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"IF YOU DON'T HAVE A STORY, YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE": LISTENING TO AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS IN K-12 AND HIGHER EDUCATION

by

Terry Bunce Burgin

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
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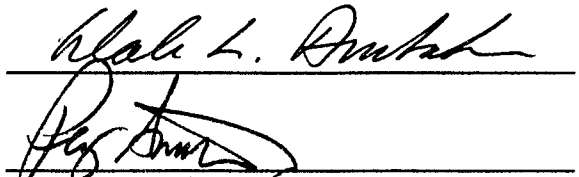
Approved by



Dissertation Advisors

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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April 3, 1996
Date of Acceptance by Committee

April 3, 1996
Date of Final Oral Examination

BURGIN, TERRY BUNCE, Ed.D. "If You Don't Have a Story, You Don't Know Where You Are": Listening to African-American Female Administrators in K-12 and Higher Education. Directed by Dr. Dale Brubaker and Dr. Penny Smith. 230pp.

The purpose of this research was to present the professional life-stories of African-American female educational administrators in K-12 and higher education. Twelve African-American female administrators participated in interviews. As they tell about their family background, their education, their career path, and their visions of leadership, their stories reveal which language--technical, scientific, political, ethical, or aesthetic (Huebner, 1975)--dominates the telling of their story. As they "construct" their professional identity, their stories also imply a metaphorical foundation for "who" they are; each metaphor (Kliebard, 1975) emanating from their stories presents a chance for discussion of both how they view education and how they characterize their vision of leadership.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When the Wizard explains his leaving to the people of Oz, he says that he will return to his native country where he will spend his time "hobnobbing with fellow wizards." As I left my house to interview these administrators, I sometimes sensed that I was "hobnobbing with the wizards," but as their student. I thank them for the opportunity to present their stories.

A special thanks goes also to the others who "enabled" me to complete this study: Dr. Penny Smith and Dr. Dale Brubaker, co-directors of my committee, and Dr. Kathleen Casey and Dr. Svi Shapiro, members of my committee. Their comments were always helpful, and I am grateful for their input and their direction. Especially am I cognizant of the "interpretive community" that they established with me, and I am changed by the discussions we have had, politically and ethically.

I am not sure that "indebted" is the appropriate word, for it implies that I need to pay back something, but it is for my family--my daughters and my husband--that I save my biggest thank-you. They would have loved me even if I had never finished.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PRELUDE OR INTRODUCTION?

Every year as my family attends a local Nutcracker ballet, I am always a bit astonished at how the audience treats the opening prelude of Tchaikovsky's music as if it were the usual run of the mill previews which invariably preface the feature film at the movie show. Folks stream in, scramble over knees to find seats on my row, switch seats several times, and chatter as if the production has not yet begun. They are too busy to attend to the mood-setting swirls of string and wind and quieten down only once the curtain rises and dancers make their way onto the stage.

I have often wondered if the bustling patrons realize just how much they miss by not "hearing" the beginning. The music introduces musical themes which recur later in the ballet; the orchestra sets the stage as well for the Christmas party in which Clara receives her beloved wooden prince. Backstage, dancers go through their last warm-ups, set their minds to the dance, and anticipate the thrill of dancing to the stirring and enchanting bars of Tchaikovsky's classic.

This dissertation has its own "prelude" of sorts, an introduction to the milieu in which it has taken form and an explanation of what the study accomplished. Because this work

examines the life stories of other educators, my introduction does indeed attempt to set the tone for the life accounts which follow; it also explains my purpose in presenting the language and the metaphors which emanate from women with whom I spoke. Such foci deserve appropriate background music.

Origins of the Study

In the second semester of my graduate experience in the world of Educational Leadership, I sat listening attentively to three African-American female educational administrators in a class taught by Penny Smith, "Women in Educational Administration." Professor Smith had invited them to speak about their professional life-stories. In the panel discussion, each woman shared her experience of being Black and being female in a mainstream White educational society. Their stories were riveting; to the mostly White class, these women spoke of encounters we had never had because we were of the "dominant culture." The power of their accounts stayed with several of us, long after the course ended. Professor Smith and two of the graduate students, Joan Essic and myself, formed a group interested in finding out more stories such as these women's and sharing them with a broader audience so that we all might learn from them.

In the spring of 1994, we three, after reading much background literature on African-American culture, on qualitative methodology, and on feminist study, compiled through recommendations a list of local successful African-American female educational administrators. We formulated several general themes we wanted to explore and developed questions that would allow us to pursue those themes. From that list we chose nine administrators randomly, we each three set out, tape recorder and questions in hand, to meet and talk with the African-American administrators we were assigned.

The actual interviews were quite pleasant experiences. Interspersed with important revelations are laughter and murmurs of agreement. The transcripts of the interviews provide voluminous data for analysis. Mentoring, discrimination, political activism, recognition of the power structure in schools--these are just a few of the topics that arise from the women's stories. Planning to increase our study team from three to five members (including two African-American female educators), we are sharing the transcripts with the interviewees to ask if we have, indeed, articulated what they said to us.

In addition to the interviews already conducted, I chose to add the voices of African-American female educational administrators in higher education as my doctoral study. The combination of their stories with those from other levels of educational administration would expand the study and would

also broaden the audience. Soliciting suggestions for effective Black female administrators at the college or university setting in the same manner as for those already interviewed, I asked three administrators the same questions and taped and transcribed their interviews. Their life stories and administrative histories exhibit similar trends and themes found in the lives of African-American female educational administrators with whom we had first worked.

Issues of Importance

Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Bell hooks states quite bluntly that White women who write authoritatively or definitively about African-American women may simply be perpetuating racism as Black women become "objects" once again, regardless of the humane intentions of the majority critics: "Problems," contends hooks, "arise not when white women choose to write about the experiences of non-white people, but when such material is presented as 'authoritative'" (1989, p.48).[1] Indeed, hooks elaborates:

> racism has become an accepted topic in feminist discussions not as a result of black women calling attention to it (this was done at the very onset of the movement), but as a result of white female input validating such discussions, a process which is indicative of how racism works. (p.51)

My own introduction into feminism began with my father's advice "Never let anyone say you can't do anything," but it

lay dormant; at the time, I had no idea I would read about myself from another perspective some twenty years later. As a White woman, I have been, as Aida Hurtado (1989) characterizes, "protected by classism and racism" (p.852). "As a consequence," she elaborates, "many do not acquire their political consciousness of gender oppression until they become adults" (852). Such luxury of time is not afforded the childhood of everyone. Stating that "women of Color . . . acquire survival skills as early as five years of age," Hurtado reports that "Relatively few get a high school diploma, even fewer finish college, and only an infinitesimal number obtain graduate degrees" (1989, p.852). Hurtado (1989) suggests that the very "concept of <u>woman"</u> has been defined as White only. When Sojourner Truth described her life and lifted up her arms, asking "And ain't I a woman?," she confronted the definition, for much of the antebellum society did not consider her a woman, but an object, a possession (Hurtado, 1989, p.842). Because White females are White, they <u>are</u> women, so the subject of feminism "naturally" must focus directly on White needs and agendas.

Such "white solipsism," that is "the tendency to think, imagine, and speak as if whiteness described the world," (hooks, quoted in Adler, 1993, p.32) is antithetical to effective sharing of life histories across cultures. By sharing the accounts and their interpretation with the women I interviewed, I have attempted to circumvent obvious

roadblocks to the identities they construct. Although there is inevitably my discussion of what they have said, I posit such a study as an attempt to add to the transcultural dialogue. I stand not as an expert; the administrators remain the speakers.

A Black Consciousness

Because many writers, both African-American and majority, stress the need for more expression of a "Black consciousness," such an issue becomes a focus for this work. My background in literature had always provided me with what I considered "utterances from the hearts" of human beings as they realized their mortality, their importance (or lack of it), and their subsequent need for connection and community by way of written expression. However, even with a Master's degree in English, earned in 1981, I had learned little of the literature existing outside the accepted White male canon. Several years ago, I took advantage of an offer of one free course to full-time instructors at the university where I taught. I planned to add to my repertoire of African-American literature. In class one day, my professor commented that while I understood the message of the Black authors, I could achieve only partial empathy with them because I was White.

Years later, I understand much better what she meant by that statement. Black consciousness is not privy to me. Although my own individual consciousness has been "in

process," I have had the advantage of the consciousness of a collective identity--the White hegemonic culture. In contrast, bell hooks (1984) describes the marginalization she experienced while growing up in two worlds:

> To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body. As black Americans living in a small Kentucky town, the railroad tracks were a daily reminder of our marginality. . . Living as we did--on the edge--we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside in and from the inside out. (Preface)

Those African-American writers who employ such techniques today are mirroring real life. When Ralph Ellison writes that to see himself, he must first realize he is an "invisible man," he is referring to a White-driven culture which refuses him a legitimate public identity:

> It goes a long way back, some twenty years. All my life I had been looking for something, and everywhere I turned someone tried to tell me where it was. I accepted their answers, too, though they were often in contradiction and even self-contradictory. I was naive. I was looking for myself and asking everyone except myself questions which I, and only I, could answer. It took me a long time and much painful boomeranging of my expectations to achieve a realization everyone else appears to have been born with: That I am nobody but myself. But first I had to discover that I am an invisible man. (p.1)

Cornel West refers to such African-American writers and discusses the contributions each has made to a Black consciousness in his book Race Matters (1994). He opens his book with a quote from James Baldwin:

> If we--and now I mean the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks, who must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of the others--do not falter in our duty now, we may be able handful that we are, to end the racial nightmare and achieve our country and change the history of the world. (p. xiii)

Such an audience as Baldwin describes is exactly to whom West writes. In Race Matters, West explains that the difficulty in understanding a Black consciousness stems from White determination to group or categorize others in order to solidify White identity. In other words, the dominant culture has generalized African-Americans to form itself:

> the enslavement of Africans . . . served as the linchpin of American democracy . . . . Without the presence of black people in America, European-Americans would not be "white"--they would be only Irish, Italians, Poles, Welsh, and others engaged in class, ethnic, and gender struggles over resources and identity. (p. 156)

Even more so than Du Bois' "double consciousness," West argues that African-Americans have faced a "triple crisis of self-recognition" because the prevailing culture itself desired to be something else (1982, p.31). That racism is the result of the need to "classify" is obvious; a dominant culture has as its "primary motivation" that of ensuring "an easy resolution to a highly complex problem, without calling into question certain fundamental assumptions that inform such assumptions" (West, 1982, p. 50).

Such rationalization, West (1982) contends, began in classical antiquity, and over time, American-Americans have

been described as everything from "noble savages" to being a "Talented Tenth" which will move the rest of the "untalented ninetieth" upward socially (p.78). West suggests that there exist four main "responses" African-Americans can take to the prevailing power structure. One such response, the "exceptionalist," is symbolized by a figure like Clarence Thomas. In this perspective, those who are able to enter mainstream, White culture are the "exceptions" to their culture (1982, p. 78). Those African-Americans are sanctioned by the mainstream as acceptable and are given access into White society. The "weak assimilation tradition" West describes as the second response insists that African-Americans need to be immersed in White culture to become "one" with it, thinking that formed much of the basis for school integration movements. Those included in the "Marginalist tradition," the third response, are characterized by the "inability to accept themselves" (1982, p. 81). West places Richard Wright's novels in this division as each of Wright's characters confronts his "negative view of self." More recent writers include Gayl Jones and Toni Morrison (1982, p. 84).

It is the "humanist tradition" which West (1982) proposes as the one which views African-Americans "in short, as human beings" (p. 85). Jean Toomer Crane, Langston Hughes, and Zora Neale Hurston have written works representing African-Americans in this manner. Referring to Ralph Ellison as the "literary apex," West goes on to explain that a humanistic

African-American philosophy "attempts to understand the Afro-American experience in order to enhance and enrich the lives of Afro-Americans; it demands personal integrity and political action" (1982, p. 91). This humanist tradition is where West places his hope of destroying racism and confronting the nihilism rampant among African-Americans caught in the grip of the "market morality" the country faces today.

West contends that today's Black political leaders are, for the most part, either "race-effacing managerial leaders" or "race-identifying protest leaders," rather than the "race-transcending prophetic leaders" they should be (1994, p. 59). Those leaders who would transcend race would not have stood by and watched the unleashing of "unbridled capitalist market forces . . that have devastated black working and poor communities" (West, 1994, p. 45). Such economic immorality has resulted in what West writes is a "rugged and ragged individualism and rapacious hedonism in quest of a perennial 'high' in body and mind" (1994, pp. 45-46). Therefore, there exists "the gross deterioration of personal, familial, and communal relations among African-Americans" rather than the relations which should exist for the "development of a collective and critical consciousness" (West, 1994, p. 56).

It is, West suggests, through a "progressive Christianity" and socialism that America can still face its failure in matters of race. Referring to the Black church as the "most visible and salient cultural product of Black people

in the United States" (1988, p.4), he maintains the elements of equality embedded in Christianity (i.e., God loves everyone, each person is a child of God) and the political equivalent--a socialism that does not deny God's existence but rather promotes equal humane treatment of all economically--provide the best hope out of American's cultural crisis. In Prophetic Reflections (1993, p. 243), he goes on to say:

> We democratic socialists have to really believe that ordinary people are not just objects of manipulation, that they do have the potential to regulate their lives and participate at the highest levels of the decision-making process in those institutions that guide and regulate their lives.

Thus the consciousness of which West speaks is very much in process. Although a Black middle class has emerged, there remain too many African-Americans left out by the "'political unconscious' of American society: the sanctity of private property and the virtue of capital accumulation" (West, 1982, p. 132). The call for inclusion of "bi-racial" and "multi-racial" classifications on one of America's icons, the census, reflects the changes that have occurred despite the stronghold conservatism continues to have. In addition, many African-Americans are now refusing to have their votes taken for granted by the Democratic Party. Resistance to being lumped into one stereotype is resulting in cacophonous dissonance which must send racists reeling. West's (1994) metaphor of music underscores the power of such overwhelming determination:

> As with a soloist in a jazz concert, quintet or band, individuality is promoted in order to sustain and increase the creative tension with the group--a tension that yields higher levels of performance to achieve the aim of the collective project. (p. 150)

Refusing to walk in lockstep is good, asserts West; it will "focus the rage where it belongs" (1994, p. 150).

Ironically, it is the arising of visible differences rather than some unwieldy collective similarity that may lead to the rest of society's acknowledgment of a "Black consciousness." Such a consciousness would be as multifaceted as the consciousness of a White majority which, after all, found definition only as a result of comparing and contrasting itself with its own contrived classifications of fellow human beings. West and Wright are on target--such an accomplishment will take the "relatively conscious" on all sides. It is, as West (1994) concludes, a weighty prospect:

> We are at a crucial crossroad in the history of this nation--and we either hang together by combating these forces that divide and degrade us or we hang separately. Do we have the intelligence, humor, imagination, courage, tolerance, love, respect, and will to meet the challenge? Time will tell. None of us alone can save the nation or the world. But each of us can make a positive difference if we commit ourselves to do so. (p.159)

Such a "conscious" stance evokes similarities found in bell hooks'(1984) assertion that political acts require the act of considering others:

> Women will know they have made a political commitment when they help change the direction of

> the feminist movement, when they work to unlearn racist socialization prior to assuming positions of leadership or shaping theory or making contact with women of color so that they will not perpetuate and maintain racial oppression or, unconsciously or consciously, abuse and hurt non-white women. (p. 85)

Purpose of This Study

This dissertation serves as only one small step in the destruction of the existing paradigm of racism and sexism accompanying today's African-American female educational administrators. Thomas Kuhn, in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962) predicts the fall of beliefs by describing the accumulation of anomalies which precedes the change of a paradigm. At the point at which explanations no longer suffice, the current theory faces challenges by alternative and/or new ideas. It is a process much akin to Piaget's concept of learning: new information first creates a disequilibrium in one's thoughts. In order to regain equilibrium, the mind attempts to deal with the new knowledge by deliberately misinterpreting the information, and thereby disregarding it; by failing to make connections, and ignoring it; or by analyzing the new information and incorporating it into the right place in one's thoughts by learning. Much like the grit which irritates the oyster, new thoughts may ultimately impel thinkers to find new perspectives. Indeed, not every grain of sand produces a pearl, and this study may not generate something whole and complete. However, if it does serve as a reminder that there have been other ways of

seeing, of doing, and of coming to a particular place, then it will have accomplished much.

Structure of This Study

Chapter One has been a prelude, an introduction to important issues surrounding the study of African-American women. Because the cultural divides between minority and majority exist on many different levels, any study which transcends race must not only avoid defining itself as "definitive" or "authoritative," but must offer its findings to both races involved for honest and constructive discussion.

Chapter Two presents the literature which surrounds the issues concerning African-American women, African-American women educators, and African-American women who are administrators.

Chapter Three sets forth the methodology used for the doctoral study and includes references for and sources of qualitative research. It also presents the restrictions affecting the research and describes them.

Chapter Four, the data and its analysis, is the crux of the dissertation. The types of language--technical, scientific, ethical, political, and aesthetic (Huebner, 1975) --which the women use in describing their families, their education, their career paths, and their visions of leadership--reveal the richness of their stories. The metaphors (Kliebard, 1975) which they exemplify how the

speakers see themselves.

Conclusions and implications for further study constitute Chapter Five, which discusses the research endeavor and the information it contributes to educational administration.

From its inception, a dissertation focusing on African-American female educational administrators was intriguing. Even in ordinary daily settings my perspective grew. One day, in a freshman composition class, I listened as students discussed the essay "How It Feels to Be Colored Me," written by Zora Neale Hurston. In the small, crowded classroom, among twenty-three of my students, I found myself remembering the women administrators I had interviewed as one African-American female read aloud her favorite passage of Hurston's essay:

> I feel the most colored when I am thrown against a sharp white background. . . For instance, at Barnard, "beside the waters of the Hudson" I feel my race. Among the thousand white persons, I am a dark race surged upon, and overswept, but through it all, I remain myself. When covered by the waters, I am; and the ebb but reveals me again. (1994, p. 76)

I was reminded of the richness of the stories of the African-American women held out to me: the themes resonating strength, idealism with a dose of practicality, realism and hope, a conviction that education is important, and a sense of community not only among themselves but encompassing non-African Americans as well.

Hurston ends her essay with a question that has served as the touchstone for this study:

> Sometimes, I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me. How <u>can</u> any deny themselves the pleasure of my company? It's beyond me. (1994, p. 77)

The pleasure of the interviewees' company results in stories that not only reveal the life histories of effective educational administrators, but that also invite others interested in educational leadership to connect with them in their stories. The import of such a connection is that those who are interested learn history, the past of these women's educational and professional lives; administration, the qualities which these women possess and which enable them to do their particular educational tasks effectively; and vision, the themes, beliefs, and convictions which guide these African-American female educational administrators to carry on in a job made increasingly complex by demands of an ever-changing frenetic society. Knowing them is not only a pleasure, but it is also an important learning and sharing experience.

CHAPTER II

SILENCE, DISSONANCE, AND ASSONANCE: A LOOK AT LITERATURE ADDRESSING AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN AND EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

> If there has been one overwhelming effort made by Blacks since the beginning of our American sojourn, it has been the belief in the need to obtain education. The laws that were made against our reading, voting, holding certain jobs, living in certain areas, were made not because we were incapable; you don't have to legislate against incapability . . . . No one tells a man or woman, "You can't read," unless there is the knowledge that if that person becomes educated, he or she will no longer be my slave; will no longer sharecrop my land; will no longer tolerate injustice. (Giovanni, 1994, p.92)

In her essays, Racism 101, Nikki Giovanni, a writer-in-residence at Virginia Polytechnic and State University, ruminates about the forces that seek so strongly to control others' lives and futures. An African-American poet who states that her presence at a predominantly majority institution of higher learning requires both Blacks and Whites to interact in her courses, Giovanni cuts through the smoke and mirrors of racism to expose the acrid thoughts of racial prejudice. Her writings express both the pride of being Black and the double-consciousness that Du Bois suggests occurs from living in a White majority culture. "I do not measure my soul by the tape of the white world," she contends (1994, p. 55);

indeed, Giovanni admits she is tired of "white women telling [her] what Black women are really like" (1994, p. 86). Giovanni, who arrived in Blacksburg as a visiting professor, states that she fought hard to win tenure once she decided that she wanted to remain at the University. Realizing that higher education perpetuates racism, she says, "it's painfully obvious that this nation and this world cannot allow students to go through higher education without interacting with Blacks in authoritative position" (1994, p. 102). Her view of higher education's treatment of women is as decided as her description of racism is forceful: "Stop the graveyards called 'associate heads,' 'assistant deans,' assistant provosts," she argues. "These have become the female position on campuses; they are dead ends" (1994, p. 145).

Silence

This chapter reviews issues to which Giovanni alludes--a Black culture, "double-consciousness," prejudice, racism, white solipsism, and institutional perpetuation of the status quo--which surround the African-American female educational administrators interviewed in this study. "Invisibility," of which Ralph Ellison writes, is one issue found not only in everyday activities but also in the products of our culture--in literature and history, as well as feminist studies. Indeed, many middle-aged Americans now find their children studying about Black leaders and events which occurred during

their lifetimes but which were not documented in America's history books. Today's American literature anthologies include Black poets and storytellers who were writing from colonial times on, but who were not in the traditional canon of "accepted classics." For an embarrassing number of years, even some institutions of higher learning failed to offer courses in "Black American Literature." Irvin Solomon (1989) in Feminism and Black Activism in Contemporary America refers to H. L. Mencken's 1910 statement about Blacks as an example of the cultural hegemony that powerfully prohibited the recognition of a Black culture:

> [The] Negro of today is a failure, not because he meets insuperable difficulties in life, but because he is a Negro. His brain is not fitted for the higher forms of mental effort; his ideals, no matter how laboriously he is trained and sheltered, remain those of a clown. He is, in brief, a low-caste man, to the manner [sic] born, and he will remain inert and inefficient until fifty generations of him have lived in civilization. And even then, the superior white race will be fifty generations ahead of him. (p.1)

That African-Americans have been passive receptors of this hegemony is untrue, contends Solomon. From the early NAACP, the founding of the National Urban League, Marcus Garvey's call to return to a homeland, to the Communist Party's pro-Black activity during the New Deal (1989, pp. 9-11), Solomon outlines activism which later includes A. Philip Randolph's "Sleeping Car Porters" organization which in the 1940's pressured President Roosevelt into making Executive Order 8802 establishing "a committee on Fair Employment

Practice in the Office of Production Management" (p. 11). The Congress of Racial Equality in 1942 took as its goal to "attack the racial problems of Chicago" in court cases like Mitchell vs. US (1941), which stated first class passenger Blacks should have equal comfort as first class passenger Whites, and Smith v. Allwright (1944), which declared that "all-white primary elections [were] unconstitutional" (1989, pp. 12-13). The Fifties' ruling of Brown v. the Board of Education preceded the founding of the Southern Christian leadership conference in 1957 and ushered in the Sixties --NC A&T University students "sitting in" at a Woolworth's lunch counter; Birmingham prayer vigils; the 1963 March on Washington; and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which established the Equal Employment Occupation Commission (EEOC) a commission which took as its charge "the ban of job discrimination because of race or gender" (1989, p. 15).

Throughout such events, many majority children never heard specifics about Medger Evans or Fannie Lou Hammer; but more telling is that, indeed, many African-American children may never have heard them either. As some Blacks raised their consciousness, participated in national conventions, or formed the Black Panther Party (1966), others worked in much the same ignorance as majority workers who never even knew such minority organizations existed. That a similar lack of awareness existed in the arena of women's rights is a major point of Solomon's scholarship. Many females of all races

grew to adulthood not knowing who Charlotte Perkins Gilman or Emma Goldman were. Few realized as part of their history that abolitionists joined in the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. That group in 1848 drew up "The Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions," categorizing female status as equal to "chattel slavery" (1989, p. 21). Elizabeth Gurley Flynn advocated that the states should pay to support all children; The National League of Women Voters became reality; the American Association of University Women was formed; and Rosie the Riveter did her patriotic part to help in the War (Solomon, 1989, pp. 27-29). It was not until May of 1973, however, that the National Black Feminist Organization was formed to be, as Eleanor Holmes Norton described, "independent of the existing civil rights and feminist structures of the day" (Solomon, 1989, p. 64). As splinter groups developed within the feminist movement, some White radicals "came to argue that all oppression, especially racism and sexism, sprang from sexual inequalities," thus seeing racism as "sexism extended" (1989, p. 95). Solomon refers to the emergence of a "hatred of <u>man</u>kind" as a kind of "cultural autonomy" similar to the "Republic of New Afrika" and other Black nationalist movements (1989, pp. 97-98). Indeed, he continues, the call for women's studies in education parallels that of the call for Black cultural studies:

> The demands of blacks, like those of women a decade later, were grounded on the assumption that history had been used by the powerful to perpetuate their control of those minority groups denied an equal access to power. (1989, p. 100)

Some activists took issue further with language, arguing that "language too often transformed symbolism into convoluted reality" and quoting Orwell's statement that "If thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought" (Solomon, 1989, p. 101). Kate Millett wrote of the oppression of Blacks and women and their resulting "castelike status" as a "consequence" of the "cultural differences imposed by white males on blacks and women"; NOW even referred to itself as an "NAACP for women" (Solomon, 1989. p. 139, p. 156).

The illusion of evolutionary progress for both Blacks and women is shattered, however, by personal accounts such as Lawrence Otis Graham's in 1992. Graham, a corporate attorney in New York City, graduated from Princeton University and Harvard Law School. Upon reading about political figures, such as Dan Quayle and Ross Perot, who belong to exclusively White country clubs, Graham decided to observe firsthand how such club members act and entered the posh milieu of the Greenwich Country Club in Connecticut the "only way" he could: as a busboy paid seven dollars an hour (1992, p. 60). Unabashedly frank about his upper class background and his desire to move in country club circles, Graham admits that most of his Black friends still must ask to be invited to local country club tennis courts because they cannot join the

clubs as members. Submitting a bogus resume, Graham began work--and began experiencing personally an "invisibility" of his own:

> "Oh, busboy," a voice called out as I made the rounds with two pots of coffee. "Here busboy. Here, busboy," the woman called out. "Busboy, my coffee is cold. Give me a refill."
>
> "Certainly, I would be happy to." I reached over for her cup. The fiftyish woman pushed her hand through her straw-blonde hair and turned to look me in the face. "Decaf., thank you."
>
> "You are quite welcome."
>
> Before I turned toward the kitchen, the woman leaned over to her companion. "My goodness. Did you hear that?" That busboy has diction like an educated White person." (1992, p. 62)

From being assigned a parking place at the rear of the building to fetching peanuts and clean ashtrays, Graham describes the events he noted in a journal he kept during his "employment." One evening, while waiting on a party of three women, he overheard their discussion about retaining child care and help:

> "The problem with au pairs is that they're usually only in the country for a year."
>
> "But getting one that is a citizen has its own problems. For example, if you ever have to choose between a Negro and one of these Spanish people, always go for the Negro."
>
> One of the women frowned, confused. "Really?"
>
> "Yes," the raspy-voiced woman responded with cold logic. "Even though you can't trust either one, at least Negroes speak English and can follow your directions."
>
> Before I could refill the final cup, the raspy-voiced woman looked up at me and smiled, "Oh, thanks for the refill, Larry." (Graham, 1992, p. 65)

His awareness of people speaking about African-Americans as if

he were not even present was underscored when a few days later, a memo was posted announcing staff rights to use the golf course. Complimenting his supervisor with a "Wow, that's great," Graham soon realized that--

> this "policy" was a crock. The memo opened optimistically: "The club provides golf privileges for staff. Current employees will be allowed golf privileges as outlined below." Unfortunately, the only employees that the memo listed "below" were department heads, golf-management personnel, teaching assistants, the general manager, and "key staff that appear on the club's organizational chart." (1992. pp. 65-66)

In an interview on television, Graham spoke of reactions he heard to his "experiment." Surprised that some maintain a fierce denial that such discrimination still continues, Graham (1992) states that the experience has a message, especially for:

> Blacks who are competing and thinking that if they make all the right moves--and it's a very pessimistic answer that I have here--as long as we're Black, as long as our skin is Black, there will be people out there who are in the position to say, "No you can't have this." And there will always be a line that will be drawn by them. (p. 66)

Indeed, the idea of progress toward the annihilation of racial discrimination and prejudice appears illusory in light of such accounts and findings as the 1990 survey by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center:

> Fifty-three percent of nonblacks believe that African-Americans are less intelligent than whites; 51 percent believe they are less patriotic; 56 percent believe they are more violence-prone; 62 percent believe they are more likely to "prefer to live off welfare" and less

> likely to "prefer to be self-supporting."(quoted in Terkel, 1992: v)

Studs Terkel introduces his book Race: How Blacks and Whites Think & Feel About the American Obsession (1992) with this quote and others which typify the diverse ways in which Americans treat and handle "race." Because he is a Chicagoan, he begins at home, and even more than that, with his own questions of tolerance, generalizations, stereotypes, ingrained suspicion, and a feeling of the "other." An example of his own sets the stage for others' stories:

> As I stepped onto the bus one early morning, the driver, a young black man, said I was a dime short. I was positive I had deposited the proper fare. I did a slight burn, though concealed. To avoid an unpleasant exchange, I fished out another dime and dropped it into the box. My annoyance, trivial though the matter was, stayed with me for the rest of the trip. Oh, I understood the man. Of course. I know the history of his people's bondage. It was his turn--a show of power, if only in a small way. If that's how it is, that's how it is. Oh, well.
>
> As I was about to disembark, I saw a dime on the floor. My dime. I held it up to him. "You were right." He was too busy driving to respond. In alighting, I waved: "Take it easy." "You, too," he replied. I've a hunch he'd been through something like this before.
>
> In this one man, I had seen the whole race. In his behavior (especially before my discovery of the dime), I saw all African-Americans. During the trips I had conducted a silent seminar on ontogeny recapitulating philogeny. (Terkel, 1992, p. 6)

To contrast, Terkel quotes a young Black woman whose perspective differs. Skin color here is a double entendre: as Ellison explained, being Black can make one invisible, a no

one, who is delineated more from those around him or her than by his or her own substantive character; in this example, however, Terkel refers to skin color as an opaque screen which blocks out any individuality, a "visibility . . . high these days for African-Americans, especially in matters of street crime" (Terkel, 1992, p. 7):

> My father is the kindest, sweetest man you ever want to know. . . He's very dark-skinned. It infuriates me to think that some little white woman would get on the elevator with my father and assume, just by the color of his skin, that he's going to harm her, and clutch her purse tighter. To think that my father, who's worked hard all his life, put us through school, loves us, took care of us--to think that she would clutch her purse because he's there. The thought of it makes me so angry. (Anonymous, quoted in Terkel, 1992, p. 7)

Thus, Ellison's "invisibility" refers simultaneously to both being whatever someone else determines and also to being powerless enough to ignore. Lucy Jefferson in 1965 recounted that when she was growing up, relations were different:

> The white man wasn't so afraid then. There wasn't enough of us. There's too many of us now. I think that's what's frightened him. Nobody noticed you then. You were there, but nobody bothered about seeing you. (Jefferson quoted in Terkel, 1992, p. 27)

In an interview some twenty years later, her grandson mentions the concept of visibility once again:

> I see difficult times ahead, especially for the black people of this country. There is a growing anger among black people since this country has taken a turn to the right. The black man is

> now visible, but in many cases, he's just as invisible as he was before. It's easy for the white majority to ignore a black voice that tells them what is important. It's very foreign. (Freeman, quoted in Terkel, 1992, p. 32)

Maggie Holmes, who has worked as a domestic most of her life, responds to the stereotype of Black people promoted by Hollywood. In anger, she decries the movies, which she contends are made by Jews:

> You look at all the pictures being made in Hollywood and, by the way, Jews made them. They made black people look dumb. Blacks had to act like they're scared, eyeballs bulging and dancing in their head. And, "Yassuh." You wasn't even able to speak. They made money off making fun of people. They wouldn't give them no decent roles. Why do you think that I shouldn't get upset? (Holmes quoted in Terkel, 1992, p. 146)

She continues about the forced "invisibility" she thinks Blacks endure at the hands of the White majority, a forced gagging of Black voices and Black culture:

> They say, "Why do you always bring up the past?" Why do whites always bring up their past? They always telling you when they came over here and what a time they had. They never let you forget their history, but they want you to forget yours. Is it so painful for you to think what you have done to us? Do that bother you? They don't have us in their history books. They don't tell you what you contributed to this country. When our kids read a book, you would think that nobody did nothing in this country except the white man. (Holmes, quoted in Terkel, 1992, p. 146)

That Blacks are silenced and defined by Whites is further

exemplified by Dawn Kelly, twenty-one and a junior in college, who tells Terkel about life as she sees it:

> I think society has set it up this way. We don't want to see the true quality of life for everybody. We will let a few people of color--I don't like the word minorities, we're over eighty percent of the world--get to the top. They'll let a couple of us get Ph.D.s, become doctors, lawyers. After that, you have people laying by the wayside, people starving, homeless, without education.
>
> You sit in a class and people tell you if you have full lips, darker skin, look a certain way, you're not pretty. This must affect children. I've seen numerous cases where darker students have been shunned and I've been accepted because I'm fair-skinned. Do we have to look European to be beautiful? That's what TV shows us. It's all over. (Kelly, quoted in Terkel, 1992, p. 206)

What is interesting about these African-Americans is that they agree that their culture has been co-opted, written for them by others, and even then, acknowledged less than majority White culture. Salim Muwakkil, a 44 year old journalist writes about the complicated process of hegemony:

> It's difficult for white society to stop denying its racism. Denial is rooted in our culture. Our country, founded on the principles of enlightenment, was practicing slavery. It required an enormous amount of denial to have these two things going on simultaneously. Racism and its denial are a bone-deep parts of American culture. We have to keep pointing this out. It's never easy to admit. . . .
>
> When this campaign to call ourselves African-American began, I was astonished by the hostility of so many white people to the idea. . . It's curious that white people want us to abandon our African heritage, which we've never been able to embrace. . .
>
> When we first came here, it was against the law to practice our rituals, to recognize our heritage. Even the drum was forbidden. So now, when black people are just beginning to embrace

> their ethnic identity, whites look at it as some sort of threat to their hegemony. It's simply that black people are just beginning to realize how much they've been deprived of knowledge of their own selves. (Muwakkil, quoted in Terkel, 1992, pp. 169-170)

Dissonance and Assonance

A Black Culture

The "knowledge of their own selves" to which Muwakkil refers is not easy to come by. Mary C. Lewis in Herstory: Black Female Rites of Passage (1988) asks the following:

> What, you might be asking, don't they already know what it means to be Black? Without seeming to be a know-it-all, I believe most don't know yet. Most of our young people, male and female, are still struggling with a definition of Blackness--understandably so. For in their struggle is our struggle to reach a common definition that welcomes the rich diversity we possess and banishes forever the abusive stereotypes that were never ours to begin with. (p. vi)

Patricia Morton's Disfigured Images: The Historical Assault on African-American Women (1991) examines the present day scholarship's search for "black women's history as it should be written" (p. x). Morton states that her research will not necessarily support the idea that "black authored scholarship has long been much more progressive than has white-authored scholarship" because the myths "which mystify" and the stereotypes "which simplify" have resulted in images which Black women may have internalized and thus affected their perceptions (1991, pp. xv-xvi). Morton refers to Mae King who

postulates that four central stereotypes she discovered in her work about Black women: "the sex object," the "'tragic mulatto' who failed in her misguided attempt to pass as white," the "inept and comical domestic servant," and lastly, "the masculinized domineering matriarch" (1991, pp. 7-8). Especially pervasive was the alleged sexual power of the Black woman. She took on the mythic abilities to such an extent that her "overpowering sexual licentiousness apparently even drove the black man away in disgust to pursue white womanhood instead" (1991, p. 36). Indeed, the Black woman could be held accountable for everyone's sin because of the sexual abuses she endured as a slave: "Cast in the image of Eve, the black woman was assigned responsibility for the downfall of the manhood of both races" (Morton, 1991, p. 37). Morton agrees with Robert Harris' contention that African-American historians may have been "dominated by an effort to achieve the notice and respect of white America" (1991, p.38) and concludes that Black history has been tainted by the power of such White majority perspectives.

Little Dovie Thurman, who became an evangelist, describes in Terkel's book her own struggle with cultural awareness, which she notes had to begin with her own acceptance of being African-American. She says of her change in perspective:

> I went all the way from not wanting to be black to being superblack. All the way militant. . . Before King was killed, I was beginning to look at the system: "Who is the culprit?" I was excited because I was learning new things I didn't think I could learn. I

> never learned in school these new things. I was using the word "system" instead of the word "you." I was beginning to understand that there's somebody in control that I couldn't get to. It wasn't the person I could see. I began to see things. If white people hate black people so much, how come there are poor whites like this? Why are they doing this to their own people? Why do they call them "white trash" when they are as white as they are? The police beat their heads as badly as they beat ours. If they were so much better, why are they treated so much worse?
>
> I began to seek knowledge about the power. Who's got it? Who's benefiting from keeping people separated? . . . I was beginning to talk a different language. (Thurman, quoted in Terkel, 1992, pp. 61-62)

Bell hooks, a prominent questioner of many aspects of Black and White culture mores, considers both the use and abuse of "knowledge," especially the issue of education, as it applies to African-Americans eager to learn:

> Education is a political issue for exploited and oppressed people. The history of slavery in the United States shows that black people regarded education--book learning, reading, and writing--as a political necessity . . .
>
> Education could help one assimilate. If one could not become the white oppressor, one could at least speak and think like him or her, and in some cases the educated black person assumed the role of mediator--explaining uneducated black folks to white folks. (1989, p. 98)

Hooks contends that integration took away school as a tool: "School was no longer the place where one learned how to use education as a means to resist white-supremacist oppression" (1989, p. 99). The environment had changed:

> We were no longer taught by people who spoke our language," she writes, "who understood our culture; we were taught by strangers. And further,

> we were dependent on those strangers for evaluation, for approval. (hooks, 1989, p. 99)

Hooks suggests the phenomena of "double-consciousness" of which Du Bois speaks, the "invisibility" of personhood written by Ellison and exemplified by Graham, and the "silence" of African-Americans in published scholarship is a natural reaction to such oppression:

> Many individuals from oppressed groups learn to suppress ideas, especially those deemed oppositional, as a survival strategy. From slavery on, black people in the United States have learned to be guarded in our speech. Saying the wrong thing could lead to severe punishment or death. (hooks, 1989, p. 161)

Black women's voices are particularly silent in historical accounts. Although the actual number has increased, some of which are generally highly regarded, most have Black women as their object rather than as their subject. Lerner's Black Women in White America: A Documentary History (1972) filled a gap, but was only a beginning. Lerner's use of primary sources did allow Black women to speak their own history. Much more the rule are books such as A History of African-Americans in North Carolina (1992). Crow, Escott, and Hatley present the story-line of Black Carolinians from their entrance with Spanish explorers in 1526 (1992, p. 1). In describing the culture of the slaves on the plantation, they note that the plantation system:

> allowed them to create a black community and interior life separate from the strict oversight of whites and

> to develop concomitantly a collective consciousness to lighten slavery's oppression. (1992, p. 11)

Although the book does acknowledge the development of a Black community and consciousness, it does not offer the voices of those who make up the community and thereby does not continue in the direction of Lerner's compilation of history.

More recently, attention has turned to disseminating the rich history of African-American women to a cross-cultural public. Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot (1976) states that in researching young Black girls' experiences in school, she found that "images of black girls--no matter how distorted or ethnocentric--do not present themselves in the literature on teachers and children in classrooms" (p. 139). The girls are not old enough to share in the stereotypes and myths of Black women, identities encompassing "nurturer," "temptress," "Mother Earth," "sapphire," and the "primary manager and competent organizer of upper-class households" (Lightfoot, 1976, pp. 140-141). At the same time, however, she states that young Black girls "were thought of as being unnatural, unchildlike, deviant, and deprived of cultural, social, and intellectual advantages--deprived in fact, of their childhood" (1976, p. 157).

Bonnie Thornton Dill in "The Dialectics of Black Womanhood" (1979) argues that the focus on the occupations of African-American women in their culture has skewed pictures of Black womanhood (p. 543). Such misrepresentation emanates

from what she describes as four existing problems. The first problem results from shortcomings in Black family history methodology. Frazier's The Negro Family in the United States (1966) emerged as the definitive study of Black families and presented the image of the Black woman as "a strong and independent person who placed little value on marriage, engaged without conscience in free sexual activity, and had no notion of male supremacy" (Dill, 1979, p. 545). Dill acknowledges that while Frazier set forth some of the circumstances which may have contributed to the "development of self-reliance and autonomy in black women," his limited perspective causes these descriptions to be viewed negatively, as causing "disorganization of Afro-American family life" (Dill, 1979, p. 545). The influential Moynihan Report in 1965 accepted the premises of Frazier's interpretation of Black family development. Herbert Gutman's more recent study of Black families, however, is the only one of the three that Dill finds acceptable. Gutman's findings indicate that while a Black female head of household was a "recurrent pattern," it was nevertheless "atypical in the period before 1925 and generally exaggerated in studies of black family life" (Dill, 1979, p. 545).

A second area of concern for Dill is the position of the Black family in a "White World" (1979, p. 547). While Frazier's study concluded that "incomplete assimilation and isolation of blacks from white society explained their

divergent family forms," i.e., matriarchy rather than patriarchy, Billingsley's Black Families in White America (1968) insisted that the Black family be seen as a separate system within the larger societal system (Dill, 1979, p. 546). Valentine's concept of "biculturation" argued "that blacks have been simultaneously socialized into two different cultural systems: white Euro-American and black Afro-American" (Dill, 1979, p. 547). However, it is Joyce Ladner's study of young girls that Dill describes as the most useful. Dill suggests that Ladner's perspective is more similar to her own because:

> interpersonal relationships of these women were adaptations to a variety of factors, including the harsh realities of their environment, Afro-American cultural images of black womanhood, and the sometimes conflicting values and norms of the wider society. (Dill, 1979, p. 547)

This particular view transcends the other perspectives because it enables Ladner to:

> focus on the dynamic and contradictory aspects of black American life and to account for the simultaneity of conflict and interdependence which characterize black-white relations in American society. (Dill, 1979, p. 548)

The third problem to which Dill alludes is the difference in "values" held by the researcher and the subject (1979, p. 548). From the works of Frazier and Moynihan, the "bourgeois family" values of "monogamy, nuclearity, and patriarchy" surfaced as the ideal family structure (Dill, 1979, p. 548).

However, because African American families may not espouse those same values, they may be portrayed negatively for their differences (Dill, 1979, p. 548). The problem caused by rigid categorization is similar to what she considers the fourth problem: "Class and Culture" (1979, p. 551). Dill reiterates what bell hooks and others have said: too often African-American women are grouped into one nameless entity. She qualifies yet another misconception which can occur along the stereotype spectrum:

> Too often, social science researchers have sought to describe black women and their families as if they were a monolithic whole, without regard for differences in social class. At the other extreme is the contention that social class differences obliterate distinctions of race. In other words, social science has generally supported the idea that Afro-American culture is synonymous with lower class culture and that it disappears as black Americans gain middle class status. (Dill, 1979, p. 551)

She prefers works such as Blauner's, which "links racial oppression to economic exploitation and the structure of classes within a capitalist economy" (1979, p. 551), noting as particularly germaine Blauner's realization that:

> In American society, races and classes interpenetrate one another. Race affects class formation and class influences racial dynamics in ways that have not yet been adequately investigated. (Dill, 1979, p. 551)

To address these problems facing the study of African-American women, Dill advocates that serious re-articulation of the history of these women and their families: "black women

must be studied within a dynamic and contradictory framework" in order to see how complex all their actions are made by the society in which they live. Dill further suggests that "we must continue to research and provide good descriptive studies of the lives of black women and their families across the social class spectrum" (1979, p. 552). She maintains that ultimately one of the reasons that Black women "have not identified strongly with what many have seen as a movement of middle-class white women" is that the African-American female has already achieved the image the movement strives for--"more than housewives and as sexual equals" (1979, p. 554). Studying what she calls the "contradiction" between slavery, other oppression, and the strong women those factors produce will open up new ways of looking at African-American women (1979, p. 555). It is, she concludes, "the potential synthesis of these contradictions which embraces the future problems and possibilities of a new definition of femininity for all American women" (1979, p. 555).

Lena Wright Myers' book Black Women: Do They Cope Better? (1980) questions the "myth" that African-American women accepted their roles humbly. Instead, she defines coping as "alternative ways of dealing with the pressures of society" (1980, p. 2). Stating that African-American women have the "dual stigma of being female and black in a society that devalues both" (1980, p. 8), she contends that "Blacks do not necessarily measure themselves against whites; nor do black

women measure themselves against white women" (1980, p. 14). What the women she interviewed indicated were their standards were not "how well we do whatever we are doing," but were rather role models their mothers or "mother substitutes" set forth, "strong family ties" which gave them "support and strength," the church and its clergy, and other relatives who presented themselves as guides for them (1980, pp. 30-39).

Anne Standley (1990) asserts that because little attention has been given to Black women's participation in the Civil Rights movement, Sitkoff is correct in arguing that scant attention has been paid to the "impact of the movement on black women's consciousness" and to the acknowledgment of "the contributions of women in making this racial pride possible" (pp. 183-184).

Allen in his study of "Family Roles, Occupational Statuses, and Achievement Orientations among Black Women in the United States" (1979) states that Black women's "experiences, needs, and realities are assumed to be identical with those of blacks and women in general" because Black women share membership in both those minority groups (p. 670). He insists that while there may well be "commonalities" with those other minority groups, the "differences" must be noted, too (1979, p. 670). His study seeks to add information to the history of Black women by conducting a "comparative analysis of occupational status and achievement orientation" (p. 671) to see what differences exist in "occupational statuses of

black women relative to white females and males of both races" (p. 671). Citing several studies of note--Gurin and Epps' study of Black college students, which found lower career goals and predisposition toward "stereotypic" jobs among Black women (1979, p. 672); and Rosenberg and Rosenberg's research, which attributed such career expectations to "fundamental definitions of sex identity" (1979, p. 672)--Allen cites the need for a more extensive study of Black female jobs and the "achievement orientations" those women hold (1979, p. 673). Drawing his data from public statistics, as well as a study using high school seniors (1972), Allen analyzes the quantitative data and postulates several points about Black female employment. Black females have, until recently, been in the work force in far greater numbers than their White counterparts; from 1964-1974, Black women's movement out of the service sector into other occupations was the most "prominent" of any other sex-race group studied (1979, p. 675). More specifically, Allen states that the "proportion of black women in white collar positions nearly doubled between 1964 (22 percent) and 1974 (42 percent) (1979, p. 678). However, the overall picture of the earning power of Black women is not as encouraging. Allen's findings indicate that "Black families have consistently lost ground relative to white families in the median income race since 1867" (1979, p. 680). In describing the "occupational aspirations" of Black women, Allen asserts that the "aspirations of black women are

significantly different from those of white women, black men, and white men," with more than one-third of Black women having "clerical jobs" as their goal (1979, p. 686). However, he notes that another study finds a generally healthy self-esteem among Black women:

> Black females, and blacks in general, display higher self-esteem levels than other sex-race groups and whites respectively because of socialization patterns which emphasize the development of high self-esteem as a protective mechanism against societal attempts to devalue the self-worth of blacks. (1979, p. 683)

In answering his research question, "whether the probable occupational status attainments of black women about to enter the labor force will accurately reflect their orientations toward achievement," he concludes that the data indicates "no" (1979, p. 683). Allen points to future research projects that may shed more light on the subject, one of which would be on "established societal practices and norms which systematically deny black women equal opportunity to achieve at levels commensurate with their abilities" (1979, p. 686). Also useful would be a thorough "scrutiny of institutions (their norms, personnel, and procedures) which impact on the achievement process" (1979, p. 686).

Diane Lewis in "A Response to Inequality: Black Women, Racism, and Sexism" (1977) focuses on the interrelationship between racism and sexism in African-American women's lives. Citing studies by Large (1970), Hare (1970), Cooper (1971), Cauda (1970), King (1973), and Rayed (1972), she states that

African-American women have:

> tended both to see racism as a more powerful cause of their subordinate position than sexism and to view the women's liberation movement with considerable mistrust. (1977, p. 339)

Lewis points to the advantage White women have had over Black women. Even though White women were powerless compared to White men, they were still able to capitalize on their common color:

> While they themselves lacked authority in the dominant society, they have had a route to power through their kinship and marital ties with men (e.g., fathers, husbands, and sons) who do exercise authority in the public sphere. (1977, p. 346)

Lewis contends the split between the women was exacerbated in the sixties when White women's "sense of deprivation grew as they saw black people demanding and acquiring an improved and more equitable position in the wider society" (1977, p. 346).

That education was unequal between Black men and Black women resulted from Black girls' receiving more education to get them out of working as housekeepers or maids. And yet, of those attending professional or graduate schools, 91 percent of the degrees were awarded to Black men as compared to 9 percent of Black women; in addition, Black men attended higher prestige universities than did women (1977, p. 351). It is no surprise, then, that the figures Lewis finds for Black women in higher education are low, and that what jobs are there for

them are ones of "lower-status and [are] lower-paid" (1977, p. 353).

Such research underscores the findings of Barbara Smith (1983). In her introduction, she describes how she became aware of "feminism":

> I learned about Black feminism from the women in my family--not just from their strengths, but from their feelings, from witnessing daily how they were humiliated and crushed because they had made the "mistake" of being born Black and female in a white man's country. I inherited fear and shame from them as well as hope. (p. xxii)

She learned it before she knew what it was called. Smith returns to this experiential definition of "feminism" again by saying:

> I have always felt that the Black women's ability to function with dignity, independence, and imagination in the face of total adversity--that is, in the face of white America--points to an innate feminist potential. (1983, p. xxv)

In fact, she argues that Black men, along with some Black women, "developed a set of myths to divert Black women from our own freedom" (1983, p. xxvi). The first myth as she sees it is "<u>The Black woman is already liberated</u>" (p. xxvi). Smith explains the foundation of this myth: because the Black female has taken on most of the "responsibilities that our oppression gives us" (p. xxvi), the Black woman appears to have the "freedom" to work outside the home and manage the home. These signs of liberation, she contends, are really

just the result of the very few decisions that Black females can make in their lives. They must, in other words, do these things;there is no alternative of "staying home" for them. Myth Number Two is that "Racism is the primary (or only) oppression Black women have to confront" (p. xxvii). Her rebuttal to this myth is that Black women cannot afford to "wait for racism to be obliterated" before they struggle against sexism (p. xxxiii) because there is not enough time to struggle against both forces. In addressing Myth Number Three, "Feminism is nothing but man-hating" (p.xxxiii), she admonishes that there is a difference in "Trying to educate and inform men" and hating them. Myth Number Four, that "Women's issues are narrow, apolitical concerns," is to her obvious in its fallacy, for she views women's issues as revolving around politics; Myth Number Five, that "Those feminists are nothing but Lesbians," is a transparent attempt to reduce all women to an object which the majority can ridicule and refuse to understand (p. xxix). Smith differs from some activists in saying that she does know of collaboration among Black and White feminists as White participants recognize and try to deal with their racism. Indeed, according to Smith:

> I have not only seen that there are white women who are fully committed to eradicating racism, but that new understandings of racial politics have evolved from feminism which other people would do well to comprehend. (1983, p. xxxiii)

Her book presents women's accounts of hurtful experiences they have encountered by the prevailing power structure. One woman says:

> this assimilation process was not randomly developed within me in my youth. It was pumped into my mind with fear and shame from both my family and my neighboring community while I was young. . . . Then one day I acknowledged to myself that most of the women I was dealing with were white and middle class. Their lives and upbringing had been as different from mine as night and day. These women were aware of, but did not really have to address, the question of racism and classism. They were focusing totally on sexism. (Smith, 1983, p. 55)

White women had the luxury of not having to confront these oppressions "unless they felt like it" (Smith, 1983, p. 55).

Bell hooks agrees that the main driving force in feminism has not been Black women:

> While feminists have increasingly given "lip service" to the idea of diversity, we have not developed strategies of communication and inclusion that allow for the successful enactment of this feminist vision. (1989, p.24)

Hooks insists that all American women have been "brainwashed" (1989, p. 120). She goes on to explain:

> I am certain that the black female sixth grade teacher who taught us history, who taught us to identify with the American government, who loved those students who could best recite the pledge of allegiance to the American flag was not aware of the contradiction: that we should love this government that segregated us, that failed to send schools with all black students supplies that went to schools with only white pupils. Unknowingly she implanted in our psyches a seed of the racial

> imperialism that would keep us forever in bondage. (1989, pp. 120-121)

White women were socialized as well, and that imbedded culture prevents them from accomplishing a feminism for all. Hooks describes the beginning feminists as "meaning well":

> The group of college-educated white middle and upper class women who came together to organize a woman's movement brought a new energy to the concept of women's rights in America. . . They demanded a transformation of society, a revolution, a change in the American social structure. Yet as they attempted to take feminism beyond the realm of radical rhetoric and into the realm of American life, they revealed that they had not changed, had not undone the sexist and
>
> racist brainwashing that had taught them to regard women unlike themselves as Others. (1989, p. 121)

Hooks laments that even though some feminists such as Adrienne Rich advocate that "the word racism must be seized, grasped in our bare hands, ripped out of the sterile or defensive consciousness in which it so often grows" (1989, p. 123), those that harm feminist scholarship write from a perspective:

> denying the existence of black women, writing "feminist" scholarship as if black women are not a part of the collective group American women, or discriminating against black women. (1989, p. 123)

Hooks continues her argument by saying that inevitably:

> it matters less that North America was colonized less by white patriarchal men who institutionalized a racially imperialistic social order than that white women who purport to be feminists support and actively perpetuate anti-black racism. (1989, pp. 123-124)

Hooks contends that the abolitionists who attended the first organizational meetings for women's rights actually were attacking slavery instead of racism (1989, p. 123). The actual day-to-day differences in the lives of White women and Black women prohibited any such real empathy. According to hooks:

> When white reformers made synonymous the impact of sexism on their lives, they were not revealing an awareness of sensitivity to the slave's lot; they were simply appropriating the horror of the slave experience to enhance their own cause. (1989, p. 126)

The conflict between Black women and White women continued far past ideology into real life situations. Hooks states that when African-American women did go into industrial labor jobs, sometimes White women would threaten to quit or would "use complaints about black women workers as a way of discouraging an employer from hiring them" (1989, p. 133). White women demanded that they be separated from Black women workers in many jobs: "They further argued that they needed the protection of segregation so they would not catch 'Negro' diseases" (hooks, 1989, p. 133). The hierarchy of positions in work was easily in favor of the White women--"In black factories black women not only wrapped and packed candy, they worked as bakers" and were consistently paid less than White workers who did not take on the more strenuous jobs (hooks, 1989, pp. 133-134). The horror is, contends hooks, that White women did not realize their reactions as racism. In the

sixties, by making comparisons between "women" and "blacks" and ignoring that there were "black women" involved, hooks says, it was there that they "revealed their racism":

> In most cases, this racism was an unconscious, unacknowledged aspect of their thought, suppressed by their narcissism--a narcissism which so blinded them that they would not admit two obvious facts: one, that in a capitalist, racist, imperialist state there is no one social status women share as a collective group; and second, that the social status of white women in America has never been like that of black women or men. (1989, p. 136)

Her conviction that Black women must accept responsibility for their awareness and activism explains her opinions about African-American scholarship and feminism:

> All efforts at self-transformation challenge us to engage in ongoing, critical self-examination and reflection about feminist practice, about how we live in the world . . . . We want to begin as women seriously addressing ourselves, not solely in relation to me, but in relation to an entire structure of domination of which patriarchy is one part. (hooks, 1989, pp. 24-25)

In Ain't I A Woman? (1981), hooks explains why some other Black women may have accepted the myth of a "matriarchy theory" (p. 80). The concept handed them several things readily:

> They were eager to identify themselves as matriarchs because it seemed to them that black women were finally receiving acknowledgment of their contribution to the black family. Young black women interested in African American history were attracted to the theory that a matriarchy existed in America because they had learned woman-ruled societies existed in our mother land. . . In general, many black women

> were proud to be labeled matriarchs because the term had many more positive implications than other labels used to characterize black womanhood. (hooks, 1989, p. 80)

Jacqueline Jones describes her mother as one of those strong "matriarchs" who served as a strong role model; in fact, she dedicates her book Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow (1985) as a "testament to the stubbornness of a mother's love in opposition to the dehumanizing demands of the workplace" (p. 56).

Patricia Hill Collins identifies several different perspectives usually mentioned in scholarship about the "consciousness of oppressed groups" (1989, p. 747). One interpretation is that "subordinate groups identify with the powerful and have no valid independent interpretation of their own oppression" (1989, p. 747); the other takes for granted "that the oppressed are less human than their rulers and, therefore, are less capable of articulating their own standpoint" (1989, p. 748).

Using statistics, Collins claims that White women have an economic advantage because of their ties to White men "the highest earners in society" (1989, p. 837). This advantage carries with it accessibility to education; therefore, it is not surprising that Aida Hurtado finds that most of the presently published feminist writing is that of the majority White, educated female (Joseph and Lewis; cited in Hurtado 1989, p. 837). She believes that the majority White feminists

have realized the importance of addressing and including diversity within their group. However, she argues that the present feminist theory has not accommodated either the simultaneous "subordination" which African-American women experience or the "oppression" perpetrated by both White men and women (1989, p. 839). The need to focus on both is imperative; Hurtado argues that the difference between the oppression Black and White women experience is one of their "relational position" to the "source of privilege, white men" (1989, p. 844). White women are necessary to help continue the White race. In other words, summarizes Hurtado: "white women, as a group, are subordinated through seduction, women of Color, as a group, through rejection" (1989, p. 844).

Hurtado also discusses the differences inherent in Black womanhood and White womanhood. During slavery, Black women worked as men but also satisfied men's lust through being raped (1989, p. 845). She contends, in spite of such history, that "White women are at a greater disadvantage than women of Color in reclaiming their identity--or perhaps it is more accurate to say, in inventing their identity" (1989, p. 846), for Collins argues that for Blacks, oppression can be attributed to a specific historical milieu. White women, though, have no "beginning time" to which they can point to explain their subordination (1989, p. 847).

To a great degree, White women have "gained political consciousness about gender oppression by examining their

personal lives," thus reaffirming the adage "the personal is political" (1989, p. 849). Hurtado warns, however, that the adage applies only to those Whites in the middle and upper classes: "the American state has intervened constantly in the private lives and domestic arrangements of the working class" (1989, p. 849). She refers to William Ryan's observation that:

> When white middle-class women rebel, they are accused of mental illness and placed in mental institutions. When people of Color rebel, they are accused of violence and placed in prisons. (1989, p. 851)

Indeed, suggests Hurtado, it is not until adulthood that many "white middle-class feminists" realize they have a political conscience. They have been protected by "classism and racism" throughout their youth, unlike Black women. Audre Lorde describes an incident in her childhood that exemplifies the difference. On a subway train, Lorde sits beside a woman, whose racial identity is revealed by her actions:

> She jerks her coat closer to her. I look. I do not see whatever terrible thing she is seeing on the seat between us--probably a roach. But she has communicated her horror to me. It must be something very bad from the way she is looking, so I pull my snowsuit closer to me away from it, too. When I look up the woman is still staring at me, her nose holes and eyes huge. And suddenly I realize there is nothing crawling up the seat between us: it is me she doesn't want her coat to touch. . . .No word has been spoken. I'm afraid to say anything to my mother because I don't know what I've done. I look at the sides of my snowpants, secretly. Is there something on them? Something's going on here I do not understand, but I will never forget it. Her eyes. The flared nostrils. The hate. (Lorde, quoted in Hurtado, 1989, p. 851)

For young girls like Lorde, the political has always been personal because they are African-American. Hurtado concludes her article with a challenge for both Whites and "women of Color": White middle-class feminists must realize the effect of their close alliance with White men when reviewing gender inequities. African-American women must look toward a new perspective:

> If women of Color are to embrace a feminist movement then they, too, must expand their consciousness of gender oppression. They, too, must understand differences in the dynamics of seduction and rejection and in particular, that seduction is no less oppressive than rejection. (Hurtado, 1989, p. 855)

Pauli Murray agrees; she emphasizes that recent scholarship has shown that Black women have a self-defined standpoint on their own oppression" (1989, p.747) and that dialogue across cultural groups is imperative.

Feminism and Opportunity in a Man's World

Sally Hegelsen in The Female Advantage (1990) quotes Nancy Bador: "I find it often takes women ten years longer than men to realize how good they really are" (163). Indeed, much of the literature on feminism laments the often slow recognition of women's talents, especially by women themselves. Throughout Hegelsen's book, echoes of the history of Black women occur, an example of which is Jean Baker Miller's finding that it is a particularly "female view that one strengthens oneself by strengthening others" (1990, p.

233). However, hooks would charge that books such as Hegelsen's, though important, do not go far enough in addressing the complexities involved with simultaneous membership in two oppressed groups. Speaking of her own research endeavors, hooks describes her frustration trying to "find sources that would explain black female experience (especially my assumption that books written by white people would contain such information)" (1989, p. 150). She has found that "since there are not many academic black women committed to radical politics, especially with a gender focus, there is no collective base in the academy" (1989, p. 181) on which to build. In fact, when she began to write about the "black female experience" herself, she was aghast at how little interest there was:

> When I began the long search in history, sociology, and psychology texts for material, I was really surprised and even shocked that black women were rarely a category in anyone's index, that when we were written about we rarely rated more than a few sentences or paragraphs. (hooks, 1989, p. 150)

In researching the topic "Women in Educational Administration," the scholarship is disappointingly scarce. Many writings exist on leadership in general, with "women in leadership" being somewhat an exotic topic. Those authors who do work in the domain of leadership lament as well the lack of research, but they attribute it to cultural factors, sometimes beyond their control. Charol Shakeshaft has written Women in Educational Administration (1987), noting at the beginning

that "traditional literature in school administration largely ignores women" (p. 9). Chicago saw almost 75 years pass from one female superintendent--Ella Flagg Young in 1909 to another--Ruth B. Love in 1980 (1987, p. 19); Shakeshaft says that the claim that women at one time "dominated school administration" is wrong in all areas except the "early days of the elementary school principalship" (p. 19). In addition, records kept by NEA and other educational groups did not report gender in their tables past 1930, and the number of minority teachers and administrators "was seldom reported" as well (1987, p. 21). In line with the criticism of bad reporting of minority service in schools, Shakeshaft admits that the:

> historical account of the ebb and flow of women in administration either details the experiences of white women only or obfuscates the lives of women of color by subsuming them within statistics and reports of women in general. (1987, p. 21)

What she does find is that African-American women were more often employed in the South, especially in the rural areas, and in the Southwest, for those parts of the country had segregated schools (1987, p. 22). In 1920, 2% of African-American women who worked outside the home were in education; by 1978, that number had risen to only 3.4% (1987, p. 22).

Shakeshaft refers to a study by Jones in 1905, which reported that over 4000 Black women "had graduated from normal schools and universities" by that year (1987, p. 29). By

1910, Black female teachers constituted "two-thirds of the Black teachers employed" (Collier-Thomas 1982, quoted in Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 29). Still, up until 1930, figures are sketchy for Black women because of the scarce documentation (1987, p. 30), even though Shakeshaft mentions that by the mid-1800's some of Black women educators started their own schools and so were simultaneously faculty and administration (1987, p. 34). Buffeted by changes brought by war and consolidation, the ebb and flow of females employed as administrators reflected whatever need society had for their numbers (1987, pp. 44-45). Shakeshaft quotes Robert Rogers at MIT who said that "Fifty years of this [training exclusively by women teachers] has produced a people incompetent to think politically and philosophically" (Rogers in Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 48). Others concurred, indicating to Shakeshaft that "When American social status and political security were at stake, society could not tolerate a majority of female educators" (1987, pp. 49-50). In the sixties, when males entered teaching fields in significant numbers, they eventually moved on to administration posts and thus "served to keep the number of women administrators to a minimum through the 1980's" (1987, p. 50). Indeed, the percentage of women educators employed as administrators was actually higher in 1905 than in the 1980's (1987, p. 50).

There are few studies which deal exclusively with women as administrators, and most of them use data accumulated from

surveys (1987, p. 56). The average age of the female administrator is in the mid to late 40's, although Black women were generally younger than their white counterparts. The majority of female administrators are in rural areas, are first-born or only children, come from two parent families, and have fathers who were farmers (1987, p. 58). While most White mothers remain at home, surveys indicate that "black mothers tended to work outside the home and then, despite their education, in unskilled labor positions" (1987, p. 58). Shakeshaft's research reports that "more black women show strong participation in church work than women of other racial groups" (1987, p. 60).

Minority women tend to enter the teaching profession earlier than men but become principals later, with an average of 12 to 15 years of teaching experience before their first administrative position (1987, p. 63). The African-American principal is found more often in a school "with a 20%, or more, minority population, in a southern state" (1987, p. 66). Because of the dependence on statistics, Shakeshaft admits that very little of individual stories is known, but there does appear to be some distinction between those who are secondary principals and those who remain in elementary principalships or as "subject matter specialists" (1987, pp. 67-68). The three most available avenues to the positions of assistant/associate superintendent or the superintendency itself are: 1) the "specialist positions, supervisory posts,

and elementary principal" positions; 2) a "variety" of specialists' positions; and 3) the position of "guidance counselor" (Shakeshaft, 1987, pp. 67-69).

The very make-up of existing educational organizations has presented a barrier to women; because the majority of administrators are male, females have fewer mentors or models with whom to work (1987, p. 115). Shakeshaft refers to Clement's 1980 findings that "Women of any race seldom get good administrative jobs" (1987, p. 105).

Other studies corroborate Shakeshaft's findings. In India, Marianna Varghese finds that a female administrator's problems arise from "the socio-economic-cultural milieu in which she has been nurtured and moulded" (1990, p. 10). The schools which teach girls are usually staffed by female teachers, with boys taking more science subjects than girls. Sounding alarmingly similar to some American situations, this picture ends with Varghese's conclusion that "the woman herself is the blocking factor in the managerial bid to succeed" (1990, p. 25).

Baltzell and Dentler's study of "5 Paths to the Principalship" (1992) presents research about the selection process involved in hiring administrators. In most hiring, the districts conduct a "closed selection process," one which the researchers conclude "cannot be characterized as merit-based or equity-centered" (1992, p.37). Sue Adler, Jenny Laney, and Mary Packer in Managing Women: Feminism and Power

in Educational Management (1993) received input from 85 women as to how they attained their positions. Referring to Maslow's argument that "the self-actualized woman [is] one who has made it in a man's world" (1993, p. 6), the authors take issue with books that suggest how to succeed in today's organization rather than change them (1993, p. 11).

Jenny Ozga, editor of Women in Educational Management (1993), presents a collection of articles focusing on females in administrative positions. Walker's "Black Women in Educational Management" suggests that African-American women in administration have particular pressures as a result of being both Black and women:

> Certain specific pressures can be identified as having an effect on their performance. These pressures include feelings of isolation, the strain of coping, with sex stereotyping, discrimination from colleagues, and the whole experience of pressure from an institutional culture. (1993, p. 16)

One woman, the head of a department, talks specifically about surviving these pressures:

> For me, political awareness had to go alongside academic achievement. . . I didn't receive it in college; it was something I had to do off my own bat, and that has been a strong motivator towards helping me become the woman I am today. (Walker, 1993, p. 19)

Sari Biklen (1993) agrees that politics establish a different playing field for women; referring to Epstein (1974), she states:

> men are judged on the job by their level of effectiveness at work, [whereas] women are evaluated according to the many roles they are able to play and to integrate well. (Biklen, 1993, p. 10)

Putnam and Heinen contend that a woman manager has a "double bind" to solve:

> If she displays the culturally defined traits of a woman, she is rejected as an unacceptable manager. If she acts according to the male defined role of a leader, she is condemned as being unfeminine. (quoted by Brown, 1979, p. 283)

It is that "double-bind" associated with being a woman that is compounded even more so by being African-American. Rosie Doughty describes the African-American female school administrator as being in "a double bind, perhaps even a triple bind" because the administrator is 1) Black, 2) Female, and 3) Black Female (1978, p. 165). Her study finds interesting data concerning African-American female administrators K-12. "For the most part," says Doughty, "the black woman is at the bottom of the administrative heap" (1978, p. 167) after White women. Hardly found as a principal of a secondary school or in the superintendent's chair, the Black female administrator is often older than Black male administrators, is well educated, is likely to be "placebound, not wanting to leave the home area" (1978, p. 169). If the Black woman is hired, Doughty contends that "It is not easy to get boards of education to consider women for top positions and even more unlikely for them to consider a black woman"

(1978, p. 171). Doughty refers to her friend's advice about administrative work:

> A male friend, Preston Wilcox, always reminds me to never lose my soul. In my opinion, this is perhaps the most important consideration for the black woman. Whereas black women generally have a strong self-perception, that perception is challenged daily in the administrative arena. Mrs. "Bee" once described it as being in a house of mirrors and getting a barrage of grotesque pictures. Some are compact and squatty-looking; others are elongated. To many, you are the matriarch, the prostitute, the iron maiden, the woman who wants to be like a man, the incompetent, the mammy, and the deviant all at the same time. None can match with your perception . . .Only the black woman can define who she is. No one else will or should do it for her. (1978, p. 165)

In higher education, the picture is still emptier than in K-12, for fewer African-Americans become administrators in colleges and universities. Citing that affirmative action has been "debated, evaluated, cursed, and blessed" in higher education (1989, p. 127), Harriet McCombs defines affirmative action for the Black woman: its purpose is to "ensure fair and equitable treatment, and where necessary, to redress 'manifest imbalance,' preferential consideration for positions historically held by whites and males" (1989, p. 127). Yet, the number of African-American women at American colleges and universities remains low. In 1983, Blacks comprised only 4% of higher education faculties, out of which only 2% were women (McCombs, 1989, p. 127).

Hooks notes that in the 1960's and 70's, universities "appeared to embrace diversity" (1989, p. 66), but today, students at such places at Yale are asking: "Does blackness

exist?" and "Is there a black culture?" (1989, p. 66). McCombs' study asks why such questions have come to exist:

> American colleges and universities espouse the ethics of innovative thinking and responsiveness to and expansion of liberal values, one of which is cultural pluralism. . . Given this perceived liberality, it is perplexing that higher education has failed to design, implement and enforce policies that categorically reflect fair and equitable recruitment practices, greater diversity in personnel and resources, and actively discouraging sexual and racial harassment. (1989, p. 130)

McCombs hypothesizes that the "failure can be attributed to the university's attempt to maintain its elitist reputation" (1989, p. 130) and discusses the effect lack of representativeness could have:

> The consequences of small or nonexistent black faculty and staff not only impacts upon other social institutions and occupations but upon student perceptions as well. White students may erroneously conclude that blacks, in general, and black women, in particular, are not qualified to fill the ranks of technical support staff, faculty, counselors, and administrators. Black students, who find little continuity of experience between their community and the university, may find no one to affirm their presence or serve as academic role models. (1989, p. 131)

She reports the "general consensus" of Black women involved in higher education for over the last 15 years, gleaned from conferences and publications, is that:

> a) the university's environment is hostile at worst and indifferent at best; b) American colleges and universities have not anticipated or planned for the inclusion of black women; and c) pluralism, diversity, and pioneering are wonderful, liberal thoughts on which the university does not act. (McCombs, 1989, p. 131)

When looking at salaries, McCombs notes simply that the biggest discrepancy is found at the full professor position where men earn $46,070 on the average compared to women's average salary of $40,630. In job positions, the highest number of African-American women are found in the "junior ranks" (1989, p. 132). McCombs postulates that Black female faculty may sense the need that the university wants to "transform" them. In fact, she states that higher education institutions appear unable to "accept the individual/collective identity of black women and affirm only one component of the whole identity--usually ethnicity" (1989, p. 134). Unless the numbers increase and Black women are able to carve out a place for their concerns, McCombs states that affirmative actions to make higher education inclusive will have been "a fraud":

> Inactions on the part of black women at this point will eventually result in their cooptation, a loss of their critical perspectives, and endorsement of the status quo. Inaction on the part of the college and the university will result in jeopardizing the future prosperity of the nation. The choice is ours. (1989, p. 142)

Reginald Wilson reiterates that Black women have "been doubly jeopardized by being part of two oppressed groups" (1989, p. 85) and quotes the 1973 Carnegie Commission Report's conclusion:

> if women are thinly represented on faculties, especially in traditionally male fields, they are

> so rarely represented in top academic administrative positions as to be practically nonexistent in the upper echelons. (1989, p. 85)

The Report also states that because early Black colleges focused more on what Wilson terms "the humbler trades" (1989, p. 89), African-American women were employed at a higher percentage than African-American males (1989, p. 89). However, the greater numbers did not mean greater access to promotion. Wilson quotes Carter, Pearson, and Shavlik's 1988 study which found:

> [Black women] comprise only 0.6 percent of the full professorships, compared to 1.6 percent for Black men, 9.9 for white women, and 83.2 percent for white men. (1989, p. 89)

The same study presents interesting figures about the "pinnacle" position, the presidency:

> Despite the fact that women are 52% of all enrolled college students, they are only 27% of faculty, and only 10% of college presidents. . . There are 296 women presidents, of which 38 are women of color, or 1.3% of all presidents. (Wilson, 1989, p. 89)

African-American female administrators are found in all types of colleges and universities, but the greatest concentration of presidencies is at the community college level. The least number are presidents of public and private four year schools.

Below the level of president, the numbers are somewhat better for African-American administrators. They constitute 4.3% of all administrators as contrasted to only 2% of

faculty. Wilson cautions, however, that "this numerical representation is deceiving because many of these positions do not lead to upward mobility" (1989, p. 91). As to qualifications, Wilson notes that "black women exceed black men in subdoctorate science degrees," but fall behind at the doctoral level (1989, p. 91). Wilson urges that an increase in Black women's representation is necessary, for soon, "after the year 2000, minorities will make up over one-third of the American population" (1989, p. 96).

Audrey Williams's presentation of interview and descriptive data on African-American higher education administrators mentions, as others have, that most studies have left out specific details about Black women (1989, p. 101). In 1984, Kathryn Moor did find out that of the 2896 administrators who answered her survey, 91.8% were White, 5.4% were Black, and 2.8% were other groups. Of these figures, males outnumbered females 3 to 1 (Moor, 1989, p. 102). Myrtis Mosley's 1975 study did focus on Black females specifically; she asked for names of African-American administrators from participants at a Harvard summer institute for Educational Management. Her data shows that:

> based on a 51% response from 232 people. . . black female college administrators are an "endangered species" whose numbers are decreasing. . . [they] tended to have positions that were outside of the main structure of the university, were underpaid and overworked, and received little or no support from their peers, black or white. (Moor, 1989, p. 102)

Resolving the Cacophony

Nikki Giovanni's admonition is: "As long as higher education considers itself 'higher,' with all the privileges but none of the responsibilities, then hypocrisy is what our students learn" (1994, p. 109). Literature surrounding African-American female educational administrators in higher education sets the stage for their stories to be heard. Bell hooks states:

> Fundamentally, it is our collective responsibility as radical black people to construct models for social change. To abdicate that responsibility, to suggest that change is just something an individual can do on his or her own or in isolation with other racist white people is utterly misleading. (1989, p. 118)

She sounds a call for dialogue among cultures so that information can be shared and learning from each other can occur. Her description of the sharing reminds one of the culture Cornel West advocates working toward:

> Yet it was listening to black musicians like Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and later, John Coltrane, that impressed upon our consciousness a sense of versatility--they played all kinds of music, had multiple voices. (1989, p. 11)

West's metaphor of an musical group, a jazz band, with many different instruments working together, each with its own individual and necessary part, remains figurative in the real-life world of educational administration.

This study seeks to add more voices to the refrain of

which hooks and West speak. Chapter Two has presented literature on the different challenges that confront African-American women who are in educational administration. Chapter Three presents the literature behind the methodology used to bring several African-American college administrators' stories to print. Leaders in using narrative research and their works set the stage for the actual professional life-histories in Chapter Four. Chapter Five discusses the implications found in the women's articulations of identity and proposes further avenues to pursue.

CHAPTER III

A VARIATION: HOW CAN I KNOW WHAT I MEAN UNTIL I SEE WHAT I SAY?

The Theoretical Basis for the Methodology

In the field of composition, one of the most intriguing tenets of writing theory is the emphasis on seeing in print what one thinks. A question which American writer Flannery O'Connor (1971) posed about her own writing--"How do I know what I mean until I see what I say?"--has become a frequently used rationale for encouraging students to put things down on paper. The process of reading one's own articulation to realize one's thoughts is similar to the process which occurs in Kathleen Casey's interviews of black female teachers; as the women speak, they engage in what Gates refers to as acts of "rhetorical self-definition" (quoted in Casey 1993, p. 8). The verbalization of one's life constitutes a composing for the outer world of what or who one is inside.

This study has sought to include the "composing" of professional life-histories of African-American women in higher education administration to the chorus of other African-American female educational administrators at different levels. Interviewing--a chance for the women to be the subjects and authors of their own stories--has been the

most appropriate manner in which to learn of their professional life histories. In her book I Answer With My Life (1993), Kathleen Casey states that the idea of using interviews in working with teachers came to her from a class assignment:

> In another course, I was introduced to the oral history debates, and became convinced that this was the methodology I had been looking for. This conclusion was confirmed in yet another class, where actual quotations from women teachers, discovered in a preliminary report on life history interviews by Dee Ann Spencer (later published as a book in 1986) proved to be the most exciting words I had ever read on the subject of teachers. (p. 10)

Her book, a compendium of interviews from "Catholic Women Religious Teachers," "Secular Jewish Women Teachers," and "Black Women Teachers," hinges on the "construction of self" as the women articulate who they are by relating what they have done in their lives and their attitudes and perspectives about those activities (1993, p. 23). Casey surmises that the Popular Memory Group (1982) has been responsible for "what remains, in my own judgment, the single most important discussion of oral history research" (1993, p. 11). Contending that positivists' approach to people's lives results in "high costs," the Group scorns the enhanced role of researcher as a type of knowledge gatekeeper (1993, p. 12).

Casey places these different inquiry approaches to "contemporary conflicts over theory, methodology, and politics in scholarly investigation" (1995, p. 211). She combines the

following practices into one category--the narrative:

> the collection and analysis of autobiographies and biographies, bildungsroman(Burgos, cited in Bertaux & Kohli,1984), life writing (L.M. Smith, 1994), personal accounts (Lancey, 1993), personal narratives (Personal Narratives Group, 1989), narrative interviews (Schutze, cited in Bertaux & Kohli, 1984), personal documents (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1958), documents of life (Plummer, 1983), life stories, life histories, oral history, ethnohistory (Quantz, 1992), ethnobiographies (Poirier & Clapier-Valladon, cited in Bertaux & Kohli, 1984), authoethnographies (Denzin, 1989), ethnopsychology (Freeman, 1992), person-centered ethnography (Langness & Frank, 1991), popular memory (Popular Memory Group, 1982), Latin American testimonios (Sommer, 1988), and Polish pamietniki (memoirs) (Znaniecki & Krzysicii, cited in Bertaux & Kohl), 1984). (1995, pp. 211-212)

Carolyn Heilbrun's Writing a Woman's Life (1989) proceeds along this same venue. She acknowledges that in women's attempts to re-define and "refine" women's studies, there must be caution:

> there is a real danger that in rewriting the patriarchal text, scholars will get lost in the intellectual ramifications of their disciplines and fail to reach out to the women whose lives must be rewritten with the aid of the new intellectual constructs. . . we are in danger of refining the theory and scholarship at the expense of the women who need to experience the fruits of research. (1989, p. 20)

Her book, therefore, is built on what she sees as something of a risk. Because she has hitherto dealt with texts, which she has been "trained to analyze and enjoy" (1989, p. 20), she admits that dealing with the biographies of literary women will be different:

> I risk a great danger: that I shall bore the

> theorists and fail to engage the rest, thus losing both audiences. If this does, indeed, occur, I shall at least have failed as the result of a conscious choices, one made in knowledge, insofar as that is ever possible, of the dangers, the challenges, and the vitality whose price is risk. (1989, p. 20)

Such risks are inherent in most of the types of inquiry Casey lists as constituting "narrative research." Of those, oral history is especially salient as a background upon which to present the interviews of the African-American female educational administrators in higher education. Frontiers: a journal of women studies presents selections constituting "Women's Oral History" Volumes I and II (1977 and 1983). In the introduction to Volume I, "What's So Special About Women? Women's Oral History," Sherna Gluck lists the types of "documents" which can result from interview: "topical, biographical, and autobiographical" (1977, p. 5). Reiterating that interviewing allows one to "move beyond the written record--which reflects the experiences of more privileged women, usually white and educated--to document the lives of all kinds of women," Gluck suggests that the "best training for conducting an oral history interview is actual practice" (1977, pp. 6-7). Indeed, Gluck continues, the optimum is that the subject monopolizes her own story and continues her own "quasi-monologue" (1977, p. 9).

One among the many articles included in the first Frontiers (1977) is "Black Women and Their Communities in Colorado." In that article, Sue Armitage, Theresa Banfield,

and Sarah Jacobus find the same scarcity of material as did my own literature review of African-American female educational administrators. Indeed, they admit, in "conventional histories of the American West, black men are seldom mentioned, [and] black women even more rarely" (1977, p. 46). Interviewing six Black women, the authors present glimpses of the Black communities through the memories of the Black women speakers. Such focus results from the authors' "suspicion that previous researchers did not consider the role of women, and because they did not think to ask, nobody told them" (1977, p. 50). In another example of oral history, "Telling It All: Literary Standards and Narrative by Southern Women" (1977), Elizabeth Meese begins by acknowledging that the accepted canon of literature has relegated all women's stories to "regional literature" if, indeed, the literature is recognized at all (1977, p. 63). Meese urges women to uproot the existing canon by re-establishing its parameters: "revising any academic canon means enfranchising voices which have been unfairly excluded" (1977, p. 64), an inclusion of all women's writing.

Lynn Bloom (1977, p. 1) suggests that oral history's purpose of transmission "from one generation to another" is further enhanced by the apparently straightforward nature of obtaining information:

> happily, oral interviewing and the related methods of the oral historian can be learned and practiced skillfully by relatively unsophisticated

> people of all ages and backgrounds, without elaborate training--but with conscientious preparation and serious effort. (1977, p. 2)

She contends that oral interviewing not only adds to the "canon" of history but that it also benefits the interviewee:

> Moreover, every oral interview with a woman is a means of enhancing not only that woman's individual place on this earth, but the significance of women generally. The oral historian can raise the self-esteem of the woman interviewed, for in talking about themselves women can recognize the worth of their roles, their efforts, their contributions, their lives. Through the medium of oral history, other women can identify with their sisters, mothers, grandmothers, daughters; men can come to know women better. (1977, p. 2)

Gluck concurs with the political importance of interviewing women when she states that by asking women about their lives, "we are affirming that our everyday lives are history" (1977, p. 3). Comparing the interview to the story-telling slaves did to perpetuate their history and culture, she contends that "Oral history. . . is the validation of women's experiences" (1977, p. 5).

Indeed, Casey suggests that the narrative inquiry, itself, has resulted from historical movements which have rearranged society (1995, p. 215). Not only has the fabric of which the study has been made become altered, but the weavers, themselves, have also changed:

> Part of the legacy of these social movements is that the demography of the university population, the design of college curriculum, and the direction of scholarly research have all been significantly altered. This is the terrain of the co-called culture wars. The

> celebration of ordinary people's heroism in liberal and radical narrative research (a major emphasis of the current trend) undermines the conservative glorification of great White men in the established autobiographical tradition. In reaction, elite intellectuals hasten to promote appreciation of their own "superior" heritage. It is quite impossible to understand narrative research without taking these ongoing struggles into account. (Casey, 1995, p. 215)

The everyday people whose lives make up the fabric that is studied experience the change as well. Those who have been advantaged by the prior conditions are sad to see the change; those encumbered by them find relief; those who see themselves as being in neither situation may sense confusion (Casey, 1995, p. 216). But the narrative serves each group well by introducing "human agency" into the studies of human lives. Casey explains:

> In a world controlled by TV talk shows, tabloid exposes, and slogan T-shirts, telling one's story becomes exhibitionism, and listening to another's becomes voyeurism. Alternatively (or perhaps complementarily), story telling is the way to put shards of evidence together, to (re) construct identity, community, and tradition, if only temporarily. (1995, p. 216)

In collecting the stories for her own book, Casey followed a procedure much like the one used in this study. Always intrigued by the place of teachers' discourse in the field of education--always the receivers of blame, silent, their relationships with students and with each other--Casey sought to find some answers to her questions about how teachers view themselves. After deciding to focus on women

teachers, she ended up having not only Black and White teachers, but Catholic and Jewish ones as an "unexpected variable" (1993, p. 15). Her interviews, she states, took off on their own, never coming "close to the analytical neatness" of her prospectus, an occurrence she reckons as fortuitous in achieving her goal of allowing the subjects to speak for themselves (1993, p. 17). Her reactions vacillated from an informal dialogue with the women to surprise at how the stories began and ended (1993, p. 18). She admits that "Although I had actively solicited these women's own interpretations, at the same time, the priorities of academic research on teachers still lingered in my head" (1993, p. 18) and at times, she "would feel frustrated because some of my questions were left unanswered" (1993, p. 18). Upon retrospection, however, she admits that this conundrum was part and parcel of the narrative inquiry experience:

> It took some time for me to realize that I could not have it 'both ways,' to really understand the consequences of my chosen methodology. (1993, p. 18)

In analyzing the stories of the teachers, she describes another complication--the teachers' ownership of the stories meant that each one was different--and so she turned from accepted modes of textual criticism to a framework built on discourse (Baktin, 1981), metaphors (Kliebard, 1975) and languages of curriculum (Huebner, 1975).

That narrative research demands a sensitivity to what is

actually going on in the interview is one of its most compelling strengths. The intellectual agility to realize what is being said and how best to transmit it requires a commitment to the subjects of the stories. Describing certain "problematics," i.e., a notion, "internally complex and contradictory" that states honestly that some "problems are never really solved," Casey discusses "vocabulary" as one such area in which interpretive inquiry faces challenges (1995, p. 216). She quotes an example of Pinar, pinpointing the complexity involved in speaking from one's "self" and then wondering who is talking:

> I want to see who this is I live with, what is this life I am living. He is a familiar stranger. There is always a layer deeper. I think I know him, and then, when I turn to him again, he is odd and inexplicable. (Pinar, quoted in Casey, 1995, p. 218)

Madeleine Grumet discusses this disclosure of self, too, but warns against the violation of the story-telling by being judgmental and by disregarding the power structure within an interview. Casey quotes Grumet's use of the metaphor--the mask--which Grumet says is inherent in our dialogues with each other:

> Our stories are the masks through which we can be seen, and with every telling we stop the flood and swirl of thought so someone can get a glimpse of us, and maybe catch us if they can. (Grumet, quoted in Casey, 1995, p. 218)

Yet another "problematic" is what Gramsci termed the

"collective subjective," (Casey, 1995, p. 220). What seems to be a natural tension exists between the subject's identification with a group and her own individuality. That one's identity cannot be divorced from the "community" in which it resides is one thing, but the unconscious adoption of identity from a hegemonic culture presents an interesting dilemma for both researcher and subject. A similar difficulty is the one which Kleinman and Copp present in Emotions and Fieldwork (1993). When they have used quantitative methods, they were uncomfortable because of the necessity of distance. In using qualitative methods, they have worried they would be thought of as "playing" or doing "soft" research. Kleinman explains the dissonance:

> For example, after reading Herbert Blumer's (1969) spirited critique of much of quantitative sociology, a student in our class asked disdainfully why quantitative methodologists do not openly criticize qualitative methods. He scoffed, "They don't even mention it. But in courses in qualitative methods, quantitative methods always come up."
>
> This student implied two things. First, he insinuated that qualitative sociologists are always undermining themselves by taking quantitative methods into account (even if only to attack them). Second, quantitative sociologists, unlike qualitative sociologists, are civil human beings who do not say bad things about other kinds of work. (1993, p. 5)

In addition, within qualitative research itself, differences of opinion exist as to how to proceed. At times, the researchers are expected to exhibit much the same objectivity as quantitative researchers. They are not allowed to be human instruments:

> Qualitative researchers hear mixed messages. On one hand, they are told that their emotions can hinder good research. On the other, they are told that they will not understand participants unless they form attachments to them. Consequently, most of us act like quasi-positivists: We allow ourselves to have particular feelings, such as closeness with participants, and try to deny or get rid of emotions we deem inappropriate. (Kleinman and Copp, 1993, p. 2)

Quoting one of the participants in her study, Casey states that "the world is bigger than the book" (1993, p. 166). That straightforward idea may well be the justification for narrative research's continuing quest for more and more definition of self.

The Method in Spite of the Madness

Years ago, in an introductory statistics class, I took a quiz that asked for the difference between logical positivism and phenomenology. I was not a particularly young or naive person, but I was very inexperienced in doing research. Up until that course, my research consisted of much the same background as that which Carolyn Heilbrun describes. I knew literary criticism, and I was much more at home analyzing John Milton's Paradise Lost than I was at determining statistical significance. I do remember that the connotation of the word phenomenology was somewhat akin to the wizard or philosopher who insisted that each person's view of something was his or her own and that one could not, therefore, make those important generalizations about human nature that would help

us progress. Logical positivism, on the other hand, was a term couched in the search for the best way of learning, a way, which I was told, that would be found; and when it was, the quantitative methods which had proved the null hypothesis would have been instrumental in propelling us to such discovery.

In retrospection, both of the fields around which I have built my life have undergone tremendous changes in perspective, changes that recoil from mechanics and gravitate toward human interaction. When first teaching composition, I circled errors and had students look up the errors in the handbook, correct the error, and assumed they would not commit these errors after doing such "revision." Writing experts today realize that such practice usually benefits only those who already possess strategies to make those writing improvements. Students now bring in drafts of essays and share them with their fellow students to make sure their writing makes sense. Revision is seen as a recursive process, dependent much on the writer's ability to sense dissonance, and classroom technique now hinges on methods to enhance or enable the student to sense things not working in a paper. Somewhere, there may still be courses taught using revision as simple correction, but they are considered out of the mainstream.

In educational methodology, quantitative and qualitative research still co-exist in many departments. The class which

includes practitioners of both sorts sometimes presents an interesting discussion of whether the "chair is really there? or is it just a figment of my imagination? It can't, -------- can it be a fact?" as well as moans and groans over the studies which strip administrators, teachers, and students of their human-ness and focus only on the percentage doing whatever is deemed important at the time. Asked early in the doctoral program as to which type of research I preferred, I was then steered toward courses that might teach me process and possible ideas for research.

In a course two years ago, three African-American female educational administrators presented their professional life histories to graduate students in a course. The professor, another graduate student, and I formed a study group to interview other African-American female educational administrators K-12. We solicited names of women who were considered "effective" administrators. Suggestions came from colleagues, teachers, central office personnel, and college faculty who had worked with these administrators in some capacity. We three also read about African-American culture, qualitative methodology, and feminist study. In group meetings, we devised questions around the several general themes we wanted to explore (see the Appendix for list of questions). Using the recommendations, we chose nine interviewees randomly. The interviews, using an audio-tape recorder, lasted approximately 90 minutes. Transcriptions

were typed, and currently interviewees are in the process of reviewing the transcripts.

The interviews yielded fascinating pictures of the career tracks of K-12 African-American female educational administrators. Family backgrounds; educational experiences, both as students and employees; leadership styles; perspectives on leadership; and experiences with discrimination, both as women and African-Americans were areas in which rich stories emerged as descriptive examples.

As a doctoral candidate, I then chose to study African-American female educational administrators in higher education. Using the same process, that of eliciting recommendations of effective administrators, I chose three to interview. Two interviews took place in the administrators' private offices; the other was at a table in a large work room, divided into office areas. After introducing myself and setting up the recorder, I audio-tape recorded the interviews. One administrator took me on a tour of the plaques, articles, and diplomas on her walls, telling me where each had taken place and giving me a visual idea of her administrative history. Another called out, near the end of the interview, to a friend of hers, and after the tape was turned off, introduced the student to me. He spoke of his work relationship with the administrator, and we all three talked of the impact he could make as a teacher. After each session of interviewing, I transcribed the interviews and sent the

administrators their copy to review. I then added the anecdotal information to that already amassed by the K-12 interviews.

To find the answer to the question, "How do other African-American female educational administrators in higher education compare with the nine administrators K-12?," I analyzed first the nine interviews as to similarities and differences. The volume of interesting and different experiences each woman had lived was rich with different events and perspectives. With the addition of the women in higher education, I re-focused on the strength of each individual interview and turned to a framework based on "languaging" and "metaphors."

Language, Metaphors, and Ownership

Language

One of the first meetings of a class on curriculum theory I took as part of my graduate program centered on Huebner's "Curricular Language and Classroom Meanings" (1975). Although I had known all the literature terms--audience, persona, unreliable narrator, tone, symbolism, propaganda--I had not hitherto considered the different "languages" surrounding education. In the K-12 classroom, I had experienced those times when, using language, I had to explain what I meant by other language, and known firsthand the circles that can be woven around certain concepts. However, upon looking

carefully at the five languages Huebner posits, it was clear that education has been acted upon by various forces, "languaging" their own perspective of education to fulfill their advantages. Huebner warns of such pitfalls that can await the naive:

> Today's curricular language seems filled with dangerous, nonrecognized myths: dangerous not because they are myths, but because they remain nonrecognized and unchallenged. The educator accepts as given the language which has been passed down to him by his historical colleagues. He forgets that language was formed by man, for his purposes, out of his experiences--not by God with an ultimate truth value. (1975, p. 218)

Huebner divides the languages into five categories: technical, scientific, esthetic, political, and ethical. Technical language focuses on product and efficiency: it has, says Huebner, "a means-end rationality that approaches an economic model" (Huebner, 1975, p. 223). Control is a major emphasis in this language. Those using this language may talk "of the need for individuals to read, to write, to compute, to think in certain ways, and to make a living in order to exist productively in this society" (Huebner, 1975, p. 225).

The scientific language focuses on methodology; education is viewed as valuable for the knowledge it engenders. Huebner describes those players involved this way:

> The teacher, the curricular worker, the educational researcher are always in need of more and better warranted assertions about educational activity.

> They can construct and manipulate teaching situations to test new hypotheses, or to produce new facts as new technologies and techniques are introduced. (1974, p. 225)

Huebner acquiesces that using scientific language is needed somewhat in curriculum discussion, as new knowledge is constantly discovered and education must keep abreast of such a rapidly changing vista (1975, p. 226). However, he cautions that education should not be reduced to such a perspective.

Huebner describes esthetic language as one that is "often complete ignored" either because it does not hold a high priority with educators or because "esthetic activities are not highly prized today in society" (1975, p. 226). To use this language, one would have to speak of things "removed" from the functional world, of their "balance" and "harmony" and other qualities. In contrast, Huebner describes "political" language which, he argues, dominates much of educational talk. In this category, the teacher "has a position of power and control," a position that Huebner says might be valued more "covertly than overtly" (1975, p. 224). The educational system is seen as a political arena, which if worked correctly, can bring praise and accolades to those in power. Huebner asserts that all involved in education take their places in the game:

> The teacher who claims to be immune is so only because he is in equilibrium with his educational community. But given a change of situation, administrators, lay attitudes, or colleagues, that

> one-time nonpolitically oriented teacher must again rethink how his educational activity reflects upon his standing in the local educational community. (1975, p. 225)

Huebner's favorite language, however, is the ethical one:

> Here the educational activity is viewed primarily as an encounter between man and man, and as ethical categories for valuing this encounter come into being, metaphysical and perhaps religious language become the primary vehicle for the legitimation and thinking through of educational activity. (1975, p. 227)

Those using this language realize that education is not to make changes, to realize one's ambition, to unearth discoveries, or to represent or symbolize something. Here, he advocates:

> The encounter <u>is</u>. In it is the essence of life. In it life is revealed and lived. The student is not viewed as an object, an <u>it</u>; but as a fellow human being, another subject, a <u>thou</u>, who is to be lived with in the fullness of the present moment or the eternal present. (1975, p. 227)

Quick to say that no one language is used exclusively, Huebner argues that the whole of languaging in the curriculum would be enriched by understanding the perspective of each (1975, p. 228).

<u>Metaphors</u>

Kliebard adds to the discussion of language by suggesting that education is tied to <u>metaphors</u> (1975, p. 84). Quoting

J.H. Plumb, "In simplicity or in sophistication man tends to think in metaphors, intuitively drawn from his social and personal experience," Kliebard suggests several metaphors--of "production," of "growth," and of "travel" which apply to education (1975, pp. 84-85). In terms of production, the student is seen as "the raw material which will be transformed into a finished and useful product under the control of a highly skilled technician"; the "growth" metaphor views the curriculum as "the greenhouse where students will grow and develop to their fullest potential under the care of a wise and patient gardener," whereas the "travel" metaphor describes education as a journey: "The curriculum is a route over which students will travel under the leadership of an experienced guide and companion" (Kliebard, 1975, pp. 84-85).

Miles and Huberman (1984) mention metaphor as well. After agreeing that in "qualitative research, numbers tend to get ignored" (p. 215), they continue:

> After all, the hallmark of qualitative research is that it goes beyond how <u>much</u> there is of something to tell us about its essential <u>qualities</u>. (1984, p. 215)

They suggest finding patterns which entails sorting things out and making clusters of similar trends or ideas (1984, p. 218). Most important is the use <u>metaphor</u>, a concept mentioned previously in the works of Kliebard, Grumet, and others. Miles and Huberman suggest that case study research often

seems banal and boring because the works, although functional, do not illuminate. Instead, they suggest:

> Consider Proust, Dreiser, Balzac, Austen, Nabokov, Updike, Oates, and Garcia Marquez. Their appeal is that they dramatize, amplify, and depict, rather than simply describe, social phenomena. The language itself is often figurative and connotative, rather than solely literal and denotative. Part of this has to do with the use of metaphors, analogies, symbols, and other allusive techniques of expression. (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 221)

To use metaphors, they suggest the researcher "think" in metaphors. The strengths they attribute to metaphors are the following:

1) Metaphors offer more "theoretically powerful" descriptors, e.g., "the empty nest syndrome" draws a clearer mental picture than does "mother's separation anxiety."

2) Metaphors are "data-reducing" devices. An appropriate metaphor can carry with it subtle connotations that makes description easier.

3) Metaphors also serve as "pattern-making devices." Once a useful metaphor is applied, then it can be extended. The example they give is school's being an "oasis." Other extensions--such as "desert" and "sustenance" can follow.

4) Metaphors can also be "decentering devices" which automatically provide some distance from the classroom or other setting with which one might be very familiar.

5) Finally, Miles and Huberman suggest that metaphors can be a way of "connecting findings to theory." In

thinking of analogies and similarities, one can analyze a thought, occurrence, or setting in terms of others like it and raise questions as to similarities and differences (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 221).

Ownership

Friere (1970) gives philosophical bindings to the net of narrative research in Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1992) when he explains that:

> Problem-posing education affirms men as beings in process of becoming--as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality. Indeed, in contrast to other animals who are unfinished, but not historical, men know themselves to be unfinished; they are aware of their incompletion. In this incompletion and this awareness lie the very roots of education as an exclusively human manifestation. The unfinished character of men and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity. (p. 440)

Although Freire uses the term narrative in his writing, he refers to the "banking concept" of education as narrative, in that teachers see pupils as vessels to be filled with stories, information, and other worthy deposits of knowledge:

> Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the student to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into "containers," into "receptacles" to be "filled" by the teacher. The more completely he fills the receptacles, the better a teacher he is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are. (1992, p. 433)

Narrative research is liberating in that it does not pose as

a great fountain from which willing learners must imbibe. Instead, the emphasis on setting a stage upon which the subjects may tell their own stories calls more on the "transforming power" of words rather than their "sonority" (Freire, 1992, p. 431). Although the women in this study might not refer to themselves as being the "oppressed," the lack of studies with like them as subjects certainly calls out for rectification. Indeed, they are much what research should be <u>of</u> rather than <u>about</u>:

> The truth is, however, that the oppressed are not "marginals," are not men living "outside" society. They have always been "inside"--inside the structure which made them "beings for others." The solution is not to "integrate them into the structure of oppression, but to transform the structure so that they can become "beings for themselves." (Freire, 1992, p. 433)

In this study, the interviews of the first nine African-American female educational administrators in the K-12 public school system and the women in higher education administration are the speakers' stories. As they present themselves, I have, using the languaging of Huebner, the concept of metaphor from Kliebard, and the philosophical conviction of Freire that these stories are articulated by women who are "beings for themselves," commented upon the picture the stories project. Because the purpose of the study has been first and foremost the transmission of these stories to help educational administrators and others interested in that field, I have considered my comments as only buttresses to the important

life histories they have to tell.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are several. In the first set of interviews K-12, I used the material collected by two of the other members of my team. I was dependent upon their methods of interviewing, and I was also dependent upon the accuracy of the transcription. In addition, the interviews themselves seemed relatively short once I concluded the questions. I walked away from each woman, thinking that I would really appreciate another "talk" with them, to find out more what they think and to know them better as people.

To be sure, any interview situation depends on the willingness of the subject to be candid and forthright. Indeed, there may always be a certain amount of posturing any time questions are asked about one's past. Yet, when researchers speak of the power structure of interviews, they attribute the most power to the interviewer who holds the questions and decides the format. Aware of that potential barrier, I tried to minimize my control of the interview. I did serve as a facilitator when the women asked what they needed to answer next or what they have covered, but they were in control of their stories. I did, however, sense that the women "warmed up" to me as a fellow educator as we progressed through the interview. I left each encounter having enjoyed the process and the person who shared it with me.

In soliciting the names of effective administrators, both K-12 and in higher education, a chance exists that someone with a compelling story may not have been asked to participate. There is no way to validate that the professional life-histories of these African-American female educational administrators are representative, nor is there any validity or reliability measure which I have used to confirm my analyses. At time, the well-known standards of quantitative methodology have haunted me, but I was buoyed by listening to the tapes and enjoying the human interaction. The stories themselves serve as testimony to acceptable standards of "truth-telling."

In answering what challenges might face a European-American non-administrator woman who seeks to find out and share with others the life-stories of African-American female administrators, one might easily, in the face of existing research and literature, have paled: "Dare I continue to write of these women's stories? Should I ever have started?"

In learning African-American history, in reading African-American literature as well as studies on African-American culture, I have attempted to address that "white solipsism," "the tendency to think, imagine, and speak as if whiteness described the world" (hooks, quoted in Adler, 1993, p. 32). Although I have increased my own awareness, I am intensely conscious of those who Audre Lorde says believe that "racism is a Black Woman's problem . .. and only we [Black women] can

discuss it" (1981, p. 7). The continued feedback I have solicited from those African-American female educational administrators with whom I have worked has helped me confront and, as bell hooks would say, "unlearn" some of the biases I have imbibed unconsciously from my culture (1984, p.54). It is not my purpose to define these women but to allow their stories to define themselves, pointing out the type of language they use and the comparisons they make in order to articulate who they are.

The bias factor resulting from race is not, however, the only bias I have had to confront. Having taught for many years, and having an internship in student-teaching supervision and an administrative practicum in graduate school, I have yet to be a school administrator. My courses have introduced me to what happens in the daily work life of a principal and in other administrative positions. I have met and learned with educational leaders, many of whom already hold administrative positions. They have shared their ideas with me as we worked together on projects and presentations. However, when I listen and analyze the responses of these interviewees, I fully realize that I am not an administrator yet. My exposure to administration in the schools, both K-12 and in higher education, has been from the perspectives of instructor, student, and parent.

Because, however, the purpose of my study is to learn, to make connections with these African-American female

educational administrators, my lack of experience in administration is not as great a barrier as it could be were I to set myself up as an authority on these women's lives. bell hooks discusses this issue in Talking Back (1989). She asserts that researchers should reflect upon whether their work will "be used to reinforce and perpetuate domination" or undo it (1989, p. 43). Suggesting that many who do research with an ethnic group fail to "discuss in the introduction to their work the ethical issues of their race privilege, or what motivates them or why they feel their perspective is important" (1989, p. 44), bell hooks focuses on what could be achieved by such cross-cultural dialogue: "Learning about other groups and writing about what we learn can be a way to unlearn racism, to challenge structures of domination" (1989, p. 46). The difficulties arise "not when white women choose to write about the experiences of non-white people, but when such material is presented as 'authoritative'" (hooks, 1989, p. 48).

The women who have worked with me in the interviews have each presented themselves as subjects, not objects of a study. We have laughed together, nodded our heads in agreement many times, and I have learned from them, not only of their lives, their professional histories, but "who" they are. Hooks begins Talking Back with the following remembrance:

> One of the jokes we used to have about the "got everything" white people is how they just tell all their business, just put their stuff right

> out there. One point of blackness then became--like how you keep your stuff to yourself, how private you could be about your business. (1989, p. 2)

These interviews do not deal with intensely personal relationships, and at all times, the women involved could deflect any question or change the course of the dialogue. For the most part, they talked, and I listened, referring to the printed questions only when we paused or they asked what they had not covered. In participating in this study, the women and I became temporary partners, and as a result, the endeavor resembles much less the "telling everything" to which hooks refers than the dialogue hooks encourages:

> Fundamentally, it is our collective responsibility as radical black people and people of color, and as white people, to construct models for social change. To abdicate that responsibility, to suggest that change is just something an individual can do on his or her own or in isolation with other racist white people is utterly misleading. (1989, p. 118)

Sarason refers to the creation of a new setting as "any instance in which two or more people come together in new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals (1989, p. 1). Discussing these administrators' life-stories will be but a small step toward correcting the "omission of black woman hood" from the annals of educational research (Morton, 1991, p. 1). The themes emanating from their interviews will contribute to "the intersection of an Afro-American culture with a female

culture" (Jones, 1985, p. 5). The study will also aid in understanding the "multiple jeopardy" (King, 1988, p. 78) which those women who are Black, female and affected by classism as well, face daily.

Lastly, that this study can help someone interested in educational administration and can be used to enlighten is important as well. Elizabeth Meese quotes the character Alabama Beggs from Zelda Fitzgerald's Save the Waltz: "Men, she thought, never seem to become the things they do, like women, but belong to their own philosophic interpretations of their actions" (1977, p. 65). Meeting these African-American female educational administrators has enlightened me. I have learned from them a great deal.

This chapter has explained the steps taken to interview the African-American female educational administrators and has explained the milieu in which their stories will be presented. Chapter Four presents the stories--the language and the metaphors they contain--and what import those professional life-histories holds for educational administration. Chapter Five will conclude the study with implications of the stories and with suggestions that add to the richness of our dialogue.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAIN MOVEMENT: ARTICULATING ONE'S SELF

These African-American female educational administrators exemplify the power of narrative research. They are the speakers, the subjects--a far cry from numbers counted or blanks checked on a survey. Indeed, their stories take over the study, making it a vehicle for their life-histories and perspectives about education. In doing so, the stories become living artifacts--although they can be discussed, they remain the property of their owners and subject to re-vision.

Each administrator speaks about family background, family influence, experiences in education and early life which have influenced her career choices, the steps which led her to administration, and the role she envisions herself fulfilling in education. Each also mentions role models or mentors in her life and gives advice for others to digest. At times, the narratives weave from what Huebner would term "ethical" language to "political" and through several other orientations and combinations. The metaphors which signify the administrators' professional life-histories are sometimes articulated; at other times, they are only suggested. The combination of the K-12 administrators and the administrators in higher education results in a broader picture of what languages and what analogies female African-American

educational administrators use in sharing their professional life-histories.

The languages of family background

Family influence pervades the stories of most of the administrators. One in particular, who at the central office level has accomplished what many of the others see as their future goals, views education as a necessity, underscored by what seems to be a strong father who relentlessly monitored her progress:

> I rather suspect the thing that really caused me to get into education was the fact that education in our household was a really important kind of issue. Everything revolved around us getting a good education. Both of my parents said that. My father accepted nothing less than our very best...it was not tolerated...you didn't think about it. You didn't even consider it. When everybody else stayed home to work on the farm, my daddy said, "Forget it. You need to go to school and if I'm going to spend the time and energy to get you there, then you're going to do whatever is required of you to stay there. You're not going to lay out. You're not going to work. You're going to go to school. You're going to make straight A's. Nothing else. That's exactly what you're going to do."

She describes her father's power, the lasting impression he has made in her life throughout her story as she attributes her work ethic to him:

> Of course I went to college. It was the same mentality that my father had. He was paying nothing for me to go to college. I was going on scholarships and paying my own way, but anything that anybody in our family did had to be the very best and because it was going to be the very best--that's all he would deal with, tolerate, even

> in college. And so, I was perhaps not as active as some people were in college, but I always worked a full forty-hour week in addition to carrying twenty hours, and so I wasn't as active in maybe some of the clubs and so forth. But--but that's the way I did that, and I did graduate summa cum laude.

When asked what other people influenced her, she states that there were others who had a significant effect but then fails to say whom and how. Instead, she reverts to describing her father more, a father whose advice echoes the efficiency and productive goals of education as a technical tool:

> There were others in addition to my father. I will say a couple of things about my father. He never expected you to have any rest periods. My father is a driving man. He was driven himself, so any time we had anything that had to be done, you could not watch television, you could not listen to the radio without having a pan of beans there or something to do. So I tend to do a number of things at one time. And all of those things had to be done well.

In referring to her mother, she admits, "I don't think that my mother had much influence at all over me." Her mother was sick and so much of the household duty fell to her: "I didn't have the life of a child. I didn't have much of a childhood." She does, however, remember her mother as kind and caring, to which she attributes her predisposition to "look very carefully at people and I do things for people." Her father, in lamenting that he did not have a son, added "strain" to the relationship. However, the daughters were "just so determined that we were going to show my dad what we could be," ironic perhaps, because he also said to them "You don't worry about

what people think about you. You worry about what you need to do." The father is also the one who cautions her about the pangs involved in growing up African-American:

> He always taught us that we would be raised in an integrated society, that we would not only have to compete with Whites in general, but in particular with White males. And that he felt that we should be prepared to do that. Nor was it enough to succeed in the Black world at that time. And for him, that was the "Colored" world because he never got into the "Black" issue. He now has major problems with that. It was the way he sees things, and it was fine for him to have that designation. He saw nothing wrong with it. But he felt that's the only way we were going to succeed in a man's world, in a White man's world...so that was part of what came to me as my message.

That political message resonates throughout her story. Because her father was a landowner, she had lived in a White community, and contact between the races was frequent and not out of the ordinary. Still, the invisible dividing line was always present, and her siblings and she were always to recognize the reality in which they lived:

> And I didn't think of them as Black friends or White friends but just as people. I was taught to look at it that way. At times that created problems, but most of the time it was ok, to have the two separate worlds. And we were taught where our place was in that world and not to forget what our place was but at the same time that that world would change and our place would change.

In another's story, the mother is picked as the most influential. This administrator who in higher education is a director of nursing and other health programs quickly answers that when it comes to influential people in her life, her

mother is an immediate choice:

> I'll connect my leadership--administrative--with my growing up. And I guess there were perhaps two things that really influenced it. One was my mother. And my dad--he influenced it, too, but mostly my mother because she was a "take charge-get it done" individual, and she was also a person in my life who said, "I don't ever want to hear you say 'I can't.' There is absolutely nothing that you can't do. You can do everything." And so, that stuck with me. And I don't see anything as a deterrent to anything that I want to do.

She names the church as the second influence. She participated in many church activities which, she realizes in retrospect, enabled her to develop leadership skills:

> I was very active in the church. I spoke very frequently in the church. I remember being sent to all kinds of conferences and having to give reports and speak and pull things together, pull groups together, even when I was extremely young.

Such youth leadership was enhanced by school, the third influence she names. In her rural county in North Carolina, she attended a segregated Black school that was a "three-room school with a pot-bellied stove." The male teacher was the principal, and he taught the senior high students. The two female teachers were responsible for the younger children:

> Of course, we didn't have much at the time--we thought we had everything, but they taught us values. And of course, they were also in the church with us on Sunday, so that sort of helped with the values, too. They also taught us how to improvise. They taught us--they helped us to learn from almost everything and anything, because we didn't have a whole lot of books. The books we had were books that were passed on to us from the White schools. So I think those were the things that strengthened me, in terms of leadership.

Like several of the administrators, she grew up in a rather large family. Being the youngest of seven children, she does not remember a time when they did not have a car or a telephone. Her parents owned their farm of 74 acres and even rented out allotments on other farms to raise crops. Getting to school was no problem--if the bus didn't take her, someone drove the car and took her to school. She contends that all of her sisters and brothers were heavily influenced by the power of their parents--the confidence-building, the "go get it-ness and the stick to it-ness" and the role modeling of two parents who in addition to the farm held outside jobs as well.

What shaped her decision to become a nurse was when, in high school, she decided to work at the county hospital where her father held a position as an orderly. The hospital at that time had a section called "the annex" where African-Americans, "or at that time they were Colored patients--that's what they were called," were treated. She began working there as a maid. "I could not work there as a nurse or an aide. . . because I am Black," she explains. Her actual duties entailed not only mopping the floors and cleaning, but in reality, she says:

> I also was the nurse, the aide, for those patients. But on the other side [the White part of the hospital], those patients were quite fortunate. They had a R.N., they had L.P.N's, and they had aides. Now the nurses would come over and give these patients their meds, but the actual nursing care? The maids did it. And so it was at that

> time that I decided that I will be a nurse . . . and I also decided at that point and time that I would work in that hospital as a nurse.

Her description of the causes of her success go beyond a mere technological mean-ends analogy. Indeed, reflective of the narratives of many of the other African-American administrators interviewed, her story carries with it a very spiritual conviction of being able to reach one's destiny.

An assistant principal of a middle school speaks of her home life as "different" but instrumental in her becoming who and what she is. Living with her mother was a political jousting match:

> I grew up the youngest girl of eight children, four girls and four boys, and was not--was a real behavioral problem at home. . . up until I was born, she obviously had excellent control over her children, and I was that one child that kind of broke the mold, that she could
>
> not control in her nonverbal way. . . I did not respond to nonverbal cues. . . .

To help her mother, her relatives offered to keep her. At six, she went to live with an aunt and uncle whose children were grown because it was decided that she probably needed to be "an only child in the household. . . that would kind of pull me in." There, she received a spanking she vividly remembers:

> I remember getting a spanking at their house because they had peach trees, and I allowed another young person to get peaches in return for a book. I exchanged my aunt's and uncle's peaches for a book. . . and I got a spanking

> for it, but I wanted the book, and I remember it was a very colorful book.

She returned to her mother's, however, when faced with the decision of changing schools. At nine, she went to live with another aunt and uncle whose children had left the home, "because these relatives were trying to give my parents a reprieve for such a difficult--what they term as a 'difficult'--child." Faced again with having to switch schools, she returned home for a year and then went to stay with her older sister's family "to be a companion to her daughter in the first grade, to get her on the bus and whatever, and never returned home again." Living there, she says, "was an interesting experience," for her sister and brother-in-law possessed the right chemistry in dealing with her:

> My brother-in-law was obviously, I felt, quite a brilliant man. There were times when I would be rebellious in their household, and he knew how to pull me back in and make me tow the line, and allow me some freedoms and independence that I obviously was searching for. At the same time, he was a very strict disciplinarian--lights out at 8 o'clock, which wasn't always time for me to get my homework done. I was determined to get my homework done. I did a lot of reading and stuff with flashlights under the covers.

When choosing a college, this assistant principal states that she would have preferred an out of state college but was directed by her brother-in-law and sister that she would attend an all girls' historically Black school or none at all. When choosing a major, her voice to choose some type of

science was also quieted by the family's decision that she would major in "some type of education." Wondering why she listened, she surmises, "As rebellious as my nature seemed to have been, I was quite obedient" because she did want to go to college. Ironically, it is to her mother that she refers when explaining how, after one year at school, she was dissuaded from dropping out of college. Not liking the college she attended, she came home to her sister's one summer and had no intention of returning:

> So, my mother, once again--now I was not living with her, but I feel like my mother had the good wisdom to tell me to go get a job in a yarn mill this summer. And I worked a swing shift. Seven days first, seven days, second, and five days, third--and I did that for a summer and that job made me decide I did not want to do that, and I was glad to go back to college. . . And it's interesting, once again, I explained to you, my mother was not a great talker, and I didn't tell her I had in my mind I was not going back to school. She knew me well enough to know, or she had the good sense to sense and the good sense to make sure I had a job that she was sure I wouldn't like.

Although she saw herself as hard to manage, her family obviously exerted control over decisions in her life. She resonates the technical "you must do this to get ahead" focus with political overtones of how much she listened and how much she chose to obey. Interestingly enough, she later admits that the people she looks to for advice now still remain those who are older, an unforeseen legacy her mother and sister and brother-in-law effected:

> Also, as I reflect back on my life, the people that I always respected, or I think, had an impact were much

> older . . . well, anybody that talks to me today will know that I quote my mother in almost any situation. . . Like I said, even most of the people that I dealt with prior to college, and even after college, and even now, are much older than I. There's something about their wisdom that I prefer, and always have preferred, about older people. They have so much to give me. They've brought so much to my life . . .even at the age I am now, I find that I have far more in common with a sixty to seventy year old lady than I do with my own age.

One administrator, a current assistant superintendent of her school system, comes from a family of nine children and attributes much of her drive also to her parents and their insistence upon the values of education. She describes her background in a mixture of technical, "do this and thus this will result" terms and with ethical and spiritual overtones of parental nurturing:

> My father had a fourth grade education. Mom had a ninth grade education. But they always valued education, so whatever I did had to be something that required an education to be successful in their eyes. . .My oldest sister is significantly older because she's first and I'm ninth, and she was graduating from college and began teaching when I was still very young--6,8,10--so I had her to look at.

She describes the values transmitted by her parents in terms of control and politics. Emphasizing a strong focus on individual hard work, she continues:

> We grew up on a farm, a small farm, and my father was always very self-sufficient, and my mom's term, which was a term that she had gotten from his father, a "self-made" man in an environment where Daddy always taught us to be self-sufficient. You don't depend on anybody, and by no means, do you have to go to other people to ask for help. Particularly, you don't want to ever have to ask the, in his words, "the White man," for

> anything. And whatever you did, you did well. That was his motto. And I often think back, and I always give credit for first motivating me to go on, and he did. But it was my mom that was the support system. In my mind, Daddy was kind of cold, and you know, he had his way of doing things, and you did it this way, and you did it well and . . . My mom, on the other hand, gave the nurturing, and always made me feel like whatever it was I wanted to do, I'd do it--always made feel like that. She was the kind of "wind beneath my wings."

Of her eight siblings, only one person does not have something past a high school diploma. Such a "success" rate is echoed in the stories of the others.

Another administrator, retired from principalships in the public school sector and working in teacher education at a small traditionally Black college, describes her home life as the place where her education really began. Her sister and brothers, a total of five siblings, were successful in their adult lives--the sister, a world-wide recognized leader in her church's national organization; and four brothers, one a dentist, one a dental surgeon, one a physician, and another who is a surgeon. She attributes their successes directly to their home life, where learning was indistinguishable from other family activities:

> I don't remember a time when my father or mother weren't teaching or demonstrating or exposing us to something, whether it was the trip to Chimney Rock, and I have been on the Rock, or whether it was something else. And I have an abiding romance with mythology because my mother had a teacher. . . who loved myths and mythology, and Demeter was told, and Persephone was told, and Hercules was a walking companion. . . and I romped and roamed around Mt. Olympus with them. I had that thrown against my father's biblical instruction, and of course, I heard David playing on his harp, I heard the 23rd Psalm, and

> my father was a graduate of xxxxxx University, and because he was in theology, he read Hebrew. . . .

Using a military analogy, she paints a picture of her mother's instruction at home:

> We were organized. My sister and I were paired, my two older brothers were paired, and the younger ones were paired, because she would have been a very good master sergeant in the Army--because she had a thing for organization. . . having it ordered so you knew what to do, the expectations, and knew you were just expected to do. We had a very large round oak table in the dining room, and that was the self-designated study hall during certain times every day, and on Saturdays for a period of time.

Her mother, a natural storyteller, could mimic others' voices so that when she told a story, it sounded just like the characters were really speaking. In addition to rearing her family, the mother also owned a funeral home and "we got to listen to all that --the embalming and the autopsies." Her maternal grandmother was a midwife "of renown. She had small hands and was called in to deliver breech births." Her paternal grandmother was a veterinarian who berthed colts and whose stories added to the educational milieu of the household:

> They would come for her. And I have a picture of her in her cape, her--the necessary things she would take with her. She would come back and tell how difficult the delivery was. I--listening, really--I think that's why my brothers were influenced too--the values of education. And at that time, you were Negro and Colored, and the common theme--education was the best hope for advancement, not only for advancement but to live fully and have a satisfactory existence. That you had to use your God-given talent and you could do it.

Such emphasis on the ethical responsibility that one had to do her best took on both a spiritual and practical emphasis in such a family: "My mother tolerated no C's and D's because you're capable of doing better and you're not going to waste your daddy's money," her mother would say. If they needed help, she would ask, "So now, what do you need? Can xxxxxx help you? Can xxxxxx [the speaker] help you? Your father will be home, and if I can't help you, he will help you." When this administrator entered her father's K-12 school, she began as a third grader. Upon reaching high school, her mother enrolled both her and her sister in a nearby academy for fear that the father's influence would be "more demanding of his children. She felt that we would not be as free and creative as we would be in another setting." After graduating from the Academy, the sister was thirteen when she enrolled in college, the speaker fourteen: "We were very studious, and we set the pace. Because we knew they would never say, 'They were too young.'"

Similar in her story that she is sent to a school chosen directly by her parents is a central office administrator who attended a small Black school in her home town. Stating that her first grade career was a "turbulent beginning" because her teacher "enjoyed paddling," she decided as early as second grade that she wanted to "pursue education." In the early grades, she endured elitist teachers and enjoyed those inspirational ones. However, it was in the eighth grade that

she was told, "You know, you can do anything that you want. You have potential." Her father had gone through the third grade, her mother the tenth because the tenth was as far as schools went then. However, she says that they "had a sense that our lives could change," and so they presented education as a way for a better life for their six children. The oldest of six, this high ranking central office administrator describes herself as "very sensitive and shy," a quality which her father recognized. "Somewhere down the line," she says, "my father realized he wanted me to go to an accredited school. He felt that I would not survive being bussed to [a nearby town]." She affirms his decision: "He was right." Instead of going to the neighboring town's school, she enrolled instead in a private girl's school in a nearby large city where she boarded and made a community for herself with the girls and the teachers there. She also notes that her parents' dissemination of their high standards "took" with her other siblings. All of the six children graduated from college and have master's degrees.

Success in school tied directly in to the expectations of parents in many of the remaining administrators' retelling of their home and school experiences as well. One principal, an only child, remembers the home as a shelter from the realities of the world; indeed, she mentions that only as an adult, when she saw a picture of her neighborhood in a newspaper, did she realize that the term "blighted area" meant she had not been

reared in a middle-class environment. Surrounded by a loving mother and father, a Black community which told her forthrightly that she would have to work harder than Whites to achieve any recognition at all, she remembers the values that her family and community held up to her. Especially did her parents exhibit values that she cherishes today:

> My dad was a laborer. He worked for a railroad company. But my mom and dad always had a great deal of pride about themselves, and I guess that was given to me. . . he worked for forty, about forty-some years with xxx xxx Railway, and he never missed a day for illness except the time he got hurt on the job. And his thing was that he always had to go to work, and regardless of any personal problems you had, you go to work and you do a full day's job. You leave your problems at home because the supervisor's not paying you to bring your problems to work. So you leave them at home, and you go do your best, and so I think that is very much ingrained in me.

Such living lessons exude a work ethic that fits discretely within a technical language of education and the world. The "ethics" of such a philosophy is that by working hard, one will succeed. Worth is linked directly to work, and productivity is one measure which indicates "having arrived."

Another principal, the oldest of four children in the family, relates a different "hands-on" approach her parents espoused. Her mother, a high school graduate, and her father, who dropped out of school in the eleventh grade to enter the service, both were factory workers. They had, she says, "two rules of education":

> one--you will graduate from high school, and that was

> preached frequently, and the other one was that if you ever got retained, you'd have to wear the same clothes! And I really believe--and I heard that rule more than anybody else because I think I'm the only one in the family whose grades, especially during elementary, more in elementary, were in danger of being retained.

Throughout her story, she mentions the lasting influence of her parents. At a predominantly White university, she welcomed the challenge of being the only Black in some situations, "It all goes back to my family"; also, in interviewing for teaching positions after graduation, although she did not want to teach in her home town, she did accept an interview there because "I did want to satisfy my parents."

One daughter of a "farm family" that owned the land on which they lived but worked land owned by another Black share owner explains that her mother and father expected all of the nine children to "go to college the first year--there was no choice." She states that:

> After the first year, if you decided that you didn't want to go or that you had some other alternatives, then you could make that decision, but after high school, you went immediately to college. And that was at the expense of my mother wearing men's shoes for years because she didn't have stockings.

When asked if she knew why her parents set that expectation, she answered that her mother probably was behind it. Not until she was older, did she realize the amount of education her parents had:

> Well, I'm sure it was predominantly my mother who set it and my dad kind of followed along. I think had it

> been left up to him, we probably would have had a little less demanded as far as education was concerned. Though Mother has an eighth grade education, I wouldn't know if I didn't know. My dad, I don't really know how far he went, but I guess--you know, I was a junior in college before I realized that he could not actually read very well or he could write his name. But because he gave the figures, my mother, the figures for the crops and everything I didn't realize that.

He had helped her with homework, an activity that she says "must have been rough on him." She attributes their demands and expectations on her parents' past. With an American Dream-like allusion, she explains:

> I think it was because they felt that they felt that they didn't have the chance to get the education in the system....[they tried to] jumpstart us so they wanted us to have all that opportunity. And it was a great expense on their part, because they could have still gotten a lot out of life for themselves, if they hadn't told us to go on. I think they did, my mother and daddy, in a sense still got those things but they got them through us being able to see that's possible.

She states that her mother's insistence resulted from missed opportunities that the mother had experienced. The story is one that the speaker says was shared with her often as a child:

> the story that one of her teachers in the community, the school, saw that she could do well on some kind of test she had passed--statewide test--that she was the only person in the school who had passed it. And her teacher said, "You're going to do well. I don't want you in ten years to have several kids. I just want you to do well." And then, there was another instructor, the same kind of test. . . she was the only one that passed and the rest of the kids in the community whose parents were more affluent, had the land and the money, did not pass. She always got the second books. He couldn't give the new books to her, or if she could

> finally get her money to get her books, he would take the old books and give them to her, and this is how the school worked. I don't know--I think it's a kind of "pull-up" thing: "I couldn't do it, but I can get my kids to do it and someone will see I'm okay."

Such emphasis on the seizing of opportunity and the dogged belief that education was a method by which to live a better life bespeaks the acceptance of a technical language. The acquisition of education is important for it offers an avenue to success. The end is an educated and, hopefully, "free" person who can actualize opportunities. In addition, the mother's story hints of a conviction that is ethically motivated--an attempt to right the wrongs of an oppressive hegemony that does not recognize true worth.

Another K-12 administrator whose father died when she was young recalls how her father cared for her education when he was alive. Saying that both her parents "valued books and magazines," she explains:

> And my father was a janitor, a custodian, and when the families would throw out their books and magazines--he worked in an apartment building where, in a wealthy section of the city where we lived--and when those families would throw away those books and throw away those magazines, he would always bring them home. So, when there was special assignments for us to do at school, there was always magazines--other materials we could use because he had brought them from the apartment where he worked. My mother valued books and my father did, too. My mother would read the Bible a lot, and we would read sometimes with her.

After her father's death, she speaks of the changes that occurred. Her mother started to work outside the home, her

oldest brother left school to work and help support the family, and then the family moved to North Carolina where they had inherited a house. Nonetheless, she states, her mother's "encouragement and her support really did make a difference." At one point, after her graduation from high school, her mother decided to go live with the White family for which she babysat, in order to earn more money and lessen the living expenses of keeping her own house. A cousin also served as encouragement, interesting her in going to a traditionally Black university with the help of a loan that her mother obtained. This administrator's account of her education is dotted with hunger for knowledge and the hope that attaining a good education afforded economically. The Black community in which she grew up presented such a vision: "educators and especially minority educators were people who were respected in the community." Even her Sunday School teachers spurred her on:

> I always admire those people because they were always confident and they had that kind of knowledge. And I wanted to have that kind of knowledge--whether it was with the Bible or in books.

The opportunities which accompany education were the focus for yet another K-12 administrator whose parents had not had the same opportunity. Indeed, she states that the parents were very concerned with her education:

> Neither my mom or my dad graduated from high school. I

> think they both had like a sixth or eighth grade education. My parents had to leave school so they could work and help support their families. . . They were both pro-education, very involved--every PTA, every Open House. If the teacher would ever call them, they would get off their job and come over to the school and find out exactly what was going on. . . I always had that backing, "You need to do well." I heard my father telling me, "C's are not good enough. I know that's average, but we want you to do better than average."

Describing herself as "not a very smart person," she says that she worked hard to fulfill her father's expectation. She also states that the schools she attended found a clear path of communication with her parents--"My teachers kept my parents notified when I was doing well, and they knew what I was supposed to be doing."

Other administrators affirm the important role family plays in their background, but some do not specify exactly how their father and mother influenced them. One administrator in higher education who has been successful at many levels--K-12 administration, the school superintendency, state educational posts, and positions in higher education--states that she "grew up, first of all, in the housing projects" of a large city. The middle child, she has an older brother who dropped out of high school to enter the service and a younger brother who "eventually finished college." She was the first of her immediate family to become a college graduate and one of the first in her extended family to bring home a college degree. From a working class family, she remembers being somewhat of a "teacher's pet" but does not "remember a lot of pressure

from my family---I just remember doing it." She does mention, however, that having an intact nuclear family may have well been the strength from which she drew:

> In terms of influences, I was very fortunate, I know now, although I probably thought nothing of it then, to be from an intact, nuclear family. In fact, I guess they don't exist--mother, father, two brothers, and myself. And I can, when I look back and try to think of who had an influence, I cannot quite honestly think of anyone outside my family. I think it was just "family." I didn't know a lot of fancy people.

Teachers may well have given her a positive outlook about teaching, she suggests, but "other than that," she explains, "I would say that my family was the biggest influence--simply because they were there." She, along with other interviewees, mentions the obligation she sensed when her family put her through college. Very aware of that sacrifice, she says she chose education, overlooking a fancy for journalism because she had no mentor or advisor who told her she could become one. The choice, she asserts, was a sound one, however, because she had a natural "love for teaching."

That all the administrators find cause for their success in the ideas planted by their parents denotes the family's acceptance of education as a viable way of improving their situation and future. Indeed, their stories dwell on education as an accepted avenue towards fulfillment, but their technological tones do not necessarily mean achievement of productivity for the good of a society that traditionally excluded them. Their successes may better the living

conditions of Black people, but viewing their language as simply technical would assume that they were active participants in the product-oriented view of education. Because much of what they say has an individual, ethical ring to it, however, their achievement is geared much more toward transcending a world defined by rules made without their input. To be sure, there is hope in their words for a better, fairer world for all races; these women do speak of education as a method of helping Blacks as a whole, and the "mobilization" (1975, p. 223) to which Huebner refers in his discussion of technical language might well be seen as the African-American community's readiness to break through fetters of inequality. There is also an indication of the "power" of those who are educated, as the parents who have not gone as far convince their daughters to surpass their achievements.

Their stories imply an almost aesthetic longing for education as a "balance" to their lives (Huebner, 1975, p. 226). That longing is not just to "enrich" their lives but to make their lives improved. The political language and the ethical language mix powerfully within each woman's rendition of her family's views of education. Accepting the power structures of the present, the family postulates an ethical approach that, even if it is unsuccessful in changing all of society's unfairness, will at least better their children's

lives and their children's ability to wrestle with societal forces outside their control.

The languages of educational experiences

The African-American female educational administrators in this study, from K-12 to higher education, offer riveting accounts of experiences as students, teachers, and administrators that reveal both the language entrenched in the present structure of today's educational institutions and the language, the "underground mutterings," that reverberate within the classroom. Some speakers dwell more on experiences in grades K-12; others focus more directly on what happened to them in college or graduate school. In many instances, the women return to some of these experiences several times within their stories, using the events to help explain why they are the way they are now. From kindergarten on, the women couch the events in language that shows what influences they faced as students and how they in turn interpreted that language for their future.

One administrator at the college level speaks of her college years as ones of creativity and classical learning. She first began college at the very place she now works with pre-service teachers. At that time, it was a junior college. The memories she mentions are of the teachers. She describes them in detail:

Dr. xxxxxx was a learned scholar and was president

> of xxxxxxxx College, which was a junior college, and [another professor] was a graduate of Radcliffe and had gone to Oxford. She was a brilliant genius and majored in geopolitics and history, and I had a taste for history and geography, and she was circling the world. And I was her work-study student, and I cut and clipped and filed, and I "romped" all over Europe with xxxxxx, and she would tell us of England. And I remember so vividly--she integrated everything because she recited English literature. We knew Keats, and I could just see Wordsworth. . . She brought it to life.

She refers to another professor's penchant for allusions. Everything he said was educational:

> Now, Dr. xxxxxxx never missed an opportunity to share and educate. I can see him now--at the beginning of the Lenten season. He would say, "As pants the hart for cooling streams, when he is in the chase/ So pants my heart for Thee oh Lord and thy adoring grace" and then he would explain what it meant. And some of them didn't know a <u>hart</u> was a deer, and the comparison and simile. And, of course, he would come to choir rehearsal and tell about Mozart. And before I saw the movie, I knew they tossed his body on the back of a wagon and that it was taken to a dump.

She transferred after completing her associate's degree to a Black girls' school where she finished her degree in history and geopolitics. She followed one of her former junior college professors to an out of state Black university, both took and taught courses, and then finished her Master's at xxxxxxxxxx University. She explains her choice of out-of-state institutions this way, and with a smile:

> I went to xxxxx College [the in-state girls' school], went to xxxxxx University. I must thank the state of North Carolina who at that time did not allow Blacks to attend their colleges--and they paid your way to major universities, and I will be forever grateful.

Her experience at this major university is one of the reasons she was an excellent teacher, she says:

> the mastery of the behaviors and the practice. How to teach and how to organize, better ways to--that's the reason the experience at xxxxxxx'x xxxxxxx was so valuable! Because we had action research projects with professors in the college at xxxxxxx'x xxxxxxxxx.

When she later enrolled in an extension course from one of those universities that she was not allowed to attend, she made that "H" for Honors that she promised herself.

Another administrator in higher education remembers playing school with the kids in her housing project as her first "school" setting; she remembers also that when her Brownie Scout troop lost its leader, she took over. Although she is sure there "was help somewhere," she remembers distinctly organizing activities to make her troop continue and reminisces that she really began her career as an educator back then. She also recounts a major disappointment in high school that remains an impetus for her drive and high standards of work:

> But you know there is one experience, not concerning a person, but one experience that contributed to my motivation, and that was most of my high school years, I was a minority in my high school [they had moved to a large midwestern city]--meaning in my freshman class, most of the students were White. . . But I do remember one particular experience, and I remember that I probably consciously tried to assimilate, I have to admit, because I wanted to be like people in my high school. . .I eventually became a good student but when I first went there, having come from not the best of schools, I think, my freshman year in high school, I got mostly average grades. So I finally plod on and

> began to learn the system and began to improve my academics. By the time I left high school, I was getting all A's and B's. But I couldn't be admitted to the National Honor Society--I kind of stayed--I kind of feel like that was a turning point.

She says she "never forgot that experience" even though she went on to a majority White university, where she was perhaps "one of 100 Blacks out of 1000 students" and kept her grades high.

Her subsequent degrees come in the midst of her career. She received her Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction at the urging of her colleagues and her supervisors. After realizing that she would prefer to advance to upper level administrative positions, she enrolled, approximately ten years later, in the doctoral program at a university she describes as "the bastion of the Old South":

> So I did all my coursework driving back and forth, and I moved down there in the summers . . . and so I put my son in camps in the summers, and my daughter and I went down there to school. And eventually, I got a sabbatical to take the whole year off--to do my dissertation research--and moved to the university. Took my son out of the high school and put him in xxxxxxxxxxxxx High School, and write from morning to night every day. I finished my dissertation in a year. And then I was on the front page of xxxxxx [a national newspaper], and I also got the award for the most outstanding research at AASA for that year.

Her doctoral study focused on an important facet of early elementary education, and she describes it with caring and compassion. As well, however, her descriptions of college and graduate studies include an awareness of the "ticket" that

such programs offer her in her career, thus blending her striving to excel with her love of education.

One administrator at the central office level contends that the teachers she had would have been successful in any setting. She describes how those teachers worked:

> The other thing that was influential in my life was that I had excellent teachers. I had the best of Black teachers. The majority of my teachers were outstanding and would have worked well even now in an integrated setting. They again would not accept anything less than your best. They put their foot in your rear end if they thought you were sleeping the least bit. They also selected people at that time who were going to succeed. You were going to succeed in spite of yourself. They pushed, they tugged--they did anything that was necessary. They did anything--if they saw an experience you needed, they made sure they provided that experience for you.

In particular, she mentions three high school teachers who very instrumental in her education and also who provided her with an outlook about the world that has benefitted her:

> There was one who was an instructor who teaches at xxxxxxxxx [a college] now. . . who was a science teacher of mine who was fresh out of school, and he brought to life the love of science for me. He loved having me in his classroom. He loved having my sisters in his class because we were not afraid to try anything . . .The other two people were sisters . . . She was an English teacher, and again she had very high standards. She was a softer person and tended to cause me not to be so aggressive acting, to be a real lady. Her sister was xxxxxx, and she was a home economics major, and did an excellent job with her area, and always taught us about getting along with people . . . She was a person who taught us how to eat and how to walk and how to dress and many times how to talk and to do things that we needed to know how to do in "the real world." And she also felt that we were going into the real world with the Whites and that we would adjust to those things.

She speaks of going to a traditionally Black university because her cousin recommended it to her and her teachers thought it would be a good place for her. In speaking of what she learned at college, she says that she "fell into" science after realizing that home economics was "just not what I wanted to do." More than courses, she speaks of the marches she attended during that period of the Civil Rights movement. She learned, largely because of her light complexion, how she must work "within the system":

> I participated in a lot of marches. Had dogs turned loose on me. People spat on me. I was always a part of this poor White trash because I hung out with the niggers at the time. And Black folks didn't want me marching with them because it drew too much attention to them. I think that's where I learned to work within the system. That that is where I was going to change things. That marching was marching, and that was fine. The marching itself was not going to bring about maybe the changes that working behind the scenes was. . . So I guess that was the one thing that occurred while I was in college that made the biggest impact on me was coming to grips with how to work through that.

She does, however, single out three college professors that she believes helped prepare her in leadership. One, she characterizes as a "nut":

> She was the most brilliant woman I'd seen. If she was on campus and something happened with her transmission, she'd have the hood up and be under the car fixing it herself. It was not unusual at all to see her having her car jacked up and crawling underneath fixing something on the car . . . She was not much of a people person. I always got A's under Dr. xxxxxx, and she thought I was an okay person, which was really difficult for her to say. She'd say, "You're all right," "You're okay," very short-spoken. . . The other person was xxxx xxxx who was also an instructor in Biology. A real bright man--I don't

> know how I attracted these people with no people skills. He had not the first idea about how to get along with people. He'd allow me to come back and borrow his books . . . He would ask that I read certain things and then we'd meet and sort of have a hash over session to go through what I'd read. Those were the two people that I think encouraged me to work harder in college that I perhaps might otherwise have done. I had a social studies instructor that was really good, and Dr. xxxxxxx, he was one of the few White instructors I had in undergraduate school. He really demanded an awful lot. He like me because I enjoyed reading and I liked to learn so he would also spend extra time and loan me materials. And sometimes he'd take me home to take care of his children. Of course, he'd always pay me and everything. He was an oddity and I was an oddity and we just fit in easily together.

A principal remembers her first encounters with "schooling." She lived next door to a schoolteacher who represented something really very special to her:

> I think probably the most significant experience was living next door to a schoolteacher that I just absolutely adored. Now that I think about it, I'm sure that I probably was a pest to her because I remember as soon as she would drive up in her driveway after teaching all day long, I'd go bounding out my front door to her house, and I'd spend the afternoon with her. We'd sit and talk, and there were some times during the school year that she would actually take me to school with her--this was before I actually started to school, and I'd get to sit in her classroom and be a part of her class, and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Education in this young girl's eyes was an adventure, an aesthetic pleasure that brought its own sparkle. Further in her schooling, she encounter a more political, power-welding teacher who espoused "getting the work done." Saying that there were several teachers who challenged her to excel, she speaks of one ninth grade English teacher in particular:

> She was determined that we were going to give her our best and nothing short of that. Actually, we sat in her classroom terrorized and she would walk around and threaten us and tell us that she would call our parents and we'd stay there until nine o'clock at night if it took that long to get our work done.

Enrolled in segregated schools, she contends that "some things [were] lost by integration, some things gained." To her a sense of community was lost. She explains that she was constantly pushed by her teacher to do her best:

> and it was very easy for them to tell us, "You cannot be as good as your White counterparts--you've got to be better!" And that was something that was drilled in my head over and over. And it stays with me.

The repetition of that message made it stick. She received it from different parts of her community, in addition to her parents:

> Values--working hard and all those kinds of things probably came to me from my parents and my teachers and from my association with my church. The community was really there to support you as you grew up in those days, and you were getting the same message over and over wherever you were to go--to work hard, to do your best, to be the best person you can be, to treat others like you would want them to treat you.

Because she ascribed to the values her parents taught her, she responded to her parents' standard of responsibility by accepting a full scholarship to a majority White university. Her parents would not have to pay for her education, she remembers proudly thinking. However, on the trip to begin her college studies, she saw robed Klansmen for the first time:

> I had been accepted at several other schools, but xxxxxxxx offered me a full scholarship. And I felt that was just the thing my parents needed. . . we were probably some of the first Black students they had on campus there in xxxxxxxxxx, North Carolina. So going down to xxxxxxxxxx was the first time I'd ever seen robed Klansman standing by the road. I don't know what their purpose was--maybe it was there Sunday outing, I don't know . . . This was the first day as my parents are driving me down to school.

It was at this college where she experienced being a minority without the supporting structure of her family and community. Her tone, like her actions as an undergraduate, deal more with the politics of that freshman year than with the curriculum:

> But the experience was a growing one for the school as well as for the students. There were ten Black female students there on campus at that time. xxxxxxxxx is very isolated--it's a town--and when you don't have transportation, you pretty much stay there on campus, so we gravitated toward each other. Of course, there were other students who were there that were friends that we were close to, but we--they also were ostracized for being our friends. So, there was always something going on. And I had never been away from home before, but I had always been taught to to treat other people as I wanted them to treat me, so here I was--a conflict that wasn't quite working out as I had to believe. . . So, it was definitely a growing experience.

Describing herself as naive, she speaks specifically of her realization that all teachers were not perfect:

> There was one--I went in very naive. I though all teachers were great and wonderful people. And we had an experience where they would always play "Dixie" and carry the Confederate flag as their team came out onto the floor. We objected to that. At that time, I guess, giving the Black Power sign, fist raised, was in vogue, and so rather than standing at that time, we would sit. And we also expressed our concern. That became an issue for the campus to

> consider, and they sent their head cheerleader over, and she suggested we just stay out of the gym until that was over, and we'd come back in, and everything would be fine. And we said, "No, that won't do." One of the professors--we had an all-campus meeting--and he said, "Well, you know, I really don't understand why you object to the time of the Confederacy because there were [quote] nigrahs." And I thought, "Gosh, this is a teacher, and he just said, "Nigrahs." . . . So the campus really was in an uproar.

She did not return to that school the next fall; indeed, she says that when she went home that summer, she had no intention of returning to college at all and had decided to work at a major department store. Her parents stepped in--"Somehow they got me accepted at xxxxxxxx College without my ever completing an application!" she exclaims. At this traditionally Black college, she chose to major in Sociology and Psychology, "and the only reason I chose that was that it was something other than biology--it was not in education, which everyone I knew had done education." Wanting to do something "new and different" and something that "sounded important," she graduated with good grades and activist experiences as she participated in an organization for poor people and in getting public housing residents out to vote in elections.

When asked about her early school experiences, one administrator begins by telling about walking to school before integration:

> I can remember we used to have to walk--it seemed like probably about two or three miles. It was probably further than that to school. And I remember the bus would pass by us every day, and as the bus would pass by, and it would stop somewhere along where we were walking,

> and the kids would, just, oh, jeer at us and call us names. And I was the one of us who would always--who never said anything. I would always walk and say to my friends in the neighborhood, "Come on--don't pay any attention to them."

Her cousin who was one of the first in her family to go to college was a powerful role model as was her high school biology teacher. She attended one of the largest traditionally Black universities in the state, mostly because she had visited her cousin there. She was not sure what she would major in, but started out in biology, eventually finishing in health education. Going away to school meant that she learned other things besides course work:

> For me the experience of being away from home, for an extended period of time, learning to get along with other people, to accept responsibility, to work, and I worked on campus, in the library. Those things helped me as much as the courses I actually took to become a more mature, responsible person, and to help me be able to set some goals for myself.

Not viewing herself as an "A student," she says that she worked very hard to make Dean's List. In graduate school, she earned a Master's in education with a concentration in health education. Her teaching experience was not in the classroom, but at the health department where she taught venereal disease classes and became eventually the health coordinator for the local school system. Encouraged by the superintendent of the school system, she returned to school to receive her administration certificate and then became a principal.

One associate superintendent shares that her shade of

skin made her victim to "a lot of abuse" within the segregated Black school she attended as a young girl; she was fairer than her sister and had lower self-esteem because of it. In the sixth grade, when she admits that her "self-esteem had take a plunge," her teacher told her how wonderful a student she was and how much potential she had. "That was probably one of the turning points in my life," she states.

When she attended a private high school in a nearby city, she discovered that the school focused on nurturing its students, from enrolling them in workshops on poverty to providing them with "oranges everywhere" to make sure that they did not contract any diseases on field trips. This background prepared her for her undergraduate experience. While attending a traditionally Black university, she participated in Civil Rights Marches and laments that young people today probably do not understand history because they have too little participation in making it.

An administrator at the university level describes her "part" of history. Because she had worked as a maid in her community's hospital, she decided to go to college to become a nurse and return to work as a nurse in that hospital. She enrolled in the institution in which she is presently an administrator--a traditionally Black university--in the four year Bachelor degree in nursing. In her junior year, she was out for the summer and returned to her hometown to work. She says, "I didn't know what was waiting on me, but at that time,

things had changed a little bit, and the director of nursing told my dad that she would hire me as an aide." She was restricted no longer to working "on the annex, but in the regular hospital," though at times she did work in the annex, to "the Black or the Colored floor." She graduated the next year, and "went back to that hospital and worked as a nurse, a registered nurse, a card-carrying registered nurse, passing out pills and the whole thing. . . wherever I wanted to." An important event that she says taught her something outside her coursework happened her senior year. She describes it as an "eye-opening experience":

> For some reason, the Dean of the program at that time just did not care for me. . . she just did not care for me. And during that time, students' rights--there were just no things such as student rights. So people could do to you whatever they wanted to. And you had no recourse. She said to a friend of mine, one of my classmates--"You need to stop associating with xxxxxx because she's not going to make it." And the girl told me. And it devastated me for all of about twenty minutes. And I called my mom, and of course, she did the things that she needed to do, but then she said to me, "I want you out of that dorm right now--over there in that lady's office talking to her." And that's what I did.
>
> And the person said to me, "Well, Miss xxxxxx. . . just because I don't like you doesn't mean that I'm not going to give you what you earn." And I said, "Dean xxxxxxx, just because I don't like you doesn't mean that I'm not going to make it." And from that point on, I soared.

She attained a Master's degree in nursing from a medical college out of state, earning a 3.7 grade point average carrying twenty hour course loads while working full-time and commuting 114 miles each day to and from the university. Her

doctorate, in community college and adult education, came years later after leaving a position as a community college administrator. That experience, she says, took her two years as she constantly reminded her professors that she was going to finish quickly. She chuckles as she recalls her son's announcement, at age twelve, that "You have one more year" to finish.

Another assistant superintendent remarks that her high school experiences "were not very positive" because she was "one of the first twelve or twenty kids in the whole county to integrate the whole school system." In fact, she went into psychology specifically because her high school counselor was not positive with her and she chose to enroll in a university that was traditionally Black because of her isolation in high school. There she met a professor, a White female, who became a mentor to her, suggesting that she go to graduate school at an out-of-state majority White university to which the professor was transferring. There this administrator received a Master's degree in Community Mental Health and, upon returning to North Carolina, taught psychology at a small Black college. Not completely satisfied with her future prospects there, she enrolled at the major state university in the same city and completed 27 hours toward a doctorate in mental health before switching over to the doctorate in Educational Psychology. She describes the differences in the three universities and the effect they had on her:

> So that by high school and college, my whole social situation was impacted by it. . . when I went to college, I was bound and determined I would go to a predominantly Black college. When I left there, after having been nurtured, I thought, then I was ready for a predominantly white and ultimately decided that neither was bliss, that it's best to have a truly integrated situation.

One of the assistant principals alluded to an experience connected to the forced integration of her school system. Relating her jumps from one school to the next as the system shifted students back and forth, her list of where she spent which grade is confusing. However, she says that by fourth grade, "finally," she is sent to a previously White elementary school:

> And that year is really important to me as--it just stands out to me because it was the first year that I made a "D." I made a "D" in science when I first got there. Well, when a lot of us first, the Black students, first got there, we were all, everyone seemed as if everyone that I knew was in my class, you know. Everyone--they grouped us in this class. And I think I moved about every two weeks to a different setting. There were two teachers--and about every two weeks something happened. They'd move me to a different setting. I didn't realize what was going on until I got to my final setting and I realized I was in what they probably considered the least able--students who were the least able to achieve in the first couple of weeks. . . In the meantime, my science grade really suffered a lot. That still bothers me as you can tell.

Even as a youngster, she says, she wanted to know more information about what was going on with all of the shuffling. Because she had attended marches, she was fairly certain that it had to do with integration. For her, the political became personal in the fourth grade.

Other incidents in later years that she mentions as important are ones having to do with her teachers. In the seventh grade, she voiced her choice of career to her band instructor:

> Right now, I'm thinking about when I revealed that I wanted to be a band director. I found that out, and I revealed it to my seventh grade band director at the time, and I though he would be jubilant and would jump up and down, and he just said, "I know." And he just kept doing whatever he was doing. But he already knew.

Although disappointed that he did not show great jubilee, she was at least aware that he knew her well enough to suspect that she might be a good band director. Another teacher, this time her eighth grade language arts teacher, worked very hard to have her admitted into the AG program, an effort this administrator sees as boosting her self-confidence:

> In the eighth grade, I was not grouped with the academically gifted students up to that point. She did a lot of struggling and paperwork and talking and got me into what was the AG program by the time I was in the ninth grade. And I didn't know that she had gone through all this until I was in the ninth grade and in high school.

Her high school experience was dotted with accomplishments such as being a class officer, being in the student government and in the Beta club, but she offers the band directors' advising as a most significant event in the planning of her future. Having attended Governor's School and having been in all-state band, she asked her two band instructors for advice

as to which colleges she should look to major in band instruction:

> One was Black, and one was White. One was the assistant, the Black man, and one was supposed to be the director. We were going through schools. . . and I was thinking about xxxxx [a university known for music and education]. I had been to band camp there for two or three summers, and I liked that kind of setting. I was familiar. . . and Mr. xxxxxxx told me I would be more comfortable at xxxxx [one she had not mentioned before] than at xxxxx. I narrowed it down . . . and he said,"You wouldn't like t there." I asked him why, and he said, "Just take my word for it. You wouldn't like it."

College was different, she says. It was "the first time I realized I probably would have some difficulties in some areas" because the music program was very tough. She also sensed that she did not have the same background as some of the other students:

> I think I would have learned a lot more if I had the background that most of my college friends had. I don't know a single person in the class of 'xx who had not had a private lesson before they got off campus. There may have been, but I sure felt like I was the only one.

She did enjoy the ensemble groups she played with, however, and graduated to take a position teaching orchestra at the high school level and assisting at the middle school level.

Another administrator, a principal who was a student in K-12 schools during integration, mentions the upheaval in the sixties and seventies as well. She rarely saw fellow Black students in her classes:

> There were 900 children in that building, and 22 of us were Black. And you know, since I've been an educator, especially an administrator, I can look back and see things that were done that were in my opinion done intentionally. We were never in class together. I had one class in ninth grade with another Black student. So we were the ones isolated. No one wanted to sit near us. No one, if they brushed up against us, they would wipe themselves as if they were . . . and we went through all of this, and I don't ever recall one teacher ever saying or doing anything about it.

Her school, in one of the largest school districts in the state, experienced rioting and unrest. She explains that throughout her high school years, no one ever attempted to counsel her as to the future. She was an honor graduate, but was bound by an unspoken political structure:

> I think I could have done more if people had told me more that I could do. . . I felt like I was deprived of a lot of knowledge. I think I probably could have gotten scholarships, but nobody shared that information with us. The Black colleges and universities wouldn't even include us. xxxxxxxxx [a traditionally Black university] was in my neighborhood. . . but none of those people talked to us about going to school. And I entered xxxxxxx [a majority White university] because that's where everybody else was going. . . I mean, the White kids.

In the early grades, she admits she was sometimes a "handful." I was in the school office quite often," she says, but when she began seventh grade, and experienced "the first wave of integration," she says that "I decided then that I would take it more seriously and I wanted to achieve." She explains:

> I wanted to prove to all those White folks that we could learn and we weren't dummies. And besides, my parents expected us to go down there and act like we had some sense. And not to go down there

> and embarrass anybody, including ourselves or more importantly, your race.

In college as well, she was a minority. Although a good number of her high school friends attended the university with her, "things like rooming together and those things never crossed our mind." She had decided to become a physical education teacher and coach:

> And when I got here, I went through that department because you started your major your freshman year--I was the only Black face in the department. I was it. The only Black face in the entire department. And our class was large. We had sixty majors on our freshman year. . . And the experiences were even more revealing because these people were from different parts of the country. I'm talking people from New York who'd never seen a Black face let alone be in a class with one. I enjoyed every moment of it. I really had some good times and some good challenges--this was a bright group of people.

It was in the physical education department that she says she learned "the word professionalism. . . and what that meant." The department was like family because it kept her "committed to a cause, high expectations, and taking on challenges."

Indeed, another administrator mentions that coaches were more influential than teachers in her life because she spent so much more time with them. She had "a closer relationship and bond with them" although she does characterize her teachers as "receptive." About college, she dwells on the "politics" involved in the racial make-up of her school:

> I put in my application at xxxxxx, but, and this is my personal opinion. I think they had accepted their

> quota of Blacks for the year, so I didn't get accepted. So I was recruited by xxxxxxx Junior College in xxxxxxx, which is basically an all-White rich girls' school. And that's where I went my freshman year. I was one of two Black students at the school. The other Blacks in the school were the custodial staff, the cafeteria staff, you know, in those type areas. I was always spoiled at xxxxxx [the White junior college] because I don't think most of the White girls there--I don't think they knew or had ever been associated with a Black person. So it was like "Oh, we've got to help the girl from the ghetto." It was that type of a situation.

Although she enjoyed it there, she left when the school abolished the volleyball program and enrolled at the first institution to which she had applied. She was granted "provisional status," and although she contends that "they were trying to set me up to fail, because when I came in they gave me 18 hours my first semester there," she succeeded. She specifically remembers an educational psychology class, during her student teaching, that she found frustrating because, as she puts it, "I felt like that segment of the course was irrelevant, was wasting my time." She confronted the teacher:

> And she, the teacher, had one of these things that she said would work. Here I was--I didn't even have a BA degree. I didn't have any degree. This lady has all these degrees. And I asked her, I said, "When is the last time you were in a classroom?" And she gave me a strange look, and she finally answered, and it had been ten to fifteen years. I said, "Do you know that these things that you are preaching or teaching will not work?" and she just turned red and gave me this "how dare you" look. But you know, she was out there, not a part of the school system. . .And I think that I offended her, and I didn't mean to. I just wanted to let her know that the things she was telling us would not, wouldn't work with those students, because things had changed and she was still back in the fifteen or twenty years ago. You know, that just doesn't work.

Throughout their re-telling of their K-12 and higher educational experiences, the administrators, both K-12 and secondary, connect their stories to the political and educational happenings of the day. Some women preceded integrated schooling and, instead, were administrators as integration took effect. Others, caught in the middle of it, tell of their teachers and schooling and refer to marches and riots as part of their education. Those younger administrators too deal with the consequences of integration, but they do not refer to their parts in "making" that history. All of their stories bear some resemblance to the emphasis on "productive citizenry" as seen in a technical language, but implicit in that interpretation is that these women, as African-Americans, realize the hegemony involved in such a language. Theirs is a collage of individual responsibility, a missionary improvement of their race, unquestionable conviction that education is the way to better one's life, and very often, the unmistakable philosophy that learning is good because it just <u>is</u>. From technical language, to spiritual and political emphasis, to aesthetic appreciation of the educational process--they tell their educational life-histories in terms of people that have been important to them, experiences which have made differences in their lives, and the resulting self-knowledge that has occurred over the span of their years in education.

The languages of educational vision and leadership

As a result of their journeys through education, these women are able to articulate full descriptions of their visions of education and leadership. For several, the words which they use to frame their career track, their present job description, and their plans for the future depict which language they now choose as their own. They are, first and foremost, realists, but they are also visionaries. Although their stories never deviate far from the tone "I know that's not really how it is, but it makes it easier to survive if I think so," they appear willing to transcend discrimination and reach out to others to build a better world.

Assistant Principals

Some of the women have not had as much experience as others. One assistant principal, who was teaching at a junior high, had people asking her why she did not go back to school and get a Master's degree in health and physical education. She says that she decided to go back, "Not because I wanted more education. . . [but] because I wanted more money." She decided to obtain certification in administration because the longer she taught, the more she thought she could do a better job. She has held jobs outside of education--working as a cashier and working in the mailroom of a major regional newspaper. Especially was the newspaper mail room a good experience: "That was a very interesting job because it had nothing to do with education--it had nothing to do with

children." Also, she sees that experience as having helped her leadership: "I got to meet a lot of people from varied professions working out there, and I was put in a leadership role to where I was basically running the mailroom." From her first job teaching at the junior high, she was hired as an assistant principal at a middle school and foresees a doctorate in her future "within the next five to seven years." Indeed, she says, "I always have a plan and goals. And my goal was to first be a coach and a classroom teacher for ten years and then get an administrative job. And that's exactly what I did. In talking about her career, she admits that she received her first teaching job because she is an African-American woman:

> Well, that's the reason I got the first job--because I was a female, and because I was a minority female. I think I have always used my gender and my race to my advantage. . . I had one interview with xxxxxxxx Schools, and two interviews in xxxxxxxxx [a town nearby]. They were all looking for someone with experience, but what I was looking for was the experience to interview. And then, I had an interview in xxxxxx xxxxxxx which lasted about fifteen minutes. She was looking for a minority male. And of course I filled that quota as a minority female because she interviewed a minority. But again, I don't see that as a barrier. I just see that as a part of this quota that has to be filled when there is an opening.

For her, the job she has by its very nature is political. She must realize how to act around certain people and how to approach certain situations. She explains her approach to parents:

> I try to help my parents feel comfortable. Because it's not like I know everything, because I try not to use a lot of educational jargon because they don't understand it.

Another assistant principal was a band instructor and director for nine years before becoming an administrator. After a particularly successful year--her band made "superior" in competition--she and her fellow band teachers heard that "the powers that be in the city wanted to juggle us around and spread us across town." She attended a meeting in which the move was discussed and was horrified:

> The cultural arts director, in big quotations, said--now what was his statement? I had been interested in administration before, but not so much--what was it he said? He made some very derogatory statements about a colleague who wasn't in the room. It was a really horrible thing. He said something to the effect that "Well, I'll put her on your side of town and let her ruin your damn program if you keep on!" or something like that. And that floored me. . . and I said how can you be in that position and have this little tact? and speak this way about who we're working with and our future students? If he knows that there's a problem, then fix it! Don't talk about it and threaten to put that person in a place to ruin a program.

That meeting served as a catalyst to her becoming an administrator, for she began taking courses that summer in administration. He had started her to wonder:

> I walked out of that room feeling like someone had just turned a knife in my heart, and I think I . . . And I tried to figure out how he could get to that position because he had--he was beyond his Master's--he had his doctorate. And to go through the realms of education and not know any more about people than it seemed he did.

She characterizes her motivation in both political and ethical overtones. Politically, she realizes that administrators have power to make such moves and to affect their teachers' lives as well as the lives of the students. Ethically, she is motivated by her conviction that someone who has people skills, tact, and a certain professionalism should be in those places of political power. At present, her principal has served as a good role model, a mentor to her, especially in setting the stage for her interactions with the staff. Not only has he been encouraging, but she says he has also been helpful:

> I almost feel uncomfortable when I go into situations, at meetings or whenever I go anywhere with colleagues or administrators, because he's already gone in and said she's going to do this, this, and that, and it's going to be right. And I feel like if I do anything wrong, I'm gonna let myself down and him down. . . I can't imagine a more helpful person because even before--the first day when I got here to work, he had already established that and that's kind of his way of making his people in turn do what he wants.

The third assistant principal was a teacher and a counselor before becoming an administrator. At each stage of her career, she has described herself as "comfortable" and almost surprised that she chose a different stage. This hard to control young child grew up to be a math and science teacher to sixth graders in another state. After only two years of teaching, she moved with her military career husband to Germany and taught fifth grade there. While overseas, she took advantage of an extension program offered by a midwestern

university and began graduate studies in educational research. However, when they moved to their present location, the only credit she could have transferred applied to Guidance and Counseling, and so she attained her Master's in Guidance and Counseling from a traditionally Black state university. She taught fourth grade for a few years, but then decided to become a "home school coordinator" since there did not seem to be any job openings in counseling. Although she says she considers herself as having done a good job in that position, she did not like it, and so moved into an elementary school counseling position when one came open. She was a counselor for, she approximates, "fifteen, sixteen, seventeen years" at the elementary and middle school levels.

Middle school counseling was a natural for her, she explains, because she says, "I felt like I had been there. I would say my middle school years were very difficult years for me." Several people, including friends and her assistant principal, would ask her if she had her administrative degree, but at the time, she had relatively little interest in leaving her counseling position. When a friend suggested they sign up for administrative courses together, she agreed to do so, largely because, she says, "I am a student. I love to learn." Her friend was the "manipulator of all this," she admits, and even after finishing the certification, she was not really looking for an administrator's job. Once again, her friend brought her applications for administration, and after

interviewing, she was surprised to be offered a job: "I wasn't real sure if I wanted to thank him or not because I didn't want to leave the counseling. But it has worked out."

She exudes an eagerness about being "new" in administration and learning what it is all about. She is, in effect, attempting to be the "counselor-administrator":

> I think that my experiences here and how I've tried to come across--speaking quietly to the children, giving them respect, letting them know that they are worthy, that what I'm speaking to them about is a behavior, what they did. And even the teachers, some of the teachers have said that they appreciate my manner here as opposed to yelling, and ranting, and raving, but that's different for the teachers here, so I'm trying to show them that we can all be human, no matter what role we play.

Even as counselor, she explains that she had a "thirst" for learning and took on new challenges in workshops and other training. In fact, she confesses that she tries to "attend board meetings--it's not that I want to be seen or heard, just for the knowledge." Although her friends tease her that she must "live a dull life," she reiterates that she "wasn't bored. I came because I wanted to."

She argues that she had a bumper sticker with the current school system's motto on it long before the system adopted the motto and has always considered the students the most important people in the school system: "Discussing any program, I would be the one to say, 'We have to remember the bottom line: is this right for children?'" In fact, if the administrators did what was right for the children, she says,

"No matter what they did, if it was for the children, then they got my respect."

She mentions one White female assistant principal who was a role model for her. Had this woman not worked with her, then she might never have entered administration:

> Now, I can honestly say that if xxxxxxxxxx had not ever come into my life, I would not have arrived at the point I am right now because she modeled a style of administration that I hadn't seen before even though I had worked with other female assistant principals. . . It was just through working with her, seeing the work that she did, she could handle it from what I consider a softer, more worthy kind of perspective. Perhaps I would have arrived where I am at some point in the future, but I don't think I would have moved so quickly into the area as I have if I had not seen her model the ideal.

When asked what barriers race and being female may have contributed to, she answers that she had not experienced gender problems until administration and had to make sure that she was considered for a twelve-month position. In teaching, however, she did experience what she refers to as "interesting" incidents:

> White parents were not thrilled a lot of times that their child had a Black teacher--we weren't as capable. Of course, we didn't always know that up front. It was what was said to us later when things worked out that they let us know they had some hesitancy at the beginning. . . Or the fact that on Open House, every parent you had would show up to see you and see what you were doing. And one parent, in particular . . . came to me and told me all her reservations she had at the beginning, and when her daughter would come home and talk about how democratic I handled the classroom in terms of the class deciding what we should all do, how we should all handle a problem--how I had "gone up on her scale"--that's a quote. So it was interesting, very interesting.

She explains that such encounters are surprising because she had forgotten to what extent that such perspectives were still "out there":

> Obviously, I am naive in life. The only experiences that I've had that affected me, that really did not affect me, was how parents saw me at the time as a teacher or how they had some preconceived ideal of what kind of teacher I would be because I am an African-American. . . the other experiences I had, I've never ever let it be an issue. I am as prone to talk to you a stranger about Black issues or my Blackness as I am about to another Black person. One thing that all teachers or people that I worked with or actually got to know me will tell you is that any question that they ever had about being Black or Black culture or whatever--they never ever hesitated to come ask because they knew I'd be up front with them.

Principals

Administrators at the principal position have taken varied paths toward their job status as well. One, who had taught for three years out of state, became a health educator at the health department when she returned to this state and taught some in nearby colleges. She later became the health coordinator for an entire school system, and then she decided that since she was the health coordinator for a school system, she should go ahead and obtain an administrative degree. Going to graduate school in the evenings, she became an administrative intern and then later a principal. She earned an Ed.S. degree as well. She recalls one professor's advice that she has carried over to her job:

> I guess his focus in one of our classes had to do with

> minorities in education. And he really helped me to see that all the background, all the book knowledge and experiences that I had had or anybody else still did not change the fact that we were Black or African-American. And then there were certain people that just would not allow you to do your job like you knew you were supposed to do your job. . . I mean he taught me so much about everyday kinds of experiences, and when you know that something is right or it's good for yourself, for the children you are working with, you have to make decisions and no matter what the consequences are, you deal with them.

She mentions the Principal Executive Program (PEP) as also being useful in her professional development, along with the Comer training at Yale University. She credits, however, her background in health education as being one of the most valuable experiences in making her a successful administrator:

> I think my experience as a public health educator was so valuable . . . I had an opportunity to deal with people whose socioeconomic status was usually at the lowest level. . . a lot of people who came to the health department were low socioeconomic people and I had a chance to visit neighborhoods and to be in the communities and to have experiences with people who had similar backgrounds but not the same kind of background that I had as an adult. So now, when families come in, a lot of times I can identify with them for one reason or another. . . Another job I had one summer was in an employment office, and especially when they are coming to report that they have not been able to find a job. . .So, those experiences just sort of enhance being here as an administrator. I think being able to understand people and some things that they say to you . . . it is difficult for them to express what they are feeling so they become very hostile and angry with you, and they don't really mean to.

Having been a principal for about ten years, she explains that she chose to become an administrator because she could "help the largest number of children by going into administration,

and . . . could have an impact on families." Her various job experiences, she says, have helped her in skills she deems important to be a successful educational administrator:

> Probably listening to people, being able to listen and not be judgmental, and the value of planning and preparation--the fact that people are different and you respect the differences.

When asked about barriers, she explains that she has not seen any complications because of gender and mentions that she has seen a good number of women in classes that she has taken and there "are a lot of females in educational administration." However, on the subject of race, she elaborates:

> Race has given me the motivation to be where I am because of some things I wanted to prove to myself and maybe some other people, but also it helps me to be a better administrator, because I've dealt with administrators who are not Black administrators who do not give me the respect that I need.

She mentions an experience where she went in to visit the White administrator of her child's high school. Her experience made her think even more about her own role as a school leader:

> He knew me as another administrator, and I had often heard how very disrespectful he always was to minorities who had gone over to his office for any reason. Now I went in to talk with him about something that--I mean, I had a right to be there. I went as a parent, and I said to him, "I'm here as a parent." And he was very, very disrespectful to me, and I walked out and said, "Wow, if he spoke to me in that tone, how did he talk to folks who were not professionals, who did not walk in with a suit and use proper English?" And that sort of motivated me to be here so I could help all

> children, not just minority children, and not just minority families, but all families feel good about themselves, and what they are doing, and what they want to be, and the situations they are coming to me for.

Another principal admits that race was a key issue in her being hired. She had applied, and school started around mid-August. On July 28th, she received a phone call:

> I got hired over the phone without an interview. . . My contract was mailed, I got it, and got a call that said I had to be interviewed. So I signed the contract, brought it with me, and went to be interviewed.

She took a position at a junior high school and stayed there for eight years. In the spring of her first year of teaching, she enrolled in graduate school to get a Master's degree in physical education. Her principal at that time commented that she would make a good administrator, and a few years later, she decided to begin administrative training. Realizing after becoming an assistant principal that "I'm not a career assistant principal, because I'm not going to put out everybody's fires," she says:

> So after three years--that was it. And I'm playing the politic game, trying to get a principalship here in xxxxxxxxx. Now I'm already knowing the rules of the game pretty well, and I learned them because they make the rules of the game--and I learned that. I learned how to use race to my advantage, how to use my sex to my advantage, but the key is to always be prepared. Otherwise it doesn't matter. . . the moment the Black teacher resigned, they needed a Black face to fill her place. . . They had to replace that position with another Black position.

During her assistant principalship, she explains that she

learned a great deal about working with parents:

> I got to xxxxxx where people were responding, "This parent won't like that." "This parent will come in." I had a hard time--in fact, I never got used to that mentality. . . I never. . . well, it made me realize I'm not so sure I can work in that environment. And from there I decided that I couldn't work with parents that thought they were in charge. I could work with those parents that wanted to help.

Finally, after growing impatient at not being hired as a principal, she finally announced to the superintendent:

> I'm single, I'm Black, and I'm female. And I'm marketable. And I can leave, and I will leave. But I've been loyal to the system, and I think the system has been good to me. . . and he appointed me.

Her first principalship was at an elementary school, where she followed in the footsteps of a very popular and effective principal. A few years later, as she left that school to take another principalship, she was gratified that the parents would miss her enough to fuss over her leaving.

A third principal ironically majored in subjects specifically so that she would not end up in education as most of her friends had. After graduating with a degree in sociology and psychology, she worked with a federal agency and then with a health management organization. She began graduate school while working in the management organization and took a counseling position at a technical community college in a different part of the state. She states that she learned a lot in that position:

> I was working with students who were older than I was, but in a different area . . .I thought all the world was like xxxxxxxx [her former hometown], and here I was [in a different part of the state]. . . . I mean there were times when if I were going to go somewhere traveling a bus, I would just walk to the bus station and notice that all these people were looking at me. And my friends would say, "xxxxx, you have to remember you're in xxxxxx, not xxxxxxx. Things have not changed that much." As I worked with students and planned trips, I assigned rooms, and I would not place the same gender together but I never thought of race. And they would say, "You have to remember you're in xxxxxxxx."

Deciding to marry, she moved back to her hometown and worked as a counselor with the school system there. Her first position was as a counselor in an alternative education, "optional," school. Her principal there became a mentor to her and helped her grow as a leader by insisting she always learn new skills and seize every opportunity she could. She calls it her "beginning training" in administration:

> I guess he was always very close to his faculty. He was just a wonderful person that you could always disagree with and still be friends. Even if you got angry, I would say, "I'm just not---I'm just not going to talk with you--you've made up your mind." He would say, "No, that's not how you do it--you've got to talk. Let me hear."

Desiring a change from the alternative school, she went to a traditional school where a second pregnancy forced her to take medical leave. "During that absence," she recalls:

> They transferred a tenured person into my position, and then I began to learn the laws of school. When a tenured person goes in, the position is theirs if they choose to stay there. . . I was devastated because

> she had my position and I had already planned to stay at that xxxxxx school for the rest of my life.

She took a position which split her between two schools, half-time at each. She brightened when her former principal at the Alternative School called her and asked her to come to a different school where he had an open position. He gave her all kinds of assignments--meeting parents, scheduling activities, presenting awards--and also mentioned that since she was doing all these activities, she should become certified in administration so that she could be paid for her work. She enrolled in a traditionally Black university and undertook a practicum with an elementary school principal. Upon completion of the coursework, she was interviewed:

> I had no intention of going there. So I got there, had another interesting interview. . . and I'm sitting there with the three of them and xxxxxxx sort of irritated me because throughout the interview, he kept referring to me as "Now, Sweetheart, tell me how you'd do such and such" and "Sweetheart, tell me this." And I finally stopped in the interview and said, "Excuse me--my name is not Sweetheart. My name is xxxxxxxx." And he apologized and said, "I really hope you weren't offended." And I said, "No I just wanted you to know my name" . . . So I got that job.

In that assistant principalship, she learned on the job. She describes such incidents as:

> So here's my first experience coming out of a counselor's office into an administrator's role, catching it, like what the devil is going on? The first time my co-worker had walked out of the office and said, "I have a parent who's coming in. Could you just give her this message?" and I said, "Sure,"

> and I delivered the message, so nice and cordial, and she proceeds to rip off some explicative deletes to me--I went, "Okay, xxxxxxxx [co-worker's name], you owe me one!"

She considers herself fortunate that her principal would allow the assistant principals to make decisions and would then support those decisions. At the same time, however, she remembers the way she was described by people who just walked into the office:

> I'll never forget when I first got there, an people would walk in, parents I would say, and they wouldn't know my name, and I would be described as "that little Black woman." So--"I don't know--that little Black woman told me so."

At first treating her special because she was a female, the principal soon realized she wanted to learn to do everything. One night, "we had a dance. . . and he said, "You can go. I'll lock up." And I said, "No, I plan to be a principal, so I can stay and lock up." She continues: "I was coming to be one of the assistant principals, and I didn't want special concessions made because I was female and the other one was male." When a principalship came open at the junior high where she had been an assistant principal, she opted for an interim position at an elementary school instead. The position became permanent.

As a principal, she admits that her Achilles' heel is that she was never a classroom teacher. She is quick to point out, however, that she did teach as a guidance counselor, and

she also contends that sometimes an "outsider" may see characteristics of classroom practice that those too close to it might miss. She admits that being a female African-American has been advantageous to her in terms of getting hired:

> I have worked them to my advantage. I certainly feel I had something to offer, but they were working to help me at the times I was going after different things. I came into administration when they were trying to get more minorities, so I was like a double package, you know, a two-in-one deal. That used to bother me when I first started out working--were they hiring me just because I was Black? And I would ponder that question quite often. But I knew they wouldn't hire me if I couldn't do that job because they'd get rid of me real fast.

Once in the job, however, she describes the political ramifications of being female. Although she sees her race as more a barrier in getting the position, the consequences of being a woman extend beyond being hired as an administrator:

> Being a female has been more of a barrier establishing peers with the existing administrators. And I think, they, maybe they still see me as a female, but I hope they see me more as a person, because I interact very freely with them. I have assumed leadership positions in the principal association, and they just call me, "xxxxxx" [by her first name]. But I know there are still some good old boys there that I will always be a "woman" and I will always be an African-American, but I'm "different" than most of the women they know or most of the African-Americans they know, so that I'm acceptable.

About those who do not conceal their prejudice toward African-Americans or toward women in administration, she says that she

has a method with which to deal with the roadblocks they might present:

> I can sense that. I think I can sense that. Depending on how important I feel that it is that we work cooperatively, I either work towards overcoming that or it's not important to me. That's an insignificant person, and if I have to deal with him for five minutes, we go on our separate ways.

Although her experience has given her ample opportunity to work with different administrators, she states that she has not worked as a counselor or assistant principal with any African-American principals throughout her career.

Central Office Administrators

Administrators at the central office level have stories of varying experiences--one came from a background of psychology, counseling, and teaching at the college level, while the two others taught in the K-12 public schools and were principals. All three women have doctorates--from majority White state universities. Not only are their stories laden with anecdotes of personal learning experiences "on the job," but their educational pasts have also led them to jobs that they perhaps did not envision at the onset of their careers. However, none of them has turned down opportunities, seizing challenges as they appeared.

An assistant superintendent in a county-wide school district, one administrator began honing her people skills

when she worked as a secretary for a lawyer on Saturday mornings during her high school years. There she sometimes dealt with people "under stressful situations." She began her education majoring in psychology at a traditionally Black state university and began teaching at a predominantly Black university after finishing her Master's at a majority White university in a different region of the United States. At the age of 23, she "tried that job on" at the Black university because "I had some interest in teaching, but knew that little kids weren't what I needed to be doing." Accepting the job because it afforded her "a different view, [to] have a different relationship with professors," she bristled at the academic dean's insistence that she not wear slacks or allow students to call her by her first name. After two years of teaching there, she decided to go back to graduate school, but because her university would not release her to go back part-time and work part-time, she opted to go full-time to graduate school and left the teaching position. She married and followed her husband to his job out-of-state, had a child, and stayed home with the infant, trying to complete her dissertation at the same time. The "at-home" experience was a catalyst:

> I decided I couldn't do this. This is not what I need to do. So I started searching for what I could do, otherwise, and I felt like I had been away from psychology too long, and I was no longer current, and I started looking around, and what came available was an internship in psychology at the mental institute. . . But I got a paid internship for a year, and at the same

> time, was motivated--casted getting back out there motivated me so I finished up my dissertation, defended, and moved back here.

Her husband's job moved him "back here," as well, and she worked as a school psychologist. Unnerved by her male boss's evaluation of what she thought was superior work, she addressed the superintendent of the school system about her receiving a "standard" rating. The meeting not only allowed her to "get it off my chest," but it also led to an unforeseen job opportunity a week later when the superintendent offered her a position as a curriculum advisor. She was surprised because, as she puts it, before the meeting, "I wasn't sure he knew who I was":

> In a week's time, he had researched my transcripts, my history, my everything, and he told me, "You made an "A" in physics. Well, physics had been so long ago, I'd forgotten--did I even take physics? But I had. But he had researched my background and decided I was capable of taking a supervisory position. That's how I got into education, the supervision of education. I think it was a good fit. But I never would have made that transition by myself, I don't think. . . from there, it's just kind of snowballed.

The same superintendent offered her an assistant superintendency four years later. Although the position was centered around personnel, a field she did not want to be in forever, she accepted the job and then when the four systems in the county merged into one, she switched to an assistant superintendency in curriculum. Her mentors have been two White female professors--one at the undergraduate level who

suggested that she attend graduate school and one at the doctorate level--but she also mentions receiving help from a White male professor in her doctoral program who was "determined that anybody who went through that program would do well." Throughout her career and chose education, she presents a work history as a series of conscious choices predicated on her desire to achieve. She does not rest. Explaining that she has perhaps thirty hours of graduate credit past her doctorate in educational psychology, she "seeks out motivational speakers" at times and enrolls in any workshop or professional development she thinks will help her do her job more effectively. Her motivation is thus:

> I purposely seek out team-building workshops because again I know there are people like me who have the capacity to be leaders but don't have whatever else it is. I don't have a need, on the one hand, to be the star of the show. If there's someone else, by all means--go ahead--and I can give my input from there. Sometimes, that's a handicapping position. I am in a situation right now--I know three of four people who are really busting a gut to be the leader, and I'm just not willing to compete on that level. I've always felt like if I did a good job, did the best job that could be done in the time frame it could be done in, that I would get my just rewards. I have found that is not always so. But I still tend to believe it, and I think in most instances it will be, so I try to become steady and constant and always striving to improve, always trying to be informed, always trying to know as much as some people and more things than others, but always also caring about individuals.

That she has never been a principal does not bother her. In fact, she admits that she thinks she would be a good principal. Her background in psychology has served her well:

> I use it a lot every day. I use it. The route was circuitous, but I think I am well fitted for where I am. It's not where I set out heading. It's not where my vision led me, but I'm not real sure where I would have ended up with my vision and only my vision. It's kind of a constantly evolving thing. I'm still not sure where I'll end up, but I've got plenty more years to do it in.

As to pressures incurred because she is an African-American female, she says that even though "I was the second person in the system with a doctorate," the other one being the superintendent, she heard the whispers:

> When I got a promotion, nobody would say--I won't say "nobody"--the first thing was because she's Black and she's female, not because she's well-qualified and she's well-educated. When I was hired initially, they were glad to hire, to get a Black person, and again, I'm sure qualifications mattered, but the fact that I was Black and not that I was well-qualified--that was paramount. In every position I've taken in the education systems has had the naysayers and those people who did not consider the academic background or the training or the quality of work that I do, but have said it's because she's Black.

She particularly speaks of one person, a White female, who she is sure wanted the position she now has. She addresses that situation this way:

> She has worked very hard. She's White. She's paid her dues. She's very deserving. Do I think she's more deserving than me? No. Do I think she's equally deserving? Yes I do. The main differences in us, as I see them, is that I am a people person, and she is not . . . and I've had so many people say to me this year, "Gee, I'm really glad you're in this position because I can come to you when I have a problem." It doesn't allow me to get my work done because I have people in my doorway all the time! [she laughs]

Another assistant superintendent began her educational career by teaching French. She was offered two contracts at once, but chose the one closer to home because she was planning to marry. Because her husband was in the military and was soon transferred to Germany, she traveled there with him. Her family could not believe she went:

> Now my parents thought I was foolish, because most people would say you stay home and you try to save your money. Not me--I said, "No, this may be my, I won't say my only opportunity, but this is a good opportunity to go to a foreign country." So I took off!

She did not find a job, so she began her family, terming it a "wonderful 18 months. I didn't work. I just enjoyed myself." Living abroad gave her the opportunity to visit France, a long-awaited dream: "I wanted to walk the streets of Paris at night. I don't know why I had---that's such a dream, right? . . . But that's what I did." Although they did not have a great deal of money, she describes that trip as very happy because "as I reflect back, I took a lot of risks and chances on things that I believed in. And I think maybe when I don't do that--I'm not as happy?" Even before returning to the United States, she received a letter from a former principal who said he had heard she was coming back and wanted her to work for him. She taught at that school until it closed in 1968 and she transferred to a newly constructed high school. Teaching English there, she also had duties of sponsoring the student council, the yearbook, and the National Honor Society.

Indeed, she says that she left teaching there to have her son, but she did not begin maternity leave until she had issued the yearbooks to the students! She did not return to teaching until four years later at another high school. It was then that people began to ask her about administration, so she began to consider it. She began a Master's in Counseling and English at a nearby majority White state university, and then asked the school system to allow her to be a home school coordinator. For a year, she worked in that capacity, but was soon "called" to the office and offered an administrative assistant's position. She went on to obtain her Master's in Administration. Applying for a principal position a few years later, she was told "No, you aren't ready." She did, however, switch schools, and she admits, she did learn from the switches: I think that it is very important for people who make decisions to help people to understand what you're ready for. You need to be in a place where you can be successful." When she did receive a principalship, it was to begin a new school, and she was allowed to pick her own staff--a challenge that she enjoyed:

> And that was right down my alley because again, it was taking a risk, and it was starting something from scratch. And I love starting things from scratch. And I love starting things from the beginning. Nothing bores me more that coming behind somebody and everything is done.

After three successful years at that school, she was asked to open a middle school. Two years after that, she was chosen to

begin a pupil services division at the central office. She says that although she did not have a mentor through all of these career decisions, she did "have people who allowed me to grow and didn't try to put obstacles in my way." To fill the void of a mentor, she did sign up for professional development workshops and seminars whenever she could--"things that were extremely helpful in help a person to know who they are and to make sure no matter what happens you don't lose your confidence." Now a successful assistant superintendent, she continues to believe that confidence is a major factor of success.

Interviewed by an assistant superintendent for her first teaching job, the third central office administrator told him that she was not sure how effective she would be at the junior high school level:

> Look, Dr. xxxxxx. I don't know one thing about junior high school. I don't know about that aged child. I know nothing about the subjects taught there, and it's the last place I'd ever want to be.

Ironically, the position she took was, indeed, the junior high one, and to make matters more interesting, she describes her talk with the principal:

> The principal said, "Well, you've got two choices--you can either teach earth sciences or you can put on one of those cute little skirts and you can do physical education." He said, "We've got lots of balls and bats around here," and he said, "You'll just learn how to do it." . . . I said, "Don't you have anything else? So he said, "Well, I do have this old earth science, but nobody wants that

> either. You know--you'd have to read and figure out what to do."

She decided to teach earth science. After having her son and staying out for half a year, she returned and then became an assistant principal where she was teaching. Her next move was as an assistant principal at a small elementary school where she stayed for four years before she gained her principalship at a large elementary school. Her principalship at a high school lasted for six years after which she went to Central Office. There, she has done a lot of different duties:

> I've been an administrative assistant. . . an executive director in charge of management and logistics. . . handled buses, construction, maintenance. . . been the EEO officer for the system . . . every kind of thing that requires order, structure, lining up, consistence.

In retrospect, she describes the principalship as "the best of times and the worst of times" because in that position "you have problems that tax your very soul." Especially is the high school position stressful:

> You know that you are the last shot they've got before they go out into the real world. . . you are under such great pressure to provide leadership, to provide the best that you have, to try to save what you can save, to try to push those along that are really doing well, and not allow them to become complacent. . . and for a long time, that's what people thought--just let me get to be that high school principal. Forget it. Because that's the position, one of the most important positions you have . . . That was the most important job I had. I never thought of it as the best job I had, but it certainly was the most important thing and taught me more than any other job I've ever had in my life.

Lacking mentors to propel her toward opportunities, she suggests that her race and gender gave her advantages: "They needed a female. They wanted somebody Black. . . they needed somebody who could work with people." She continues:

> I was the person selected but not just because I had both, but because I was the best they could find of that combination. It doesn't bother me one bit if I'm selected to do something because I have the skills, and I happen also to be Black and a female. It really ticks me off to be selected for something because I'm Black or because I'm a woman because to me that's the most degrading thing that you can do.

Indeed, she admits that her experiences, especially because she is a very light-skinned African-American, have sometimes been the way they were because of what she is instead of who she is:

> Most of my experiences have been because I was both. And some of my experiences have been because I was both and because of how I look. I know when I was hired to teach my first year--I know I was selected because I was Black. The female part had nothing to do with it. But it had to do with the way I look as a Black. . . but you know this is the way I am, and if I looked differently, maybe I would have had a different set of experiences.

Administrators in Higher Education

Two of the African-American female educational administrators at the college level had K-12 teaching experiences in their career path. One retired as a public school principal and then she began her "retirement," becoming an administrator of teacher education at a small historically Black college. Earlier in her career, she had taught college

level classes as she obtained her Master's degree, and she had also been the director of early childhood education during the summer for Headstart. She returned to her "home" public school system to teach history and geopolitics. Her opportunity to become an administrator came because of her success as a teacher. She elaborates:

> I was an outstanding teacher so when they, the new school was to be opened, the superintendent who was a professional educator, asked xxxxx xxxxxxx, who was our instructional supervisor, to name him an outstanding teacher, because the person must be an instructional leader. You have to help teachers learn how to teach, and if you don't know how to teach yourself, then you can't deliver. You can't tell someone else how to do it. I think that's the first qualification. I am a good teacher.

Although it was a segregated school, this administrator knew that integration was on its horizon, and so she made sure that her staff readied itself:

> And we were determined to have an outstanding program. And we did have an outstanding program. It was a beautiful school, and the sciences and the arts--and a good program. Because we served children from xxxxxxx Homes, which was a housing project. And we had high expectations and good behavior, and performance, and you can do it. And you will do it. And they did it.

In the first days of integration, she served as the principal of a grade four through six school. Their first, second, and third graders traded places with the fourth, fifth, and sixth graders from the other half of the paired schools. She says there were no problems, chiefly because "we worked with the children constantly." She explains further:

> We decided that they could walk, they could come by cars, they could come by helicopters, planes, or bus, the yellow bus--it didn't matter how they got there. But when they got there, the things that happened would make a difference. The building would be spotless. The program would be second to none. The quality of behavior would be acceptable.

This administrator dwells more on the changes affecting education rather than her advancement in administration. She spent most of her life teaching and being the principal of two schools before entering higher education administration. Even at the college level, she still sees herself as a teacher first and always.

The second administrator in higher education attended a "traditional university that was founded upon teaching" on a university scholarship. She confesses that she still carried the disappointment of not being initiated into her high school's National Honor Society and spent a good deal of her time in college proving to herself that she was, indeed, smart:

> The fact that I never forgot that experience to xxxxxx xxxxxxx University, where I was one of a hundred Blacks out of 5000 students, it was always having to "arrive," always having to prove, always having to show that you could speak and write and think like everyone else, and so I do remember that experience.

Reflecting on her undergraduate days, she also acknowledges that she was not very much of an activist in college. In fact, she suggests that people who knew her then might not recognize her:

> I realize that I was never very outspoken during those days . . . I turned out to be in some ways different probably than some people would have expected of me earlier, in that I am more and more assertive as we go along, more and more aggressive, took more and more initiative as I went through life . . . I just went along with the program. I followed the rules. I got my credentials.

She graduated, majoring in elementary education, and became a teacher in a suburban elementary school, not before, however, she experienced a political consciousness-raising at the hands of the large inner city school system to which she first made application:

> This was in xxxxxxxx. xxxxxxx was a very corrupt and political town at that time. And you had to take a test to be a teacher in the city of xxxxxxxx. And there was a written test, a music test, and an art test. The written test was all day long, and I took that test, and I got a like, a 94 on it. And then there was a music test and an art test--and they were practicums. And I couldn't play the piano and sing, and so I didn't pass the test [laughs]. Now, I want you to know they were hiring truck drivers to teach in xxxxx[that same city]--it was a racist thing . . . That was their gate, and even when you had a 94 written score, and the people who asked me to sing--I remember there were five little elderly White ladies sitting in a chair and they asked me to sing of all things, "America the Beautiful." And they asked me to play the piano. Well, but immediately after that they offered me a job, and I wouldn't take it. In other words, the game at that time was "Yeah, we need these Black teachers, but don't certify them because then you will have to pay them as much as you have to pay the White teachers." And so what they would do--they would fail you on the exam, but then they would offer you a job, but then your job would be a permanent substitute pay, not a regular type.

After marrying and having children, she and her husband moved to another large city, and she taught in a planned community,

a community she describes as "built upon the ideals of racial integration, economic integration, [and] age integration." Her principal was a good role model for her, allowing her to be creative and encouraging her to become politically involved in the school system's decision-making. Upon discovering that her system was going to discuss human relations, she remarked one day in the office, "I could tell them what I think of this policy." "Well, why don't you?" her principal asked, and from there on, her activism was launched. She became a member of the human relations committee of the local educational association and eventually became a "teacher on special assignment," a position which allowed her to work outside of the classroom. "I never went back to the classroom after that," she says.

Encouraged to obtain a degree in administration, she decided to get a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction and tagged on the extra courses needed for administration certification only after repeated friendly "hounding" by her colleagues. Her courses finished, she took an assistant principal's position and admits: "Anybody's who's been an assistant principal has said, 'Heck, I don't want to do this for the rest of my life. If I can do this, I can be the principal.'" She applied for a principal's assignment and was able to meet one of her future mentors, an area superintendent who was both White and female and who was that school system's

highest ranking female administrator at that time. The school she went to had problems:

> I really began to develop as a leader even more, because I went into a situation where the community needed to be brought together . . . They had kind of been stuck in the mud for a number of years, but on the other hand, I knew that I would have to win them, lead them, through winning them over and kind of meeting them halfway.

Conceding that she has never had a "master plan" for her career, she does acknowledge that once "I was in one position, I kind of looked ahead and thought, 'What are those people doing up there?' and 'What kind of skills would I lack to do that?'" She was soon tapped to be the coordinator of a special program for 35 schools, a program in which she was not even certified. Voicing her concern, she was assured by the same female area superintendent that she had the "principal" skills to work with fellow principals in getting the program established in each school:

> I only knew xxxxxx xxxxxx [the special program] from my school. They had seen that I had worked with the two xxxxxxx xxxxxxx programs that happened to be located at my school as principal, but I didn't have any course work. . . but what they said was true. I had a whole stack of specialists . . . what they needed was someone who could manage them, and like I could call the principals and say, "xxxxx, I know you have two rooms down there on the second floor. What do you mean you don't have room for an xxxxxx class? I've been in your building!"

Staying at that position for two years, she next became a Coordinator of Instruction, working for another area superintendent she classifies as a mentor:

> I thought he had a style very similar to mine, that I could learn from . . . he allowed me to be creative in terms of instruction. He rewarded my initiative . . . and it was just really in many ways the ideal job. I really only left to work on my doctorate. Now why I did that--I don't know--but it was one of the best decisions I ever made.

After completing her doctorate at a university she describes as "the bastion of the South," she knew that she was definitely interested in "upper level administration--assistant superintendent, etc." She began to make decisions that would enable her as a woman to accept those types of positions--being "mobile," even though the single parent of two children, and creating and using a network. Her first offer came from out of state, and she accepted it on the condition that it be an "assistant superintendent level. . . [because] I'm already a director here in xxxxxxxx." Two years later, a fellow colleague from her doctoral granting university asked her to become an associate superintendent in the school system where he had accepted a superintendency. That, she explains, was a "great" move, for she met her second husband there.

As she explains her career track, she prefaces the story with "another opportunity" quite often. Indeed, only several years after her latest move, she "had an opportunity to be assistant state superintendent," and so she moved to the capital city of that state. She says that position taught her

about politics even though she had worked for systems for quite a few years:

> Oh, it added tremendously because I have to tell you I had no idea even through I had pretty high positions in a local school district--I had no idea of the role the legislature plays. I don't think I even realized that all the money--exactly how the money got appropriated and how we got all these rules and regulations and these kinds of things. . . I think it helped me see the "system."

For three years, she remained at that position, leaving to accept the superintendency of a large inner city school system out of state. Her three years as superintendent "was an experience," she says that "would take weeks to tell you about." Indeed, she summarizes it by saying:

> I'm glad I went, and I'm glad I left. But I would do it again. . . The school system is terribly problematic, bankrupt for so many years. . . I remember when I went to xxxxxx [that system] there was a little elderly Black woman that came up to me at a reception in my first week there, and she said, "Yeah, you know what they did, Dr. xxxxxxxx--you know what they did." I said, "Well, what did they do?" She said, "They wait until the system hits rock bottom, it's bankrupt, and the buildings are falling down, and the test scores are rock----and then they bring in a Black female to solve it.

It was at the superintendent's level that this administrator says she sensed greater discrimination. In terms of being an African-American female administrator, she believes that up to that level, "in some ways being a female and being African-American actually helped. I think that stops at the superintendent's level." In fact, she continues, the superintendency is probably a good level for one to file a

discrimination suit because a quick look at the statistics reveals the preponderance of White males in those top positions. African-Americans have indeed made progress, but she continues:

> I think that African-Americans in education have progressed to the point that they are maybe wanted on the leadership team, but they have not progressed to the point that they are wanted in the number one chair . . .at the superintendency's level, women and African-Americans . . . just need to know the difference in being used and when there is actually a possibility they can be hired.

Her present position as an administrator at a historically African-American university allows her several things: she has more of a personal life since she does not have a commuter marriage and she is able to work with a dynamic chancellor. She counts on her experience of "being there" to help her program grow and change:

> But there was a time when people wouldn't recognize the value of that, but now the schools of xxxxxxxx [her department] are changing. They now know, finally know, that they need to reform just as much if not more than the public schools need to reform.

She also mentions a personally ethical reason for accepting her present post as well. She is at a "historically Black university," after all:

> I just feel that I'm not always suspicious of the other race. I think you function better that way. Even through the other race may give you many reasons to be suspicious--history gives you reasons. . . But I think that I have always felt that I could help

> African-American students better by being in these positions. And I have never been shy. I always wanted to do two things--I carried out my leadership position in two ways: first of all, by demonstrating that I can do the entire job but then by demonstrating that I have an obligation to pay particular attention to African-American students because, not just because I'm African-American, but because they've been the least well-served.

The third administrator in higher education tells of a career path in health care rather than K-12 schools. After being hired as a maid during her high school years, she returned to the same hospital as an aide during the summer between her junior and senior year in college. Upon graduation, she achieved her goal of returning again to that hospital--as a registered nurse--a goal she formulated for herself when as a maid she was left sometimes as the only one to care for African-American patients.

After a few years at this hospital, she moved a few times and returned to the same hometown hospital for several months as a charge nurse. Her marriage meant a move to out of state, but she did return again to her home area to work at a university, and she made sure she took her nursing students to the very same hospital where she had worked as a maid. When she moved to another state, she began completed a Master's degree from a medical college and returned once again to her first hospital as a clinician. She describes her own surprise at taking a position as a then single mother of her four year old son:

> I went there to start a nursing program, and again, it was another one of those situations where they said, "Will you come do it because we've tried. We can't get it past the Board of Nursing. Even with our legislators putting pressure on the Board of Nursing, we can't get it passed." And I said, "Well, why not?" And xxxx [her son] was four at that time, so we moved from xxxxx, eight hours away to xxxxxxx, and I knew absolutely nobody. So, here I am with this little boy, and so we made our way into the community. I developed a program for them. It became the premier program.

At that community college, she received four promotions, the last of which was a deanship of the entire college rather than her particular field only. At this point in her career, she describes herself as rather naive, because as she explains further, her promotions caused tension between her and the head of the community college. Looking back, she realizes the political mistake she made in not attributing her success to him. Although he was a "laissez-faire" administrator, she did not realize the import of her success:

> He left me in charge of the school, and so people started talking about Ms. xxxxxx's [her name] school . . . and I didn't have the sophistication at that point to know that I should turn that around if I wanted to hold on to my job and make sure that everybody understood that this person is the xxxxx [leader] of the school. . . So he plotted my demise, although I took that school, that community college to heights where it had never been taken.

She says, she "fell right into" his plans, and so at that point, decided to get her doctorate in education. In two years, she completed the degree and returned to her "home" community hospital as an associate director of nursing, an opportunity she describes as a chance to "rest" and re-group

from earning her Ed.D. in two years. In the spring, after graduating in the morning with her doctorate, she participated in a pinning ceremony later that afternoon at the institution where she now is an administrator. A few days later, she received a phone call asking her to consider taking over the very program in which she participated as an undergraduate:

> And he said to me, "Dr. xxxxxx, our nursing program is in trouble. We are about to be closed. Will you come and see what you could do?" The number of students enrolled in the program was down.

She had been offered the presidency of a community college branch in another state, but chose to come to return to her alma mater nursing program, her present job. She has, she says, worked hard to increase the numbers and to enlarge the scope of the program, adding five "outreach programs," increasing the number of students from 30 to 371, and she is presently planning to add a Master's program to their curriculum. In addition, the program has been given a million dollars in an anonymous gift toward this growth.

This administrator reflects that she may not have reached her stopping point yet and would like eventually to become the chief administrator of a college one day, perhaps the president of a community college. The mixture of her goals, the description of her work and accomplishment, and her constant awareness of making some inroads for her race depict a language that not only sounds much like the technical "you can get to the end if you use the right means," but which also

affords her the means by which to test her destiny, a somewhat spiritual journey of professional growth.

Metaphors of Self-Identity

The languages in which the speakers postulate and frame who and where they have been and what positions they have worked in cannot serve as handy labels that fix and define their autobiographical musings. Indeed, Huebner (1975) has warned against such simplistic use of the five languages which he identifies. These women speak a myriad of languages as they discuss their family background, their personal reactions to what happened to them in school and in the workplace, and the conditions in which they taught or otherwise worked in education.

Kliebard's suggestion of using metaphors is particularly helpful in understanding the visions these women hold of themselves as leaders. Each woman makes comparisons, either implied or direct, in the process of articulating who she is as an effective African-American female educational administrator. A close look at how each woman describes her leadership style and her leadership vision reveals not only how she perceives others view her but reveals as well her own reflection.

Family life and background is extremely important to all of these African-American female educational administrators. However, several have professional life-histories that

acknowledge specifically the residual influence of their familial backgrounds. One principal characterizes herself as a "dutiful daughter" when she admits that she sometimes thought she earned accolades in high school and college degrees to honor her parents. An only child, she attributes her desire to please her parents to the hard work her mother and father did in making her childhood happy:

> I was an only child. I was very ill in my younger life. I had asthma, and during that time the treatment was not as sophisticated as it is today . . . the first thirteen years of my life were spent watching from the sideline because I was not allowed to do anything that might cause me to become short of breath. But at the same time, I know that my mom's persistence of pushing me to get involved was also a factor, because being an only child, I wanted her to be with me . . . And she would always push on. As much as I was uncomfortable with it, I know that really helped a great deal . . . My parents were very proud of me, and I think I knew that, and that's what carried over. I always wanted to please them or do something that would please them. I think back over the years--when I initially began earning degrees, it was like I was earning degrees for them.

She states that she has carried over her parents' philosophies into her adulthood. When she experienced grief and stress, she continued to work in spite of it:

> And yet I continued on. And the faculty kept saying how can you do all this? And I don't know--it's just the natural thing that I had to carry on, that I had responsibilities that had to be met, and that's not to say there was not the pain. But there was also that need--that need to not give up. It's just such a vital part of me.

She is the speaker who in choosing colleges chose a majority White institution because the full scholarship would mean that

her parents would not have to pay for her college education. Even in her anti-establishment days of crashing an alumnus dinner in jeans, she still acquiesced to participating in college graduation because "my parents wanted me to."

Throughout her story, her attitude toward taking risks is a positive one; continually, she approaches every situation as it is an opportunity and wonders, rather than frets, about where it will lead. After losing her favorite counseling position because of maternity leave, she took a job with a former principal and immediately began to coordinate a new program at the school, the first of many such projects this mentor handed her. That she enjoys taking on such new challenges seems one of the most interesting aspects of administration:

> I've always known that if I wanted to make it or succeed to become a principal, I had to take advantage of opportunities, and I guess I got that sort of from xxxxxx [her mentor]. Any time they'd say, "We need people to do this," I would volunteer. I got to go to xxxxxxxx [a large city] as a recruiter because they had simply sent this notice out that they needed administrators to be on recruiting teams, and I responded. . . The guys were sitting back and thinking they were just going around xxxxxxx County [the local area], and I was going to take any opportunity. . . If it was summer school to be done, I volunteered to do summer school--the very first summer after being an assistant principal, because I knew it was giving me experience at running something on my own. . . . Every opportunity that comes along, I take advantage of it. . . But that's just been a standard code--that when the opportunity is there, even when it doesn't seem very attractive, it leads to something else.

Besides being a dutiful daughter whose strong parental support encouraged her to welcome opportunities, she has also

learned to view every situation as a learning one. Her self-concept of leadership is to look at every situation totally--from her first nightmarish year at college to unfriendly supervisors, she recasts their importance into terms of what she learned. Her principalship as well has afforded her such an opportunity:

> I got this school, and I came in at the time that the director of elementary ed was a person that did not really believe that secondary people had any business in elementary schools, and I also came into the school behind a very strong leader. . . I learned a lot because that director could be [unpleasant], but she also taught me a lot. . . she would push me all the time. . . That was good, too, because it made you strong to deal in this world because you get many more people who walk through the door and tell you what they think of you--which is not always positive--than you will get those people who walk in and say, "You're doing a wonderful job." So you have to learn to exist without those things.

That she is a younger edition of her father's work ethic is evident in how she describes her leadership style. She affirms that high standards should be a given:

> My style of leadership is that I like to respect everyone to be a professional, and I assume they are going to work as hard as I'm going to work. So those are assumptions that I start out with, that everybody is a professional and everybody wants the same end, or they're working toward the same goal. . . and when I find someone I don't feel like they're really giving me all, that's when I become very uncomfortable because I don't like to follow behind you, because I have made the assumption that you are professional and I have in my mind what a professional should be doing.

She also explains how she encourages dialogue, the counselor

training evident in her approach to problem-solving. Treating all as equal participants sounds reminiscent of times as an "only child" when she said she was always used to "adult" talk and being treated as if her own ideas were worth hearing:

> We sit down and talk. We identify what are our areas we need to improve in, and we openly talk about what suggestions are there. And at that point, I drop back. I don't assume to be the principal. I think everyone knows I'm the principal, but we're all equal in terms of what we're suggesting or what we might try to disagree with.

Similar to this principal in the way she characterizes her life and educational vision is an assistant principal who upholds the family's standards and serves as the "hope" for a family's legacy. This woman continues the tradition that her mother, who scored higher in tests than other students who had lots of advantages, began but did not have the opportunity to finish. The daughter explains the importance of keeping the family's reputation high:

> In the community, as a whole though, again I was expected to do well in school. My last name was xxxxxxxx, that kind of thing, and it was almost a kind of respect. . . It was a kind of a good feeling.

Buffeted by constant reshuffling of schools during integration, she excelled in music during high school and later accomplished the "superior" ratings as a teacher through her bands and orchestras. That experience combined with her mother's unceasing work ethic have contributed to her own work-life:

> I know this is a natural, but my mother--she has literally worked herself to death for her kids. She is unreal--I know everyone should say that about their mom, but some people don't and it's really true. . . she's always given . . . sometimes I'm frustrated with her because she's still giving, and people don't do as they should. She says, "I don't want to live in hell and die and go to hell, so I want to treat people right." I think that's another reason that I feel like I try to do sometimes more than the work says is my share. And I don't know what my share is. Whatever I sees needs to be done is I do.

Perhaps the administrator whose life mirrors her family's in the most unexpected way is the assistant principal who begins her professional life-history by describing herself as "that one child, that kind of broke the mold." In the way she has lived out her professional life, she has been the "sinner-turned-saint," the reformed one, who was hard to manage growing up but who ironically has become a solid example of what her family stood for. She was "unruly at home," and instead of responding to her mother's verbal cues for behavior, asked "Why are you looking at me that way?" As she lived apart from her family, she did receive the attention her family thought she was asking for, the attention given to an only child. Far from becoming the center of attention as an administrator, however, she has ended up as an assistant principal largely at others' instigations, not hers. Indeed, even the choosing of an undergraduate school was not hers, but her family's:

> And what I've said is maybe they saw something

> in me that I didn't see myself and I didn't have the wisdom to do. . . I certainly think that my mother and my brother-in-law had . . . wisdom. Note--they didn't have any formal education other than high school, and for both of them, the eleventh grade was considered the end part of it. But from my perspective, they are two of the smartest people that I've encountered in my lifetime.

That she who gave her mother the most challenge became a counselor is also ironic in that she has come to espouse much the same value system as those very people from which she rebelled as a youth. Her leadership style exhibits an identification with young people as people "in progress":

> I could really identify with them, with the kinds of things they were experiencing because I felt like I had been there. . . I would say my middle school years were very difficult years for me, so I could identify with them. . .I believe in leading by example. I try to model the behavior I want to see exhibited with students and adults. . .I believe in telling the whole truth. I'm not afraid of any, discussing any issues. I don't tread lightly when I'm looking for ways to enhance students--it's not my intention to step on toes, but if I step on them, I'll apologize. I'll do what I have to do--that's my leadership style.

Her work ethics are inherited from her brother-in-law, who coined a phrase she has used throughout her educational career:

> But the leader I admire the most would be one who had a good work ethic, genuinely cares about people, feels that everyone in the organization is worthwhile, deserves respect. . . those kinds of things. I really respect strong work ethics. I got that from my brother-in-law. He had a very strong work ethic. He taught me and his children that any job that's worth doing is worth doing well--he used the term, "Don't ever half-step." Do the job. And I believe it.

In addition to her adoption of the values and work ethics of her family, she also turns to older people for advice and wisdom, an action she did not take with her mother as a young girl:

> As I reflect back on my life, the people that I always respected, or I think had an impact, were much older. My mother, even though I was absent from that home, she still had--well, anybody that talks to me today will know that I quote my mother in almost any situation. . . interesting, like I said, even most of the people that I dealt with prior to college, and even after college, and even now, are much older than I. There's something about their wisdom about things that I prefer, and always have preferred, about older people. They have so much to give me--they've brought so much to my life.

She describes her relationship to these "older people" as a "learner," ready to imbibe their lessons of the world. It is a vision of herself that emanates from her first attempt to trade her uncle's peaches for a colorful book and which continues throughout her life, from attending workshops and school board meetings to watching CNN to learn about whatever is on to reading books that she suggests to fellow administrators and teachers. Her basic philosophy combines that need to learn with her strong bent toward individualism:

> The one thing a person has to know is himself or herself to be a leader, and you cannot be a leader and not know yourself. And I spend a lot of time with me--on a lot of issues. And I'm not afraid to spend a lot of time with me. Some people are afraid to really reflect and go inside themselves and find out who they really are for fear of what they might find. And I love to have that conversation with other people. So I'm not afraid of who I am--

> I am who I am, and that's all that I am. But I just know that it's an ongoing process. I'm still learning stuff about myself that I didn't know before. It is almost a new revelation a day.

Other administrators present their stories as other metaphors. One assistant superintendent describes her career track as not only a "standard bearer" of her family's values but also as a "role model" for other women. Because of integration, she says she was "pretty much isolated from what I considered my cultural roots." Being one of the first Blacks to integrate her county's school system, she was not in a "very positive" environment in high school and enrolled in a traditionally Black state university in reaction to that isolation. The terms "loner," "isolated," and "hard time reaching out to people first" recur within her story, but her experiences connote a self-identity much more outgoing than she articulates. As a curriculum supervisor, she exemplified one tenet of her leadership style, letting "people know you appreciate the work they do":

> And I will never forget--I called the person who had been the primary writer and told her what a great job she'd done, and would she come back in and work on this area, and it was like "Nobody's ever said I've done well." She's a good friend today.

The accepted term "participatory leader" is how she would characterize her style:

> There are some people who would say I'm not a good leader . . . I believe that everybody contributes to the pot--I guess I'm a participatory leader. I've

> very fortunate now because . . . I have a very, very competent crew to work with. Some of those people have a real attitude and a personality weakness, deficiencies, that make them very difficult to work with. . .but I try to put those feelings away and work with those people in the most effective way. . . . I try to provide opportunities for them to shine, and for most people, that helps.

Most rewarding of all is when she can say she has helped someone grow. Confessing that the past year has been frustrating because "this is the first year I cannot look back over the year and say 'I made a difference in somebody's life,'" she recounts an episode in which she did:

> I was just having a miserable day, and it was a young lady that when I first started working there was a secretary, and as we talked, she indicated that she wanted to go back to school. A very bright young lady, very warm and caring who ran the program. And just couldn't seem to get what she needed to go back to school. I started writing her notes--on a daily basis at the time. I bought her a bear--one of those pull-cord things--and it said things like "You can do it"--those corny things?? She decided to go back to school, and she called me last week to tell me that she had been nominated for "Teacher of the Year" for xxxxxxxxxx City, and she said it's because, to a large degree, those notes--"I still have them. I still read them. I still have that bear."

One central office administrator, successful in every stage of her career, refers to her appearance as a major factor in her growth as a person and as an administrator. Because some of her relatives are White, she has faced a combination of cultures that society might rather separate. Her father, insistent that his daughters be who they really

are, "taught us that it was terrible to try to be something that you're not. And he didn't have much patience with his brothers and relatives who chose to quote 'crossover.'" At times mistaken for "White," such ambivalence has affected many of her experiences even though she has, perhaps, paved the way for other African-American women. She wistfully acknowledges that she wishes she had participated in more "social"-type activities:

> That was a piece that I knew I was missing. I don't know that I felt really sad about it. I know I did in elementary school because I knew that I just did not fit. As I got older, it was okay to be kind of strange.

At one time, she "integrated" a grocery store in her hometown because she was their "first Black female checker." Of course, because not every one would readily recognize her as Black, she was in limbo:

> And, of course, looking at me, it was not easy for people to know. So people adjusted to my being there. The word got around that a grocery store had a Black person and everybody would come to that store and there was lots of business at that store trying to figure out who it was.

In college, although she first marched in Civil Rights marches, she eventually stopped because of the complications accompanying her skin color. She said that while some considered her "White trash because I hung out with the niggers at the time," other "Black folks didn't want me marching with them because it drew so much

attention to them." Even a White professor who took interest in her progress at the undergraduate level is, according to her, "an oddity, and I was an oddity, and we just fit easily together."

It is this recognition of her outward impression that has aided her in developing her leadership style. She describes herself as needing a good "fit":

> My approach is a moderate, common sense kind of approach, so I tend to avoid anything that seems to be so terribly strange that it just does not fit with me. . .I try to be open-minded enough to at least look, but I'm not going to get involved with a cult or to me things that don't fit with my background.

She mentions that this "common sense approach" has served her well because she has chosen to work within systems rather than employ a confrontational style. In that manner, she sees herself as having used her appearance as an advantage. Her advice follows this philosophy:

> Do not ever dismiss a person because of how they look or anything about them. . . And I would say avoid falling into the trap of hitting everything head-on . . . Learn the lay-out of whatever you are going into. You cannot get into administration if people think you are a fanatic. Nor can Black females get into administration if people think you are a nut. So you have to be somewhat moderate in what you attempt to do. Then once you get into administration, there may be things that then you can find a way to work on . . . I'm a realist.

She is a "doer," a "mover," a "shaker," she says. Her experiences have been the way they have "because I was both [African-American and female], and some of my experiences have

been because I was both and because of how I look." She explains further:

> I know when I was hired to teach my first year. I know I was selected because I was Black. The female part had nothing to do with it. But it had to do with the way I look as a Black, and that's very degrading to many Blacks. But you know, this is the way I am, and if I looked differently, maybe I would have had a different set of experiences. But I feel that in some cases it's just because of how I look, and that I would fit in easily.

Another administrator, a principal, refers to her past experience as a health coordinator to elaborate the metaphor of the "helper" that dominates her leadership style. As a health educator, she taught classes about venereal and other communicable diseases as a health educator. She remembers in particular, a graduate instructor who fostered her desire to become a "helper"; he showed her how to serve by providing "a lot of experiences. . . [that] helped me to know that I really wanted to help people." He along with other faculty members at her traditionally Black graduate program went "beyond" the textbook---"they made application."

That her career choices have been fulfilling is answered when she says she would not have done anything differently. As each decision arose, she thought carefully about which step she would take. She attributes much of her leadership effectiveness directly to the skills she learned as a health educator:

> I had an opportunity to deal with people whose

> socioeconomic status was usually at the lowest level. . . and I had a chance to visit neighborhoods . . . So now, when families come in, a lot of times I can identify with them for one reason or another, either because I've been there myself, or because I've dealt with these same families when I was in health education.

Indeed, her advice to those wishing to become administrators is that working in any capacity serving people will broaden one's perspective and should be considered:

> A good example--I have a friend who is an administrator who used to be in physical education, and the coaching experience, working with children with different backgrounds, and different values, and that happens a lot with athletics, and getting to know those children and their families--so I guess I'm saying whatever it takes to help you understand people and their differences.

A similar theme is that of "identifier," exhibited in the language of an assistant principal who describes her educational experiences as very positive, specifically those with her coaches who established strong bonds with her. Laughing at what she refers to as her first leadership experience--setting a duck free from its cage in her first grade classroom to see what would happen--she describes her style as based on her personality, outgoing and able to identify with those she is helping. Her work as a cashier and as an employee of a newspaper mail room forced her from the ivory towers of education into the presence of real parents desiring real answers about their children's future. She explains:

> Especially working at the xxxxxxxxxxxxxx[newspaper]. Because once they found out I was a teacher, and at at that time I was a teacher, then they would ask me questions or express their concerns about how educators deal with people who are not in education. . . . They were not high school graduates, so they felt intimidated about coming over to a school to talk to the "educator" about their children. So I tried to ease they worries and to give them some suggestions as to how to approach the situation.

She refers to herself as a "situational leader" because it is the situation that determines how she will handle it but calls herself a planner as well, for she has formulated a time-line toward getting a doctorate in education.

In slight contrast to this assistant principal who serves as a "common denominator" that can relate to all different types, one principal not only sees herself as understanding the people--parents, staff, and students--with whom she works, but also she prides herself in cutting through the periphery, in telling it as she sees it. Indeed, this "truthsayer" is blunt and direct, but compassionate as she relates who she is as a school leader. She, who was not always concerned with making high grades, admits that when she decided excellence was important, there was relatively nothing that she could not handle. She even enjoyed the "professionalism" which her physical education department at her majority White undergraduate institution demanded. She explains her resulting educational vision:

> But I never went into education because I loved children. That was not important to me. I thought that we could make changes in society through education, and I still

> believe that, based on all the experiences I had based in that desegregated environment. Those images will never leave me.

In her last school move, she walked into a situation where the first experience she had was to break up a fight in front of her new school. However, she continues:

> And when I got here, and the stories and the rumors, and everything I had heard about this school, all I saw was potential. This was not a moment for site-based management. . . I made just change after change for children . . .These teachers care about these children--I care about them, but they will learn. And that's my mentality. . . .

When asked to describe her strengths and weaknesses, she elaborates:

> I think I'm organized, very visionary, and a hard worker. And I've learned to bring people aboard from different communities. I don't rely solely on teachers. It's not fair, for one thing, and they can't do it, and so my networking has been really good. . . When you realize the limitations that you do have, there are the ones that require the most energy to deal with. I have a
>
> hard time dealing with the system. . . the bureaucracy . . . is just horrible.

She spares no words in giving advice to administrators-to-be either:

> First of all, diversify. I don't mean just pad your resume. I mean go out and do a lot of different things with different groups in and out of education. Be prepared, and it's one thing to look at your sex and race as a way of getting in the door. It's another thing to be prepared once you get in there. . . Networking is important and

> learn to work with parents. Not run from them. Work with them.

The advice to "diversify" is a common theme in the story of a successful college administrator as well. This educational leader is first and foremost an "achiever" who, much like a "pole vaulter," intentionally raises the bar to challenge herself more. From her failure to become a high school member of the National Honor Society, an experience she has never forgotten, to her successful career as a K-12 educator, she admits that she has been driven to "prove, always having to prove, always having to show that you could speak and write and think like everyone else." Included in that proving is a determination not to be "pigeonholed," as she terms it. Suggesting that women, especially African-American women stand a chance of being dismissed as one-dimensional, i.e., good in human relations, proficient in special education, she argues that she has switched positions often to avoid that happening to her:

> I was there--actually, it was less than two years. It looks better on paper because you see two . . . but I didn't want to pigeonholed. xxxxx xxxxxxx was not my first field, even though I knew a lot about it. I think that in certain areas, people say, you know, this is the only thing that she can do. And that's another reason that I don't recommend that minorities stay very long in human relations. . . two years, that's as long as I was going to stay in human relations, because I felt I was an educator. Yes, I was interested in human relations, but I don't want people to say, "Well, she's an African-American, so she's an expert in being African-American. Or, she's in special education, so she's. . ."

She insists on the importance of being involved in school management at the K-12 level for those interested in leading professional schools of education. Although she admits "I reluctantly accepted that experience," she recognizes that it "strengthens one's hand":

> And so, even if you want to be the guru of curriculum and instruction, still go through the assistant principal and principal things first. Because you've got to--you may have been a teacher--if you're a teacher and a principal, then you've--that's where the action takes place. And if you're the superintendent, you need to know something about that. And I've found that of all the people I hired and interviewed, especially when I was superintendent or assistant superintendent, or deputy superintendent, I always zeroed in, if the candidates were otherwise all equal, and one had that principal, assistant principal experience, I generally went with him.

She also advocates obtaining a doctorate if one plans to advance to upper level administrative positions. Her decision to go back to school for the doctorate is, she says, "one of the best decisions I ever made. . . by that time, I was looking at the next step." She also, however, mentions that "I still think I had that urge to prove myself academically."

Her broad experience--as an assistant principal, a principal, a director of special education, a coordinator of curriculum, an assistant, associate, and full superintendent of schools, as well as a state education official and an educational dean--has convinced her that her leadership style is one of team-building. Because she has been in situations where she "managed" areas that were not her primary fields,

she has learned to staff schools with people who "have a lot of energy." Indeed, she elaborates:

> So I really do believe very much in "team." I think it's hard for any one person to have everything. When I've gone into a new job, I've always been able to say where I am probably very qualified to have this job, there are still two or three holes that I have, and so when I hire people, I try to hire them also to fill those holes.

She seeks people who are "energetic and competent" so that she can give them "leeway" and room to work their own magic.

The level of her determination and energy is not unlike that of another university administrator, the director of nursing program. From her high school experience of working as a maid on the "annex," the "Colored wing" of her local hospital, this woman set out to return as a full-fledged nurse to that same hospital. In yet another restriction--in their practicums as student nurses--she and other African-American students were not allowed to work at another nearby regional hospital, a prohibition that she admits was ultimately beneficial for it afforded the students to achieve a broader perspective of health care by working in a neighboring state. She has been, indeed, a "trailblazer" of sorts, opening doors for other African-American health professionals as she composed her own story of academic and leadership successes. Called upon to start several programs, she has been promoted to administrative posts because of a proven track record of strong, viable curricula. She contends that the present

president of the university system has made progress in appointing women, although she urges, "We have to try a little bit harder because there are a lot of women who really produce." "It goes back," she says, "to that old adage--it's just not good enough to produce, to work hard--you've got to be political. You've got know how to play those games."

She has instinctively taken experiences as opportunities to grow rather than defeats, from her meeting with her undergraduate dean who did not "care" for her to her obtaining her doctorate in community college education after leaving the community college program she established. "I think everything to me is a challenge," she says. She continues:

> The more you tell me I can't, the more I'm going to show you I can. And if you tell me no, then I'll retreat and figure out a way to come back at you with the same thing--if I know it's the right thing to do. And I'll keep bringing that to the forefront, until somebody sees, "Well, maybe there's something here."

She asserts that leaders "have to be a model," and she tries to "put her hands on," i.e., get to know, every student in her program. She admits she is not the kind of person who can stay in an office and hand out directives. Since 1989, she has known almost every student going through the program, not just by name, but something personal about each one. She contends that her training in a health related field is a wonderful basis for administration at all levels, for medically trained workers have been held accountable to

national standards for many more years than most other programs have been. As well, she has started a clinical practice of her own so that when she suggests to a faculty member that he or she needs to sharpen skills, she can speak from active experience in the field.

It is interesting that for the final metaphors discussed, two women--one at the central office administration and one at an institution of higher learning--espouse a transcendent description of their lives as educators. An assistant superintendent, the central office administrator speaks of her career as an educator as a "journey" in understanding herself. Beginning with the year in which she was sent to a private boarding school to avoid busing, she depicts both her education and her career in tones of self-awareness. Perhaps because from age fourteen on she did not live at home, she has experienced educational experiences based on outreach as much as improvement of one's self. Her twelfth-grade teacher took her class to New York to a conference on poverty; she traveled a great deal with her chorus and such trips were considered essential parts of her education. In college, she visited nursing homes and participated in the sixties' Civil Rights activities. Throughout, this "risk taker" admits that when she would take risks, she would be happier--from moving to Europe with her new husband to beginning schools with totally new staffs and new curricula. From longing to dance in the streets of Paris to asking herself what position will she

accept next, she frames her life in terms of adventures:

> That even as a youngster, the difference you know. . . Before going to xxxxxxxx High School, for example there were two little missionary Baptist ladies, who took me and several others under their wing and they involved us in a lot of activities. . . In fact, I ended up being what they called Southern Baptist Youth Missionary, was sent to xxx xxxxxx [a large midwestern city]. . and I also did missionary work in western xxxxx xxxxxxx [her home state]. . . and I was still a teenager.

She admits to still being a "free spirit," although "curtailed" somewhat by responsibilities. Indeed, she wonders how she will view her position once the phase her current school system is undertaking is finished. She has enjoyed herself the most when, for example, "we came up with our own program," beginning a project rather than simply continuing it:

> We visited a school in xxxxxxx, an alternative program, and we visited all other places, and we came up with our own program. The thing unique about it was I was again a free spirit. I wasn't that accountable to the xxxxxxx school system because it was a federal program . . . I was able to really feel my way and learn on my own, other than principals' meetings and stuff like that.

The exhilaration she describes is a personal satisfaction, an aesthetic appreciation of the thinking process she must undergo to formulate and devise a program that will really happen. That emphasis on personal satisfaction is the same crucial focus of a retired K-12 principal who has spent the last ten years directing a teacher education program at her first alma mater. She, brought up in

a family that integrated classical learning into everyday activities, is indeed a "classicist," an administrator who advocates that enriching the aesthetic powers of a learner's mind remains the most powerful approach to improving one's life. The dining room table, the "self-designated study hall," stood as a symbol of a total familial commitment to education. Her memories of a drama production in high school, The Bishop's Candlestick, include the research she and her sister had to conduct to produce it and the rewarding affirmation of her parents' attendance: "And I'll never forget. . . we had to do the research and stage it and all, and my parents came to see their darling jewels walk across the stage." Hers is an account, even in the midst of closed opportunities for African-Americans in public universities, of a gentility and affection for learning. "If I could just whet their appetites, and lift up the scales," she would be achieving education's true purpose for students, a purpose which seems to hint of the divine:

> I firmly believe that contacts enrich and spark one's very being, and I think that's one reason I try very hard to listen and zoom in and try to make an impact.

The "constant learner," this classicist uses allusions much like she says her own professors did in explaining her view of leadership and the work that must be done in education:

> I like to interact with people, and I like to discover. And because I'm constantly learning. . . And I see

> new relationships and see the threads of the past coming to form the tapestry of the present and go to the future. And I see some areas--it's some areas--it seems like it's going around in circles. . . but then I think of the salmon as they go upstream--how some of them get off in the little grooves, in the quiet water and stop and rest, and gain strength, while others break their heads and are worn out and never make the journey. Sometimes it's well to just stay in the pool for a quiet reflection and a time to regain their strength. . .

Describing her leadership as principal, she speaks of her interaction with the children:

> We didn't have problems because we worked with the children constantly. You've got to expect--I think that you can appeal to children and they can be their better selves. . . We were very, very anxious at all times to involve children and parents in what are the things that would help us to live better, improve the quality of living in the school? . . . but if there are interesting experiences and they are live, and you can capture that little spark . . . .and to face it by themselves. . . .they can do better by themselves and they can open up toward others. Because the more secure they are, the better they are to help somebody out. If you are standing on quicksand, you can't lift the pig out of the pond.

Her attitude extends to the teachers as well. Because she was an instructional leader, she saw it as her task to help teachers improve grow. Just as a "gardener" tends to her plants, she as an instructional leader nurtures those around her:

> And I worked with people to help make them strong and believe in themselves. And then I facilitate their growth because when you help other people grow, you grow, and everybody grows. . . And I had some teachers that others didn't want, and they said "How in the world...?" You see, they had

> been dumped, so we held them close and helped them do very well what they could do. . . Because you can't take them and put them in a dump. And all of them don't die or retire, so you have to do something inbetween, so give them a chance to grow.

She takes issue with those in educational leadership who do not attempt to help these teachers. Her analogy of what happens to these teachers is what she concedes also happens to students on whom the system "gives up":

> They pick. They find. You can take a child and pick at the same piece of thread, and you'll unravel it. But if you try to get that back in the fabric, you can put some more colors on it.

Such an attitude reveals her preferred leadership style, one she characterizes as "open and receptive. I listen, and I am, I am very frank. I mean, I don't sugar coat it, but I'm not rude. I think you have to deal with reality."

Her reality is that after a lifetime in the public school system, her "retirement" is working with undergraduates as they begin their own teaching careers. At a traditionally Black college that has fallen on economic hard times, she is glad to have played a part recently in a "thank-you day" honoring her ten years, so far, of service there. "They amazed me," she admits. "And it moved beyond me. . . several persons said it was good for the soul--it was a needed gathering." Because she has had a "love affair" with the college as well as with learning, she has spent her time working for this institution: "I know that any day that I

decide I want to go home, I can. But there's so much to be done, and there's a short time to do it in."

Kliebard's suggestion that we interpret our lives metaphorically is an indication that human beings desire connections to be made between their life-events and their philosophies, between their philosophies and their existence. The metaphors which surface in these African-American female educational administrators professional life-histories emanate from who they are within, the people they are when the last student or staff has gone home and they are left deciding why they should come back to work the next day. These successful women have stories which indicate that they find their strength from the families in which they have lived, from the education and training they have experienced, from the obstacles such as prejudice and ignorance which they have encountered, and from the languages they have learned to speak to themselves when trying to make sense of it all. The stories give us metaphors, small glimpses of the process they undergo as they make their educational contributions to a society outside themselves. As one administrator summarizes, she continues her work in education because she recognizes that relationships among human beings are the conduits along which learning travels. She wants to be there, to be involved in helping students learn that, like herself, "each person has a story" that is crucial to knowing one's self. After all, she concludes, "If you don't have a story, you don't know

where you are and where you're going, and you don't know where you've been."

The "stories" of these African-American female educational administrators have, in this chapter, served as examples of the languages and the metaphors inherent in the process of making meaning and communicating one's self to another. As these women articulate their educational visions, they have exemplified the power of narrative research in showing, rather than describing, real-life interactions and perceptions. Chapter Five presents conclusions derived from this study and also suggests further implications and questions that may enhance our knowledge of African-American female educational administrators' professional life-histories and their visions of leadership.

CHAPTER V

THE REFRAIN: "UNDERSTANDING HAS CONSEQUENCES"

In the beginning of this study, I had no idea what the African-American female educational administrators with whom I would speak would say about their lives. I did not know if I would find common themes or if each story would be so individual that I would be ill at ease to make any comments about its language or metaphorical foundations. I was not sure, even though I had contacted these women and had received their permission to interview them, exactly how the interviews themselves would proceed. I was dependent on them for all the "data" and could not manipulate anything except some prompts to make sure we covered the questions.

Throughout the process of interviewing, I fought the demons perched on my shoulder, whispering, "This is not quantitative--how can you generalize? What a small sample! How can you be sure these are representative? Can't you say 'Two out of three . . .'?" The tension of looking at the interviews textually and not listing how many times the person referred to parents or referred to prejudice or mentioned isolation at times overwhelmed me, and I would have to step back from typing what the speakers said and remind myself that the analysis of the language they use and the metaphors which they exemplify is valid, even more so if communicating their

meanings is my first priority and goal.

There was as well the struggle of whether I were saying too much in setting the framework for their stories or if I were depending too much on their words and not having enough of "me" included to justify this as my dissertation. Whenever that spritely little devil leaped close to my ear and poked me with his doubting pitchfork, I reminded myself of a tried and true tenet of good composition: always show rather than tell. In my writing classes, I have always tried very hard to enable students to find out the difference between "showing" and merely "telling about something"--that to use people's words or textual clues from the literature always results in more powerful writing than when one simply describes or tells about something. In the long run, my instincts were right: adhering to the premise that these African-American female educational administrators are the speakers allowed me to present their stories in a framework that made sense but also meant that they still controlled how their stories were presented because they authored the words.

Learning from the Process

In concluding this study, the question asked in Chapter Three--how do African-American female educational administrators in higher education add to and broaden the picture of professional life-stories shared by other African-

American female educational administrators?--inevitably became an introductory question to the adventure of interacting with the administrators I met and to whom I listened. Of course, the administrators in higher education usually, but not always, had more degrees than those in K-12. They may have been more mobile in their careers, not staying in one system or region. Any descriptive statistics, however, fall short of showing the process they use to make meaning of their histories. As they tell about their family background, their education, their career decisions, and their visions of education and of leadership, it is by far more important to see the pictures all of the administrators construct of their lives.

Learning from What They Say

Family influence matters a great deal. From those women who found a base from which they later could try out their wings as adults to those women who acknowledged the stress parents could place on them, the home surfaced as a key place to ask about when attempting to find out who these leaders really are. It was there that they were motivated not to do just as well as their White counterparts, but "better" because the outside world does not keep score in the same manner for Blacks as it does for Whites. The word <u>can't</u> was disallowed. Hard work and professionalism were modeled. For these

administrators, parents insisted that they attend college--for how long differed from family to family.

These women grew up with some of the phraseology found in the technical language of curriculum: an emphasis on productivity, hard work, efficiency, strong work ethics, little room for personal interactions or feelings. However, what is striking in their descriptions of how this language plays out in their family background is that the African-American community may indeed have had a different "take," a different interpretation of those phrases. For the most part, these women experienced the majority of their education in either segregated schools or in the confusion surrounding the early days of integration and did not participate the same way that the majority culture did within the technological language the hegemony spoke.

In addition, these administrators' experiences in schooling--from receiving positive, self-affirming personal attention to being shuffled around from school to school and being little more than a number--serve as examples of the disappointments, the accomplishments, and sometimes the bewilderment about the true purpose of education. The young girl who realizes that she has been placed in a class of students who are not expected to achieve shares the anguish of wondering why she is there. The college graduate who is not allowed to enroll in her state university because she is an African-American, but who goes on to obtain a Master's degree

from a prestigious teacher's college, smiles and utters thanks that she was turned away from her own state's institutions to enroll in one of national renown. The principal whose first day of college introduced her to white hoods and burning crosses now works with her elementary teachers to reach every child and make a difference in that child's life. These examples and the rest of the stories show us vividly that the women accepted the importance of education in a manner that others might have deemed not worth the trouble. Throughout all their stories, these women admit the pain and confusion of mixed signals sent by the institutions of education, but they do not deviate from their conviction, begun by parents and nurtured by their community, that education is the "one best way" to improve their lives.

Their careers--from teacher, nurse, and counselor--reveal paths that are not linear. Most of the women who have married have also had children, sometimes taking leaves because of health complications and sometimes making sure the yearbooks are all issued before allowing labor to begin. A "maid" on the Black wing of the hospital goes to college, works a summer as an aide on both Black and White wings of the hospital, and eventually becomes the director of nursing at that same hospital. One administrator makes a conscious decision that to advance to the level of administration she desires she must be mobile and moves from position to position, taking up each challenge as a new learning opportunity. Indeed, these women

sometimes refer to their instincts as having led them to certain job opportunities, which only in hindsight do they realize were good choices. Throughout their career steps, however, these women do show thoughtful decision-making, even if at times they refer to "falling into administration." The strength of their personalities suggest that were the positions not a good fit, they would quite readily "climb out" of administration.

That these women experience prejudice both as African-Americans and African-American women is neither unexpected nor unusual. For the most part, these administrators state that their race has been the primary barrier they have faced. They speak of experiences from early in their lives to ones they have faced as educators. The assistant principal who as a teacher was told that she had gone "up a notch" in a parent's estimation was not fooled by the condescension and veiled suspicion that she had been regarded as an inferior teacher. The central office administrator who was first hired as a teacher because she was Black-- but not noticeably so--chose to teach science education even thought it meant she would "have to read all that stuff." As successful educators of children of all color, they must function on two levels--that of working with children intensely to make sure the children are achieving and growing educationally while at the same time realizing that their work is not judged on the same, equal criteria as their majority counterparts.

In addition to being conscious of the effect of their race on their work and their career goals, these women admit that gender bias has also been evident in some situations. One principal confesses that she thought she had ruined her chances of being hired when she took objection to being called "Sweetheart." She learned later that her asking the principal to use her name probably was the defining moment in the interview that led to her being hired. An assistant principal takes steps to insure that she will be considered for a twelve month position because she realizes the additional month of work could be a too-easy rationale for handing over the position to a male applicant. A leader in higher educational administration recalls how her successful development of a program and her four promotions melted away as accomplishments because she did not possess the political suaveness to efface her own hard work and point instead to them as the results of her hard-working, male, supervisor.

Learning from Their Leadership

Whether their careers began teaching elementary children to read, counseling community college students, instructing students at the college level, or mopping floors and dispensing medication, these women speak of their careers with dignity and purpose, leaving little doubt that their successes have been due largely because of their commitment to the tasks

at hand. One administrator in higher education exemplifies how important she considers the students and their education:

> Human beings like to feel that they are necessary, and one of the ways of doing that. . . we had a situation that . . . I didn't believe the classes we were getting in were having so much difficulty in reading. So, very well, there's no use in saying they can't read. It's established, and tests, standardized tests,indicate that they probably read better than this--we'll believe that they do. But let's get ready for them, for some of them will need to be in intensive care. Because if they were in a physical condition, they would be in the emergency room with tubes running everywhere. Now where, what life support are we going to do? And we'd be very frank with the students. We said, take their records, go over, because they must have some responsibility. Show them where if you were in the hospital you would be on the list they were get ready to see where your cemetery plot was. Now, if you were going to be in an intensive care, then you're going to act, your action and your behavior--and so they'd say, "I want to go to the intensive care unit!"

Advice filters in and out of their stories as they share experiences of prejudice, cruelty, and being misunderstood. One administrator in higher education summarizes her career by saying:

> I don't think you avoid things. I think they are offering opportunities to be solved because when you're going, you cannot pick and choose. I'd say have every experience and do them positively and have reflective thinking and say, "Well, would I have done differently? What happened in this situation? What are some alternatives for what happened?" You don't--because life isn't like that--you can't ball up and avoid things.

Another administrator, this one at the central office level, talks about the milieu in which she first became an administrator:

> When I initially became an administrator, there were none (women), and I had to just fumble around and find the best ways, and many times I was so frustrated and felt like I was out there on my own because I couldn't pick up the phone and call someone . . .

She continues, warning against losing touch with one's identity:

> I think we sometimes forget what it's like to be to be there . . . We take on the characteristics of the males that we surround ourselves with or that we may see every day. I don't know if it's easier to do that, if that's what we subconsciously think we ought to do, when we become a successful administrator. I don't know what the key is, but I see it happening too many times. . .it's like being a minority for any number of years, and getting to a place where you don't have to worry about that so much and you see yourself becoming the biggest racist that you could ever become, because you've forgotten where you've been, you've forgotten what it's like, and I think we all really need to pay more attention to that and not let it happen.

These successful educators share from their lives what to look for in mentors, in making the most of opportunities, in becoming "people" persons, and in developing effective leadership styles.

When one looks at the language in which these leaders articulate the influences in their lives, most women discuss their parents, church, community, and other relatives with fondness. They offer examples of how a father or mother instilled them with confidence or "rode herd" over them to strive for success. The political tug of war for power seems natural in their youth; the language of the American Dream

resonates with what technical overtones can be adopted from the shreds African-Americans were allowed to call their own; the ethical language of treating others as they themselves would like to be treated is by far the loudest chord repeated throughout their stories. "Remember where you are," cautioned friends of one principal in an eastern part of the state; in addition to doing her job well, she must also be avoiding any racial mistake she might make--an extra "job duty." In another administrator's experiences is one in which a White parent communicated his impatience with her teaching method:

> There was a professor at xxxxxxx . . . I had his daughter and that was the time when we didn't have a text book per se for each student, and we used a variety of books and we used them as research, and that is how I taught math. And I would give the students a few problems to do at night. Every day, her father would write me a note on a torn off sheet of paper--it was intended to be nasty--about the problems or whatever. What finally made me realize that his intentions had been nasty--I could have been devastated, but since I was so naive, I couldn't be devastated by something I didn't know was happening. He wrote me a letter, and this time it was on stationery, and it said, "Dear Mrs. xxxxxx, xxxxxxx would be happy to do her math assignment if she had a book to bring home to do it." And he said, "If the school system, or school, is too poor to buy a book for xxxxxxx, please send me the publishing--the book and the name of the publishing company so that I might order her a book." And I wrote him back, and I said, "Dear xxxxxxxxx, since you are ordering textbooks, I have four other children who do not have that same book!" [laughs] "Would you order one for them, too?" And I never heard from him again.

She confesses that he probably thought she was a "total fool," but when she erred in interpreting his communication, she did so on the side of compassion. The idea that he was good

enough to reach out to help other children besides his own, she surmises, may just have been too much for him to pursue.

The African-American female educational administrators at K-12 and in higher education do not dwell in the scientific language; the construction of their identities and visions are very much grounded in the political realism of today, but as they speak, they continually seek for the ethical core and dream of the aesthetic fulfillment education should offer. They are immersed in what West calls the "triple crisis of self-recognition" (1982: 31); they know who they are, they know who they are as perceived by the majority culture, and they are aware of what the White hegemony desires itself to be as well.

As the women articulate who they are, their words outline the image of who is speaking. Metaphors, which serve as a means of connecting what they say to concepts the listener or reader can understand, emerge from the repeated themes. Because these women are in education, they are by necessity producers, but beyond their managerial responsibilities as administrators, they appear to genuinely care about the total development of students. For a director of teacher education, the major concern is much akin to the same process Helen Keller undergoes in learning to communicate--it is the breaking down of the barrier prohibiting her from making connections. Once the magic is sensed, once the idea takes form in the brain--then the potential is unlimited. For

another administrator, the challenge is to hire and develop staff to attain such "teachable moments" and to provide a work atmosphere that enables education to make needed changes in society. Still another sees her role as symbolic for African-American students who have been "least well-served."

These women view themselves as leaders. Although some suggest people they admire, most admit that they would like to meet other leaders simply because they could learn from speaking with them. One explains her concept of leaders this way:

> I don't have a lot of public what you call "heroes." I consider them to be human and of course just like me--have a lot of human flaws. I don't really have a lot of people on pedestals. I don't have anybody really . . . But the leader I would admire the most would be the one who had a good work ethic, genuinely cares about people, feels that everyone in the organization is worthwhile, deserves respect.

Unknowingly, in other places in her story, she has described herself as a hard worker, a person who really cares about students, teachers, and parents, and who respects her colleagues for putting the children at the very center of her attention. It is she, herself, who is a leader that she could admire.

Inherent in all the stories is a strong self-confidence born of experience, training, intelligence, and awareness. When one college administrator says that she is not necessarily suspicious of the "other race," she echoes the sentiments of an assistant principal who overheard a White

teacher telling a group of White teachers that the assistant principal would not approach the problem any differently than they would: "So it was the greatest compliment that she could pay me, because truly, I see us all as humans." That these women are, indeed, successful, visionary, committed humans from whom other educators can learn is the most important facet of this study. Their voices, along with other African-American female educational administrators' stories, are fascinating and enlightening.

Learning Where to Go from Here

That these interviews portend the power of what other African-American female educational administrators might have to say suggests that more interviews should occur and more women should be encouraged to participate. Increasing the original study team could accommodate an increase in the number of women's stories which could be shared.

In addition, although in most cases the interviewees would begin after one question and amazingly cover most of the questions in the simple telling of their lives, a fresh look at the questions might be necessary to see which ones encourage the speakers to share more experiences or describe experiences more fully. In this particular interview sequence, although the question of "leaders" gave particular insight into what leadership qualities these women admire, and although the women named leaders that exhibit many of the

values they themselves espouse, there were times in the process that such questions seemed very anticlimactic and almost detracted from the richness these women had articulated about their own leadership values and priorities. One of the purposes set forth in this study was that the stories might benefit all those interested in educational administration, but especially those African-American educators who might consider a career in administration. Return visits to these interviewees with questions about networking and establishing some sort of communication might indeed be a benefit, an active offspring, of this study. Because these women have so much to tell, hearing what they have to say is a call to action, reminiscent of what Dr. Evelyn Fox Keller said in an interview with Bill Moyers: "Understanding has consequences."

Sherryl Kleinman and Martha Copp (1993) refer to the changes they experience as research fieldworkers when undertaking qualitative studies. They discuss the haunting positivist voice, and they acknowledge the existence of those "problematics" which Kathleen Casey (1995) examines. Pinar describes the dynamism involved in such research:

> Qualitative research is politically progressive, as it is epistemologically sophisticated, because it understands that a basic meaning of human life is movement, conflict, resolution, each thesis and anti-thesis opposing each other in ways which give birth to a new order of understanding and life. The task is not to control this movement, nor is it merely to portray it. It is to contribute to it, acting as midwives in the labor which is human history coming to form. (1988, p. 151)

Noblit acknowledges the interaction which is inherent in qualitative research when he explains how his own "smug little 'learned' views about education" were changed as a result of his interaction with the Black woman teacher in his study (1993, p. 27).

By articulating their professional life-histories, these African-American female educational administrators contribute to qualitative studies and to education. That more studies of this nature need to be undertaken is obvious; indeed, even more could be learned from these women's lives, for there is so much of their lives that cannot be said in a short interview, and, their lives keep formulating new chapters every day. However, this study does play a small part toward the resolution of the discordant void their silence has made heretofore.

James Baldwin is quoted in a recent book by Rebecca Carroll, a compilation of writings from African-American male writers. Although his audience is that of literary figures, his words apply as well to African-Americans who struggle with the concept of self-identity in the midst of a hegemonic culture that either ignores them or controls them by defining for them who they are:

> All you are ever told about being black is that it is a terrible, terrible thing to be. Now, in order to survive this, you have to dig down into yourself and re-create yourself, really according to no image which yet exists in America. You have to impose, in fact--this may sound strange--you

> have to decide who you are, and force the world to deal with you, not with its ideas of you. (1995, p. xvii)

That these African-American female educational administrators share their professional-life stories is a step toward improving dialogue among educators and achieving for themselves what they advocate for children: the fascination of discovering knowledge and the power of understanding. Indeed, the inclusion of everyone's story may help in forming that band of ideas to which West refers:

> As with a soloist in a jazz quartet, quintet, or band, individuality is promoted in order to sustain and increase the creative tension within the group--a tension that yields higher levels of performance to achieve the aim of the collective project. (1994, pp. 150-151)

The chorus of these women's stories has many different notes within it, just as a band or an orchestra is made up of many different instruments playing what seems to be a complex but rich and beautiful tune. With more inquiries such as this one, educators can generate more discussion and study which can "yield" those "higher levels of performance" that West maintains accompany an ideal working relationship. Musicians achieve this "collective project" because they practice together. Educators should follow their example to achieve the excellence students deserve.

FOOTNOTES

[1] It is acceptable APA practice to exclude first names when mentioning sources. However, I have chosen to include the first names of female researchers and sources to underscore the active scholarship and writing by women.

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APPENDIX

QUESTION PARAMETERS
INTERVIEW

General Background

1. As you were growing up, what experiences contributed to your later decision to enter the field of education? to become a school leader?

2. What people during the years before you entered college had a significant influence on you? Can you describe that influence?

3. Given the attitudes and values you bring to your current leadership position, can you tell me about experiences you had prior to college that helped shaped them?

4. What things about your early years contributed to your later professional success? in what ways?

5. Tell me something about your family, your parents or the people who raised you. In what ways did they contribute to make you the person you are today? (Did having _____ [name of important person or large/small family, etc.] have an impact?)

The information sought in this section is the biographical foundation upon which the person built once in college.

Formal Educational Background (college and beyond)

1. Tell me something about your undergraduate formal education. Where did you go to school? What did you study? Why did you decide to study that?
2. Sometimes the most important things we learn as undergraduates aren't things that show up in courses. Did you have any experiences that might fit into that category?
3. Tell me a little about your graduate school experiences. Where did you go? Why did you decide to study that?
4. What motivated you to attend the schools you attended?
5. Specifically, in what ways did your formal graduate schooling prepare you to be a school leader?
6. What other school experiences or people that you met during your formal education prepared you to be a leader?
7. Are there other kinds of formal educational opportunities, like workshops or training programs, that you've taken that helped you? What are they? In what ways did they help? How did you find out about them?
8. Are there specific things about one's formal education that you would advise other folks interested in becoming school administrators to take, do, or consider? What are they?
9. Any advice about what to avoid? Why?
10. Is there anything about your formal educational

experiences that you wish you had done differently? What? Why?

Work Experiences Other Than Professional Education

1. What jobs have you held outside education? Did you learn anything doing those jobs that has been helpful to you as an educator? If so, what?
2. Are there job experiences outside education that you would advise someone to get on their way to a career as an educational administrator?

Work Experiences in Education

1. Tell me a little about your professional experiences in education. Where did you get your first job? Why there as opposed to somewhere else? What was that like--what did you learn from those early years as an educator?
2. What kind of teacher were you? What strengths did you have as a teacher? Have those been helpful to you as an administrator?
3. Would you walk me through your educational work experiences--when you did whatever you did on your way to your current job?
4. Looking back on your experiences as an educator, before this current position, what things were most important to you

in your current role? What things did you learn that were particularly valuable?

5. Obviously, you made a decision to become an educational administrator at some point in your career. Tell me about that decision. When did you make it? Why? Did someone influence you in your choice? If so, who and how?

6. Often we are told that having role models or mentors is helpful. What role models or mentors did you (or do you) have as you moved toward administration? How did you find them? In what ways were they helpful?

7. Looking back on those work experiences, what things would you advise someone who's thinking of becoming an administrator to experience? to avoid? why?

Leadership Philosophy

1. How would you characterize your leadership style? What type of leader are you?

2. What qualities do you think make a good leader? How did you come to have those qualities?

3. Are there things about your leadership that are distinctly you? If so, what are they?

4. Identify one or two leaders whom you admire and tell me why you admire them.

General Philosophy

1. Identify one or two people, leaders in education or outside education--maybe not even leaders at all, other than those discussed already that you admire. Tell me why.
2. If there's someone today you could meet, who would it be and why?
3. What things would you look for if you were in a position to hire someone as a teacher? As an educational leader? Why?

Gender and Race Issues

1. In what ways do you think your experiences have been the way they have been because you are a woman?
2. In what ways do you think your experiences have been the way they have been because you are an African-American?
3. In considering the discrimination challenges you might have encountered, how would you weigh being female and African-American? Was one more a barrier in your advancement into positions that have, until recently, been reserved for white males than the other?

Other

The goals in collecting this information, in addition to telling the stories of successful African-American female educational administrators, is to provide some guidance for women, both European and African-American, who are interested in leadership positions and to provide some guidance to personnel directors, superintendents, and administrators at the higher education level who are hoping to fill such positions. Is there anything that I have not asked that might be helpful in meeting those objectives?