

“Problematic Bodies”: Negotiations and Terminations in Domestic Service in Jamaica, 1920-1970

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Domestic servants, defined by B.W. Higman, as “employees performing personal service within the households of families not their own in return for wages in cash or kind,”¹ constituted a significant proportion of the female workforce in twentieth-century Jamaica. Building on a long history of racialized enslavement in the island where bondswomen were deployed in a variety of labour contexts, domestic servants and their employers negotiated understandings about who would/could work as servants and what roles they would/could play in the households that employed them. As race, colour, class, status, and gender ideals and expectations conflated to prescribe the often unstable parameters of the sector, those who operated within it negotiated around the working bodies—the black, female bodies—that would be recruited to perform domestic service. These domestic servants were both black working women and representative of black working women; as such, the questions of who they were and what they symbolized resulted in constantly shifting ground and in struggles to define and contain them in the sector. And on those occasions when domestic servants’ bodies (which were sometimes perceived as ‘problematic’) violated the somewhat permeable boundaries of the sector or else would/could not perform domestic labour, then terminations of working arrangements removed those servants, lest they create havoc.

With the emergence of women’s history within Caribbean history in the 1970s, the initial concern was to make women ‘visible,’ to ‘recover’ them and to include them in the narratives of ‘slavery and freedom,’ which dominated the historical analyses of the region. It soon became clear, however, that that project was insufficient because the intersection of race/colour and class helped to determine significant differences in historical experiences, including those of persons who shared a ‘sex.’ Historians of women increasingly turned toward the concept of ‘gender’ to try to unravel what Joan Wallach Scott described as “the multiple and contradictory meanings attributed to sexual difference,” the relationships between the sexes, the cultural construction of male and female identities, and the hierarchical social structures that are created by sexual differences.² Growing out of these efforts, scholars have expanded the discussions about women’s and gender history, especially for the long and crucial period of slavery.³ For the post-slavery and more ‘modern’ eras, important scholarly contributions have taken the increasingly sophisticated analyses in new directions.⁴

After more than three centuries where enslaved Africans and their enslaved descendents provided the bulk of the workforce, primarily within plantation contexts, and principally within the sugar industry, the end of slavery in 1838⁵ brought with it important socio-economic shifts in Jamaican society. While most workers continued to labour in agriculture, many worked only part time in the still-dominant sugar industry or left the plantations altogether to establish small farms and a peasant society; neither of these actions was encouraged by the imperial and colonial authorities, who instead advocated the importation of a labour force held in place by indenture.⁶ By the turn of the twentieth century, the economic hardships that resulted from a sugar industry in decline were only partly offset by the increasingly important banana industry; and by the 1930s, pressures from low wages and poor working conditions, coupled with a lack of political representation with a severely limited franchise and no legally recognized trade union exploded in a general uprising of workers across the region.⁷ Out of these disturbances, trade unions and political parties would emerge, led by an ascending and educated middle class, many of the members of which had recently come out of the brown and black working classes. It is they who would champion political autonomy, industrial development and social progress⁸; and it was they who would become the largest portion of the servant-employing classes in the island.

Where domestic service was concerned, the trajectory of labour history was somewhat different. According to Higman, during slavery just over 10 per cent of the enslaved labour force were used as domestic servants⁹; however, there was “a steep decline in the domestic servant population of Jamaica in the immediate post-slavery period, it then expanded rapidly to the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in response to demand from the emerging bourgeoisie, and contracted again only after about 1950.”¹⁰ While low wages and poor working conditions were being addressed for some categories of workers, the situation for most in the domestic service sector did not change much since their appeals did not grace the discussions of the Colonial Office, their concerns did not bother the island’s legislature, and they were largely ignored by the trade unions as well as the various women’s/feminist movements in the period, the leaders of which were often employers of domestic servants. Indeed, it was not until 1974 that domestic servants were brought under the general labour laws of the island; then, for the first time, they could claim, even if many did not receive, a minimum wage and other benefits. This paper then, examines the domestic service sector during the island’s ‘modern’ history—after the Great War, through ‘decolonisation’, an attempt at West Indian federation, and political independence—but ends before government intervention. This is a history of personal engagements, negotiations among individuals, and a private working-through of social constructions including race/colour, class, gender, and sexuality through the prism of labouring (and/or problematic) bodies.

Centring Working Bodies

According to Catherine Gallagher, at least since the late eighteenth century the body—in particular “the social and economic significance of the vigorous body”—has been a focus of analysis where the healthy, reproducing (female) body was portrayed as “absolutely problematic” and as the source of possible disorder.¹¹ Later, in the Victorian period and beyond, “the body came to occupy the center of a social discourse obsessed with sanitation, with minimizing bodily contact and preventing the now alarmingly traversable boundaries of individual bodies from being penetrated by a host of foreign elements, above all the products of other bodies.”¹² These were the foundations on which what Kathleen Canning calls the “body history, or bodies in history” were constructed within a broad cross-section of disciplines, including gender histories.¹³

In some of these studies, says Canning, “bodies, as signifiers, metaphors or allegorical emblems, promise new understandings of nation or social formation.”¹⁴ This comes against a background where the social and discursive foci of gender history have tended to pry bodies apart from considerations about sex causing, as Canning reports in a discussion of Donna Haraway’s view of gender, the concept of gender “to be quarantined from the infections of biological sex”.¹⁵ As Canning points out, the influence of Michel Foucault, which encouraged an interest in that discursive body as well as the “social body,” has often resulted in abstractions, removed from the “material body” or “bodily experiences”.¹⁶ The conversations about the body (discursive and/or social and/or material) have also been heavily influenced by Judith Butler’s work questioning the link between “the materiality of the body” and “the performativity of gender” as well as the place of “the category of ‘sex’” within that relationship.¹⁷ Where the ‘material body’ is concerned, for Butler, that body is as much a construction as either the discursive and/or social body, so that in ways similar to the performativity of gender, through the reiteration of a set of norms one performs one’s material and discursive body, gender and sex.¹⁸

These and other debates about the body, sex and gender (especially the latter two), have profoundly influenced scholarship. The attempts to re/insert the (“material”) body into the discussion are important even though as Canning argues, the body, described by Bryan Turner as “at once the most solid, the most elusive, illusory, concrete, metaphysical, ever present and ever distant thing—a site, an instrument, an environment, a singularity and a multiplicity”¹⁹ makes the use of “body as method’ a particularly daunting one.” In addition, the tasks of locating the body within the peculiarities of historical moments (time and space) which themselves include large social, economic, political and cultural contexts can be overwhelming. However, one path by which Canning believes this might be addressed is through the deployment of the concept of “embodiment” which she defines, using Leslie Adelson’s formulation, as a process of “making and doing the work of bodies—of becoming a body in social space.”²⁰ Through “embodiment,”

says Canning, it is possible to move beyond the fixed and idealised concept of the body as well as to encompass “moments of encounter and interpretation, agency and resistance.”²¹

In Caribbean societies, where the vast majority of the population owes their relationship to the region to the various systems of exploitative labour, there have always been concerns about working bodies; about the factors determining who was deployed in what sort of labour; how labour was extracted and how the enslaved, the indentured and later, the employed, would negotiate their working and daily lives with those who would control their labour. While the race/colour, class and gender of those who were engaged in these arrangements have rightfully preoccupied scholars, far less evident are discussions about the working *bodies*. Where bodies have been the focus of some of the region’s literary scholars like Denise deCaires Narain, Caroline Allen, Evelyn O’Callaghan, and Jane Bryce, as well as sociologists Linden Lewis and Suzanna Marguerite Charles, bodies do not feature in a great deal of the region’s scholarship.²² This paper, which is part of a larger study, utilises some of the ideas about the body and embodiment in a first attempt to examine aspects of domestic service in twentieth-century Jamaica through the lens of working bodies.

A Comment on Sources

Due to what Higman records as the “relatively few records” which exist for domestic service in Jamaica, the identification of sources for a study of the working relationships in the sector takes some effort; however, there are some documents that present windows into this closed and private world and allow its occupants to ‘speak’. These include classified advertisements in the local newspaper and oral histories. Based on the work previously done by Higman and on preliminary conversations with former employers and domestic servants, it became clear that classified advertisements for domestic service in contemporary newspapers were sites where individuals signalled their interests, expressed their desires and began a process of setting the parameters that defined the sector. The *Daily Gleaner* was chosen for close examination because it was the most popular and longest running newspaper in the island and between 1920 and 1970, its classified advertisements were acknowledged to be the most influential.²³ After initial studies, a sampling²⁴ of the *Gleaner*’s classified advertisements resulted in an examination of 10,215 advertisements; some of those data are used here.

For the large number of persons who did not use the newspapers for recruitment or seeking positions and who operated almost entirely under the radar of written sources, another means of unveiling the hidden and private domain of domestic service had to be sought; oral history seemed to be the answer.²⁵ While oral sources continue to be treated with scepticism by some scholars,²⁶ the phenomenal strides in the field make it an important source in studies such as these since, as Higman points out, the source can provide “information on the attitudes,

beliefs and actions of all classes of people” and it “permits the study of aspects of the everyday lives of ordinary people which never found their way into public documentation.”²⁷

In an effort to generate some data about the sector, I conducted sixty-five interviews with respondents identified through a wide range of personal contacts, several churches (including Anglican, Roman Catholic, United, Baptist, and Church of Christ), the administrators in twenty homes for the elderly, the thirteen local parish councils, eleven of the thirteen parish-based Poor Relief Departments, and eleven parish infirmaries. I was also given access to fourteen of the oral histories gathered by the African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica/Jamaica Memory Bank (Institute of Jamaica). While all the names of respondents have been changed in order to maintain their privacy, the paper tries to present their individual memories of the sector as accurately as possible, while accounting for the challenges of “orality, narrative form, subjectivity, the ‘different credibility’ of memory, and the relationship between interviewer and interviewee”, in Alessandro Portelli’s words, “what makes oral history different.”²⁸ As they reminisced, most of the former employers and domestic servants were quite forthcoming in their narratives; however, there were also some moments of hesitation, evasion, and silence. All of these types of moments, according to Luisa Passerini, often indicate points which deserve further examination.²⁹

Most of the respondents also operated in both languages spoken on the island—English and Creole (Jamaican nation-language)³⁰ and the paper makes an effort to reflect that facility, especially keeping in mind that according to Higman “...it is perhaps surprising that the language of history-writing in the English-speaking Caribbean has remained firmly in the Standard English frame” and that “[i]t is impossible to identify a single written historical account ... that attempts to employ nation language.”³¹ While all the respondents switched back and forth between these two languages, the employers’ language tended to be closer to English in keeping with middle-class ideas about the role of language in indicating education, class, status, and respectability.³² With former domestic servants conversations often started slowly and carefully in a frame that was close to English but picked up momentum when Creole was woven into the dialogues, which quickly became exchanges in the nation-language; still, there were some moments (often when quoting employers) when the former servants paused to deliver their responses in the frame that was closer to English.³³ In transcribing the oral sources, efforts were made to reduce what Raphael Samuel called the ‘perils of the transcript’³⁴ in order to reach for an understanding of domestic service from persons who had been active in the sector. Along with other published and archival sources, the classified advertisements and the oral testimonies permitted a closer look at a sector that operated under veils of privacy and silence. One of the silences that has been partly broken is that about the perception and role of working bodies.

Whose Bodies?

As was the case in many other societies, domestic service in twentieth century Jamaica entailed the employment of lower status women by privileged women to perform 'women's work'.³⁵ This was in keeping with the prevailing ideas about the correlations between the female gender and domesticity, the appeal of female workers who were allegedly easier to control and cheaper to employ than their male counterparts, as well as many gendered work restrictions.³⁶ Many in twentieth century Jamaica would have endorsed Esther Chapman's observation that "Men servants are a problem, but there are plenty of well-trained, hard-working and civil girls and older women around."³⁷ By and large, women performed domestic service in the period. According to the censuses, 86.3 percent of persons employed in domestic service in 1921 were female; in 1943, 88.4 percent of domestic workers were female; while in 1960 and 1970, the proportions were 90.9 and 91 percent, respectively.³⁸ Not only did women dominate the numbers of persons employed as domestics, but according to these statistics between 20 and 34 percent of all working women were employed as servants. These numbers did not include the workers who were not interviewed by the census-takers or who misinformed them about the means by which they earned their livelihood; the numbers did not include the persons who worked as servants but who were not recognised as such, especially if they worked in the homes of their relatives; and they were unlikely to include the significant number of children who worked as domestic servants in households other than their own in exchange for food, shelter, clothing, and the possibility of an education. As a result, the number of persons, the vast majority of them women, who were actually employed as servants, was likely to have been even higher than the censuses recorded.

While it might be clear from this short discussion that domestic service in twentieth century Jamaica was 'women's work', it is important to note that the women who were recruited to work in private households were not arbitrarily assigned to domestic occupations. The women tended to come from the group with the lowest status according to the prevailing race/colour hierarchy (that is, black/coloured) and they tended to be economically marginalized. However, for our immediate purposes it is also interesting to note that the demands of the job meant that not every poor black woman was believed to be ideal as a performer of domestic service; indeed, many persons who operated within the sector had clear visions about the quintessential working bodies that would operate within the sector.

"... 'strong', 'healthy' and 'clean' ..."

When employers sought workers to come into their homes to perform domestic work and when workers offered themselves for service, there was often a negotiated understanding about what sort of bodies should ideally fill these positions. Some employers were willing to state publicly, in newspaper advertisements, that

they wanted to recruit women who were either “strong and healthy”, “strong built and in good health” or “healthy”³⁹ to work in their homes. Likewise, some prospective servants who used the same medium advertised themselves as “strong”, “healthy”, “strong and healthy”.⁴⁰ It is certainly possible to argue here that the discourse of service was being shaped and confirmed even before the parties had a physical encounter. Through these means as well, the power dynamics that operated in the sector were indicated as some employers sent clear message about their expectations and some domestic servants sought to assure those who would recruit them that they embodied those expectations.

That said, the references to strength by *both* parties seemed to indicate a recognition within the sector that serving women’s bodies had to be physically strong because they would be subjected to the onerous tasks associated with domestic service. Most domestic servants were expected to do laundry, which for many servants throughout the period meant either transporting the soiled linens and clothes (usually in pans, balanced on their heads) to some water source (rivers, springs or in urban areas, community stand-pipes) or else fetching water to their employers’ houses. For much of the period, domestic servants used harsh caked soaps, lye and bleaches to clean their employers’ clothes; if the laundry was done at the river, the heavier clothes were beaten against rocks to help to ‘loosen’ the dirt, while washing at home usually involved the use of scrubbing boards; in most cases, white clothes were placed in the sun, to assist in the elimination of dirt or stains. The washing, second-washing and rinsing by hand involved heavy physical work which was followed by the making of starch from local plants (and later, from a powered product) and ironing with metal irons, heated in open fires; it was only towards the end of the period that electric irons became more commonplace.

House-cleaning, which was also a usual requirement, was no less strenuous. In addition to sweeping the floors, domestic servants were often required to wipe them, to make and apply, to the wooden floors that dominated for much of the period, a liquid red dye, in addition to a polish. Domestic servants had also to shine the floors with coconut brushes and cloths. All of this usually done by the domestic servants on their hands and knees. Cooking was another major task assigned to most domestic servants in the period. In many households, especially in rural areas, up to and beyond 1970, kitchens continued to be buildings separated from the main house and contained open hearths where meals were prepared. In addition to chopping the wood for the fire, or making the fire with coal in wealthier homes, domestic servants had to prepare (sometimes quite elaborate) meals in these smoky kitchens, serve the meals, and then clear the table and wash all the pots, pans, dishes, glasses and cutlery that had been used in the process. And in households where employers had children, none of these duties alleviated domestic servants’ childcare responsibilities: whether the children were infants, toddlers, or older, they were usually expected to respond to the children’s needs whenever these were expressed.⁴¹ It is little wonder then, that many in the sector

agreed that strong and healthy bodies were best suited for its demands.

This was certainly the expectation of Ophelia Brown, a retired schoolteacher, who recalled that the women whom she hired from the 1940s through the 1960s were expected “to cook... and wash and iron and keep the house tidy”. Although the women worked alone in the Brown household, their duties were extended to include care for three children.⁴² Similarly, Maureen Cooper, a retired civil servant who hired women during the 1950s and 1960s, remembered that in addition to childcare, she expected her domestic servants to “[c]ook, clean, keep the house tidy, wash, you know, wash. And you would have certain days—you wash on Mondays... Thursday you iron, Friday you clean, you know.”⁴³

According to Hazel Cunningham, when she was hired as a domestic servant in the late 1930s, she “had to do everyt’ing”. Although she had been originally employed as a nursemaid “to look aftah her [employer’s] four children”, she was also required to do “general work ... I did all de children laundry; I assist in de kitchen; I assist in cleaning; go on de street [ran errands]”. In order to complete all these tasks Cunningham had to be physically capable and perhaps her employer believed she would find that strength in a fourteen year-old—Cunningham’s age when she entered service in the woman’s household.⁴⁴ Linnette Reynolds was eighteen when she started to work in 1949. Everywhere, the expectations were the same. She “washed, cooked, ironed and did general housework” and when she worked with one post-mistress, she was required to deliver telegrams as part of her ‘household’ duties.⁴⁵ Rachel Barrett worked with a “[p]air a people, wife an’ husban’ an’ children” in the period; when she was asked about her duties, her reply could have been echoed by several other respondents: “Me do domestic. Cook, wash, clean an’ everyt’ing”, including childcare.⁴⁶

For many servants, the distinctions among domestic, agricultural and other sorts of work were not clear and the ‘maid-of-all-work’ did all sorts of labour. According to Norma Rodney, a retired schoolteacher, the workload was incredible, especially for rurally-based domestic servants in the 1950s and 1960s.

Life for them was extremely hard as they had to go to springs for water and look [for] bundles [of wood] for cooking and ironing. The girls had to wash at the river which took them a whole day as they had to wash these clothes, clap out the dirt on river stones, then boil them with washing soda ... They had to iron, cook, clean, peel ginger, sweep, tidy house, pick coffee, rind oranges, clean out springs, prepare the field for planting of ginger, yams, cocoa, peas, corn, bananas, cassavas, organs, plantains, irish [sic] potatoes, sweet potatoes. They also had to go to the market to sell these products including head sugar as many of these employees [employers] had sugar mills where they milled sugar. Most of the loads were carried on their heads as donkeys and mules were limited. They took

care of the animals too.⁴⁷

Phyllis King's memories of her experiences coincided with Rodney's. She recalled that she was recruited to work in a household in Westmoreland parish where, in addition to doing all of the housework, she was required to work in the sugar works, to feed the cane mill and to help with the grinding of the cane.⁴⁸ Jean Evans, too, recalled that in her second job in Clarendon parish, her employers required much more than housework: "Me haffi deh chop, deh weed-up grass – *tough lackah wha!* – wo'k a ya'd. An me couldn' manige i' ... Dem ha' all cane-piece, den me feh clean-out cane-piece; clean-out pittatah-fiel', an' plant pittatah ..."⁴⁹ When Helen James was recruited into a domestic position in Westmoreland parish, she also found that her duties were extensive. She was required ". . . to wash an' so an' so an' t'ing" and then on Fridays and Saturdays she went to the market, to sell the cakes and pastries that her employer had baked.⁵⁰ For Florence Higgins, who worked in Kingston, the extension of the meaning of 'domestic work' took her into her employer's restaurant business; as she put it, "when Ah finish at de home, Ah go to de restarant", where she worked late into the night, cooking, washing dishes, and cleaning until all customers had left.⁵¹

While analyses of domestic service often focus on the repetitive tasks and the isolation of workers, what comes through in these testimonies is the physical strain that domestic service could entail. As had been the case under slavery, when working women's bodies were assessed for their strength, and women were momentarily 'un-gendered' when they performed heavy, manual labour alongside enslaved men, the demand for and offer of strong bodies covered a great deal of ground.⁵² Although these women were recruited to perform domestic labour, and therefore could be perceived of as (gendered) women, the bodies that were needed to complete that labour were (masculinised) strong bodies. In the slippery world of *embodied* gender, the performance of domestic chores 'made' these individuals into hard-working, female servants, and it also demanded strength that was not 'feminine'. These working bodies *were* physically/materially strong, and within long-extant discourses of racialized and gendered labour, they *represented* strong black womanhood. They used 'non-feminine strength' to fulfill 'female domestic duties' and, like their foremothers, they were women whose bodies both were and represented black labour.

Where strength and health could be directly connected to the demands placed on servants, the requirements for and assurances of health may also have been reflective of wider public fears about the illness and diseases that these workers could introduce into the households where they were employed. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Central Board of Health and the Medical Department reported that there were some serious problems in the island. In addition to a veritable epidemic of hookworms,⁵³ there were heightened concerns about enteric (typhoid) fever, pulmonary tuberculosis, malaria, chickenpox, dysentery, alastrim, venereal diseases, yaws, smallpox and scarlet fever. Where the dreaded enteric (typhoid) fever

was concerned, apart from 'labourers', some of the occupational groups singled out for mention in the reports were 'domestic servants', 'washerwomen', and 'cooks'.⁵⁴

Within intimate domestic spaces, where access to employers' clothes, food and bodies was a regular part of the performance of duties, the possibilities for silent dangers presented a real undercurrent. And since the bodies of the poor, especially of poor women, were thought to be the breeding grounds of unspeakable dangers, employers indicated their willingness to protect themselves from the diseases that officials in the health services warned about. The desire for strong and *healthy* domestic workers had a certain resonance among employers, and many servants were anxious to be labelled thus. The allusion to and preference for bodies without disease, free of germs and contamination was also a coded reference to the ideal condition of the bodies of the poor and the black bodies that dominated the workforce. In a historical context where masters/employers were dependent on, resentful of, and threatened by, working (productive) bodies, these bodies had long been constructed as potential vectors of unspeakable personal destruction.⁵⁵ But the bodies of healthy female domestic servants represented 'problems' of another sort: they were tied to racist ideas about the 'nasty difference' that black women's bodies represented⁵⁶; they were the sources of the fascination and/or revulsion; and, their presumed robustness stood in stark opposition to the ideal of frail white femininity that was threatened by the harshness of life in the tropics. And in a sector and society that sought to reduce them merely to bodies without minds, as we will see, they would prove again and again that they were full, thinking human beings who made their best choices often under difficult circumstances.

If some prospective employers mentioned the strength and health of servants, there were others who were clear that they wanted servants who were "clean", "cleanly" or "very clean",⁵⁷ while some servants declared themselves to be "clean" or "clean [and] healthy".⁵⁸ These references, which were quite separate from cleaning tasks assigned to them, were directed at the servants *themselves*, to their bodies. This was the case when Cooper reminisced about her interaction with the women she employed in the 1950s and 1960s. According to her, there were occasions on which their clean/dirty bodies would become her concern.

... I would try to - you know, any points that I wasn't satisfied with I would try to talk to them about it. For instance, you know, say they not conscious about certain hygiene [chuckles], you have to find a *nice* way of telling them. You know? Telling them about using deodorant, changing their clothes ... tell them, "You have to make sure you keep yourself clean and tidy coming into my kitchen. You wash your hands. If you go to the bathroom, you wash your hands." Is not everybody do that you know? [When they were] ... coming out of the bath-

room, [she asked] “You wash you hands?” But you try to do it, not in an unkind fashion.

Cooper’s chuckle in this instance alerts us to undercurrent of amused condescension, and concern.

That Cooper was as black as the women she employed only served to emphasise how class had come to drive the perception of cleanliness/dirt and contamination; an idea the middling classes shared in other contexts was that poverty was often embodied by (innately) dirty persons.⁵⁹ However, in the context of this former slave society, class precepts were enmeshed with those of race/colour so that dirtiness was also be equated to blackness. When Cooper referred to the poor hygiene of black lower-class women who embodied domestic servants, she could do so because she believed herself to be removed from the classes where that dirt, those smells (uncontrolled by deodorant), and untidiness congregated; and she would insist on the dissipation of all such signs lest they reflect badly on her (black) self. Kindly references to domestic servants’ problematic, unhygienic bodies were part of the construction of their real and symbolic bodies; the fact that those bodies were likely to smell of perspiration due to heavy toil only served to confirm the complexity of these moments. As gendered workers who executed domestic chores and so became servants who were women, they also became real frowsty bodies that violated the spaces they occupied.

Within domestic service, the issues of cleanliness also had resonance because of the proximity of servants to the food, clothes, and bodies of their employers. And for many persons (perhaps the health authorities as well), there was an emphasis on clean hands that would prevent transfer of dirt and disease. In a society where there were communicable diseases and where black women’s hands could be part of the cycle of sickness, dirty hands which were representative of hard manual labour could also be symbolic of disease and the sources of disease. And what else could those threatening hands have come into contact with? Trips to the bathroom (as mentioned above) carried hidden messages that also confirmed the workers’ materiality through their bodily functions and cyclically affirmed their sex since their menstruation (as mentioned below) was part of what employers hoped they would wash away, completely.

On the occasions when servants’ bodies did *not* function as they were required, when they were either weak, unhealthy or unclean, they became problematic and often had to be removed from the sector. According to Adelle Robinson, when she decided to leave domestic service in the early 1960s, she did so because her body was worn out; she “get break down.”⁶⁰ Evelyn Williams remembered that she left the sector in the 1960s when her body became too sick to work.⁶¹ Edith Jefferson’s recollections were similar: she became sick after working with a family for ten years but when trips to the local health centre made

no difference to her health, she had to leave the job. When she was asked if her employers helped or supported her during these difficulties, her answer was short: “No.”⁶²

While Jefferson would not be pressed further on the issue, Catherine Darby was more forthcoming. She said, “I was sick wid a severe cold. Ah did have a severe cold an’ is dat cold cause me to leave dat job”. Asked why a cold would have that result she replied, “Because Ah had was to lay in bed ... An’, ahm, dey had to get a nex’ person to work in my place, while I was in bed, yuh know! ... Dat is de reason why I had was to leave”. After she recovered, she worked for another employer but once again illness struck. According to her, “... is sickniss tek me outah dat job yuh kno’ ... Ah sick wid au’tritis Ah sick wid au’tritis inna de two knees, and de han’ dem” so she left the job.⁶³ Neither she nor most of the other former servants found this to be surprising since, according to the negotiated understanding within the sector, a domestic servant whose body could not respond to the demands of the job was expected to leave the job or else to be removed from it.

Phyllis King’s recollections, however, seemed to complicate the picture of responses to sickness in the sector. She remembered that on one occasion she was using a knife to “dig-out de coconut” when it slipped, stuck her and “blood –piezn’ [poison] de han’”. She was taken to the hospital, underwent surgery and her employer looked after her until she was discharged from the hospital and went back to work.⁶⁴ Perhaps it was because the injury was suffered during her duties that the employer felt responsible, but this was not always the case. When Hazel Cunningham went to work as a cook with the Catholic nuns at Saint Joseph School in Kingston, she did not last long in the position because she “gat damage, dis [right] han’ gat damage ... Boilin’ oil, pour ovah it, burn me up. So Ah had to leave an’ go home.” There was no compensation mandated by law or offered by the reverend sisters for her injury and her pain would last for a long time. Experiences like these reinforce the concern among some scholars, like Elaine Scarry, that in focusing on the body, it is necessary to emphasise “that bodily practices have a physical reality which can never be fully assimilated into discourse.”⁶⁵

Cunningham and others in similar positions knew that the domestic service sector had little place for those whose bodies were not strong and healthy and that the largely unregulated nature of the sector meant that the care of those servants who became weak or ill depended entirely on the whim of employers. If servants were injured or if they became ill, there were no safety nets, whether by custom or by law⁶⁶, to ensure their care; and in a country where the governmental welfare system was difficult to access, humiliating and minimal, there were few options open to the servants whose bodies were broken by work or by illness. Those who could, turned to family members while for others their destitution ensured reliance on sporadic neighbourly or religious charities and commission to the parish poor houses.⁶⁷

“... no paramours, ‘friends’, sweethearts ...”

If domestic servants’ bodies came into focus in the sector due to their physical in/abilities to complete domestic tasks, then other concentrations on their bodies were due to their sex and sexuality. Some employers expressed anxieties about servants’ biological cycles, the potential for sexual intercourse and the possibility for significant ramifications in the employers’ households if these issues entered these intimate work environments. For their part, domestic servants were well aware of the threats that their sexual bodies suggested and many were content to play their part in the pantomime of expectations and the attempts to control their bodies and their sexuality. As was the case for other aspects of domestic service, on these issues there was variability within the sector, including varying levels of negotiations around some features of embodied biology. And, importantly, in this sector where there were severe imbalances of power, there were also moments of confrontation, resistance and self-assertion.

In ‘real’ and discursive terms, domestic servants’ bodies’ preparation for reproduction was sometimes perceived as problematic. According to Maureen Cooper, soon after she recruited Viola Johnson from St. Mary it became apparent that hers might not be an ideal working body because “When she would see her period every month she *sick*,” but Cooper kept Johnson in the position because “other than that, she was such a *good* worker”.⁶⁸ That Cooper should remember those monthly interruptions to the domestic work schedule forty-seven years after the fact is telling; but she seemed most anxious to make it clear that she kept Johnson *despite* her sickness, as if this was unusual. And it may well have been since for many persons, while there was little way to deny the reality of menstruation, dealing with the process was unpalatable.

According to Emily Martin, while there had long been discomfort around women’s ‘natural’ body function in menstruation, by the nineteenth century the process was perceived as “soundly pathological.”⁶⁹ Those ideas would continue to be influential well into the twentieth century perhaps, says Martin, because menstruation is symbolic of “failed production” and the belief that “women are in some sinister sense out of control when they menstruate. They are not reproducing, not continuing the species, not preparing to stay at home with the baby, not providing a safe, warm womb to nurture a man’s sperm.”⁷⁰ It is not at all clear that the menstruation of domestic servants would be viewed in this way since one thing that their employers most wanted was for them *not* to reproduce, but to remain available for domestic tasks, including the care of children who were not their own. Still, employers were nervous about the taboos around blood that obtain to many societies where some aspects of domesticity, especially the preparation of food, present moments of anxiety.⁷¹ So employers and domestic servants were well aware that what servants’ menstruation meant and what it symbolized were potentially problematic for those who operated in the sector.

The difficulties that menstruating bodies, represented in domestic serv-

The difficulties that menstruating bodies, represented in domestic service, could introduce into the home/workplace could be found in Hazel Cunningham's recollections of her biological 'problems.' According to Cunningham, one day she returned to her employer's home from a trip to the market; she remembered her body was wracked by a painful menstrual cycle. She felt especially stressed because the mother of the children she was caring for was not at home—she had gone to the Cayman Islands on holiday. When the employer/mother returned later that day, the children told her that Cunningham was sick but the employer ignored the children's news; "...she nevah even give de kitchen door a peep an' seh, 'Ah heard dat yuh are feeling sick, how are yuh feeling now?' Not a word" Stung by what she believed was an uncaring attitude, Cunningham decided to confront her employer.

So me aks 'ar what did de children say to har when she came home. [The employer replied,] "That yuh were feelin' sick." Ah seh, "Yes ma'am . . . Ah would be happy to go an' lie down, but Ah jus' couldn' lie down, because dere were nobody to protect de children, an' I had to cook de dinnah." An' she [the employer] went back to her bed. So, when I look at it I said, "My *god*, [I] am a human being." An' dey doan t'ink of dat. An' Ah decide Ah gwine leave it. An' Ah lef' de work. An' Ah went home.⁷²

Perhaps Cunningham believed that her employer, as a woman, should have been more understanding of the pains in her female body. However, maybe the empathy she sought was not in evidence because some female employers saw the 'sickness of womanhood' as just another hindrance to the completion of domestic tasks. Nevertheless, in that moment of confrontation Cunningham, who through her performance of domestic service might have represented 'servitude', brought her 'real', feminine, menstruating body into proximity with her employer's body and used her embodiment of the female sex to call attention to the power dynamics within the sector where sickness did not alleviate her responsibilities and where post-travel weariness relieved those of her employer. Speaking from a position of relative powerlessness, she laid out what she believed to be the unfairness of the working arrangements, spoke about the lack of acknowledgement for her real/female pain, invoked her humanity, and then terminated her employment. Cunningham's memory of that moment portrayed it as one of triumph, where she removed herself from circumstances where she believed neither her physical efforts nor her bodily/female pains was acknowledged; this was embodied self-assertion.

Domestic servants brought their histories, personalities, needs, and sexualities into their employers' households; and while many employers tried to construct a one-way flow where servants would respond to their domestic and person-

al concerns while they ignored the servants' concerns, they were limited in that construction by the pressing reality of servants' lives. Many employers responded by establishing rules of engagement—they tried to limit the 'disruptive' incursion of servants' personal lives into their private spaces and by so doing tried to prevent all agendas but their own from having any importance. Limiting 'outside' bodies and their influences was one means of accomplishing this.

Throughout the period, one primary focus of employers' anxiety was male bodies that threatened to invade their households in order to have relationships with the women they employed as domestic servants. When one local employer advised expatriate Marjorie Hughes about recruiting a domestic servant in the early 1960s she said: "Make sure ... that she understands that no paramours, 'friends', sweethearts, lemans, common-law husbands—they have all sorts of words for it—are allowed in her room ..."⁷³ For this advisor and others in the employing classes, the concerns here were myriad.

For employers, personal relationships, especially if they included sexual intercourse, meant the possibility of competing personal concerns among servants, the image of sexualized bodies in their households, and the stains of immorality that unregulated sex represented to 'decent' middle class households. According to the ideals that many in the employing classes embraced, the vast majority of women who worked as domestic servants should have been other than sexualized bodies since they were not married. Although many in the society continued to survive and thrive in a culture that assigned more importance to family than marriage, those who had middle class aspirations claimed to support sexual relationships only in marriage.⁷⁴ And since the vast majority of them were employing single women as general maids, those women had no 'right' to embody sexuality and to have personal sexual lives, certainly not within respectable middle class homes. The transformation of serving bodies into sexualized female bodies was more than most would countenance.

Ophelia Brown recalled that her first domestic servant in 1949 did not last long in the position; "... she left after four months because she wanted to have a relationship with a young man."⁷⁵ She believed that the servant's personal (and potentially sexual) relationships could not be allowed within the context of the working relationship she had established; and she was not alone. Between 1957 and 1970, Maureen Cooper employed several servants; when asked about why some domestic service arrangements were terminated, among the reasons she pointed to was that "... some of them have boyfriends and bring them, you don't really want that set-up in your house, you know."⁷⁶

Domestic workers knew all too well what set-ups were permitted while they worked, especially if they were resident workers since they knew that living in someone else's home could be a source of a great deal of anxiety. They had to obey the rules of the household (some of which were constructed entirely for them) and their personal lives were often controlled by those who provided them

with 'homes'. Their movements in and out of the residence, their use of resources in the household (electricity and water, for example) and their ability to have visitors (relatives, friends, or partners) were just some of the issues that resident servants had to negotiate with employers who continued to see their households as their own private 'homes' rather than 'workplaces' and the 'homes' of their employees.

By the very definition of the sector, among employers and domestic servants there was little of the clear home/workplace dichotomy which existed for most sectors by the twentieth century. According to Lewis Coser, the two key attributes which distinguished the modern workers from their forebears were that their abodes were usually separated from those of their employers' and their labour was committed for a set number of hours. Since domestic service, in this and similar contexts, fulfilled neither criterion, the sector could be labelled as 'anachronistic'.⁷⁷ Because domestic servants worked, and sometimes lived, in their employers' homes that home/workplace and private/public division was breached. As workers, they brought the concerns of 'outside' into the private domain and try as they might to treat their employers' homes as any other workplace, the reality was that it did not operate as such. While, as Nancy Duncan contends, "the binary distinction between private and public spaces and the relation of this to private and public spheres is highly problematic" and that "[t]here are privatized or quasi-privatized, commercialized public spaces",⁷⁸ it is possible to argue that domestic service presents a situation of 'publicised private spaces.' For employers, trying to maintain the balance in favour of (their) privacy meant clear ideas about which, if any, public bodies would be allowed into their intimate space. And domestic servants were well aware of those ideas which were in force throughout the period and beyond.

Adelle Robinson remembered that when she started to work "about 1945", the position required that she 'live in.' She soon became aware of the regulations of the household including the rule that she could have visitors, once they were "under good behaviour an' t'ing", but that this did not extend to males. When she was asked if she could entertain "gentleman callers", she responded forcefully: "No ma'm ... No ma'm" and laughed.⁷⁹ Similarly, Edna Phillips recalled that she began working as a domestic servant "in di 1950s" and was permitted to have visits from family members, although she was more likely to "... run go look fi me maddah" after work. When asked about the possibility of having male visitors, she forcefully echoed Robinson's negative response: "Nooo!"⁸⁰ Lena Ferguson, who started to work as a domestic servant in the late 1930s and early 1940s remembered that she was expected to live according to exacting regulations. Friends were not allowed to visit and when asked about the possibilities of entertaining a male companion her resounding response ("Ob no!") was similar to Robinson's and Phillips's. However, she found a way around the rules: she arranged to meet male and female friends when she went out to "walk out baby

[i]n de evenings” but emphasised that those friends “caan [can’t] come inna de people dem place”.⁸¹

The larger context for these prohibitions and terminations was, of course, the long-standing image of wanton black (female) sexuality, which had its roots in slave society.⁸² This was significant especially because a large and growing proportion of the employers of domestic service were, themselves, black. Well aware of the image, many (black) employers were concerned about being associated with the ‘heritage’ of vulgar sexuality in their homes. Not only could these highly sexualized (black) women assault the reputation of employers’ households, but they might influence their employers’ children, and just as importantly, provide sexual rivalry for women in the employing class. Women employers, like the mistresses of an earlier period, were well aware of the sexual ‘threat’ that the sexualized bodies of domestic servants represented in their private spaces, and although the encounters that did occur were often at the behest of predatory masters/male employers, many women focused on their potential replacements and tried to control not only their access to the men in the household, but to all men. Interestingly, there was an emphasis on the prohibition of male visitors, which indicates that as far as employers (and perhaps domestic servants) were concerned, there was little, if any, thought given to any but heterosexual relationships. Since most often when domestic workers were allowed visitors these visitors were women, those who terminated the services of domestics who wanted to have boyfriends clearly never believed any other scenario was possible.

While employers tried to control the sexual bodies of their servants and were willing to terminate their employment if there was evidence of ‘violations’, they were often unsuccessful. Whether they defied their employers’ rules about bringing visitors into the households, or whether they met with partners outside of the employers’ space, many domestic workers established sexual relationships and some of the women became pregnant. And on those occasions, employers and domestic workers accepted that a relationship that led to pregnancy was grounds for termination. In most cases employers asked pregnant servants to leave because the body image of a pregnant servant, especially if she were unmarried (which most were), was simply unacceptable. Most viewed the women’s expanding bodies as symbols of ‘impropriety’ and ‘immorality’ and servants knew that if they became pregnant and those pregnancies were carried forward, the question was not if they would lose their positions, but when. It is important to note, however, that the issue of pregnancy and employment was not confined to domestics since other working women were also required to resign once their bodies indicated that they had gotten pregnant, especially if they had done so out of wedlock. While there was some argument that this was a response to women’s reduced abilities to work, the issues really seemed to be focused on the image of impropriety that (un)married pregnant workers suggested. So domestic servants operated in a society where their female employers, if they chose to work, faced

similar discrimination on account of their sex and bodies. Perhaps this might account for the swift terminations of those domestic servants who defied the ‘rules’.

After Linnette Reynolds got her first domestic position in 1949, she stayed at the job for two years and left because she “got pregnant”. Unmarried, she returned to her village, gave birth and looked after her child through infancy, in her parents’ home. Her next jobs were in her village where she worked with in two domestic positions at different times; both were terminated because of pregnancies.⁸³ When Winnifred Black was taken by her mother to her first job at fourteen, she stayed in that job “long, long, long, long time; so till me did start ha’ pickney”. Although she could not remember her age when that first child was born, she did recall that she went home to her parents and remained with them for a while. Her child, however, did not survive and so she resumed domestic service until she became pregnant again.⁸⁴ Barbara Richards’s memories of her experiences were similar. She worked in one household in St. Ann for about three years after which, she said, “Me get prignant an’ me leave.” She too returned to her parents’ home and had her child. According to her, she waited until “im can walk an’ go a school before me go back a work”; at that stage, rather than living in her employers’ homes, she ‘lived out’ so that she could care for her son.⁸⁵

If the aspiring middle classes and others viewed ‘unmarried sex’ and ‘illegitimate children’ as part of the moral scourge on the island, for the vast majority of ordinary Jamaicans, there was no stigma attached to pregnancy and childbirth outside of marriage.⁸⁶ The women’s abilities to ‘go home’ once they ran afoul of the employing classes’ sensibilities reveal a great deal about the family culture of the island which seemed to create not only a safety net for the domestic workers, but likely for their children as well. So, while there was little institutional support for childbearing women in the workforce seeking maternity leave, and the protections that did exist did not extend to ‘unwed mothers’ until the 1970s, domestic servants did what many ordinary Jamaicans had long done—they made the best choices they could and turned to their families for support.

While many employers acknowledged and tried to control their domestic servants’ sexual bodies by insisting that no ‘paramours’ were allowed to visit them, they were also aware that many of those bodies could become ‘problematic’ if men *within* the employing classes recognised them as sexualized bodies. As masters had done during the period of slavery, some males in the employing classes behaved as if servants’ domestic duties extended to sexual labour.⁸⁷ For some domestic servants who could/did not resist these sexual encounters, the possibilities for some personal and/or material benefit, domestic explosions on discovery (since these were often secret affairs), pregnancies, and difficult circumstances were real. For others, the ‘discovery’ of their sexual bodies could wreak havoc in the households of their employ and lead to the termination of their employment.

When Hazel Cunningham was employed as a domestic servant at four-

teen, she stayed in the position for two years, until 1940. When asked why she left that job, she said, “De salary”, but she later returned to explain what “really cause Misses Clarke an’ I to break-up”. According to her:

... she [Clarke] nevah stay home in de nights, an’ when she gone out, an’ I go ... to sleep near de children an’ when de faddah come an’ go to bed, [he] leave his bed an’ come a mine bed, come on me. An’ I t’reaten de night he did. I told him I’ll hurt him if he attempt it again. An’ dat I mean, I would ’ave done it, for I was a serious girl when Ah was growing. No man touch me. No man musn’ touch me ... Dat’s what wake me, Ah was asleep an’ he came down on me ... An’ I jump out of ma’ sleep, but ... , I nevah scream ... An’ me rail-up an’ seh, “What are yuh doing? Doan do it. As long as I am ’ere doan attemp’ it again, I’ll hurt yuh. Man, I’ll kill yuh now.”

When asked about his response to her threat to do him grave bodily harm, she said, “He didn’ seh a word, he ongle got up an’ went out back”. But the problems ‘caused’ by her nubile body did not end there. Cunningham told someone about the incident and that person, in turn, told Mrs. Clarke. According to Cunningham:

She give me a good cursing wid ’ar tongue; seh dat I am feisty; lickle school gal like me feel seh her husban’ want me. So I told ’ar ... , “If you were a *lady*, you would be in yuh bed when ’im come home ’im fin’ yuh, ’im wouldn’ come an’ want me to use me.”
[Mrs. Clarke] couldn’ ansah.⁸⁸

The incident became the source of hostility between Cunningham and her female employer.

This dramatic episode highlights a number of issues that were current in the lives of many domestic servants, especially those who were young and lived in their employers’ homes. For them the spectres of sexual harassment and sexual attacks were very real. Mr. Clarke’s assumption that he could simply join the young domestic servant in her bed was by no means peculiar to him. However, her hostile response might have separated Cunningham from other young servants who felt vulnerable in the face of the demands of the male authority figures in the household that was the source of their livelihoods.

The incident also makes clear just how much access domestic servants had to the most secret aspects of their employers’ lives. Cunningham had previously discovered that her married female employer was sexually involved with other men and that she and some policemen “use[d] to meet ovah a place name

Frontier". Because she knew that the employer "was going out wid a policeman," she could declare, "Ah know what Ah was saying when Ah tell 'ar, 'If she was a *lady*, she would be in her bed.'"⁸⁹ In Cunningham's memory of the exchange between Mrs. Clarke and herself, in addition to her own, the female employer's sexual body also came under scrutiny. In Cunningham's estimation if Mrs. Clarke had been sexually available to her husband, instead of being 'illicitly' available to another man, her own sexuality may not have come under assault; the connection between the 'women' (since Cunningham was a girl) and their possibility of sexual interchangeability were highlighted, as was Mrs. Clarke's un-lady-like behaviour. That Cunningham would remember herself as a fourteen-year-old invoking this language spoke to the pervasiveness of the image of ideal gender roles so that Mrs. Clarke, 'caught in violation,' could not answer her young accuser's immediate words. Although poor, alone and vulnerable, Cunningham embodied resistance to the difficulty of her circumstances: she confronted and stood up to both her male and female employers.

Rather than focusing her anger at the husband, Mrs. Clarke subsequently unleashed her fury on the young servant who had dared to be 'feminine' enough to enter the vision of the predatory male, and who had told at least one other person about the incident. Mrs. Clarke's sexual role as 'wife' was threatened by this 'school girl'. She lashed out at the source of her competition by 'cursing her with her tongue' (so often referred to as another 'problematic' body part) once that knowledge became public. Although Cunningham had refused to perform the sexual side of her 'domestic role', Mrs. Clarke's hostility made it increasingly difficult for her (and her 'material' body) to remain as a worker in the household. Cunningham terminated the working arrangement and returned home to her family. She shared her memories of those moments with great pride; against the odds, she had saved her body and herself from violation.

Problematic Bodies

*I know no woman – virgin, mother, lesbian, married, celibate – whether she earns her keep as a housewife, a cocktail waitress, or a scanner of brain waves – for whom her body is not a fundamental problem: its clouded meaning, its fertility, its desire ... its bloody speech, its silences, its changes and mutilations, its rapes and ripenings.*⁹⁰

Using the body as a site for reading the historical experiences and relationships in domestic service in twentieth-century Jamaica provides an opportunity not only to analyze what the servants symbolized, but what the insertion of 'actual' female working bodies into a private household might have meant. The

attempt to centre the physical working bodies of domestic servants, in and of themselves, allows for an interpretation of why strong, healthy, and clean bodies might have been sought and offered and what resulted when servants' bodies did not fall, or no longer fell, within those parameters.

Through their material and sexual/ized bodies, as well as through the discourse that accompanied them, although they were paid for their labour, female domestic servants were part of the gendered construction of domesticity. Those among them who used their physicality to negotiate for domestic positions (in this case, by offering their strong, healthy, and clean bodies for work) were responding to both the heavy labour demands of the sector and the representations of ('unfeminine') black, female workers in the Caribbean. Furthermore, when female servants arrived to work, they brought with them their femaleness which included those biological and sexual aspects that could be viewed as 'problematic'. The concerns about, and fears of, domestic servants' always sexed and potentially sexual bodies prevailed throughout the sector. Many servants tried to downplay their feminine bodies, even as they used those bodies to perform 'women's work'.

However, the attempts to dictate the terms of embodiment of Jamaican domestic service were not always successful. When they could/would not fulfil the expectations of strength and/or health and/or cleanliness, some were removed or removed themselves from domestic positions. And interestingly, some continued to work through their illnesses and although they knew that their bodies were neither strong nor healthy, their financial needs and willingness to work (often for very low wages) superseded the search for ideal working bodies. In addition, the attempts to control the female bodies of domestic servants were limited by the physical/sexual realities of their bodily functions and sexual needs. As a result, despite attempts to contain and control them, the servants' menstruating and sexualized bodies could not be ignored, especially on the occasions when, notwithstanding warnings about allowing a male presence, they established relationships and became pregnant. That the males who recognised their sexual bodies could also come from the employing classes was a reality that many domestic workers encountered. And sometimes, when they rejected their male employers' demands, those encounters became moments of resistance and empowerment.

The domestic service sector operated as a microcosm of the relationships that obtained to this post/colonial society, where gender, race/colour, and class functioned in historically scripted ways. With its foundations in a race-based system of slavery, domestic service was constructed as women's work. In keeping with gendered expectations, it was the preserve of the lower classes and the majority of the persons who performed it were black or coloured. As this short examination indicates, the 'real' poor black women who performed domestic service remind us that in material and discursive ways, the working body represented one site for the articulation of race, colour, class, status, and gender, among other concerns. The bodies of the women who worked in the domestic service sector in

twentieth century Jamaica could be one way of viewing large social forces and intersecting relationships. Their bodies present great possibilities for the scholarship as it moves forward.

Notes

1. B.W. Higman, "Domestic Service in Jamaica, since 1750," in *Essays Presented to Douglas Hall: Trade, Government and Society in Caribbean History, 1700-1920*, ed. B.W. Higman (Kingston: Heineman Educational Books Caribbean Limited, 1983), 118. While the more common terms in current use are 'domestic workers' or 'household workers', I will use 'domestic servants' throughout this paper since it is the label recognized under the law and used by most people for this period. For the number of persons working as domestic servants see table.
2. Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 25; Patricia Mohammed, "Writing Gender into History: The Negotiation of Gender Relations among Indian Men and Women in Post-indenture Trinidad Society, 1917-47," in *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective*, eds. Verene Shepherd, Bridget Brereton and Barbara Bailey (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 20-47; Bridget Brereton, "Text, Testimony and Gender: An Examination of some Texts by Women on the English-speaking Caribbean from the 1770s to the 1920s," in *Engendering History*, 63-93; Bridget Brereton, "Gendered Testimony: Autobiographies, Diaries and Letters by Women as Sources for Caribbean History" in *Slavery, Freedom and Gender: The Dynamics of Caribbean Society*, eds. Brian L. Moore, et al. (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2001), 232-253; Hilary Beckles, "Sex and Gender in the Historiography of Caribbean Slavery," in *Engendering History*, 125-140; Jean Stubbs, "Gender in Caribbean History," in *General History of the Caribbean: Methodology and Historiography of the Caribbean*, ed., B.W. Higman (London and Oxford: UNESCO Publishing/Macmillan Education Ltd., 1999), 95-135; Blanca Silvestrini, "Women and Resistance: 'Herstory' in Contemporary Caribbean History," in *Slavery, Freedom and Gender*, 161-182.
3. Lucille Mathurin Mair, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica, 1655-1844* (Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2006); Hilary McD. Beckles, *Natural Rebels: A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989); Hilary McD. Beckles, *Centering Woman: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999); Barbara Bush, "White 'Ladies', Coloured 'Favourites' and Black 'Wenches': Some Considerations on Sex, Race and Class Factors in Social Relations in White Creole Society in the British Caribbean," *Slavery and Abolition* 2, 3 (December, 1981): 245-262.; Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650-1838* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishing, 1990); Marietta Morrissey, *Slave Women in the New World: Gender Stratification in the Caribbean* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1989); Bernard Moitt, *Women and Slavery in the French Antilles, 1635-1848* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001); Verene A. Shepherd, ed., *Women in Caribbean History* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999); Digna Castañeda, "The Female Slave in Cuba During the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," in *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader*, eds. Verene Shepherd and Hilary McD. Beckles (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2000).
4. Bridget Brereton, "Family Strategies, Gender, and the Shift to Wage Labour in the British Caribbean," in *Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World*, eds. Pamela Scully

and Diana Paton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Blanca G. Silvestrini, "Women and Resistance: 'Herstory' in Contemporary Caribbean History," in *Slavery, Freedom and Gender: The Dynamics of Caribbean Society*, eds. Brian L. Moore et al. (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2001); Alice Colón and Rhoda Reddock, "The Changing Status of Women in the Contemporary Caribbean," in *General History of the Caribbean: The Caribbean in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 5, ed. Bridget Brereton (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2004); Rhoda Reddock, *Women, Labour and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago: A History* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1994); Olive Senior, *Working Miracles: Women's Lives in the English-speaking Caribbean*, (Cave Hill: I.S.E.R., U.W.I., 1991); Pat Ellis, ed., *Women of the Caribbean* (Kingston: Kingston Publishers Ltd., 1985); Janet Momsen, ed., *Women & Change in the Caribbean: A Pan Caribbean Perspective* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1993); Verene Shepherd, Bridget Brereton and Barbara Bailey, eds., *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995); Patricia Mohammed, ed., "Rethinking Caribbean Difference," *Feminist Review* 59 (Summer 1998); Patricia Mohammed, ed., *Gendered Realities: Essays in Caribbean Feminist Thought* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2002); Christine Barrow, ed., *Caribbean Portraits: Essays on Gender Ideologies and Identities* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers and Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, 1998); Barbara Bailey and Elsa Leo-Rhynie, eds., *Gender in the 21st Century: Caribbean Perspectives, Visions and Possibilities* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2004); Pamela Scully and Diana Paton, eds., *Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

5. Although the British Parliament passed its Emancipation Act in 1833, to take effect on August 1st 1834, the legislation included a transitional period of semi-freedom called 'Apprenticeship' which finally ended in 1838. As such, many historians of the Caribbean treat 1838 as the year of 'full freedom'. For discussions about the end of slavery see Franklin W. Knight, "The Disintegration of the Caribbean Slave Systems, 1772-1886," in *General History of the Caribbean: The Slave Societies of the Caribbean*, vol. 3, ed. Franklin W. Knight, (London: UNESCO Publishing, 1997), 322-345.

6. See Douglas Hall, "The Flight from the Estates Reconsidered: The British West Indies, 1838-1842, in *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, eds. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 55-63; Sidney Mintz, "The Origins of Reconstituted Peasantries," in *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, eds. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 94-98; Woodville Marshall, "Notes on Peasant Development in the West Indies since 1838," in *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, eds. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 99-106; K.O. Laurence, *Immigration into the West Indies in the 19th Century* (Barbados: Caribbean Universities Press, 1982).

7. See Richard Lobdell, "Patterns of Investment and Credit in the British West Indian Sugar Industry, 1838-1897," in *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, eds. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 319-329; Richard Hart, "Labour Rebellions of the 1930s," in *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, eds. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 370-375; W. Arthur Lewis, "The 1930s Social Revolution," in *Caribbean Freedom Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, eds. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 376-392.

8. See Gordon Lewis, "The Challenge of Independence in the British Caribbean," in *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, eds. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 511-518; Havelock Brewster and Clyde Thomas, "Industrialization of the West Indies," in *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, eds. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996) 394-404; Rex Nettleford, "Race, Identity and Independence in Jamaica," in *Caribbean Freedom Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, eds. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 519-527.
9. B.W. Higman, *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834*, 2nd ed. (Barbados: The Press, University of the West Indies, 1995), 38, 40.
10. Higman, "Domestic Service in Jamaica, since 1750," 117.
11. For Gallagher, concerns about the body became heightened with the 1798 publication of Thomas Malthus's *Essay on the Principles of Population* which argued that the "spirited health and strength of the utopian body leads within two generations to social chaos, want warfare, and finally, starvation." See Catherine Gallagher, "The Body Versus the Social Body in the Works of Thomas Malthus and Henry Mayhew," in *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 83, 85.
12. Gallagher, "The Body Versus the Social Body," 90.
13. Kathleen Canning, "The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History," *Gender & History* 11, no. 3 (November 1999), 500.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 134 quoted in Canning, "The Body as Method?," 501.
16. Canning, "The Body as Method?," 502.
17. Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 1.
18. See Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 1-23; Sara Salih with Judith Butler, *The Judith Butler Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).
19. Bryan S. Turner, *The Body and Society*, 2nd ed. (London: Sage, 1996), 43, quoted in Canning, "The Body as Method?," 504.
20. Leslie Adelson, *Making Bodies, Making History: Feminism and German Identity* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), xiii, quoted in Canning, "The Body as Method?," 505.
21. Canning, "The Body as Method?," 505-506. Canning's development of these ideas includes a reference to N. Katherine Hayles, "The Materiality of Informatics," unpublished paper. For other discussions and possible trajectories see Nancy Duncan, ed. *Body Space: destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1996); Deborah Orr, Linda López McAllister, Eileen Kahl, and Kathleen Earle, eds. *Belief, Bodies, and Being: Feminist Reflections on Embodiment* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006).
22. See Denise deCaires Narain, "Body Talk: Writing and Speaking the Body in the Texts of Caribbean Women Writers," Caroline F. Allen, "Caribbean Bodies: Representation and Practice," Evelyn O' Callaghan, "'Compulsory Heterosexuality' and Textual/Sexual Alternatives in Selected Texts by West Indian Women Writers," Jane Bryce, "'Young t'ing is the name of the game': Sexual Dynamics in a Caribbean Romantic Fiction Series," all in *Caribbean Portraits*, Barrow, ed.. See also Linden Lewis, "Masculinity, the Political Economy

of the Body, and Patriarchal Power in the Caribbean,” and Suzanne Marguerite Charles, “Mirror Mirror: A Feminist Examination of the Construction of Beauty and Body Image,” in *Gender in the 21st Century* Bailey and Leo-Rhynie, eds..

23. Other newspapers that were examined included *Public Opinion*, *West India Review*, *The Blackman*, none of which lasted through the period and none of which had as many advertisements as the *Gleaner*.

24. An initial study of the *Gleaner* determined that the second Saturday of every month (up to 1946) drew the greatest number of advertisements; after the introduction of the *Sunday Gleaner* in that year, the most popular day to advertise was the second Sunday of the month (which avoided major holidays). Since as many as 300 advertisements appeared in some newspaper issues, and an examination of 2,600 issues of the newspaper was prohibitive, a further sample was developed where all the classified advertisements from every second Saturday or Sunday, of every month, for five year intervals starting in 1920, were examined. By this means 10,215 classified advertisements that appeared in the *Daily Gleaner* or *Sunday Gleaner* between 1920 and 1970 were examined.

25. For discussions about the importance of oral history to the Caribbean see B.W. Higman, “Theory, Method and Technique in Caribbean Social History,” *Journal of Caribbean History* 20.1 (1985-1986), 1-29; B.W. Higman, *Writing West Indian Histories* (London: Macmillan Education, 1999), 28-29, 247; B.W. Higman, “The development of historical disciplines in the Caribbean,” in *UNESCO General History of the Caribbean: Methodology and Historiography of the Caribbean*, vol. 4, B.W. Higman, ed. (London: UNESCO Publishing/Macmillan Educational Ltd., 1999), 3, 13. See also Erna Brodber, “Oral Sources and the Creation of a Social History of the Caribbean,” *Jamaica Journal* 16 (1983), 2-11; Mervyn C. Alleyne, “Linguistics and the Oral Tradition,” in *UNESCO General History of the Caribbean*, vol. 4, Higman, ed., 42.

26. Some scholars continue to express doubts about the reliance on eyewitnesses, about faulty and selective memories, and about the possibility of silences, distortions and outright falsehoods by some respondents, as well as a tendency among some scholars to collapse the differences between the historical past and memories of that past. For these discussions see Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Paul Richard Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Michael Frisch, “Oral History and *Hard Times*: A Review Essay,” *Oral History Review* 7 (1979), 70-79.

27. Higman, “Theory, Method and Technique in Caribbean Social History”. See also Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds. *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), which includes important excerpts and articles from Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Michael Frisch, “Oral History and *Hard Times*: A Review Essay,” 70-79; Ronald J. Grele, “Movement without aim: Methodological and theoretical problem in oral history,” *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1985), 127-154; Luisa Passerini, “Work ideology and consensus under Italian fascism,” *History Workshop* 8 (1979), 84-92; Alessandro Portelli, “What makes oral history different,” *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 45-58; Joan Sangster, “Telling our stories: Feminist debates and the use of oral history,” *Women’s History Review* 3, no. 1 (1994), 5-28. See also James Hoopes, *Oral History: An Introduction for Students* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979); David Henige, *Oral Historiography* (London:

Longman, 1988). For discussions about the use of oral history in Caribbean history, see B.W. Higman, "Theory, Method and Technique in Caribbean Social History," 1-29; B.W. Higman, *Writing West Indian Histories* (London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1999), 28-29, 247; B.W. Higman, "The development of historical disciplines in the Caribbean," in *UNESCO General History of the Caribbean: Methodology and Historiography of the Caribbean* vol. 4, B.W. Higman ed. (London: UNESCO Publishing/Macmillan Educational Ltd., 1999), 3, 13; Erna Brodber, "Oral Sources and the Creation of a Social History of the Caribbean," *Jamaica Journal* 16 (1983), 2-11; Mervyn C. Alleyne, "Linguistics and the Oral Tradition," in *UNESCO General History of the Caribbean* vol. 4, Higman ed., 42.

28. According to Perks and Thomson, eds. *The Oral History Reader*, 3-4: Portelli argued that the factors that make oral history 'different' should be considered as "strengths rather than weaknesses, a resource rather than a problem." See Alessandro Portelli, "What makes oral history different," in Perks and Thomson, eds. *The Oral History Reader*, 63-74.

29. On the importance of silences, see Luisa Passerini, "Work ideology and consensus under Italian fascism," in Perks and Thomson, eds. *The Oral History Reader*, 53-62

30. For some of the discussions around the use of nation language in Caribbean history see Higman, *Writing West Indian Histories*, 5 and Michele Johnson, "On Reading *Writing*: Review Article on B.W. Higman's *Writing West Indian Histories*," *Small Axe* 8 (September 2000), 224-241.

31. Higman, *Writing West Indian Histories*, 5.

32. This care to speak in English was also possibly influenced by the fact that the former employers were aware of my connection to the university and their expectation that we would communicate on those terms. Their 'creole moments' were fewer and, as Portelli suggests, often indicated personal encounters in the sector. See Portelli, "What makes oral history different," in Perks and Thomson, eds. *The Oral History Reader*, 63-74. For discussions of the middle culture of respectability see Dinae J. Austin, *Urban Life in Kingston, Jamaica: The Culture and Class Ideology of Two Neighbourhoods* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1984); Edith Clarke, *My Mother Who Fathered Me: A Study of the Family in Three Selected Communities in Jamaica* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1957).

33. Following Portelli's analysis, this could indicate a less personal moment. See Portelli, "What makes oral history different," in Perks and Thomson, eds. *The Oral History Reader*, 63-74.

34. There perils include the elimination of pauses and repetitions, the forcing speech into punctuation codes and the fact that speed, emphases, or other cadences of delivery are difficult to indicate. See Raphael Samuel, "Peril of the transcript" in Perks and Thomson, eds. *The Oral History Reader*, 389-392. I decided to keep the transcriptions as close to the spoken word as possible; this meant I included repetition, indicated pauses and points of emphasis, and maintained phonetic spellings wherever possible. Data from the transcriptions appear throughout the article and are rarely translated.

35. See Brenda Clegg Gray, *Black Female Domestic Workers During the Depression in New York City, 1930-1940* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1993); Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out: African American Domestic Workers on Washington, D.C., 1910-1940*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994); Elsa M. Chaney and Mary Garcia Castro, eds. *Muchachas No More: Household Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); Christine B.N. Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). For discussions about male domestic workers see Karen Tranberg Hansen, "Household Work As A Man's Job: Sex and Gender in Domestic Service in Zambia,"

- Anthropology Today* 2, no. 3 (June 1986); Karen Transberg Hansen, *Distant Companions: Servants and Employers in Zambia, 1900-1985* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).
36. For some discussions about gender roles and domesticity see Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995); Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Anne Laurence, *Women in England 1500-1760* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1994). For restriction in employment see Richard Anker and Catherine Hein, "Why Third World Urban Employers Usually Prefer Men," *International Labour Review* 124, no. 1 (1985): 73-90; George E. Cumper, "A Comparison of Statistical Data on the Jamaican Labour Force, 1953-1961," *Social and Economic Studies* 13, no. 4, (December, 1964).
37. Esther Chapman, *Pleasure Island The Book of Jamaica* (Kingston: The Arawak Press, 1968), 102.
38. *Census of Jamaica*, (Kingston: Government Printers, 1921, 1943, 1960, 1970); Higman, "Domestic Service in Jamaica," 117-137.
39. *Daily Gleaner* 12 April 1930, 13 September 1930; 12 July 1930, 8 November 1930, 12 January 1935, 8 June 1940, 13 July 1940, 8 March 1970.
40. *Daily Gleaner* 9 February 1935, 9 March 1935, 8 June 1935, 13 April 1940; 10 October 1925, 12 May 1945, 13 February 1955; 8 June 1935, 16 November 1935, 8 June 1940; 14 December 1940, 13 March 1955, 14 August 1955.
41. Information gleaned from interviews conducted through the ACIJ/Jamaica Memory Bank. Many interviews are preserved at the Memory Bank as handwritten transcriptions. Leonora Allen, St. Thomas, 30 January 1983; Francise Burke, St. Thomas, 16 August 1985; Wilhel Cutbert, St. Thomas, 29 January 1985; Rupertia Johnson, St. Thomas, 4 March 1986; Jane Pratt, St. Ann, 26 September 1989; Victoria Clarke, Hanover, 4 December 1985; Ms. Sawyers, St. Ann, 15 March 1984; Icilda Flynn, St. Mary, 11 March 1986; Maud Williams, Portland, 8 January 1985; Ida Lowers and Mary Brown, St. Ann, 27 November 1984; Regina Darby, St. Thomas, 25 February 1986; Ruth Clemmings, St. Ann, 9 December 1985.
42. Ophelia Brown, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Trelawny, 15 July 2004.
43. Maureen Cooper, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Kingston, 30 July 2004.
44. Hazel Cunningham, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Kingston, 16 August 2004.
45. Linnette Reynolds, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Trelawny, 15 July 2004.
46. Rachel Barrett, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, St. Thomas, 2 August 2004; also Millicent Chambers, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, St. Thomas, 2 August 2004.
47. Norma Rodney, Written "Statement: Domestic Helpers pre-1970s, [July 2004]" Written personal statement, Rattray to Michele A. Johnson.
48. Phyllis King, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Westmoreland, 14 August 2004.
49. 'I had to chop, weed grass—tough like what!—work in the yard. And I couldn't manage it . . . They have even cane field, then I was to clean out cane-field; clean-out potato field, and plant potato.' Jean Evans, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, St. Ann, 20 August 2004.
50. Helen James, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Hanover, 14 August 2004.
51. Florence Higgins, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Westmoreland, 14 August 2004.
52. See Richard S. Dunn, "'Dreadful Idlers' in the Cane Fields: The Slave Labor Pattern on a Jamaican Sugar Estate, 1762-1831," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XVII, no. 4 (Spring 1987), 795-822; Bernard Moitt, "Women, Work and Resistance in the French Caribbean During Slavery, 1700-1848," in Shepherd and Beckles, eds., *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic*

- World*, 1017-1029; Moitt, *Women and Slavery*, xiv-xv, 42-4347-54; Bush, *Slave Women*, 33-39; Mathurin Mair, "Women Field Workers in Jamaica During Slavery," in Shepherd and Beckles, eds., *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World*, 390-397; Shepherd, *Women in Caribbean History*, 36-55.
53. There was an ongoing "Hookworm Campaign" funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Central Board of Health, *Departmental Report*, 1920, 333-336.
54. Central Board of Health and Medical Department (Jamaica), *Departmental Report*, 1920-1938. See, for example the relevant Island Medical Department Report and the Board of Health Report for: 1920, 333-346; 1920-1921, 318-325; 1922, 165-174, 483-490; 1923, 482-486; 1924, 494-501.
55. See B.W. Higman, *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834*; Kenneth F. Kiple and Virginia H. Kiple, "Deficiency Diseases in the Caribbean," in *Caribbean Slave Society and Economy*, Hilary McD. Beckles and Verene Shepherd, eds. (New York: The New Press, 1991); Alvin O. Thompson, *Unprofitable Servants: Crown Slaves in Berbice, Guyana 1803-1831* (Barbados: University of the West Indies Press, 2002), 29-30, 175-187.
56. For a fascinating analysis of the perception of black women's bodies which continues to be influential see Sander L. Gilman, "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature," *Critical Inquiry* 12 no. 1 (Autumn, 1985), 204-242.
57. *Daily Gleaner* 14 December 1935, 10 July 1960, 12 April 1930, 8 June 1935.
58. *Daily Gleaner* 8 March 1930, 14 August 1955.
59. For similar discussions see Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
60. Adelle Robinson, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Kingston, 4 August 2004.
61. Evelyn Williams, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Manchester, 16 July 2004.
62. Edith Jefferson, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Westmoreland, 14 August 2004.
63. Catherine Darby, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Kingston, 4 August 2004.
64. Phyllis King, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Westmoreland, 14 August 2004.
65. Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), quoted in Canning, "The Body as Method," 502.
66. The relevant laws were the "Masters and Servants Law," 1842 (5 Victoria, C.43) and the "A Law to Amend the Masters and Servants Law" (Law 27 of 1940).
67. For a discussion of government assistance to the destitute see Brian L. Moore and Michele A. Johnson, eds. "*Squalid Kingston*" 1890-1920: *How the Poor Lived, Moved and Had Their Being* (Kingston: The Social History Project, 2000).
68. Cooper, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Kingston, 30 July 2004.
69. Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 34. See also Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thompson, *The Evolution of Sex* (New York: Scribner and Welford, 1890), 244; see also Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Puberty to Menopause: The Cycle of Femininity in Nineteenth-century America," in *Chloë's Consciousness Raised*, Mary Hartman and Lois W. Banner, eds. (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 28-29.
70. Martin, *The Woman in the Body*, 47.
71. Martin, *The Woman in the Body*, 97-98.
72. Cunningham, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Kingston, 16 August 2004.
73. Marjorie Hughes, *The Fairest Island* (London: Victor Gollanez, 1962), 17.

74. For some of the discussions around family formation and which were still relevant in this period see Brian L. Moore and Michele A. Johnson, "'Married but not Parsoned': Attitudes to Conjugal­ity in Jamaica, 1865-1920," in *Contesting Freedom: Control and Resistance in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean*, Gad Heuman and David Trotman, eds. (London: Macmillan, 2005).
75. Ophelia Brown, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Trelawny 15 July 2004.
76. Cooper, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Kingston, 30 July 2004.
77. Lewis A. Coser, "Servants: The Obsolescence of an Occupational Role," *Social Forces* 52 (1973), 31-40.
78. Nancy Duncan, "Negotiating Gender and Sexuality in Public and Private Spaces," in *Body Space: destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality*, ed. Nancy Duncan (London: Routledge, 1996), 127, 129.
79. Adelle Robinson, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Kingston, 4 August 2004.
80. Edna Philips, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Trelawny, 15 August 2004.
81. Lena Ferguson, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Kingston, 4 August 2004.
82. Hilary McD. Beckles, "Property Rights in Pleasure: The Marketing of Enslaved Women's Sexuality," in eds. Shepherd and Beckles *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World*, 697-700; Beckles, *Centering Woman*, 22-37; Barbara Bush, "White 'Ladies', Coloured 'Favourites' and Black 'Wenches'; Some Considerations on Sex, Race and Class Factors in Social Relations in White Creole Society in the British Caribbean," *Slavery and Abolition* 2, no. 3 (December, 1981), 247; Eddie Donoghue, *Black Women/White Men: The Sexual Exploitation of Female Slaves in the Danish West Indies* (Trenton: African World Press, 2002).
83. Linnette Reynolds, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Trelawny, 15 July 2004.
84. Winnifred Black, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Trelawny, 14 August 2004.
85. Barbara Richards, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, St. Ann, 20 August 2004.
86. See Brian L. Moore and Michele A. Johnson, "Sex, Marriage and Family: Attitudes and Policies," *Neither Led Nor Driven: Contesting British Cultural Imperialism in Jamaica 1865-1920* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2004).
87. See Moitt, *Women and Slavery*; Douglas Hall, *In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica 1750-86* (Barbados: University of the West Indies Press, 1999); Bush, *Slave Women*; Neville A.T. Hall, *Slavery Society in the Danish West Indies: St. Thomas, St. John, St. Croix*, ed. B.W. Higman (Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 1994).
88. Hazel Cunningham, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Kingston, 16 August 2004.
89. Hazel Cunningham, interviewed by Michele A. Johnson, Kingston, 16 August 2004.
90. Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born*, quoted in Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), n.p. [following front matter]. Emphasis added.