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Women, Domestic Abuse, And Dreams:
Analyzing Dreams To Uncover Hidden Traumas
And Unacknowledged Strengths

by

Mindy Stokes

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Women's Studies
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Dedication

I dedicate this paper to my mother, Sue Ann, the first abused woman I knew and loved. Her strength continues to amaze me.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank K., my partner for her love, support, suggestions and editing. I would like to thank my friend Jeni, for helping me edit this piece of work as well. I would like to thank The Spring and the women of this study for allowing me to perform my research and especially J.B. for his help. Lastly, I would like to thank W.C. for helping me research this topic.

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ABSTRACT

Domestic abuse is the number one cause of injury to women in the United States. Women and their children flee everyday to shelters to escape the abuse. Once inside the shelters, material resources are rendered so that the women can continue to lead lives outside the shelter and different therapies are employed so that the women can better understand the abuse and their options once leaving. A type of therapy used in other therapeutic forums, such as patients sexually abused as children, is dream analysis. This type of therapy has allowed formerly traumatized victims a safe space to uncover hidden traumas, acknowledge them and begin to write new scripts for their lives. The theoretical view behind this paper is that dream analysis could be a feminist tool of empowerment for women participating in domestic abuse therapy. As a researcher, I performed research at The Spring, Tampa Florida's only domestic abuse shelter for women and their children. During the research, I observed multiple domestic violence group therapy sessions, interviewed the facilitator of this group, and

held personal interviews with five different women over a three month period. During these interviews, the women discussed in detail their lives, the abuse they sustained and their dreams surrounding the abuse. The women were asked to give interpretations of the meanings of their dreams, which are incorporated in the paper. Throughout the interviews, it was of vital importance that the battered women's standpoints were privileged and that they remained the "experts" of their own experiences. During this process, two points became clear: forgotten traumas resurfaced during dreamtime and the women understood they were "too good" for the abuse and should leave. It became clear that dream analysis could be a feminist tool of empowerment for this highly marginalized community.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

It is my intent to determine if victims of domestic abuse, specifically women in shelters, experience dreams regarding the abuse and whether or not recovery can be facilitated using dream analysis. I have used relevant literature on the subject of childhood sexual abuse and dreams as well as conducted research within a women's shelter. My research included semi-structured interviews with five women residing at The Spring in Tampa Florida, their domestic violence group facilitator, and five observations of domestic violence group therapy sessions. My research shows that there is a connection between trauma suffered and the unconscious effects of the abuse which come to light through the discussion of dreams. I intend to show that dream work can be a feminist tool for empowerment for women affected by domestic abuse. Previous literature on the subject suggests that victims of childhood sexual abuse can go on to live emotionally healthier lives using dream analysis. It is my theory that women living with domestic abuse can use the same dreamwork analysis that adults sexually abused as children use, rendering a similar outcome. This work is important because research connecting domestic abuse and dreamwork is lacking. Women suffering from domestic abuse have

been and are still invisible in today's society. It is my hope that connecting this research will give women alternative tools to empower themselves.

DOMESTIC ABUSE, THE INDIVIDUAL, AND SOCIETY

Domestic abuse is the number one cause of injury to women in the United States (Ferrato 13 and Jones 87). The next three causes of injury combined: muggings, rape and traffic accidents, do not equal the number of injuries perpetrated by domestic abusers. Most perpetrators of domestic violence are men (Ferrato 13 and O'Neill 457). Jane Caputi and Diana E. H. Russell label femicide, the act of killing women by intimate partners, the most extreme form of sexist terrorism (qtd. in Radford and Russell 15). Other types of homicide are declining in the United States (Jones 6-7). According to a feminist perspective, this imbalance in homicidal statistics is attributed to gender inequities evident in the lack of importance placed on women's lives which is mirrored in the justice system. Ann Jones postulates that the "law has never been able to address battering effectively because of its own peculiar structure" (23). Laws are designed to protect men from "the power of the state and to adjudicate conflicts between men, to preserve order in a society of men" (Jones 23-4). Women's rights have been subjugated while "male order" has been preserved by men

who have maintained power and privilege over women through physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Battering and femicide are not treated justly in the judicial system due to the patriarchal “nature” of the law. Jones discusses battering and the lack of protection for women in her book Next Time She’ll Be Dead¹. In other words, because our judicial system is controlled predominantly by men, and most violence is acted out by men towards women, the system tends to be more empathetic towards men.

The judicial system has begun to make changes in some areas. The Travis County Family Violence Task Force, located in Austin Texas, has made strides to decrease the prevalence of domestic abuse. Through their education about domestic violence they have affected “legislative, criminal justice, and law enforcement legal, policy, and procedural changes” (Wilson 201). An example of this is their “pro-arrest policy,” which states that police officers are expected but not required to make an arrest when they suspect domestic abuse (Wilson 202). Even though the batterer may not be arrested due to individual choices made by police officers, the policy regarding domestic abuse has changed. Ideally, the batterer should be arrested and removed from the home, but again, men are primarily the policy makers and

¹ Refer to Thurman v. City of Torrington and Balistreri v. Pacifica Police Department for a discussion of lack of protection for women seeking help from the judicial system.

may be empathetic toward males. A complete overhaul of the criminal justice system, which would encompass keeping women safe from their partners, doesn't seem to be a priority at this time. Nevertheless, the change in the policy is a starting point, and could set precedence for other communities and their criminal justice laws.

The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota, is a comprehensive community-based program involved in the intervention in domestic abuse situations. They list tactics of domestic abuse as: male privilege, intimidation, emotional and sexual abuse, isolation, use of children, economic threats, coercion, threats and the minimization or denial of the abuse (Worcester and Whatley 529). R. Barri Flowers agrees, listing the natures of domestic crimes as: physical, sexual, and verbal assaults, threats, intimidation, emotional abuse, neglect, and death (14). Domestic abuse includes acts of rape and sexual coercion, which are among the most damaging to women involved in abusive relationships. According to Jones, "batterers rape and rapists batter" (85). The Rural Women's Advocacy Program states, "approximately 1,155,600 adult American women have been victims of one or more forcible rapes by their husbands" (2). Sexual abuse is used as a tool for domination and coercion, it is a way for the abuser to gain complete access to his wishes and desires whatever they may be (Walker 6). Along with sexual abuse, psychological abuse is known

to be debilitating in ways far more damaging than physical abuse according to most women (Jaffe et al. 51). Psychological effects such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, low self-esteem and substance abuse are often reported by battered women (Cascardi et al. 249, Jaffe et al. 51, and Orava et al. 181).

Domestic violence threatens women's lives on individual and societal levels. On an individual level, women can't leave due to economic, physical or psychological reasons. Women often want to leave their abusers but believe the abuser might cause them deadly harm. According to the Rural Women's Advocacy Program, their chance of death increases 75 percent when they leave (2). When women are forced to stay in the abusive situation, they often suffer emotional and psychological disorders such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, and drug and alcohol abuse to name only a few (Brokaw et al. 31 and Orava et al. 168). According to Greenfeld et al. quoted in "Abject Economics," women endure financial consequences; they lose \$18 million each year due to intimate partner abuse (Moe and Bell 30). Another consequence of battering can also be reflected in trips to the emergency room and repeated calls to the police. Battering also threatens the lives of unborn babies, each year many women miscarry and "countless birth defects and abnormalities can be attributed to battery of the mother during pregnancy" (Jones 87). Rural Women's

Advocacy Program states that "60% of all battered women are beaten while they are pregnant" (2). In sum, women's lives are affected on individual levels making it seemingly impossible to leave.

Domestic violence not only threatens women's lives but is also a detriment to society as a whole. The tone of violence perpetuates the idea that women are second class citizens. As such, they are devalued in a society that renders them powerless. This devaluation is evident in women's lack of access to material resources. More often than not, women are the caretakers/homemakers and have not accumulated work experience or education. If women do work for material gain, financial losses extend to their employers resulting in a loss of five billion annually (Moe 30). This is due to women's inability to work because of physical and psychological injury. Another form of institutional and/or macroscopic oppression (sexism) is evident when violence is normalized in our language. For example, male tee shirts worn as underwear are commonly called "wife beaters".

A HISTORICAL GLANCE

The women's movement of the 1970s gave birth to the emergence of battered women's shelters. These shelters provided non-violent living spaces for women and their children. They were and are essential in the safeguarding of battered women's lives and allow

women to get back on their feet once they have been displaced from their homes and jobs. Shelters provide programs that consist of material resources which include job placement, education, child care, transportation, medical assistance, housing resources and legal assistance (Wilson 208-9). Social workers provide individual and group therapy as do formerly battered women. This feminist dynamic privileges battered women's standpoints and allows them to be "experts" because of their experiences. This mentoring replaces a "pathological" model with a "consciousness-raising" model. In other words, domestic abuse was demedicalized and in turn the solution to the problem of abuse rested in community based support networking groups. This provides women, who have historically been isolated, an opportunity to understand their abuse through the experiences of other women.

In the beginning of the battered women's movement, shelter organizers used the ideology of feminism. One of the main components of the movement was that battered women remained the "experts" of their own lives, which ensured that their standpoints were privileged. Today, shelters do not always embody a feminist standpoint due to money contributions made by the federal, state or local level (Kendrick 152). This has created a model where battered women are seen as pathological rather than viewing battery as a tool of

oppression and control. Some shelters today focus on the emotional aspect of abuse instead of providing material resources which would allow the women to leave the batterer. Nonetheless, seeking help from a shelter is one the first steps in recovering from the debilitating effects of domestic abuse. In the shelter isolation is broken and women learn how to help each other understand the cycle of abuse. Group therapy provides women with the opportunity to share their experiences and hear how others have coped with similar situations. This feminist model situates violence within the larger scope of patriarchy, denouncing the violence and shifts the blame from women to male perpetrators (Kantor et al. 222).

Domestic violence groups were born from a model of feminist consciousness-raising groups of the 1960's and 1970's. Ginny NiCarthy has outlined practical steps battered women use to recover in group therapy: women are the best "experts" on their own lives, women teach one another the sociological aspect of their subjugation, institutionalized concepts of gender are damaging to women, individual women are powerful and collectively their power can be great, and women provide the best emotional support and practical help to one another (25-6). In group therapy, women no longer feel isolated and "crazy"; they are not only validated but become the experts of their lives which empower them. Recognizing the social and political aspects

of domestic abuse, women might begin to comprehend the magnitude of gendered violence and its far reaching scope in society. Accordingly, individual and collective power is tapped into, and the women look to others in the group for support, validation and material resources.

In my opinion, recovery from domestic abuse could begin with dream analysis. Women would have the opportunity to analyze their dreams and nightmares to uncover hidden aspects of themselves and the abuse. In a study designed by Janice R. Gagerman, four women met for 23 group therapy sessions and explored their dreams together. Their goal was to determine what effect childhood sexual abuse had on their adult relationships. Gagerman found that women patients seeking help with former abuse found relief in a group situation allowing them to explore their hidden past traumas through dream work (163). By looking at the details of their dreams, they were able to understand the abuse and reasons for patterns in their current relationships.

Though it is not currently used in shelters, dream analysis could be used in a group setting, to facilitate recovery from abuse. Members could help the dreamer uncover hidden meanings and develop a new language of deconstruction designed for healing. This language would allow the women to identify, name and own hidden truths, which may encompass recovered memories of past traumas, unhealthy decision making skills, and unacknowledged strengths. M. Bruce Sarlin found

“that in the presence of a supportive group atmosphere, unconscious conflicts can be alleviated or resolved,” making this a perfect model for women’s shelters (181). Montague Ullman states that group dream work helps the dreamer “make discoveries about [herself] that are too difficult to make alone” (7). Group dynamics provide a safe haven for reflection into scary territory, allowing the participants to analyze aspects of their personalities that sustain poor partner choices.

Victims of domestic abuse commonly experience a lack of empowerment during waking hours which has been termed “learned helplessness” (LaViolette and Barnett 117 and Walker 10). This helplessness is a “condition brought about by violence [and the] inability to stop it (LaViolette and Barnett 117). Even though the victim may feel powerless, she may experience empowerment and autonomy during dreamtime (Barrett 67). She may acknowledge hidden strengths and act out revenge on the perpetrator of her abuse. This can be the catalyst to leave the abusive relationship. Gregory C. Bogart found that empowerment in the form of dreams allows the once helpless dreamer to see themselves as capable beings, able to affect their lives in positive ways (201).

My research focuses primarily on battered women living in shelters, the abuse they suffered and their dreams. The connection between dreams and recovery will be investigated to determine if

women who analyze their dreams can uncover positive strengths and hidden traumas. The literature review below discusses research that involves adults with childhood sexual abuse histories and their processes regarding the abuse and the use of dreams. What is missing is the connection between women, domestic abuse and dreams which this study investigates.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Abuse against women can be traced back to ancient cultures, as documented in the Bible, which details a “scalding death of Fausta ordered by her husband, the Emperor Constantine” (Flowers 8). Early in the 1800’s, wife abuse was normalized and attributed to the “nature of men” (Jones 97). In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft addressed the normalization of violence toward women in an essay she wrote in response to Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s political essay regarding the education of women solely to serve men. Wollstonecraft wrote, “Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and there will be an end to blind obedience” (Bell and Offen 57).

The battered women’s movement was born in the 1970’s on the wings of the women’s movement. During this era, women joined consciousness-raising groups and started dialoging about abuse occurring in all communities. Grass-roots organizing facilitated the

onset of domestic abuse hotlines which were operated with little money. In 1977, Barbara Warren and Jacqui Clarke started the Family Violence Project hotline in Augusta, Maine. The project is still in operation today and has helped multitudes of women leave abusive situations ². Grassroots activism not only flourished on the east coast of the United States but succeeded on the west coast as well. The Korean Women's Hotline in southern California, founded in 1990, was established to serve Korean women experiencing domestic abuse. The mission was to "empower Korean American women who [had] been abused and systematically neglected by [the Korean] community and rendered powerless by [...] society" (Park 179). According to Confucian philosophy, which was integral to Korean culture, women were subordinated to men and were expected to place their family's welfare before their own (Park 181). These Korean-American women had struggled in their own community regarding the issues of race and patriarchy.

Dream analysis has been found to be an effective treatment for victims of abuse. People who experience acute trauma, such as physical or sexual abuse, often have dreams or nightmares related to

² Dr. Mary Samuel Reid was interviewed on March 29, 2004 and gave the following information: Barbara Warren was a therapist in Augusta, and she noted that many of the women coming to her for help were experiencing domestic violence. It was her opinion that they were experiencing political problems, not mental health problems. Therapy was not going to solve the issues of abuse of power. Barbara Warren and Jacqui Clarke still work together in Augusta.

their experiences (Agargun 139, Alpert 221, Bogart 201, Brenneis 17, Droga 178, and Williams 145). According to Agargun et al., “[n]ightmares appear to be an effective coping mechanism in trauma victims” (140). Dreaming allows victims to resolve conflicts, because information that surface in dreams can be reworked in therapy and can be used to validate and acknowledge the unconscious (Mack ix).

Most of the literature to date targets adults who dream about their childhood physical and sexual abuse. Some adults have entered therapy hoping to relieve their anxieties and nightmares, and in the process have discovered forgotten traumas. Gagerman discusses her study of women with childhood sexual abuse issues involved in group therapy, where each woman shared dreams about the abuse and allowed members of the group to analyze the dreams. Through this process, “the group members mutually constructed life narratives, which ultimately created new meanings regarding their lives” (163).

Miriam Williams describes her male patient therapeutic process which centered on early childhood sexual abuse and disturbing nightmares he had as an adult. In the dreams, the man enters ruinous filthy buildings and finds toilets overflowing with feces. The man then finds himself in bed with another man who is anally stimulating him, which produces anxiety for the patient. Using this dream and others

like it, Williams and her patient are able to reconstruct events in early childhood that provide a framework for the man's ideas and beliefs about intimate relationships and his self-loathing. Through this process, the patient is able to reconstruct molestation that occurred at the age of two. After doing so, he enjoyed a "more normal sleep pattern," and was able to become involved in an intimate relationship with a woman (158).

Janet T. Droga writes about her therapeutic experiences with a female patient who had sought help in her late twenties. The patient initially complained of being overly stressed and fearful of success. As a result of therapy, unrecovered memories of sexual abuse by her father began to surface in her dreams. In one such dream, the victim was "anally sodomized by her father" (178). Soon, therapist and patient began to piece together sexual abuse beginning when she was two years old and continuing until she was 14. Through the therapeutic process, the patient was able to uncover sexual traumas, halt her inclination for self-mutilation and acknowledge the true reasons for her overwhelming anxieties.

Unconscious meanings about abuse can be uncovered by analyzing dreams allowing victims to identify the source of their problems. Dream analysis is a tool for victims to understand their past and recover from it. Women living with domestic abuse dream about

their violent experiences, and often report common symbols throughout their dreams. Some of these are snakes and tidal waves (Brenneis 7 and Hartmann et al. 116). By analyzing these symbols and images the victims can begin to recover from the abuse and eventually change their lives.

Victims of abuse have recurring nightmares more frequently than adults not abused as children (Agargun 139, Barrett 58, Garfield 93, and Hartmann 125). It can be theorized then that women who live with abuse also have recurring nightmares more frequently than those women who do not. The incidence of nightmares increases directly following a traumatic event (Mack 41). Nightmares are also common to victims of PTSD (Agargun 141 and Alpert 225).

Much of the literature regarding dreams and PTSD focuses on war survivors who have PTSD, but women who live with domestic abuse often suffer from it too (Jones 87). According to Jones, "Many veterans of family violence suffer recurrent, paralyzing flashbacks, just like war veterans, afflicted with [PTSD]" (1). Because women involved in domestic abuse survive war within their homes, this literature can be adapted. Nightmares have also been found to be a "universal symptom of rape trauma syndrome" (Barrett 148). According to the article "Violence Against Women," 33%-46% of women who are

physically abused by an intimate partner are also raped by that same partner (Jones 145).

Literature supports the claim that victims of trauma suppress feelings of fear and terror during waking hours and relive the abuse during their nighttime dreams (Alpert 226, Brenneis 15, Droga 178, Prozan 223 and Williams 146). They often seek psychotherapy due to feelings of inadequacy, self-loathing, and suicide which uncovers forgotten memories of childhood abuse. Therapists use dream logs to help the patients understand their distress and self-hatred. This process serves to give voice to hidden memories and the patients' past begins to unravel. Processing past abuse is painful and often scary, however, by understanding the meanings of the dreams they can begin to recover from emotional distress.

Gagerman and colleagues asserted that women involved in group therapy found validation and support from other women and created a "mutual meaning system" (Gagerman 16 and Saari 143). A "mutual meaning system" provides a method of communication to identify feelings about the abuse and themselves, giving women a new language of self-expression. According to K. J. Wilson, "[w]omen who feel isolated and powerless, and who blame themselves for the abuse they suffer, often benefit from exchanging information and expressing their feelings with other women in similar situations," (209). This new

language gives women the opportunity to be validated and to repudiate the blame placed on them (Schechter 60). The group dynamic contributes to feelings of warmth, comfort, acceptance and support (Yalom 48).

According to dream analysts, dreams and nightmares contextualize emotion (Brenneis 5, Hartmann S131, 116, Mack vii and Reis and Snow 27). Hartmann et al. have suggested "that all dreams involve contextualization of emotional concerns" by providing a "powerful image" that conveys the concern (116). Hartmann et al. give an example of a rape survivor who dreams of drowning, due to an inescapable tidal wave. During the dream, she experiences feelings of terror and helplessness. According to Hartmann et al., although she did not dream specifically about the rape, the emotions experienced were the same as those felt during the rape (116). The tidal wave is the "powerful image" that "contextualizes" the emotions felt. Other images reported by trauma victims include attacks by eels, monsters, penises, and snakes (Brenneis 5 and Hartmann et al. 116). These images can also symbolize the inability to ward off the danger of a possible attack (Barrett 62, Brenneis 7, and Gagermann 171). Johanna King and Jacqueline R. Sheehan describe the dream of an incest survivor who experienced years of molestation by her grandfather:

The nights that I would stay with my grandparents, I would dream that this big, mean black cat would come into the room where my sister and I slept. Then the cat would go back outside and bring in thousands of its big, mean friends. They would pile into our room and they would all turn into huge eels...I would wake up screaming and crying, still seeing the eels... (Barrett 62)

According to Reis and Snow, "the heartbreaking stamina and vulnerability of trauma can be known and transformed into dreams" (8). This transformation and analysis is a vital process for trauma survivors longing for clarification of the events of their lives.

Trauma survivors also experience dreams pleasant in nature containing positive images that include escaping the abuse. These dreams can provide resolution and hope for the dreamers. Through the process of therapy, Jim, a man molested as a young boy, began to experience positive dreams that provided him with hope for his future. The last dream Jim logged portrayed him to be "a successful person capable of fulfilling his ambitions with discovery of his capacity to work and live creatively and confidently" (Bogart 208).

In my opinion, if dreams have the potential to facilitate recovery in individual and group therapy involving childhood sexual abuse, it should also be applicable to women living with domestic abuse. Nicholas E. Brink suggests that one can heal through making sense "of these unconscious messages and [using them] to facilitate personal

understanding and internal or unconscious change" (1). Making sense of the dreams brings clarification of the abuse and character traits that may inhibit recovery. King and Sheehan write that "working directly with the dream material can...bring increased sense of power, direction, and satisfaction" (Barrett 56). Ullman and Claire Limmer believe dream analysis will lead to greater freedom, stating "the dream offers us the opportunity to confront an issue with greater clarity and deeper honesty" (238).

Domestic violence shelters offer individual counseling with a feminist approach that is "wellness-based rather than pathological-based" (Wilson 211). Women are taught that social constructs, politics, and lack of material resources are reasons for domestic violence. In this setting, women's perspectives are privileged and power is shared equally with the counselor (Wilson 211). Literature discussing the intersections of race, class, and sexual orientation in relation to therapeutic models is nonexistent. Michele Bograd suggests that this silence:

Renders many families touched by domestic violence invisible, relegates some individuals' experiences outside the realm of clinical concern, and may guide us to intervene in ways that unwittingly compound clients' experiences of abuse, unpredictability, and domination. (277)

Future research must be inclusive of all women if domestic violence intervention is going to be effective for all communities.

The following chapter discusses my research performed at the domestic shelter, including the research methodology employed and the women's histories of living with violence. The women have explained in detail the psychological, sexual, physical, and verbal abuse they lived with. The affects of gendered name calling, omnipotence of the abuser, police response to domestic abuse calls, and substance abuse as a coping strategy will be investigated.

Chapter Two

METHODS OF RESEARCH

Research was conducted in Tampa Florida at The Spring, a domestic violence shelter, during the months ranging from October 2003 through January 2004. The shelter offers individual counseling and domestic violence group therapy facilitated by a licensed social worker. Women and their children have the option of staying at the shelter for a maximum of two months. The Spring also operates a 24 hour crisis hotline. A quality control group, composed of residents and a social worker employed by The Spring, meet weekly to discuss how The Spring could better serve its clients.

Approval by the Internal Review Board (IRB) of the University of South Florida had to be obtained before research could begin. Permission was granted in September 2003, with an expiration date of one year. Interviews were entirely voluntary; the women were given consent forms to read but were not allowed to sign them, in order to ensure anonymity and the safety of all the participants of the study. Each interviewee was given a fictitious name that is used in this paper. Interviews were taped in the office of the on-site police officer at the shelter, and transcribed later. Research participants had to meet certain criteria to be involved in the study. It was required that each

participant had been in residence at The Spring for a minimum of two weeks. This was an attempt to safeguard the emotional stability and safety of the women involved. No interviews were conducted with children or pregnant women, as per the requirements of the IRB. I attended group therapy sessions, as an observer, five times during the three month time period.

Mandatory group therapy is held once a week and includes all residents. Sharing on topics such as power and control and the cycles of abuse is encouraged. Groups function to give information about abuse as well as provide a safe environment for victims to talk about their personal experiences. The groups involved volunteer participation by the residents, and the meetings focused on power, control and abuse as well as the three cycles of abuse: tension, the actual physical abuse and the honeymoon period. These phases are discussed in the "Power and Control Wheel". This wheel was "developed by battered women and formerly battered women to describe the violence in their lives" (Worcester and Whatley 529). Lenore E. A. Walker gives a description of these cycles in her book, The Battered Woman. She describes the first cycle as the "tension building stage" which normally consists of "verbal attacks" and can last for hours or days. Next is the "acute battering incident." It is during this phase that many injuries

occur. Lastly, the “loving contrition” phase begins and the abuser is often “charming, apologetic, loving, [or] remorseful” (Flowers 77).

The facilitator referred to the “Nonviolence Wheel” also developed by battered and formerly battered women. This wheel described behaviors experienced in a relationship based on equality that doesn’t include violence. These behaviors include: negotiation and fairness, non-threatening behavior, respect, trust and support, honesty and accountability, responsible parenting, shared responsibility and economic partnership (Worchester and Whatley 530).

My research depended on voluntary participation and therefore required the subjects to approach me if they were interested. When a woman was interested, she approached me at one of the group therapy sessions and scheduled an appointment to be interviewed. All participants were informed that there would not be any money involved and that they were free to leave the interview at any time. A counselor was available in the event any of the participants became emotionally upset. Each participant was informed that all information regarding identity would remain confidential. The interviews consisted of IRB approved questions and were the same for each participant. At the beginning of the each domestic violence group therapy session, I was introduced along with my research by the group facilitator. During

these sessions, dream analysis was only mentioned in regards to my research. Dreams were discussed during regular individual therapy if the resident broached the subject; however, the dreams were not a topic of discussion in group therapy.

Once I was able to speak with the women individually, a semi-structured interview model was employed as the research method. The sample size consisted of five women. They were asked 19 questions and given the opportunity to tell their life stories (see Appendix A). The questions focused on abuse the women sustained during their intimate relationships and abuse they may have experienced as children. One question focused on abuse they may have witnessed in their parent's relationships. Another asked the women to describe a "typical violent episode" between themselves and their partners. In order to get a picture of the explosive details of the women's lives and how they coped with abuse, questions were designed to extract information that described regular violent episodes. Another question asked for the circumstances that brought them to the shelter. The remainder of the questions concentrated on dreams and nightmares. The interviews lasted anywhere from 40 to 90 minutes.

The interview process gave the women freedom and autonomy by allowing them to tell their stories in their own ways. This is termed "semistructured" interviewing, which allows women to convey as much

information as they wish (Moe 37). It places them as authorities in their own lives instead of privileging the interviewer. This research method is not unlike other feminist methods of inquiry which privilege “women’s diverse standpoints” providing them with a space to contribute to the literary canon (Moe 37). In fact, this research situates highly marginalized domestic abuse survivors as the “experts” of the layered oppressions they experience.

Questions were designed to investigate gender issues inherent in domestic abuse situations. The women were asked to analyze their dreams and nightmares from three aspects; childhood dreams, dreams experienced before and after entering the shelter. Historically, women experiencing domestic violence have not been given the space to define their abuse, instead this process has been professionalized (Jones 8). Normally, researchers, psychologists, medical doctors, policy makers, and social workers have standpoints that are privileged. In this body of work, however, the victims’ standpoints are privileged and the women analyzed their own dreams.

THE SAMPLE

Paula is 38 years old, white, with four children; three boys aged 22, 20, and 19, and a 15 year old daughter. None of the children were with the mother in the shelter. Paula is unemployed and receives

disability payments. She has experienced multiple traumatic abuses throughout the course of her life. Her heroin addicted mother abandoned her when she was six years old, leaving her to take care of her two younger sisters. She was sexually abused by her "uncle" between the ages of six and nine. At the age of 14, she was forced to have an unwanted abortion. Her children have three different fathers; all of them have abused Paula. At the age of 33, she was beaten and raped by a stranger. The abuse she escaped by fleeing to the shelter was perpetrated by her male roommate. The abuse she endured was both physical and psychological.

Deirdra is a 39 year old white female without children. She is a custodian, and cleans offices for a living. At the age of nine, her mother began physically and verbally abusing her, which normally centered on gender and sex issues. Beatings often occurred if Deirdra showed any interest in boys. The relationship that facilitated her stay at the shelter was with her husband of 12 years. She had been experiencing abuse for the last nine of their 14 years together. The abuse was physical, verbal, and sexual.

Tammy is a 39 year old white female with two daughters that are two and three years old, both of whom are residing at the shelter. Tammy

is a homemaker and full-time mom. She has experienced physical abuse by other partners but did not experience it as a child. Her husband, the father of her children, is her abuser. Their relationship began five years ago and the abuse began three and half years later. The abuse she sustained was both physical and psychological.

Celeste is a 36 year old white female with two children living with her at the shelter. She has a boy that is seven years old and a girl that is four. She is a massage therapist. As a child, Celeste was physically abused by her father and witnessed the abuse of her mother. Her father severely beat her mother, breaking her nose twice and slamming her head through walls. Celeste played the peacekeeper. She calmed her father so that he would discontinue the beatings. In her early 20's, she lived with a man for three years. He was severely possessive and continuously accused her of having affairs. He bought a penthouse for her where he locked her in when he was not home. During a fire in the building, firefighters had to rescue her from the balcony because she was locked in. Near the end of their relationship, she became pregnant, but suffered a miscarriage due to his physical abuse. She married the father of her children seven years ago. He began abusing her physically and psychologically three years ago.

Lola is a 39 year old African-American woman with a 20 year old son who no longer lives with her. She is a truck driver. Lola first experienced physical abuse when she was married to her first husband. Now married to her second husband, she continues to deal with verbal and physical abuse.

PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

All of the women interviewed had escaped abusive relationships. The abuse included physical, psychological, verbal and sexual abuse. All of the women interviewed feared for their lives because the abuser had either tried or threatened to kill them. Some women left the cities where they lived because they were afraid the abuser would find them.

Paula describes the incident that brought her to the shelter. Her 15 year old daughter's bathing suit was missing and she had a suspicion that her roommate had taken it. She went into his room and found a pair of her daughter's underwear with semen stains and pubic hairs on it. She then sent her daughter to stay with her father, who also lived in Tampa, then called the police. The police informed her there was nothing they could do because of a lack of evidence of a sexual crime, but stated that they could arrest her for burglary. When she confronted her roommate, a heated argument ensued, at which point he pushed her off of the deck of their home breaking her

shoulder. She did not leave immediately because she had nowhere to go and she knew her daughter was safe. The next day, he continued to yell and lunge at her as if he was going to hit her. Because her arm was in a sling, she was defenseless. "I felt like I was going crazy. I could not sit there and listen to his mouth and he would come up to me like he was going to hit me." Paula decided to leave while he was in the shower and fled to the shelter.

Deirdra suffered prolonged abuse at the hands of her husband. Her stay at the shelter was due to her husband's upcoming release from jail. Seven months prior to the interview, he broke into her home and tried to kill her while they were separated.

I was at home in bed, he came and busted in the door and grabbed me by my hair and drug me through the living room. He accused me of sleeping around, ripped off my panties and attempted to rape me. He slapped me in the face calling me a "whore" and a "slut". I got up and ran to the porch light switch. My neighbor and I had a system; she knew something was wrong if I flashed my lights on and off. But he had a marital arts background and knocked my legs out from under me. He then drug me to the stereo. I was screaming, but my neighbors couldn't hear me. He pinned my arms down with his knees and began to strangle me. I couldn't breathe and lost consciousness. He let loose enough so that I wouldn't die at that moment. He then asked me, "Are you ready to meet your maker?" I said, "Yes I am, I would rather die than spend one more moment with you and with this abuse." With that, he let go, lied down and fell asleep.

At this point, Deirdra called the police. They went to court and he was charged with aggravated assault, stalking, violation of probation,

violation of a permanent injunction, and attempted rape. Even though he had a record of domestic abuse and had violated two previous injunctions, the judge only sentenced him to one year in jail. The judge said if he did something like this again he would be sentenced to 15 years in prison. Deirdra fled to the shelter two weeks before her husband was due to be released. He was getting early release for good behavior because he had been made a trustee by the jail. He was going to serve only a total of seven months for attempting to murder her.

Tammy left her husband in St. Petersburg and fled with her two small children. Her stay began in the shelter just two weeks prior to the interview. She left because her husband threatened to murder her and kidnap her daughters. She could not face the thought of losing her children to him. She stated during the interview, "I had to leave. I had to take my babies." The physical and psychological abuse occurred often, usually before he went out to drink. He used her children to control her by telling her that if he found one mark on them, she would never see them again and he would kill her. During one violent episode he kicked her in the head but she was too afraid to seek medical attention.

Celeste came to the shelter in Tampa from Orlando with her two children. She was terrified her husband would find her if she fled to a

shelter in Orlando. Celeste's husband was a retired professional football player with many resources. The last violent episode, the one that prompted her to leave, occurred at their children's school. He attacked her in front of the kids as she picked them up from school. His abuse was not only physical but embodied psychological torture. Celeste was a recovering heroin addict when they met. During their marriage, she underwent knee surgery and was prescribed a highly addictive substance called methadone. It is normally used to help drug addicts withdraw from heroin. If she missed a methadone treatment she would suffer withdrawals, and one such time, he propositioned her with heroin.

He would keep me high for three days and if I didn't do what he said he wouldn't give me any [drugs] and I would have mini-seizures laying on the bathroom floor in a fetal position. I couldn't handle my kids. We were staying at his parent's house. They thought I was a psychological wreck.

When Celeste tried to get help with her drug addiction, her husband sabotaged her success. When she attempted to go to drug rehabilitation, he flattened her tires or put sugar in the gas tank of her car. Wilson writes that abusers who sabotage their partner's chances of quitting drugs and alcohol are common, and that this is another method of physical and psychological abuse (63).

Lola was in shelter because she was afraid for her life. She and her husband had been separated for three weeks, when he showed up

on her doorstep unannounced at four o'clock in the morning. He woke her by pounding on the door, calling her names (such as slut, whore, and bitch) and demanded to be let in the house. She refused to let him in and he slashed all the tires on her car. The next day she went into hiding, afraid that he would attack her.

All of the women of the study suffered extreme physical assaults as well as psychological and verbal abuse. The women of this study claim that the psychological and verbal abuse had been far more damaging to their self-esteem and self-worth. Following are the types of psychological abuse suffered by the women and how they coped with them.

Gendered name calling is a tactic of emotional abuse used by abusers (Worcester and Whatley 529). According to Jeffrey S. Victor, author of "Sluts and Wiggers: a study of the effects of derogatory labeling," labels like slut and whore are incorporated into a woman's self-concept and when consistently called these names, the woman will eventually develop low self-esteem (71). The women in this study experienced this type of name calling by their abusers. Ironically, the men called their partners sluts and whores and accused them of having affairs, when they were the ones guilty of such conduct and sometimes bragged about it. This behavior is not uncommon according to Amy H. Schwartz et al. They describe this type of jealousy as

“pathological” and state that this “pattern of accusation and denunciation may contribute to reducing the woman’s sense of agency, control, and self-esteem and may further ensnare her in the pathological dyad” (Ammerman and Hersen 353). Furthermore, it has been suggested by battered women that name-calling and other forms of verbal harassment are the most damaging of all types of emotional and psychological abuse, doing more harm than physical assaults (Aguilar and Nightingale 36).

A form of psychological abuse is to use dominance and male privilege against women (Worcester and Whatley 529). The omnipotence expressed by the abuser is described by Schwartz et al., “the abuser typically establishes his role as ‘boss’ and ‘master’ by using acts of verbal aggression that communicate control and dominance and the ‘worthlessness’ of the female” (Ammerman and Hersen 352). This type of domination and mental cruelty was evident the night Deirdra’s husband almost strangled her to death. With his hands around her throat, he asked, “Are you ready to meet your maker?” It is evident that his control goes beyond physical power, this statement clearly places psychological control over the woman’s life.

Police response to a domestic abuse call has been known to be counterproductive, because after the police leave, the abuser becomes more violent and causes more physical damage to his victim (Ferrato

34). Often times, the law dictates that police must arrest both partners for assault even if the woman is acting out of self-defense (Jones 142). Celeste experienced this during a domestic abuse situation involving her husband. Before her stay at the shelter began, she was arrested for assault. During a domestic dispute, her husband was beating her and in retaliation, she threw a bowl of cereal across the room at him. The police were called and arrested them both. Celeste was charged with assault with a deadly object and spent 30 hours in jail. Even though their relationship was plagued with wife abuse, Celeste is now considered a batterer too. After the incident, she had to attend domestic abuse and parenting classes ordered by the court.

Substance abuse is common among women who are abused. In fact, domestic abuse increases women's risk of substance abuse and addiction. Wilson writes that "risk of drug abuse [is] six times [greater] and a rate of alcohol abuse [is] fifteen times as great in battered women compared to non-battered women (62). These statistics are supported by the findings of a cross-sectional study done by Brokaw et al. A team of medical doctors interviewed female patients and found that women who experience intimate partner violence suffer higher alcoholism, cocaine and other illicit drug addictions when compared to female patients who do not experience intimate partner violence (31-2). According to Evan Stark and Anne

Flitcraft, "battered women experience a disproportionate risk of ... alcoholism and other problems only after the onset of abuse" (100). This partnership of substance abuse, violence and domination is inevitable according to Charlotte Davis Kasl, author of Many Roads, One Journey. According to Kasl,

Patriarchy and hierarchy are based on domination and subordination, which result in fear. This fear is expressed by the dominators through control and violence, and in the subordinated people through passivity and repression of anger...to quell the inner conflict people resort to addictive substances and behavior. (53)

Paula and Celeste are examples of battered women who may have used alcohol and drugs as coping mechanisms to deal with their subjugation and the fear of violence they lived with daily.

The abuse categories were chosen depending on the occurrences of the different types of abuse in the women's lives who participated in this study. All of the women suffered extreme psychological abuse such as death threats, drug withdrawal abuse tactics, and statements of omnipotence made by the abusers. Gendered name calling, a type of verbal abuse, was said to be the most damaging, affecting the women long after their bruises disappeared. In the next chapter, psychological abuse suffered by the women will be further analyzed and the women's abuse dreams will be dissected. Theories regarding the meaning of the dreams will be given by the women themselves.

Chapter Three

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this chapter, I describe the different types of psychological abuse that the women in this study endured. The women described the effects the abuse had on their self-esteem, their increased depression and their feelings of going "crazy". Their dreams are also discussed in detail as well as their analysis of the dreams. Finally, I used alternative websites to find the different analyses of dreams, which I found valuable due to their non-medicalized format and simple language. The various websites were produced by lay dream interpreters, giving the information a non-professional feel to them. This follows along the lines of feminist theories used in this paper, where information used is non-professionalized.

METHODS OF CONTROL

Beyond types of physical control there are methods of psychological abuse used by abusers such as intimidation, denial of the abuse, economic abuse, isolation tactics, using the children, and using coercion or the threat of abuse (Worchester and Whatley 529). These tactics of abuse are known as intimate terrorism (Johnson and Ferraro 949) and categorized as psychological abuse. Previous research as well

as the women I spoke with state that psychological abuse is far more damaging than physical abuse (Wilson 10), as long as the physical abuse does not encompass death or a near-death experience. According to Walker, "psychological degradation and humiliation [are] the most painful abuse[s] suffered" (33). Research performed by Ann L. Coker et al., found that psychological abuse by male partners was associated with poor health in women who experienced this type of abuse. In fact, "psychological intimate partner violence was as strongly associated with the majority of adverse health outcomes as was physical intimate partner violence" (451). Verbal and other forms of psychological abuse have profound effects on battered women. Rudy J. Aguilar and Narina Nunez Nightingale report that "emotional abuse has more debilitating effects than the physical abuse" (37). A battered women's sense of "personal power" decreases as does her self-esteem, which has a negative affect on her health (Orava et al. 182). All of the women I interviewed, especially Deirdra and Paula, experienced feelings of lack of power and low self-esteem due to the psychological abuse.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE, SELF-ESTEEM, AND DEPRESSION

Speaking with the women of the study, two distinct psychological abuse categories became evident; matters of self-esteem coupled with

depression and denial of the abuse. Each woman in the study expressed feelings of low self-worth, low self-esteem and depression. Deirdra reported feelings of depression, low-self-esteem and humiliation due to her husband's abuse. She was diagnosed with depression and anxiety by her doctor and prescribed anti-depressants. In fact, during a three month period of separation, she felt good about herself and experienced peace for the first time in a long time. Similar findings are supported by literature regarding victims of domestic abuse reporting low self-esteem and depression. Michele Cascardi and K. Daniel O'Leary determined that the level of abuse and the victim's psychological state were proportional to one another. The greater the abuse the more depressed the victim became. In Nassau County, New York victims of abuse experienced depression and low self-esteem in higher numbers as the abuse became more aggressive (249). Aguilar and Nightingale found that depression increased as self-esteem decreased in battered women compared to non-battered women (36). Orava et al. also found a correlation between domestic abuse, low-self esteem and high rates of depression (167).

Paula experienced severe depression due to the abuse she suffered. She wanted to leave many times but did not believe she could raise her children without the abuser. Her reasons for staying were economical and can be described as "learned helplessness"

(Walker 118). The learned helplessness theory suggests that Paula may have held negative beliefs about the locus of her control and her ability to leave the relationship (118). Women who believe they lack control over events in their lives report lower self-esteem and higher rates of depression (Orava et al. 168). Denial and minimization of the abuse, such as Paula experienced, are symptoms of abuse victims according to Wilson (21).

GOING "CRAZY"; DENYING THE ABUSE

The battered women of this study often reported feelings of going "crazy". This can be attributed to their denial that abuse is occurring or their minimization of it. This type of denial is a coping strategy employed by women struggling daily with the effects of battering (Silva et al. 550, Walker 171, and Wilson 21). Paula questioned the extent of the abuse she underwent while living with her roommate, because the abuse only occurred when her children were not present. In fact, the roommate was very nice to her kids. This alternating behavior by her roommate almost drove Paula over the edge, as she questioned the extent of the abuse. At times she wanted to check herself into a mental hospital because she thought she was going insane. The roommate's abuse also encompassed sexual

coercion. On one occasion, he threatened to call the police because she refused to have sex with him.

Celeste denied the extent of the abuse as well. During the interview, she stated that her husband was a "good man" and did these terrible things because he was addicted to drugs. According to Wilson, this pattern of thinking is steeped in "denial that the batterer is responsible for the abuse, which instead is attributed to external forces" (21). Celeste says she felt and continues to feel insane. Her husband not only tortured her with heroin withdrawals but with other types of psychological abuse. Many times he would steal the groceries she had just purchased, leaving her and their two children hungry.

TYPES OF DREAMS

According to Reis and Snow, "the heartbreaking stamina and vulnerability of trauma can be known and transformed in dreams" and could possibly be used to help a person recover (8). This is possible because dreams can be used to help uncover truths and realities hidden to the dreamer due to the nature of the trauma. Hartmann suggests that "dreaming makes connections more broadly than waking by using pictured metaphor and have followed the connection making from immediately posttraumatic to various less dramatic situations" (133). Dreams constitute an autonomous space for women living with

or leaving domestic abuse. Women in this situation have the opportunity to analyze their dreams to better understand the abuse as well as uncover hidden talents they possess.

PLEASANT DREAMS; SELF-ESTEEM AND SPIRITUAL

Paula has had a recurring dream throughout her life and during her stay at the shelter.

I'm in bed asleep and I wake up and find a secret, hidden room in the house. It's a redone kitchen or bathroom. It is perfect with perfect décor. At first I am anxious and am afraid to go through the door. But I decide to and find the room is beautiful, comforting and warm.

I asked Paula to analyze this dream.

I think there may be a part of me inside somewhere I can't find right now that I know is there. I want to find it so that I can give it to my kids, but I haven't found it yet. The room represents something I can have if I put my mind to it, stop being dependent, and stop being scared, stop being an emotional wreck, and go to school. I know I have good inside of me, I just have so much junk. I need to find it. Maybe that is my subconscious saying, YES, its still there.

The perfect room in her dream might symbolize an aspect of herself (this may be her unconscious mind) that is telling her she is "too good" for the abuse. After Paula's analysis of her dream, she admits she is indeed "too good" for the abuse and deserves much better treatment. According to the Myths—Dreams—Symbols website,

Paula's perfect room possibly represents an aspect of her self or her self image (1). In the dream, Paula is apprehensive of walking into the newly discovered room, but decides to enter. Upon entering, she finds the room to be "comforting and warm". These pleasant feelings are associated with an aspect of herself that she knows is there, waiting to be experienced.

These dreams occurred when she was thinking of leaving the abuse.

Deirdra also experienced pleasant dreams while she was in the abusive relationship. The first dream began when the space shuttle exploded over Texas in 2003. Deirdra dreamed of a big explosion before the shuttle actually blew up. In her dream, there was debris all over the place and the military was brought in to clean up the mess. As she was watching, a female angel descended and spoke to her, "If he (her husband) does not change his ways you are not meant to be together."

The angel in Deirdra's dream may have represented a "positive guiding force" in her life, according to the Aisling Dream Interpretation website (1). This "guiding force" advised Deirdra to leave her abusive husband. The gender of the angel may hold great importance in this dream. The angel can be interpreted as a female archetype. According to the Myths—Dreams—Symbols website, archetypes are defined as "intuitive powers or symbols of power and wisdom that lie in the deep

parts of our psyche." If this is true, Deirdra's internal intuitive voice understood the gravity of her situation, and understood she had the strength and wisdom to leave. Furthermore, because the angel was female, she may have represented an aspect of Jung's psychological concepts of the "collective unconscious"³.

A second dream involved a divine presence as well.

We were together (her and her husband) in a car and there were people coming towards us. They were moving but their feet weren't touching the ground. My husband and I got out of the car. There was a light following the crowd of people. It was a spiritual light. There was thunder and lightening. I have two cups, each cup has GOD written on it. We were following the crowd, but got separated. I yelled my husband's name three times. Then I saw him across the street with a group of zombie like people with no direction. They were spaced out and lost. I moved with the people in the light. I chose to stay in the light.

When asked to analyze this dream, Deirdra believed it was a depiction of the reality of her and her husband's lives. He was an addict, lost and zombie like choosing a life of drugs, sex, alcohol and violence. She had found God and was choosing a violence free life of goodness and love. Deirdra believed these dreams came from a divine power telling her that she was too good for the abuse and that it was time to move on.

³ Refer to The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious (The Collected Works of C. G. Jung), Vol. 9, written by Carl Jung, edited by Herbert Read and Michael Fordham.

Lola believed God spoke to her in her dreams as well. During her marriage to her first abusive husband, she had a dream that involved her running from him.

My husband was chasing me and every time he tried to get a hold of me, I was one step ahead. In my mind I would say, "Thank you God." I knew God was protecting me.

When asked to analyze the dream, Lola said she was able to stay an extra step ahead of her husband because she didn't deserve the abuse. She believes God protects her in her dreams because often times what happens during dream time will come to fruition in waking life. She says, "Dreams are precursors for what's to come."

Literature supports the concept that dreams provide a positive self-image for women living in traumatic situations and that analysis of dreams can lead to positive changes. Brink suggests that "understanding the meaning of dreams can open doors to real change" (1). Often, dreams provide hope and are a coping device for women thinking of leaving the abuse. Patricia Garfield found that therapists can emphasize the positive elements of dreams experienced by sexually abused teenage girls (96). Stressing positive aspects of the dreams creates a psychic space in abused women for alternative options, such as leaving. Bogart found in his study concerning dreams of an adult male who was sexually abused as a child that dreams were the catalyst of "positive therapeutic change" (201). Through the

process of dream analysis, the adult male found healing and recovery from his earlier traumatic experiences.

Dreams play a spiritual role in women living with domestic abuse, such as those of Deirdra and Lola. Both women dreamt of a spiritual presence urging them to leave the abusive husband. These dreams were profound and had positive effects on the women's ability to leave. Reis and Snow describe this type of process as "powers of the spirit" giving courage to the dreamer to continue her voyage of conquering negative and powerful forces in her life. They also refer to a "guiding intelligence at work" helping women with abusive pasts (17). This "guiding intelligence" is referred to as God by some people.

DREAMS AS PREMONITIONS

Dreams can serve as premonitions in our lives. Many times, the participants of the study would dream about the abuse before it actually happened. Celeste dreamt about snakes the day before her husband would go out on a drug binge. Sometimes, she would actually see a snake.

Snakes are coming from all angles, falling out of air conditioner vents, falling on me in bed, even on my stomach. I would always see a snake before he [her husband] would relapse or go out on a binge. One time I opened the front door and a snake jumped up at me while it was eating another snake. Once after a dream of snakes

falling on me out of a vent, he got arrested while on a crack binge with a prostitute.

During her husband's binges, he would leave the house and disappear for days at a time, leaving her at home with two small children without power, a phone or diapers for her babies.

Upon analyzing the meaning of the snake dreams, Celeste decided they represented male energy and control the men in her life have had over her throughout her life. According to The Dream Doctor website, Snakes can be phallic symbols or can "reflect emotional injury or attack in waking life" (1). If the snakes are phallic symbols, they represent penises, and in essence they embody male gender.

According to Simone de Beauvoir, males represent things "positive" and women represent things "negative" (Oliver 8). In this regard, males symbolize the subject rather than the other, placing them in a hierarchy and situating them on the top rung while women are relegated to the bottom. Due to the inherent dichotomy of this hierarchy, women are subjugated, marginalized and subject to male control. The snakes could also represent warning signs of upcoming physical abuse.

Lola would dream about the physical abuse the night before it actually happened. This particular dream was experienced the night before her husband tried to kill her.

I am lying next to him in bed. He leans over me and his face is contorting. It looks evil. I think to myself "just lie there and it will pass and I will be out of danger." But instead of it passing, he grabs my hair and his hands become entangled in it. I then wake up terrified. The next day he tried to kill me. I always dream about abuse before it happens.

According to the Dream Clairvoyance website, "warning dreams" are a type of clairvoyant dream, predicting danger (1). Lola's premonition dreams may have saved her life, by preparing her for the abuse.

Tammy experienced premonition dreams that may have saved her life as well as the lives of her daughters. She dreamt that her husband was going to beat her to death and kidnap her children. This dream was a catalyst for her to consider leaving. She knew if she did not leave to protect her girls, the dream may very well materialize.

DREAMS PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT PAST TRAUMAS

Dreams can be a powerful tool for adults coming to terms with childhood sexual abuse. Survivors of childhood sexual abuse have a history of forgetting their abuse, which is a coping device (Brenneis 2, Reis and Snow 13, Silva 543, and Wilson 21). Adults seeking therapy due to seemingly unrelated issues find they have often been victims of sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member or another adult. Paula experienced dreams that led her to recover memories of sexual abuse

that she suffered from the ages of six to nine years old. When she was six years old, her mother went into drug rehabilitation which lasted for three years. At that time, Paula and her two younger sisters were sent to live with a couple who had been friends with her mother. During the stay, the husband began sexually abusing Paula. She did not remember the abuse until she entered alcohol rehabilitation at the age of 29.

I started having nightmares about big penises. There were penises everywhere I looked. I would open a door and a big penis would be standing there. I would run and they would chase me.

Once the dreams began, memories of the actual sexual abuse surfaced. She remembered the abuse and the threats the family friend, whom she called "uncle", made to keep her silent; he threatened to kill Paula's sister if she told anyone about the abuse. Paula's sister had a heart condition and she was afraid that if she told the abuser's wife, her sister would die. After recovering all of the memories, Paula gathered the courage to confront the abuser.

I called him and confronted him. I said, 'You can't hurt my sister, she is dead, and I'm not little any more!' It was like a weight lifted off of me. He had terrorized me for so long.

After the confrontation, the nightmares ceased.

DREAMS AND AWARENESS

Dreams can be an avenue to find truth which is often unknown when awake. When the truth is difficult to accept, denial is a comfortable stance. Women involved in domestic abuse sometimes dream about their unhealthy decision making skills. For them, dreams are a safe place to explore such issues. The first steps toward recovery can be made upon analyzing dreams. As a child, Celeste had a recurring dream about the abuse in her parent's relationship. The dream contextualized the fear and anxiety she felt as a child, watching her father brutalize her mother. In the dream, as in reality, Celeste found herself as the "peacekeeper," trying to save her mother's life while calming her violent father.

I would dream of a huge giant walking through our neighborhood. He was devastating everything. I was a peon compared to him and I was terrified. Everyone was running away from him but I climbed up his pant leg to his shoulder. I began brushing his hair and he calmed down. I was so scared but I got him to relax.

The dream ceased when Celeste's mother divorced her father.

In her analysis Celeste realized that the giant she was calming was her father. She began to understand her role as a "peacekeeper" and believed this role obstructed her from making healthy decisions in her life, especially when choosing a male partner. Celeste realized her daughter had assumed the "peacekeeper" role too, bargaining with her

father, Celeste's husband, to cease beating her mother during violent episodes of abuse. Furthermore, her daughter had begun to have nightmares that her own father, Celeste's husband, was going to harm her.

According to Edgar Cayce, a famous clairvoyant, giants in dreams may represent people who are "oppressive" to others (Delta Spectrum Research 1)⁴. Celeste's father was extremely oppressive to her mother and to her. In the dream, Celeste fears the giant, but knows she must calm him so that he will discontinue annihilating the town. Celeste places herself at risk, playing the "peacekeeper" to save her neighborhood.

Dreams can also help victims of abuse understand the extent of the abuse they have suffered. Often, victims minimize the abuse in order to cope with it, or the abuser minimizes it or denies it all together (Worchester and Whatley 529). This denial can cause the victim to believe they are going "crazy". Lola experienced this insanity during her abusive marriage.

I was sleeping and dreaming in my sleep. I was dreaming about my husband. He told me in the dream that I was tripping, that all the abuse was in my head.

⁴ Edgar Cayce was a Sunday school teacher who received psychic information and symbolism while in dream-like trances. For more information refer to [Edgar Cayce: Modern Prophet](#).

Upon analyzing the dream, Lola stated that she understood the true nature of the abuse and the danger she was in. Lola realized that the abuse was real and that she needed to leave to protect herself.

Dreams can serve as a tool to escape abusive situations. Tammy recalls a violent dream during her stay at the shelter.

My husband enters the shelter through an open back door. He comes to my room and beats me badly and takes my babies away from me.

When asked to interpret the nightmare, Tammy believes she must stay away from her husband in order to protect her children.

My research suggests that dreams provide vital information for trauma victims, and that the information can be used when making life changing decisions. The women of this study have stated that their dreams were powerful because the dreams sent messages to them pertaining to their self-esteem and their physical well-being. Because the women interpreted their own dreams, the power of decision making lay with them, serving to empower them. In my opinion, this is the reason there needs to be an integration of dream analysis in domestic violence shelter group therapy.

Chapter Four

DISCUSSION

In previous chapters, it has been established that encouraging women to voice their experiences about living with domestic abuse is a feminist tool for empowerment. This is monumental because domestic abuse has only recently been a topic for analysis and discussion. In the 1960s, terms such as "wife beating" and "domestic abuse" were rarely used by professionals when speaking of American families.

Psychiatrists who published articles referring to domestic abuse did not correlate sexist social institutions and violence perpetrated against women. In fact, wife beating was rarely mentioned, and if it was, it was seen as a problem brought on by "frigid, masochistic, and emasculating" women (Jones 8). Even though, this type of sexist propaganda was abundant in the mainstream media, feminist ideals challenged institutionalized sexism and asserted that it was "women's right to control their bodies and lives," hence were entitled to the right to end their battering (Schechter 29). Thus, the women's movement of the 1970s, and more specifically the battered women's movement, thrust domestic abuse into the spotlight and made it a topic of conversation. The women's movement helped to create "an

atmosphere where women could understand and speak about battering [and it] influenced the organization of work in the battered women's movement" (Schechter 33). It was never more evident that the feminist adage: *the personal is political*, was the case concerning domestic abuse.

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

The personal is political was a phrase that surfaced in the 1960s and 1970s that linked individual women's struggles with sexism including the political and social institutions that governed this sexism. Second wave feminists determined that the exploitation and exclusion women experienced individually were also experienced collectively (Z Staff). The battered women's movement determined that violence experienced by women in their homes was sanctioned by the patriarchal ideology of gender oppression. The oppression was present in many forms: less economic power, less access to higher paying jobs, less access to education, less access to the public sphere, little or no political access, little or no representation in government, little protection by the police, and responsibility for most of the childcare

The battered women's movement was instrumental in establishing shelters so that women could leave the abuser, a move that often saved their lives. Feminist theory was used to construct the

ways the shelters were organized and how they were operated.

“Consciousness-raising” models were employed when developing the shelters, placing women in roles of support and validation of other women, situating battered women as the “experts” in their lives.

Blame shifted from the victim to the perpetrator as gender oppression was recognized. The women were no longer seen as “weak” or “sick,” but oppressed. This non-pathological model privileged battered women’s standpoints instead of privileging professionals’. According to Moe and Bell who performed a study involving residents of a battered women’s shelter:

Emphasizing the epistemic privilege...of the participants...provide[s] members of a marginalized and often silenced group greater opportunity to offer meaningful accounts of the ways in which the world is organized according to the oppressions they experience.
(37)

Moe and Bell determined that battered women have valuable and insightful knowledge that can be shared with other battered women, and that this knowledge is known only to women who have lived with violence.

PATRIARCHY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

When second wave feminists began to write and lecture about the detrimental effects of patriarchy on the lives of women, they

analyzed the system that relegated control to the male gender in both the public and private spheres. Feminists adopted and recreated questioning of epistemologies including that of history; and concluded that those who were in power wrote history. They asked the question: had women resisted subjugation before? Women deconstructed the gendered nature of the law; its protection of men, and its lack of protection for women. Consequently, feminists challenged the treatment of women by the judicial system. Most importantly, feminists analyzed the language of violence against women and found that it was normalized. These concepts were monumental, because historically women's experiences had not been validated.

During this second wave feminist era, it was determined by cultural feminists that patriarchy was the "root of all evil." Some feminists claimed that the "patriarchal system [was] characterized by power, dominance [and] hierarchy" and that it was not just political and legal structures that needed to be revamped but "social and cultural institutions (especially the family, the church, and the academy)" had to be overhauled as well (Tong 2). Other feminists such as Gloria Steinem claimed that "the patriarchy require[d] violence or the subliminal threat of violence in order to maintain itself" (Corry). Feminist discourse served to empower women like never before. Women declared that business as usual politics subjugated the woman

class⁵, and that this subjugation not only perpetuated violence but relied on it to maintain control over women. The feminists of this movement “demanded a total, egalitarian restructuring of male/female relationships and society” (Schechter 31). This feminist model of deconstruction placed the power of knowledge in the hands of women, providing a space for their experiences.

Domestic violence and the dreams women have regarding the violence can be deconstructed in the context of a patriarchal culture. Blame for the violence is shifted from the pathological state of the battered women onto the sociological aspects of the sexist culture. Laura F. Salazar and Sarah L. Cook describe this shift as a necessary one of psychology. Traditionally, professionals have used an “exceptionalistic approach” when analyzing the nature of battered women’s experiences, viewing domestic abuse as a problem that lies “within individuals” (418). Salazar and Cook report that a “universalistic approach” is needed when analyzing the “social, political, and historical context of [domestic abuse] problem[s]” (418). This approach situates domestic violence within the greater context of institutionalized patriarchal violence and gender imbalances in the private and public spheres. This non-pathologized approach is

⁵ For a deeper understanding of the woman class refer to “One Is Not Born A Woman” by Monique Wittig, French Feminism Reader. Ed. Kelly Oliver. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield P., Inc, 2000. 128-135.

imperative, if women are to understand that the violence they experience is universal, tied into social institutions beyond their control.

Dream work can be used to answer questions about our lives that at times seem unanswerable. The process of analyzing dreams is often placed in the hands of professionals, but in the spirit of feminism, battered women could be granted the space to analyze their psychic landscapes. This non-professionalized process can be a feminist tool for empowerment, because the power stays with women, instead of being transferred to psychiatrists, social workers, or medical doctors. Along with this concept is the non-medicalized view of women and their symptoms due to domestic abuse. When battering is understood as a symptom of patriarchy, women are no longer seen as "weak" or "sick," but instead viewed as victims of gender oppression. It is important to acknowledge that women are underprivileged and lacking resources in a society that views them as second class citizens. G. Larouche identified three reasons women tolerate abuse: "society's normalization of this behavior, women's internalization of related stereotypes, and personal factors". Larouche developed a therapeutic model for ending domestic violence, which included: "a feminist perspective, the importance of concrete help, and special consideration of each woman's personal experience" (qtd. in Rinfret-Raynor and

Cantin 222). Battered women shelters provide material resources (a place to live, money for housing, child-care, court liaisons, etc.) and are founded on feminist knowledge (patriarchy is oppressive). Personal factors that Larouche mentions may be issues the women can address while undergoing therapy in the shelter and these factors may be more easily identified using dream analysis. Sources of disempowerment, such as prior sexual abuse, can be exposed during dreams.

DOMESTIC ABUSE THERAPY AND DREAM ANALYSIS

Currently, two types of therapy are utilized in domestic abuse shelters: individual and group, and dream analysis could be used in both venues. Throughout their stay, social workers can invite the women keep dream logs, a journal that chronicles their dreams. These logs can then be discussed with the therapist and patterns of decision making can be analyzed. Analysts can help the women make connections between their dreams and their waking life which can possibly lead to discoveries about the abuse.

A type of dream analysis that can be utilized during individual therapy involves multiple questions, asked of the shelter resident. Eugene T. Gendlin outlines these questions in his book, Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams. The first question asks the dreamer what information was relayed in the dream. The second asks what feelings

were experienced in the dream. The next asks the dreamer what she did the day before the dream occurred. Once this information has been established, other questions are asked to tease out the details of the dream. These questions include: who are the characters in the dream, or where did the dream take place; do all the characters in the dream represent the dreamer or what parts of the dream represent the dreamer; what do the symbols mean in the dream; does the dream relate to specific aspects of the dreamer's life such as childhood, personal growth, sexuality, or spirituality (9-17). Once all of the questions have been answered, the dreamer and the therapist can construct meanings of the dream together. This process can be helpful because the woman is asked questions which can guide her in teasing out details of the dream which may not seem relevant at the time.

Dream analysis occurring in shelter groups can be a process, by which members of the group help the dreamer analyze the dream. Ullman has outlined a process for group dream analysis. During Stage One, the dreamer volunteers only the details of the dream. At this stage, she is asked not to give her interpretation, associations or ideas about the meaning of the dream. It is important that the dreamer not track the response of the group, creating a space for the group members' imaginations to associate freely the aspects of the dreams

and meanings they may interpret. Secondly, the group may ask questions to clarify the dream; characters of the dream are identified.

Stage Two of this process involves the group taking ownership of the dream. They will speak of the dream as if it is theirs and talk amongst themselves about the possible meanings of the dream. At this juncture, the dreamer remains a passive listener. Next, the group members share with one another feelings or moods the imagery of the dream conveys. Once this is complete, the imagery is analyzed for metaphorical content. At this time, the dreamer is still asked to remain silent regarding her reactions to the group's analysis. It is important to note, that the group is unaware at this time, the exact events in the dreamer's life that may have shaped the dream, which enables them to give "spontaneous and intuitive responses" regarding the dream. These interpretations and responses may ring true with the dreamer.

Once this is complete, Stage Three begins, and the dreamer is invited to share her reactions to the group's responses and give details of life events which may have prefaced the dream. She is given as much time as needed to respond without interruption. After this, the dreamer and the group may continue the discussion but only at the dreamer's request. This process serves to give contextualization to the dream. At this point, the group helps the dreamer recount recent events in her life that may have helped shape the dream. Once this is

complete, the dream, at the request of the dreamer, is read aloud to her scene by scene by one of the group members. Again, the dreamer makes new connections about the meanings of the dreams and relates this information to the group. She then has the option of hearing from group members their final interpretations of specific imagery or the entire dream. Because group analysis is given when asked and not thrust upon her, she is able to develop more of a waking-life context of the dream. At this point, Stage Three is complete. Stage Four is utilized if the dreamer and the group meet again at a later date. During this stage, the dreamer is invited to share any additional insights to the meaning of the dream with the group (7-12).

According to Ullman, this process allows the dreamer space to take any information she wishes and make free-forming connections between her dream and her life experiences. This is important, because the power stays with the dreamer. If used in a domestic abuse shelter, the dreamer would be a battered woman, and the other women would be able to validate, support and provide important insight into the dream, due to their own experiences with violence, which professionals might not be able to (12).

Another venue for women worth mentioning is support groups. Support groups provide a place for women to gather and discuss the violence in their lives and possibly analyze their dreams. L. H. Bowker

performed a study involving formerly battered wives. The women were no longer beaten by their husbands even though there was a previous pattern of abuse that had been established in their relationship.

Bowker determined that the women were able to demand the violence stop in their relationship because they had gained information and confidence from participating in women's support groups (qtd. in Rosen and Stith 171).

Unfortunately, I cannot find in the research, this type of work has not been performed with adult women living with domestic abuse. It is my theory, that if dream analysis were integrated into domestic abuse victim therapy, women would be able to locate the exact nature of their disempowerment. This would aid in uncovering past traumas, such as childhood sexual abuse, or acknowledging positive aspects of their personalities.

Battered women are a highly marginalized group due to their gender and the violence they are subjected to. Dream analysis can be used as a feminist tool of empowerment for women residing in domestic abuse shelters. Presently, there is no literature or research regarding dream analysis coupled with studies of victims of domestic abuse. This work needs to be done. The topic of domestic abuse must be brought into the light and the system of patriarchy must be deconstructed so that the varied reasons for this violence can be

looked at truthfully. Part of this process is performing research in the area of domestic abuse victims, their lives, experiences, symptoms and their dreams. According to Susan Schechter, "few researchers have documented the complex steps through which women pass as they make positive changes in their lives" (310). Fruitful work has been done with sexual abuse survivors and the time has come that this valuable knowledge be used with women living with domestic abuse.

My research has shown that the integration of dream work analysis and domestic abuse therapy is important because it empowers women to make positive changes in their lives. Instituting required changes, such as educating social workers employed by battered women shelters in dream therapy techniques might increase needed funding. However, due to missed work, society loses millions of dollars each year because women miss work due to beatings incurred by their male partners as well as the cost of emergency room visits and police calls. My research is a starting place for this discussion; an integration of theory and application. The integration of dream analysis and domestic abuse therapy is a young concept which needs to be built upon. My research shows that some form of self-discovery occurs when battered women analyze their dreams. The

application of this theory may vary, but the feminist principles are the foundation. Bernice Johnson Reagon stated that,

The thing that must survive you is not just the record of your practice, but the principles that are the basis of your practice. If in the future, somebody is gonna use that song I sang, they're gonna have to strip it or at least shift it. I'm glad the principle is there for others to build on. (366)

My research is a starting point for this type of integration. I have determined that dream analysis is a feminist tool that could be utilized by this highly marginalized community for empowerment and discovery.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION: A PERSONAL STORY

I believe understanding our dreams have the potential to bring resolution to our lives because I have experienced it. For more than three decades I dreamt nightly about a man that was going to kill me. In my dream, I would awake to find him standing next to my bed or outside the window ready to break in. This dream traumatized me, as I was afraid to go to sleep knowing I would awake terrified. This terror translated to fear I experienced when outside in the world. I was certain there was a man who was waiting to harm me, and I felt as if I were being watched and stalked by an anonymous killer.

I understood that something must have happened in my early childhood, since my earliest recollection of the dreams began around the age of seven. I knew my biological father, an alcoholic, was abusive towards my mother, but I didn't know he had any role in my dream, until my mother told me a story that changed my life.

When I was just three years old and my brother was six months my father came home one night in a drunken rage. He began beating my mother, punching her with his fists, yelling and screaming at her calling her "slut" and "whore". He then proceeded to the back of the house where my brother and I slept. He awoke us from our slumber,

jerking us both out of bed. He carried my brother by the throat and had me lifted onto his hip. Once he returned to the living room, he placed me on the floor and began beating my mother again. My mother states that I ran around the house begging my father to stop hitting her. My pleas fell on deaf ears as he then grabbed my brother and I and took us to the car. My mother knew he was going to take us and she defiantly stood in front of the car door so that he could not shut it. After tossing us in the back seat, he then pulled out a gun and placed it under my mother's chin and said, "You're dead". He pulled the trigger, but the gun was empty of bullets. My mother ran for her life as my father dove into the car to get bullets out of the glove box. Upon finding she had fled, he then drove, in a drunken rage, to a town three hours north and stayed with his sister for three days. My mother frantically called the police and explained to them what my father had done and where he was driving to. The police did nothing to help her. They did not try to find my father, nor did they offer to help my badly beaten mother. At the end of three days, my father came back and my mother acquiesced, promising not to leave.

Once my mother told me this story, I understood that it was my father in the dream waking me from my slumber to murder me, as he had tried to murder my family so long ago. The man in my dream was

not a stranger. Upon making this realization, I ceased having the dream.

Growing up in our patriarchal society, we are taught to fear men who are strangers, not men in our own families. We are taught that the men in our families will protect us from the unknown men creeping in dark alleys ready to strike us at any time. In reality, it is the men who we know intimately, that cause us the most damage. This is supported by the fact that domestic abuse is the number one cause of injury to women in the United States.

My goal was to find out if other women, affected by domestic abuse also dreamt about the abuse and then found resolution because of the dreams. What I found in my research supported my theory; that dreams have the potential to bring resolution in some form. Celeste ceased dreaming about the giant who destroyed her town once her mother divorced her abusive father. Paula discontinued having dreams of penises chasing her once her childhood sexual abuse memories surfaced, and she confronted the abuser. Deirdra found help from an angel in her dream, who told her to leave her abusive husband. These processes are profound because each woman was able to get to the core belief surrounding a traumatic event and release the fear that plagued her for so long.

The implications of this research are far-reaching. Through the analysis of dreams, women formerly disempowered due to traumatic abuse, can find the courage to confront demons that have haunted them for so long. Paula confronted the man who began abusing her at the young age of six. Celeste stopped fearing her father. Deirdra was able to leave her drug addicted abusive husband. Lola realized she was "too good" for the abuse. Tammy left her husband and saved her "babies". I was no longer tormented in my sleep or feared unknown faceless men. This application of dream analysis is compatible with feminist theory. As women, we can take the knowledge of our dreams and use it to stand up to our oppressors. We can integrate our dream knowledge into a waking psyche and use our courage to fight for what is our human right; safety in our homes and lives.

In February of 2003, I wrote a poem about the domestic abuse that plagued my family and the nightmares that had occurred throughout my childhood and adult life. It is titled *Sleep*.

daddy daddy
hurry come quickly
there is a man standing in my room and he is looking at me
he is going to hurt me

daddy daddy
come quickly
someone is hurting my mommy in the living room
he is punching, kicking, slapping her
I am standing on the floor screaming *don't hit my mommy*

daddy daddy
why didn't you come and help us?

it was you

hitting my mother
after dragging me from my bed in the middle of that warm summer
night
to watch as you struck my mother with your fists of rage
you dragged me by the arm and held my baby brother by the throat
and fought my mother all the way down that dark hallway to the front
porch and onto the lawn
my mother desperately trying to save her children from this drunken
man and his rage
She defiantly stood in the front of the car door
risking her life to save her children
you threw us in the car
and pulled out a gun to rid yourself of this wife once and for all
but the goddess smiled upon my family that moment
pulling the trigger, *click*, you know that sound empty guns make
you dove into the car to find your steel powder
and my mother had no other choice but to run for her life
you drove us in your drunken rage
north to your sister's
until your wife acquiesced, promising not to leave you vulnerable
alone with yourself in your fermented hatred

72 hours later
you returned to your lovely home and wife with your lovely children
life returned to normal until the next time...

but She outsmarted you
with her blackened eyes and bruised bones
as you slept, she harbored her children safely
and packed to leave

Aha!
She called your bluff
your hand was dead
you the big loser of the game of life

the story does not end there
with blackened eyes and bruised bones
She traveled to a lawyer and had pictures taken of your brutal
infatuation with power and violence
She stood before the judge and asked for a restraining order against
the father of her children
patriarchy dictates she was your property
the all-mighty perched upon his royal pulpit denied her request for
protection against the man who attempted her murder in front of her
children

*I am tired of you women coming around here asking for restraining
orders*

She left bewildered, confused
She had learned in school
that her forefathers built this great america founded on the principle
that

All men are created equal

yes, yes

She understood

She was not a man, but his property

those *certain inalienable rights* were not written for her

daddy daddy

I am still afraid

there is someone standing in my room at night

I wake up and he is there

I know he is going to kill me

he is waiting, watching

I must stay awake, alert

daddy daddy

why don't you come quickly?

I am afraid

Oh it is you

in my bedroom at night waking me from my sleep

it is you ready to inflict

barbaric pain and hatred

into my flesh and soul

it has been you all these years
standing
jerking me out of my slumber
to witness your ruby colored rage
it is you drawing blood
inflicting pain, scars lasting a lifetime
it is you

No longer
your time for haunting my dreams is over
trespassing into my physic frontier for three decades
long after the warm summer night has gone
when you drug me from my bed to watch you murder my mother

My dreams are fading
no longer will you exist in this space I have reserved for your ghost

No longer

My dreams are mine
to remember the long summer nights
of my mother reading bedtime stories to my brother and myself
tucking us in bed

My dreams are visited by a beautiful woman
sitting at my bedside
whispering into my ear
Her warm breath caressing my skin
no one is going to hurt you now
it is safe to sleep

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research Questions

1. What is your age?
2. What area of town do you live in?
3. Where are you from? If not from this area, where are you from?
4. Do you have children?
5. If so, what are their genders and ages?
6. How long have you been in the shelter?
7. Is this your first time in the shelter?
8. What brought you to the shelter?
9. How did you meet your partner?
10. How long have you been together?
11. Were you abused as a child? If the answer is yes, who abused you?
12. Was there abuse in your parent's relationship when you were growing up?
13. Have you been abused by previous partners?
14. Please describe a typical violent episode between you and your partner.
15. Have you had recurring nightmares or dreams throughout your life?
16. Have you had recurring nightmares or dreams since your stay began at the shelter?
17. Have you had different nightmares or dreams since your stay began at the shelter?
18. What was happening in your life during the time(s) you had the nightmares or dreams?
19. What is your interpretation of your nightmares or dreams?