (That is where two individuals take turns being counselor and client; listening and being listened to.) The majority of the work of Co-Counseling and the organization of the Communities is carried out without financial compensation. Teachers and workshop leaders are paid for specific work they do, but the fees are generally low and the motivation to counsel is not primarily for financial return, but for the development of counseling communities.

Money raised by class and workshop fees is used to pay for the use of facilities, food and other expenses incurred by the class or workshop. A portion of all income received is put into a special fund to support outreach to new populations and make RC counseling skills and information available to them.
In general, class fees and workshop fees are consciously kept low, and scholarships (supported by outreach funds) are made available to enable low-income persons to start upon development of Co-Counseling skills. The Co-Counseling sessions themselves are free; people are encouraged to have as many sessions with as many different Co-Counselors as they are able and willing to.

One-way counseling by a small staff of professional counselors in Seattle, where the original development of Co-Counseling took place, is offered on a fee-for service basis.
Co-counseling - description and guidelines

The approach of the counselor to the client in Re-Evaluation Counseling can be described in at least three ways.

It can be, and often is, said that if the counselor will simply pay enough open-minded attention to the client and show enough interest, the client will spontaneously talk about what he or she needs to, and will spontaneously find ways to discharge and re-evaluate the distresses that have proved burdensome. Many cases demonstrate this principle to be true; it is probably true in all cases except those in which the specific distress is obscured by other distresses.

The second approach assumes that the client has a certain amount of attention available to work with that is not embroiled in the distress. Since this amount is not known to the counselor ahead of time, a "spectrum of techniques" is presented, with the lightest ones pulling the attention of the client away from the distress and to the counselor, to the present situation and its positive elements: pleasant memories, past successes, etc. The counselor
checks that the client is functioning well at each stage before proceeding to the next level of technique. This next level will require more of the client's available attention, but also is likely to achieve faster discharge and quicker emergence from distress. This approach is helpful in providing the counselor, if he or she becomes confused or puzzled, with intervals in which to consider what to do next.

Experienced counselors often use a third approach. This is a general one which calls for the counselor to take three specific steps with each client. First: pay enough attention to the client to see clearly what the client's distresses are; second, think of all possible ways to contradict that distress; third, contradict the distress sufficiently, the "sufficiently" being reached when the client discharges.

In effect, each of the foregoing suggestions is a general guide to specific work, with a specific client, on a specific day. Co-Counselors are encouraged to think that the perfect counseling technique is the one that they create at the moment for a particular client at a particular time.

Guidelines for counselors

A client may begin by telling his or her life story to a counselor, or may have identified a specific area of hurt
and distress that he or she wants to work on. The counselor listens, pays attention and asks questions. The questions are not primarily for the counselor's information, but to assure the client of the counselor's interest and to guide his or her attention to the ideas, feelings and experiences likely to need and promote discharge. The client is encouraged when signs of discharge show. When the client slows down or stops, the counselor persistently guides (assists) the client back to the process of discharging.

Counselors listen, pay attention, support, validate and encourage self-direction by being confidently relaxed and by being completely interested. Counselors do not suggest, do not interpret, do not give "good advice," do not point out answers, do not interrupt discharge and do not "sympathize." To do any of these things would be to reflect the counselor's own stored-up distresses, and would inhibit the client.

Since the client tends to place complete trust and confidence in the counselor, he or she must not violate this trust by talking to others about the session. Confidentiality is crucially important. Complete courtesy in keeping appointments, in consistency in manners, attitudes and tone of voice are provided to clients as a matter of course.

Co-Counseling works on a roughly equal division of time. Individuals alternate the roles of counselor and cli-
ent. The two persons involved go to a private area. When three people counsel together, the time as client is evenly divided among them, with the second person being counselor and the third giving attention in a "three-way" counseling session.

**Some Forms in which Re-Evaluation Counseling operates**

In a Co-Counseling session, the counselor usually faces the client, giving the client attention while offering eye contact and supporting the client as much as possible. In giving attention, the counselor is also giving support and validation.

By offering eye contact and indicating attention to the client, the counselor allows the client to remain aware of both the present and the past simultaneously. A past distress, viewed in this way, is likely to be seen as distress and under such circumstances the discharge process is spontaneous.

The counselor's caring about the client is indicated by facial expression, tone of voice, posture and the questions that the counselor asks. The counselor maintains an open, accepting attitude of respect toward the client. This in itself is validating to the client and contradicts the distress and assists the client to hold a self-respecting attitude toward him or herself and his or her experience.
In beginning a session, the counselor often asks the client to share a recent pleasant incident or a positive new development in his or her life. The purpose of this is to focus attention on the positive aspects of life and living. Thus, the present incidence of distress is often overlooked, and this drawing away of attention from distress allows for it to be contradicted, enabling discharge to occur.

"Discharging" is the physical release of stored tension and emotional distress. Specific indications of discharge are laughter, animated or reluctant talking, yawning, perspiring, angry noises with violent movement (tantrum), trembling and shivering, tears and sobbing. Discharge is a natural healing process which allows the client to eliminate emotional hurts and pains, thus restoring intelligence and other inherent qualities.

Example of a counseling session:

The counselor in a co-counseling session may ask or say:

"What would you like to talk about?"

"How have you been feeling?"

And on occasions:

"What are you thinking?"

"What was that thought?"

"What do you mean?"
"What are you feeling?"
"What do you mean?"
"Tell me about it again?"
"Stay right with that feeling."

With the counselor's assistance the client continues to do in-depth thinking which brings him or her to the point of discharge and re-evaluation.

At the end of a session where distress has been dealt with, the counselor will often ask the client to talk about potentially pleasant events expected in the near future. Doing this tends to pull the client's attention away from the distress and puts him or her more in touch with current reality.

**Mini sessions**

Co-Counselors over the years have increasingly refined the use of co-counseling in what they call mini sessions. These are done in person or often over the phone. For a very brief period, just a few minutes long, each person takes time to clear his or her attention, by discharge, talking, etc., on any distress, in order to proceed more confidently with whatever activities they are about to undertake.
Teaching RC theory and practice

In order to improve counseling, RC individuals provide workshops, classes, theory discussions, lectures and gathering throughout the Co-Counseling communities. The people who become the most effective counselors and the ones who discuss the theory best are used as teachers and workshop leaders, often traveling to different localities in order to share with other co-counselors the continually growing theory, as applied to different groups of people.

During classes participants are urged to report on theoretical articles from the counseling literature. In addition, individual counseling session are often reported on in class. The client first gives the client's point of view about the session; then the counselor reports on it from his or her point of view; then other members of the class make any helpful suggestions they might have. The teacher will generally end the class with a summary of what has been said. Theory and practice are enhanced through this type of sharing.

Counseling on a relationship

Individuals who are desirous of improving their relationships may ask a third person to play the role of counselor. As counselor, he or she will ask each of the parties in turn all the things they like and enjoy about the other person, then all the difficulties they previously have with the
other person, then when they have had such negative feelings about someone else, and so on. Each person speaks while the other party listens without interruption. Relationship counseling require individuals to counsel separately and consistently on areas of distress.
I. Counseling techniques

Following are some basic RC techniques used to assist the counseling process.

A. Think and listen

A very pure form of group work has been called the "think and listen." Here there is no intervention by any member of the group during each person's turn as a client, and no indication of agreement or disagreement by facial expression, words or otherwise. Each person is encouraged to think out loud, free from any expectation that what he or she says will be commented on then or later. In fact, the members make a commitment not to quote anything said during a think-and-listen session so that the whole session can be kept forever free from anyone's interaction. Experience shows that think-and-listen sessions free people's thinking to a remarkable degree.
II. Group sessions

A. Support groups on oppression and internalized oppression

The support group has become an important avenue for discharging distress, particularly distresses connected with oppression. In enduring a common oppression, each participant takes turns in speaking to the group about the things that he or she wishes to change, about self and about the situation, while the rest of the group listen. A designated member of the group acts as a counselor and intervenes when it seems helpful to the designated client to do so.

The discharge and sharing of thinking and information about each other's oppression helps people to understand, clear up, and evaluate oppressive circumstances. The specialized activities work on the oppression, internalized oppression and are a way of contradicting the oppression. These are not merely intellectual exercises since discharge is sought. In the process people are freed to evaluate and think consciously about the circumstances.

These sessions also take place before large workshops. The extra attention from the large group often enhances the ability of the person whose turn it is to be client to discharge and re-evaluate. Such work also services as a demonstration of how to counsel. Since Re-Evaluation Counseling is taught mainly by example, the demonstrations provide ex-
cellent opportunities for learning. At the end of the ses-
son an assessment is conducted with the best counselor
taking charge. Members of the group are asked to say what
they thought was good about the counseling, what they would
have done differently, and what they had learned from ob-
serving the counseling.

Examples of some of the questions which could guide a
group to structure sessions on oppression and internalized
oppression follow:

- "How have you, your group or your people
  been hurt/oppressed?"

- "When and how have you stood up against
  your or the oppression of your own people?"
  (e.g., against the injustices by the major-
  ity culture).

- "How have you internalized the oppression
  from the injustices?"

- "When have you acted totally outside of
  your internalized oppression?"

- "When have you interrupted members of your
  own group hurting each other?" (the inter-
  nalized oppression manifested onto each
  other).

- "How have you sought alliances with members
  of your group? Other groups?"

The experiences in oppression and its internalization
push everyone to transcend the limitations imposed on them.
Unity is sought and breakthroughs are always a highlight, as
all the women in this study emphasized.
B. Eliminating oppressed/oppressor feelings

A number of techniques have been developed for use with groups when dealing with the distresses left by oppression. Oppression imposed from the outside is usually found to be internalized in the oppressed person as a distress pattern. This seems to continue to operate within the person's psyche and impose invalidation and powerlessness. A member of an oppressed group is often asked in a class or workshop or session to state:

1. "What do you love/enjoy about your group?" (e.g., women, Third World people, white males, U.S. citizens, etc.).

   Taking authentic pride in one's own group helps contradict internalized oppression. Any form or direction of self-pride is sought.

2. "How have you been oppressed?" (e.g., category, such as child/working class/poor/woman, etc.).

   Tracing patterns of victimization helps individuals to connect with circumstances that lead to playing oppressor roles.

3. "Describe what has been hard about being a member of your group."

   The person telling these experiences of distress is helped to discharge the hurtful experiences.

One of the most important revelations of Re-Evaluation Counseling theory is that all people operate in some of both oppressed and oppressor roles. A women, for example, will
frequently have a session on her oppression as a female, but then will have another session working on the distress which has led her to oppress her children. Working in this way, the person is often asked to talk about his or her own oppression first as an oppressed person (as seen above). Then they are asked:

1. "Tell of times when you stood up against the oppression of someone else and how you championed the oppressed person in another category." (Any member of an oppressed group such as a laborer, a child, a Third World woman or an elder.)

2. "State exactly how you interrupted the oppression of another individual."

3. "How did that feel?" (If the client cannot recall, ask him or her to fantasize a situation in which he or she interrupted someone else's oppression.)

It is important to refer the client to a specific incident of oppression that he or she can go back to and retell the incident with complete power, using a confident tone of voice and manner. The client is often asked asked to verbally fantasize or physically act out how it was done powerfully. Sharing an accomplishment before telling about a time of powerlessness is most important because it contradicts the guilt and self invalidation that so many feel concerning times they remained silent when confronted with oppression. Remembering successful experiences, a person is apt to feel empowered to repeat the success.
To assist a client who has either contributed to or gone along with the oppression of others, both the oppressor's and the oppressed's sides are taken into account. An individual in the oppressor role has been a victim of institutionalized oppression sometime in his or her life -- as a child, when physically different, etc., appendix IV. This past distress must be discharged to free the individual from oppressive patterns.

1. Tell about a time when you did nothing to stop oppression or gave support to the oppression of another person or group (i.e., going along with or contributing to the oppression).

The purpose of this step is to get the person in touch with how he or she has functioned in an oppressor role and then have the client describe and discharge those feelings.

Regardless of which group(s) the client belongs to or identifies with, the counselor must be nonjudgmental, assertive and supportive.

Generally, discharge occurs under these circumstances and the person tends to become free of the oppressive mannerisms or attitudes which had previously been part of his or her behavior, and to become an important ally for the oppressed person.

III. Powerfulness

Invalidation/oppression makes it difficult for most people to imagine what it would be like to have full power
over (be in charge of) their lives. The techniques of taking full power require the client to take charge of a situation at a given moment. The client, for instance, is asked:

1. to describe a situation in which he or she felt a loss his or her power.

2. He or she is then asked to behave out of total power, similar to a fantasy, to act out how he or she took power.

The counselor must be keenly attentive to the voice, body, posture, and choice of words the client uses to contradict the powerlessness he or she felt when hurt. A client may then be asked to describe how he or she is going to see that things are different from then on.

Another way of helping a client is to ask him or her to envision self as able to be, act, and behave as a completely powerful, intelligent woman or man in the world (feelings are elicited and the thinking is pursued):

1. "How would you describe yourself?";

2. "What would be or would have been different about you?";

3. "What would it all feel like?";

4. "What has to happen for you to get there?"

Discharge is sought, as well as choosing a powerful point of view (see below).
IV. No limits

The individual needs to know and act on the knowledge that he or she is the center of life. It is necessary to figure out what one wants for oneself and for others, never settling for compromise and exploitation. One must step boldly forward, accepting only the very best.

V. Choosing one's point of view

The individual, in spite of the oppression, decides that it is within his or her power to take action to change both internal and external circumstances. He or she chooses to be powerful instead of remaining weakened by the victimization he or she experienced. A client is assisted by affirming that there is a benign reality beyond the pseudo-reality created by distress. The individual then gears his or her action towards the realization of the vision of reality outside the oppression.

VI. Panel

A panel of people from different oppressed groups will often speak to all participants of a large workshop.

"What is great about being a Latina, Asian, Black or Native American woman?"

"What is hard about being a Latina woman?"

"What are you completely proud of as a Latina woman?"

"What do you wish others to understand about you? Your group? To respect?"
"What are some of the contributions your people have made? To your country, to the world?"

"What you do not want others to say or do again?"

"What do you require of others from this moment on?"

The exchange of information about the oppression under these noncombative, noncomplaining conditions often makes it possible for people who have played an oppressor role out of ignorance to re-evaluate.

VII. Commitment

The use of commitments has been developing in recent years. Commitments are promises which a person from an oppressed group makes. These are directed against the internalization of the oppression. In effect, it commits the client to go against the internal patterns left by the oppression and furnishes a contradiction which brings significant discharge. To have such a commitment against internalized oppression brings the client in session to more effective discharge with the same counselor than would happen without it.

The following are some examples of commitments drawn up for specific groups:

Latinos/as

In respect for my beautiful land and the enduring and proud people that inhabit it, I promise
that I shall cherish my culture and language, unite my people, and, in alliance with all peoples of the world, see that all oppressions are ended.

Black Persons

For the complete liberation of my beautiful, wise, strong and courageous black people, I solemnly promise I will always remember my own goodness and strength. I will eliminate every division separating us from each other and from other people. I will settle for nothing less than complete liberation, complete equality, complete opportunity and complete respect for everyone.

Women

I solemnly (fiercely, cheerfully) promise that, from this moment on, I will never again settle for anything less than absolutely everything. (Sometimes followed by a confident, growly laugh.)

Jewish

For the long-range survival of my people, I solemnly promise that, from this moment on, I will treat each person I meet as if she or he were eager to be my warm, close, dependable friend and ally, under all conditions.

Irish Heritage

For the long-range encouragement of my brave and noble people, I joyfully promise that, from this moment on, I will never again demean myself, or permit myself to be demeaned, nor permit any Irish person to be demeaned by anyone, including the person herself or himself, but shall stand as a proud example of the beauty, nobility, and wisdom of my wonderful people.

Southern United Stateser

I sincerely promise that, from this moment on, I will never falter in my pride in being a Southerner, in my love for the beautiful Southern land, for the thoughtful courtesy and caring of its people, for their often-obscured but always-persisting resistance to oppression, for all
our proud heritage and our brilliant future. I shall never lose sight of the fact that all people of the South are my sisters and brothers, not even if voiced by Southerners themselves. The real South will rise again!

**Young Persons**

I solemnly promise that, from this moment on, I will never again treat any young person, including myself, with anything less than complete respect.

**Men**

I promise that, from this moment on, I will be proud to be male and will seek closeness and brotherhood with every other man of every age, race, nation and class.

I will seek to restore to all men to discharge the cruel hurts that have been put upon us.

I will fight to end and eliminate the burdening of men with over-fatigue, over-responsibility and coercion into armed service where we have been brutalized and forced to kill or be killed.

I will permit no slandering or disrespect or blaming of any man for hurts which have been placed upon him.

I will cherish my birthright of being a good, intelligent, courageous and powerful male human.

**Parents**

I promise to remember always that I am a good parent, that I always have done the best I could, that I have passed on to my children as few of the hurts that I endured as a child as I could possibly manage, and that I have had to operate in a social structure that heavily oppresses all parents, and a social structure which I and other parents must change for the sake of ourselves and for the future of our children.
United Statesers

For the long-range flourishing of my beloved United States, I promise that, from this moment on, I will speak out and act against every injustice, no matter how long-established. I will insist that the ideals and goals which inspired the founding of our country and for which we have repeatedly striven and fought and sacrificed shall be lived up to.

The United States is my country. I shall forever claim her with pride in her every good quality and with determination to correct any past, present, or future wrongs. My United States! With freedom and justice for all!

Working Class

I solemnly promise that, from this moment on, I will remember to be proud that we do the world's work, that we produce the world's wealth, that we belong to the only class with a future, that our class will end all oppression.

I will unite with all my fellow workers everywhere around the world to lead all people to a rational, peaceful society.

I am a worker, proud to be a worker, and the future is in my hands.

Owning Class

I promise that, from this moment on, I will refuse to feel guilty or accept blame or isolation for the class position in which my birth or other events placed me, but will instead take full pride in my complete humanness. I will recognize and remember my close ties to all other human being from every oppression.

Some of the earliest distresses for all people, but especially for members of oppressed groups, relate to a negative, or hopeless, or despondent view of reality and to the assumption that one and one's fellows are powerless to do anything about oppressive and onerous conditions. In these
fields, Re-Evaluation Counseling is working more and more steadily to contradict these by the assumption of a basically benign reality in which the unbenign characteristics are a superficial, obscuring film left by distress of oppression and the assumption of total powerfulness as an inherent characteristic of every human, obscured only by powerlessness patterns which can be discharged.

A. **Exchange commitments**

An exchange commitment simultaneously enhances thinking and discharging as it increases safety between people. An exchange commitment entails two peer counselors who accept no limits in themselves and in working with each other. Each of them makes the commitment to work boldly on him or herself, and to be caring and committed to the concerns and growth of the other person. They exchange equal time as one assists the other. From seeing what these counselors are doing, other people gain insight and get enthusiastically motivated to do the same for themselves. In working with commitments the client is moved from the rigidity of "being in control." It is a flexible, aware process of discharging and moving toward more power.

The literature on Re-Evaluation Counseling listed in the bibliography further depicts the techniques described above. Further updating and information on these can also be obtained from the journal *Present Time* (see Kauffman in
bibliography), particularly vols. 50-57.
APPENDIX V

Interview Guide

Name ____________________________ Ethnic Identity __________________

Age _____ Education ____________ Religion ________________

Occupation _______________________ Income ________________

How long in RC ________ Residency _________________________

A. Background

1. Briefly state your life history. (Family background, Education, Class background, Work, and Religious History.

B. Perception of RC

2. How did you hear about RC? What brought you to RC? What made you think there was something in RC for you? What did you want to get out of this model?

3. How would you describe your role/participation/consistency with RC?

4. What have been the reasons for your staying with the process?

5. Is there any one thing or aspect about RC that you have found to be the most helpful to you? (e.g., co-counseling, classes, workshops, peerness, issues dealt with, third world activities, basic human assumptions, theory of oppression, internalized oppression, commitments, etc.)

6. What have you found the most effective about RC? The least effective?
C. **Self Validation**

7. How would you describe: (a) yourself before RC; (b) after RC. How would others describe you?; (c) Before RC?; (d) After RC?

8. In what ways did you appreciate/validate yourself: (a) before RC?; (b) after RC? In what ways did others appreciate you: (a) before RC; (b) after RC

9. In what ways did you not appreciate yourself: (a) before RC? (b) after RC?

10. What abilities, talents did you possess: (a) before RC; (b) after RC?

11. What abilities and/or talents do you still want to develop?

D. **Relationships**

12. What were your relationships in general like (a) before RC?; (b) after RC?; (c) with your family, before and after.

13. What would you still like to see happen with your relationships?

E. **Limitations and Hurts**

14. How have you been hurt?

15. What have been some of the most difficult experiences of your life?

16. In what ways/how has your potential/growth been encouraged? By whom? How? Discouraged or stifled?

F. **Oppression and Specific experiences with Sexism, Classism, and Racism**

17. How would you define oppression?

18. How have you been oppressed?

19. What experiences have you had with language oppression?
20. What are your views on and experiences of competition? Alienation? Isolation?

21. What was it like for you growing up as a woman?

22. What do you think it was like for other women?

23. What experiences did you have with sexism?

24. What experiences did you have growing up -- poor, middle class, working class?

25. What experiences have you had with racism?

G. Internalized oppression

26. Describe internalized oppression.

27. How has it affected you? Others, in general; Third World people; Third World women?

H. Sociopolitical Awareness

28. How would you describe the nature of class in this society? How would you describe the position of others to the class structure?

29. What has been your relationship to class?

30. Are there any similarities/differences among women regardless of class? Regardless of race?

31. How would you describe your political views before RC?; e.g., oppression, politics, social change.

32. Have your awareness and views changed since RC?

33. What, if any, is the relationship between intellectual awareness and the integration of this awareness and knowledge and the implementing of these into one's own personal life and actions?

34. Do you have any resentments or regrets regarding areas and/or skills that you were not able to develop due to the oppression?

35. How and where do you want to grow further politically?
36. What contributions do you make to the world because you are a woman? As a Third World person and woman?

I. Change and Growth: RC's Role and Assistance in This Process

37. Identify specific changes in your self since your initial contact with RC. What specific things about the RC model assisted you in this process?

38. How would you describe/evaluate where you are right now?

J. Where Do You Need to Move Next?

39. What are your concerns right now?

40. What areas of yourself warrant further change and development?

41. To what extent are you willing to change further?

42. Do you see an end goal? Or direction? If so, what does that look like?

43. Could you have undergone all the aforementioned changes without RC? How?

44. If you were going to be, act and behave as an extremely powerful woman in the world: (a) How would you describe yourself?; (b) What would be different about you?; (c) What has to happen for you to get there?; (d) What do you have to do?

45. In spite of your oppression and all the hurts you have endured, what kept you human?