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Women's Voices in Education: Two Jamaican Life Histories.

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WOMEN'S VOICES IN EDUCATION:  
TWO JAMAICAN LIFE HISTORIES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the 
Louisiana State University and 
Agricultural and Mechanical College 
in partial fulfillment of the 
requirements for the degree of 
Doctor of Philosophy

in 
The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

by 
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May, 1999
DEDICATION

To the memory of Zillah V. Palmer, (Mama), the only mother I knew, and the woman who believed in me and my ability to achieve any goal I set myself.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The educators whose words appear in this study are in a very special way, its primary authors. Without their cooperation and trust there would be no study. To these women, I extend an enormous thanks.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to recover the marginalized voices of women educators in Jamaica by turning their oral life histories into text. It was not possible to interview all women educators in Jamaica so I have used the life histories of two women who were the 'first' women to take positions in educational leadership in two spheres that were once male dominated. Both women have made it to the zenith of the education profession. These women relate their life experiences and the meanings they give to their work as educators. Women have always played important roles in the education system of Jamaica, but there is very little or no documentation of this.

Although the two women in this study cannot speak for all the women teachers/educators in Jamaica it is hoped that because of the meanings they give to their experiences, through their stories, other educators in the country will be reflective of their practices as professionals. It is the researcher's hope that this study will begin a conversation in which other women will join.

It is also the researcher's hope that outsiders will gain some knowledge of class, race and gender as they co-exist in Jamaica.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: WOMEN AND JAMAICA
I remember, I remember, the house where I was born. The little window where the sun came peeping in at dawn... Places and faces may change... the memories of childhood are here with me to stay.
(Anonymous)

My own identity

I grew up in Jamaica in the 1960s, a time of political changes and uncertainties. It was a time when Jamaica wanted to be rid of the shackles of colonialism and to find her own way in the world. Jamaicans wanted to sever the umbilical cord that still connected them to Britain and colonialism but was unsure about how to do it. Should Jamaica be part of a West Indian Federation\(^1\)? Should she seek internal self-government and finally her independence from the motherland? Jamaica seceded from the federation in 1961 and gained independence from Great Britain on August 6, 1962.

Although I grew up during the political maelstrom, I realized from very early in life that there were no boundaries set on what I as a woman could do or achieve. I am not very sure however, when I came to that realization or what contributed to it. Was it my home

\(^{1}\)This was a joining together of ten British colonies in The West Indies to seek independence as a unit from Britain and to set up a common government. The federation did not materialize as the islands could not agree on many things and had insular interests.
background? Maybe. There were so many men in my immediate environment. There were my uncles and male cousins. My grandmother and I were the only women. I grew up ‘like one of the boys’. Looking back, I was perhaps the proverbial ‘tomboy’, although no one ever referred to me as one. No one told me that I should not play marbles, climb trees, catapult birds out of trees, race the boys to the corner, or do handstands on the handle bar of my bicycle. My male cousins did all these things. We were playmates, and so I did them also. They cooked, cleaned and sewed just as I did. We tidied our rooms and made our beds. One of my male cousins even learned to crotchet and do embroidery. There were no defined gender roles in my immediate surroundings. As children we reared goats and rabbits and it was our duty to feed them. We took turns doing chores before we left for school each day. Anyone who did not perform his/her duty for that day was punished. There was equal punishment for neglect of duty, regardless of gender.

I recall with fond memories an incident that happened one morning when I was nine or ten years old. It had rained heavily the night before I was to tend the goats. The path to the pastures was flooded. Water was waist high. If I took another path I would be late for school, so I decided that I would lead the goats through the water. They would not follow willingly so I began pulling on the ropes. The
biggest goat jumped back and the other three followed. That day I learned that goats will not go through water. I was pulled down in the water and was drenched from head to toes. Finally, taking another way to the pastures, I had performed my day’s chore, but I was now going to be late for school. In a hurry I ran back to the house, took my bath, got dressed and was about to run the quarter of a mile to school when I was stopped by my aunt’s American husband who was visiting. He told me that what I was doing was boys’ work and I should let my cousins do it because if I continued to do the work I was doing, I would not get married. "Men do not like tomboys", he added, "and that’s what you are". I made it to school a minute before the bell for the start of class. On my return home that evening my uncle-in-law and my grandmother were discussing what was said to me that morning. My grandmother, (or "Mama" as I called her) told him that my aunt, to whom he was married, did the same chores I was performing and he married her. Then she asked, "Is Myrtle a tomboy?" Uncle-in-law said no, but added that she was too independent. My grandmother remarked that it was that same independence that she was trying to instill in me through performing the chores I did. That said, he apologized to both Mama and me. He was convinced that there was nothing inherently masculine about what I was doing.
My uncle-in-law took me out that weekend and bought me my first pair of waterboots.

Another recollection that brings a smile to my face me every time I repeat it, was the day my foster father (my uncle) tethered his cow too near the fence and it stretched across and destroyed our neighbor's ears of corn. Grandmother told my foster father he should pay for the crops as he should not have put the cow there. My father started to justify his behavior by saying he had tied the cow on his property. I decided that I would tell my dad how I felt about the matter. Being only a child, who was too short to see my father eye to eye, and believed I should look him in the eyes when I spoke, I climbed on to a chair and finally on to the dining table, looked him in the eyes and said, "You are wrong. Pay for the corn, Daddy. The corn was there before you brought the cow home". My father lifted me by the collar of my blouse as if I was weightless and set me down upon the floor. He then remarked, as he walked away, not intending that I should hear, "I do not know what is going to happen to you if you continue to speak your mind so openly".

Sure there were the times when I was the 'perfect little lady', dressed in laces and ribbons, pretty patent shoes, and adorable pink dresses, and played with dolls and stuffed toys. I was not always "the little tomboy". My home and environment gave me the freedom to
become whomever and whatever I wanted to be. There were days when I daydreamed about becoming a lawyer, or a doctor, a psychologist, and did role play. I was an athlete who won many trophies and medals in elementary, high schools and teachers' college. I even dreamed of becoming a world class athlete, but that dream was aborted when I had a left nephrectomy\textsuperscript{2}. I dreamed of becoming many things, but never did I want to be a teacher.

I attended a co-educational school as most children did in the 1960s. I even received my teacher training at a co-educational teachers' college - the very college, Mico, that was originally set up to educate male teachers, and did so for over one hundred years. Mico became a co-educational institution in the late 1950s. I had the choice of attending a women's college, but perhaps it was the 'wanting to be one of the boys' determination inside of me or the unrestricted gender environment in which I grew up, that made me turn down the offer to attend a single sex institution.

Teaching for me was a second choice. I could have gone into any other profession, and in fact did go to law school for a year. However, I eventually left and went into teaching because I did not want to cause financial strain on my grandmother who was advanced in age, or my foster father, my uncle, who had to send his biological

\textsuperscript{2} The surgical removal of a kidney
children to school. Teachers were needed in my country. Young men and women were being invited into this "noble profession" (Hoffman, 1981). While the government paid for teacher training, law school was expensive. I thought I would teach for a few years, save my own money, and go back to law school if I was still interested. I did work and save but I never returned to law school. I suppose the interest died. I have remained in teaching and I am very happy.

When my cousin, Michael, my uncle’s last child, graduated from law school in 1990, I was congratulating him and telling him how happy I was for him. I joked that I wished I had remained in law school so we could have discourses at the legal level, and maybe compete with each other in the courtroom sometimes. I was unaware that my uncle overheard our conversation. He called me aside and told me that he had always supported me in whatever I wanted to do; it made him sad that I had quit law school because I thought he could not afford it. He begged me to go back if that was what I wanted, and offered to pay the bills. I assured him that I was really happy as a teacher and that I was no longer interested in law. The disappointed look on my uncle’s face still haunts me, especially when I think that he died not convinced that teaching had become my true interest and profession.

Daily, I examine my life and the professional choice I made. The more I do, the more convinced I am that Uncle wanted me to be
that lawyer much more than I ever desired. I think he was the person who suggested that I pursue law in the first place.

My own teaching stories

My grandmother knew that I had been happy as a teacher. In my near twenty years of teaching in Jamaica, I have many experiences and often reflect on how teaching has helped me to define my own life. Teaching has not always been a joy, but neither has it always been sorrow. I cannot think of any other profession that I would have enjoyed as much as I am enjoying teaching. I feel fulfilled as a person. Looking back now, I know I would choose this career all over again given a second chance.

I will never forget a boy who I taught to read. He was in school and had moved up through the grades to the ninth but was unable to read. When he was placed into my English class the teachers who had taught him through the years told me it was unfair to me as a first year teacher to have to teach the student as "he could not read and was a troublesome boy". I tried to find out Bill’s interest. He loved cars. He said he wanted to be a mechanic. I told him he had to learn to read as the people who were going to come to him to have their cars fixed would give him checks and he would have to read how much was written on it. They would cheat him if he could not read. I asked Bill to name the parts of the automobile and he did. I made a list of
these and made up sentences and stories containing the words. Everything I wrote for Bill or gave him to read was about cars. I started subscribing to a magazine about cars for Bill. I asked other teachers who taught him to center their work for him around auto-mechanics. At the end of the first semester in my class Bill was reading, slowly. I was elated. All I know about cars I learned from Bill. The next year the principal assigned me to teach one group of children who needed remedial English\(^3\).

Then there was the time when I prepared my cousin, Michael, for the common entrance examination. I still remember how proud my uncle and aunt were when he passed that examination, making him the first of their biological children to pass the examination at the first sitting. Maybe it was those two success stories that kept me in teaching. I have had several of them since I first began my teaching career. I believed, then, and still do, that every child is teachable and everyone can learn if only the teacher finds the way to reach the child.

About two years ago, I received an invitation and an airplane ticket to return to Jamaica for a reunion with a group of fifty students I taught very early in my teaching career. They were now all adults and

\[^3\] This was English taught to students who were either illiterate or were reading below grade level. The prescribed text could not be used with these students and the teacher has to find materials suitable for each child.
had chosen their own professional paths. They were having their fifteenth reunion and wanted me to be a part of it. As we talked and joked about our lives and careers, one former student remarked that she always liked the way that I pretended to be stern and serious when I was teaching the class. She said she "could see right through" me, that I only did that because I was not much older (six years) than they were. Actually, they were even physically bigger than I was. Another student reminded the group and me about the day we went hiking and two male students threw me into the river. That was the very first time they had seen me roar with laughter. There were so many anecdotes told that day about me, and my teaching.

Others reminded me of my favorite phrases. They said after teaching a concept I would ask, "Are you sure you understand? Speak now of any doubts you have or here after hold your peace". Another shouted, "And do you remember, "Let that be our next assignment". This, they said, I would say to them if they asked a question about something outside of what was being discussed, or, for example, what is the rule governing the agreement between the verb and its subject. I never pretended to know the answers to everything. I would challenge them to see who would be the first to get the information on whatever they asked. They said I liked them to find things out for themselves and that I rarely gave my opinion on a subject
before hearing theirs. My own daughters tell me I do the same thing to them. They would ask me for the spelling or meaning of a word and I hand them a dictionary. From where did I get this practice? My own teachers never did that. They did not challenge me. I learned most things from them telling me. I liked to question my teachers' vast knowledge. Often, I'd ask them how they knew what they knew, and they would tell me the source and I would go read and come back to them with some new information. I liked discovering things for myself.

This reunion was a time of real reflection for me. I was very proud. I was sad too, because from the group of fifty young people only one had pursued teaching; he said he did it in honor of his favorite teacher—me. The others said that there is no money in teaching and that teaching takes too much patience. Many were self-employed businessmen and women, lawyers, doctors, physical therapists, nurses, a veterinarian, a computer analyst, politicians and an agriculturist.

These former students wanted me to see what they had become because they said I had always encouraged them to dream big. "The mighty oaks grow from little acorns." When they repeated that quotation I often said to them, I could not hold back the tears. I remembered it well. It was a kind of inspiration for them to do the very best they could. I admitted to them then that I had read that quotation somewhere and was not certain to whom it belonged;
neither was I fully aware of its implication then, as I did not know an oak tree or an acorn until I came to Louisiana. I told them about the "mighty" oak trees and those little acorns on the campus of Louisiana State University. The agriculturist asked me to bring her some acorns so she could plant them to see if they will grow in Jamaica.

My maternal grandmother and I were the only females in the household in which I grew up. She was revered. Everyone inside and outside the family sought her counsel. She was the matriarch of the family. "Mama", was a strong influence in my life. She was my heroine. She was the only mother I knew. "There is nothing you cannot do or achieve if you want it badly enough", Mama often told me. Death had robbed me of my biological parents before I knew them. I was the last child for my biological parents, but became the first for my adoptive (my uncle and aunt). I was not legally adopted either because they wanted me to keep my father's name. Mama, or "Miss B", as she was affectionately called by the community, was an advisor and a mentor to both young and old. Many people referred to Mama as "the mother in Israel" because she was like a loving mother to everyone. Mama was always feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Strays were always around us. They always found their way to Mama's door, whether it was the homeless boy or girl, man or woman, cats or dogs. Even birds were brought to her to nurse back to health.
If they needed help she found a way to help, even if it meant borrowing. Mama would not turn anyone away. I recall her being awakened from her sleep very early one morning when someone in the neighborhood fell deathly ill. The caller wanted to take the neighbor to the hospital and needed Mama to give her nightgowns and towels. Without even thinking, the emergency bag that Mama packed for herself was reached for and handed over. Mama’s only request was that the bag be returned to her as she needed it. That bag was never seen in our house again. Mama took care of everyone with whom she came in contact.

Reflecting now, it seems as if many women in my community possessed this kind of strength and sense of purpose. Even if they did not work outside their homes, they seemed empowered. They decided how the money their men brought home would be used. Women in Jamaica play an important role in the education of the youth of the country, whether it is a single mother struggling to send her children to school each day, or the teacher/educator trying to grapple with the inadequacies of the school system, or women’s groups trying to persuade the government to bring about educational changes to make better the future of education. Women are active in the education process in whatever way they can be. However, few are recognized for their true worth and contribution. It is out of this
knowledge, coupled with the absence of written records of the contributions of women educators in Jamaica, that I pursue this study.

**Why did I decide to do this study?**

The moment I started doing gender studies and life history during my graduate studies at Louisiana State University, I became interested and intrigued by the stories women tell about their lives as teachers and educators.

I began searching the library shelves and bookstores for works on Jamaican women educators and was surprised to find that there is an absence of documented writing on Jamaican women educators. I wondered why there are no such documented texts on the women teachers/educators of my country. Is it that they do not think that their stories are important? As I read the works of life history research done on women in the United States and some Third World\(^4\) countries, I became uncomfortably aware that the life histories of the women of my country were absent. I started questioning women educators and friends in my homeland as to why they do not write or tell their stories, as we have so many who have made invaluable contributions in the field of education. Two of the first women I approached about the "missing voices" of Jamaican women are the participants in this study.

\(^4\) "Third World" generally signifies countries that are developing economically.
My main reason for choosing these two women is that they are considered successful educators in Jamaica and they have not written about their experiences for others to read and learn from. The second reason is that these two women have been ‘first’ in spheres once dominated by men. They were the first women to be appointed in these educational positions once held for “men only”. One became the first woman to be Minister of Education in Jamaica. The other became the first woman to be appointed as Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. I see them as torchbearers for Jamaican women who think that only men can occupy positions at the highest administrative levels.

One of these women taught me at Junior College; the other taught me during my undergraduate years at the University of the West Indies. I consider these women my role models. They were good teachers, thorough in the lessons they taught, impacting on my life and educational goals. I believe their stories tell as much about the experiences of other Jamaican women educators, past and present, as they do about themselves.

Finally, women have played and are playing vital roles in shaping the educational lives of Jamaicans, but these women do not tell their stories. No one knows about Jamaican women educators from their own perspectives as they do not write about themselves. When
women are talked or written about, the information is filtered through
the lens of patriarchy. The women's experiences are generally
excluded.

I want the women of Jamaica to write their life stories. Outsiders,
like A. Lynne Bolles (1996), have written about Jamaican women. For
example, they write about women who are household helpers or
informal commercial traders\(^5\) but not about teachers. There is also a
life-history, Lionheart gal, done on women, crash program\(^6\) workers, by
Hanna Ford-Smith (1986), a Jamaican woman, but it is written in the
dialect of the country. This makes it very difficult to read, especially by
outsiders. Michelle Cliff, a Jamaica-born author and now United States
citizen, has also written a fictional autobiography, Abena. The work is
written in the third person and Cliff does not position herself as a
"representative" of Jamaican life. That work has been criticized as
being in the "alienated tradition" by two Jamaican scholars Pam
Mordecai and Betty Wilson (Lionnet, 1992, p.325).

\(^5\)Women who buy items-chiefly clothing overseas and sell locally. This
grew out of the 1970s when women were seeking a new way for
economic independence.

\(^6\)This was job created to provide employment for unskilled workers
mainly-women during the 1970s.
Women's voices have often been marginalized; this investigation allowed me to explore women's societal roles and personal experiences that have not been addressed in mainstream research.

**Purpose of study**

The purposes of this research are to: (a) study the contributions that two women have made in the Jamaican educational system and to let these women speak in their own voices about their experiences as educators; and, (b) to use the narratives of these women to document their lives and thus turn their voices/oral narratives into written text so others may read about them. I wanted to make sure that never again will another Jamaican student feel the disappointment and frustration I endured when I searched the shelves of the library for a reference on women educators in Jamaica.

Every time I wrote something about women and teaching or curriculum in Jamaica, my professors either requested "source" or "citation" in the margins of my work. What I could not get them to understand was that I was writing from the repertoire of my lived experience and from oral history or story passed on to me by some friend, family member, or teacher. I needed to cite the source of my knowledge but I was the reference point; there was no documented work to which I could refer. Often I became frustrated, even angry. Why don't these Jamaican women write or why don't other women
write about them? These were the questions I kept asking myself.
Linnette Vassell, a member of the Association of Women's Organization of Jamaica (AWOJA), in The Daily Gleaner of July 18, 1996 confirms the lack of written information on women when she writes, "You have to recognize that there has been a historic dearth of information on Jamaican women" (p.4). Lucille Mair (1974) also writes that "the history of women in the Caribbean had never been written... I found exactly one historical monograph on the role of women in the area...The subject has been totally ignored by our scholars" (p. 11). I vowed that I was one scholar who would do something about it during my doctoral studies and realized this would be the research I do for my dissertation.

It is out of the awareness of the lack of the printed word about the Jamaican woman educator that I seek to tell the stories of these two outstanding educators. I realize that they have something to tell about their lives and experiences as educators that is not being told. I hope that I am not being too presumptuous in wanting to tell their stories; like Carol Christ, (1986) I believe that the simple act of telling a woman's story from her point of view is revolutionary. I want to start that revolution with the life history of the two women in my research. My two participants are successful Jamaican educators and their work and accomplishments have been articulated over and over in Jamaica by other educators and politicians; however, I seek to turn
that oral history into text, as it is my belief that text is more reflexive than voice. One can use the printed word as a reference point. They are two women who have made significant contributions to the field of education in Jamaica. I realize that my participants cannot speak for all the women of Jamaica, but in speaking, a conversation may begin in which other Jamaica women may join.

I hope that these oral life histories will provide insights into the contributions and roles that women in Jamaica play in the educational system. Perhaps more than anything else I want this study to awaken the interests of feminist researchers, both at home and abroad, to the life and work of Jamaican women educators. I want Jamaican women educators to use the life histories of my participants as a tool for reflective practice, and to write teaching stories of their own. It is hoped that teachers will find it necessary and important to incorporate autobiographical writing into the curriculum of schools so children especially girls, will begin to write about themselves. Pagano (1990) reminds us that, "education should prepare each of us to write our stories...discourses through which we might shape these stories must, then, be available to us" (p.2). Pinar and Grumet (1976) also see autobiography as a medium for teaching.
Significance of study

What distinguishes this study from other oral life history research is that it is about two very successful educators in Jamaica whose life stories have not been written. This research will be the first of its kind that turns the spotlight on Jamaican women educators, looks at them from their perspectives, and permits them to talk back in their own voices/narratives. These women have already spoken with their lives, work and achievement, but there still needs to be a documented life history of them, from their perspectives. This research should not be considered as "typical". That was not my intention. The study does not present hypotheses which need to be proved or disproved. Neither does it have direct questions to which it seeks to find solutions or answers. This work seeks to add the voices and contributions of Jamaican women educators to the body of literature that presently exists on women educators. I used the narratives of the women to make them present, and to add their words to the literature. In order to do this I felt as if I was engaged in a dance. I was constantly shifting, constantly moving and negotiating a rhapsody of movements, between the autobiographical and ethnographic, between my voice and their voices, and between self-disclosure and resistance to self-disclosure. Pinar (1988) speaks of the on-going nature of movement when he writes "a basic meaning of human life is movement, conflict,
resolution, 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 merely to portray it. It is to contribute to it... in work with ourselves, as well as with others...

Autobiographical method is one strategy by which this work can be conducted" (p. 151)

Three women came to mind the moment I decided to pursue this research project. However, since spending many hours in the summer of 1995 doing some exploratory interviews with them, the situation of one of them has changed. One of my participants has moved away from her homeland to live in a foreign country. Realizing that it would not be possible to work with her, I spoke with two of my professors about my concern and the direction my research should take. They both suggested that I study the remaining two participants. This means that the number of participants for this study has been reduced to two.

While this may be considered a small sample, this allows for an in-depth analysis of the multiple data sources collected on each participant's role in the educational system (Borg & Gall, 1989). I am also aware that one can learn as much from a small sample as from a larger one. The selection of these participants was based on three main criteria. First, they had to be teachers/educators. Second, they must have served at some level of the educational hierarchy inside and
outside the classroom, or must have had direct impact on the lives of teachers. Thirdly, the participants had to be women.

The women I have chosen to study are both in the field of education. They began as classroom teachers and have impacted, or, in one way or another, continue to impact teacher education in Jamaica. Although in most studies researchers are encouraged to maintain the anonymity of the participants where possible, I have not assigned pseudonyms to my participants as I have sought and had their permission to use their names. And even if I tried to assign them fictitious names, it would not guard their identity, as anyone familiar with the history of education in Jamaica would still be able to identify these women. I also thought that it would not be fair or even sensible to render these women anonymous as I would be defeating one of the reasons for pursuing this research: allowing them to tell their own stories and assisting them to take their rightful place in the history of Jamaica. If I hid them behind pseudonyms whose stories would be told? Whose story would I be re-telling?

Very little is heard from the Jamaican woman herself about her experiences and personal interests. Male educators, like Errol Miller\(^7\) (1989), for example, write about women educators but their personal

\(^7\)Dr. Errol Miller is a Professor at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. He is also an author and has written several articles on women teachers in Jamaica.
lives, experiences and interests and oral history are not recorded. It is hoped that through the stories that I help these women tell we, will be better able to see the culture in which they received their education and how this has impacted their lives and that of other Jamaican women educators. Bruner (1987) states that the stories people tell about themselves, life narratives, reflect and reveal the prevailing theories about "possible lives" that are part of one’s culture. Etter-Lewis and Foster (1996) remind us that oral life history approaches provide an understanding of cultures, "for they emphasize the experiences of an individual and provide an insider’s view of her life and culture" (p. 72). Susan Chase (1995) adds that narratives produced during interviews are embedded in culture.

This research is important because it concentrates on women, a group whose stories have not been fully addressed in educational research literature (Stromquist, N.P., 1990). Further, it uses ethnographically-informed life histories that focus on the participants’ life narratives (Langness & Frank, 1981). Jo Anne Pagano (1990) points out that "feminist educational theory is tricky business. We transmit a tradition in which women are silent" (p.16). Feminist educational scholarship tries to listen to and reproduce the inflections of the female voice as it is produced in gendered experience. As Stromquist (1990) reminds us, "women’s lives and concrete experiences need to be
clearly situated if we are to understand them", (p.54) and part of that situatedness is what Pagano (1990) terms as "teaching in the patriarchal wilderness".

In this research the roles these two women have played vary according to the participant’s life experiences. I am confident that there are patterns between and across these participants’ lives and experiences which demonstrate the relationships between their roles as educators and their personal experiences, and the roles of other Jamaican women educators, within the context of the Jamaican educational system.

The broad questions which motivate this study are:-

1. Why don’t these educators write about their life experiences?

2. What contributions have these women made to the educational system of Jamaica?

3. How has the historical/cultural context in which these women were schooled and have taught, influenced their experiences as teachers/educators?

4. How can their experiences as women teachers impact our understanding of the role of Jamaican women in education?

5. What is the relationship between their lives as women teachers/educators and their teaching practices?
6. Why do Jamaican women go into teaching?

7. What roles do gender and social class play in the success of these women as educators?

By studying the lives of these women, we may come to see how gender roles are politically and socially constructed and how these conditions have shaped the day-to-day lives of women in Jamaica in the last half of this century. The dynamics of gender relations are important elements in situating women's lives (Stromquist, 1990, p.54). By examining the lives of these women, we can gain an understanding of how women have struggled, negotiated, and created meaning in their lives as they juggled complex and myriad responsibilities.

In the vast literature on education, the teacher herself appears rarely as a subject of serious study. The work that describes her tends to be of two genres: biography and sociological study, although recent feminist life history is beginning to change this picture (Hoffman, 1981; Grumet, 1988; Weiler, 1989; Goodson, 1992; Middleton, 1993 & Munro, 1993; 1998). There is even less documented evidence in Jamaica of the woman as an educator.

In Jamaica, so much depends on women in education; not just inside the classroom but outside its walls, and in politics as well. The Jamaican woman has taken up the challenge and is making an impact for change. One of the dilemmas faced by the Jamaican
woman is that she is the cornerstone of the political, social, and educational system, but men are in the seat of political power which impacts education in Jamaica. The woman goes out on political campaigns and persuades people who would not vote in an election to do so. She is the "watchdog" who keeps the men on their toes. She is able to call upon others to protest against anything the government tries to do that she feels will not benefit women and children. Due to patriarchal forces in our society, women were not given the educational, political and economic start that men were given. As Munro (1991) says, "being a woman in a patriarchal\(^8\) (governed) society means being someone whose experiencing of the world is systematically discounted as trivial or irrelevant" (p. 167).

I start from the premise that education is, among other things, a political process (Apple 1989) which society employs to determine how individuals are allocated to the resources available. Education is also one very influential means by which distinctions/divisions in the society are reproduced and maintained. Further, the roles played by male and female citizens have always been reflected in and reinforced by the education system of any society.

\(^8\) This refers to power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men.
As I read the literature on women teachers/educators here in the United States about how they feel subjugated by patriarchy, I realized that I wanted to give the Jamaican woman teacher/educator a place in literature. It is my belief that although men are in the seat of power, the present Jamaican woman feels less subjugated than women before her and views the male as her equal. Although the Jamaican woman is not head of the government, one can find women as head of most other offices and organizations in the country. For example, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education is a woman. There are many women who are managers of banks, most school principals are women and several are Heads of teachers' colleges.

In every election since 1972 women have sought and gained representation at political levels. The highest political office held by a woman so far is that of Deputy Prime Minister. Since 1973, Jamaican women have gained ground, that is, they have asked for and obtained equal pay as their male counterparts. Jamaica, like other parts of the world, has experienced the Women's Movement and the International Decade for Women. I have chosen two women who have made their marks in the educational system in positions which were male-dominated until they took office.
Limitations of study

This study has its limitations despite the researchers' reasons for pursuing the research. The sample of women educators I researched was small and does not speak for the vast population of Jamaican women educators. The voices recorded in this work are those of two women who have "made it" to the top of the educational system pyramid. Although they have been classroom teachers, they cannot speak on behalf of today's classroom educators, especially those who work in overcrowded classrooms, under limited and dilapidated conditions in rural Jamaica. Much has changed in the classrooms of our schools since these women were there. Neither can the two life historians speak on behalf of women principals, or for other women in administrative/leadership positions in education; however, their stories can give these women educators hope that there is a place for them beyond the schoolroom, even though those places are few.

The study is also limited because the life stories that are provided are but one instance of the life stories of my participants. We must remember that the stories of a life develop and change through time. When a life story is recorded and transcribed, we have a "text" which can be compared with a still photograph; however, lives are constantly in flux.
I believe that the teachers/educators in my country would like their stories told. I am uncertain about the reason for their not writing and hence the absence of their stories, especially in prose form. I know that the few Jamaican women who do write often express themselves in the poetry genre. Paule Marshall, for example, writes of West Indian women who were the poets and bards and mothers of the kitchen (Aptheker, 1989, p.49). I am aware, and believe as Abu-Lughod (1993) suggests, that poetry provides a cultural narrative for articulating deep feelings that would be inappropriate to express in other forms of everyday discourse, and therefore has its place. Loma Goodison, a Jamaican woman, writes a poem entitled "Who is the Jamaican Woman?" This poem addresses what Marshall speaks about. In it, Goodison remembers her mother as nurturer, caretaker, and mother of the kitchen. Following is an excerpt from that poem.

When I came to know my mother many years later, I knew her as the figure who sat at the first thing I learned to read! "Singer" and she breast fed my brother while she sewed and she sat in judgement over all our disputes as she sewed. She could work miracles, she would make a garment from a square of cloth in a span that defied time. Or feed twenty people on a stew made from fallen-from-the head cabbage leaves and a carrot,
and a cho-cho⁹ and a palmful of meat.
And she rose early and sent us clean into the world and
she went to bed in
the dark, for my father came in always last.

From--Jamaican poetry since independence
(Pam Mordecai- editor p. 83.)

Several other Jamaican women have written poems praising the
strength of the Jamaican woman. I am cognizant of the fact that both
poetry and stories have positive effects in defining the experiences of
women. Though poetry has the power to name and define women’s
experiences, I consider narratives and stories more powerful ways of
expressing the dailiness of women’s experiences, and wished that the
women would write their own stories about themselves.

Stories of Jamaican women

To understand the significance of the life experiences of my life
historians as educators, it is important to look at the roles women have
played in the development of Jamaica. Women began to have their
say, at the representative level, in the political affairs of the country
shortly after Jamaica gained independence from Britain in 1962. One
may say that Jamaica is and has always been a matrilineal¹⁰ or a
matrifocal society. Many households are headed by women and

⁹Cho-cho is a vegetable, relative of the squash. It is known in parts of the
United States as mirliton.

¹⁰This is a society in which most women are heads of households
but the seats of political control are occupied by men.
women also hold positions of leadership in several educational
institutions and businesses. They work as hard as their male
counterparts in education, politics, the home, and the economy but
their work and worth was hardly ever given the limelight that the men’s
received. This is because the official definition of labor force
participation is “work outside the home for pay or profit”. Women
remained the power behind the men but the men got promoted.

It must be pointed out however, that although women were not
given the same educational start that men were given (will be
discussed later), women were considered "societal linchpins" or the
foundation of educational beginnings in Jamaica, from as far back as
the 1600s when Jamaica was an English colony (Women’s International
Network, September 12, 1991). Several schools in Jamaica can trace
their early beginnings to founding women. For example, Vaz
Preparatory School, one of Jamaica’s leading schools, was started by
Mrs. Lucille Vaz on her veranda. The Mico Teachers College, one of
Jamaica’s well known and oldest teachers college, was also started by
the monies bequeathed by a woman. Women have also been very
active in the political arena from very early in the history of Jamaica as
will be discussed later.

The part women have played in social change has been
repeatedly trivialized or sometimes ignored altogether by history writers.
Several stories have been told about women leading political resistance at different periods in the country’s history, and about women and their resilience. Jamaica is an oral society and many stories are passed on from the old to the young, orally. One of the stories that comes to mind is that of Nanny, leader of the Maroons\(^\text{11}\), and spiritual healer. Many history books fail to mention Nanny of the Maroons, whose resistance to the British brought about a treaty between the English and the Maroons. According to Hanna Ford-Smith (1986) historians express doubt as to whether Nanny in fact existed, and prefers to discount the weight of hundreds of years of Maroon oral history in favor of the contradictory accounts given by her enemies.

After the English took Jamaica from the Spanish, they made several attempts to resettle the country. It was Nanny’s persistent resistance to slavery and against the British slave owners that caused the English to sign a treaty with the Maroons. The English made treaty with the Maroons, or run-away slaves, who pillaged and burned the plantations. The treaty between the Maroons and the English gave the Maroons several parcels of land where they were to settle unobstructed by English rule. In addition, the English were not to try to take back the slaves when they abandoned the estates by escaping to the hills.

\(^{11}\) Maroons are runaway slaves. They marooned the plantations by escaping to the hills.
Nanny was known by both the Maroons and the British settlers as an outstanding military leader who became, in her lifetime and after, a symbol of unity and strength for her people during times of crisis. One may say Nanny was one of the first Jamaican women to be involved in political resistance. Several of the Maroon settlements are still in Jamaica today, although the rules governing them have changed and there are no full-blooded Maroons living there. One of the settlements is called "Nanny Town" in honor of Nanny of the Maroons. Maroons living in these settlements now pay taxes to the government and obey the laws of the land. Nanny led several attacks against the British. Legend has it that when her army was fired on, Nanny caught the bullets the British soldiers fired at her with sections of her anatomy and "returning them in a manner not usually mentioned in polite circles" (Campbell, 1990, p. 51). She was able to tell her followers exactly when a slave master was going to pass a certain place and they would lay in ambush and capture the master. Messages were passed on with the use of the abeng\textsuperscript{12}. The Maroons used the abeng to communicate with each other. They blew the abeng when they wanted to send messages using codes that the slaveowners could not decode or understand.

\textsuperscript{12} This was a type of horn used as a means of communication by Nanny and the other Maroons. It was blown using different pitches and sounds that only the Maroons could decode.
Several times Nanny would capture the colonizers and threaten to make them ill or kill them if they did not do what she requested. Nanny practiced obeah\textsuperscript{13} as a means of intimidation and control. Stories are told of how the English were so afraid of Nanny’s obeah, or "blackmagic" that if an overseer\textsuperscript{14}, master or family member became ill, they would summon Nanny to the great houses for her medicinal and healing powers. It was the case of "if you cannot beat them befriend them." Many of these people were not really ill; they were overcome by the fear that Nanny had put a spell or hex on them. Often Nanny used these trips to the great house to her advantage, by making demands on behalf of the runaway slaves or 'spiritting' them away from the plantation. Nanny has been depicted as a kind of mythological figure in the oral stories that are passed on about her. Today, history records her only as Nanny, or Nanny of the Maroons, and she is the only national heroine named in the country which has seven national heroes\textsuperscript{15}. Recently, a subdivision was named in her honor, and still more recently the largest paper money of the country to date.

\textsuperscript{13} It is a form of witchcraft or magic. Obeah is said to have originated in Africa (Webster Dictionary).

\textsuperscript{14} These were the men who saw to the day to day running of the plantation and kept the slaves in check.

\textsuperscript{15} "The designation 'National Hero' is the highest honor that can be bestowed and is reserved for people who have made an extraordinary contribution to the country" (Manley, 1982, p.23).
bears her picture. The picture, however, is not a real picture of Nanny, but the artist’s interpretation of how he thinks someone of Nanny’s strength and personality would look. The picture was made from a computer composite. No one knows what Nanny really looked like as she left no photographs. Nanny has no last name either. She is almost like Maxine Hong Kingston’s (1989) “No-Name Woman”, which opens her memoir and tells of the death of her aunt—a woman erased and silenced.

Jamaican women have always played pivotal roles in shaping the future of their country. Henry-Wilson (1989) says that it is almost a truism to state that women have always been the backbone of all political parties in Jamaica before Independence since they comprise the majority of visible workers and supporters at the base. They have always been part of the quasi-government but have never been given the opportunity to be top political leaders. In fact, women were among the chief opponents to women’s entry into electoral politics. This can be attributed to the patriarchal social organization of the society which has inculcated values that lead women to distrust each other. Yet, at the same time, women were in the forefront of the

16 This is the base of government. Women work at the grassroots level to build interest in the people who see no use for government.
social unrest of the 1930s. They supported the longshoremen as they led strikes against the economic and social conditions in the country. Women provided food, clean clothes and buoyed the spirits of the men. They faced police batons and bullets and in several cases were injured or killed. Many were imprisoned and some fought cases of false imprisonment, malicious arrest and prosecution. There were protests, demonstrations, marches and picketing, and women led or stood beside the men in many of these. Despite this, "the action of the women that has received publicity has been that women cooked for strikers, as if that was the only work the women could do" (Ford-Smith, p. 166). Two women from this period, Gladys Longbridge and Edna Manley, became "first ladies" in 1962, as they married two political leaders who emerged out of the 1930s, and who became Prime Ministers and were later named national heroes. Aggie Bernard, a third woman who played a pivotal role alongside the men during this same period, remained in oblivion until the 1970s when feminists insisted that she be given her place in history. A monument has been erected in her memory near the site where she, Edna, and Gladys worked with the longshoremen. Not much else is known of Aggie. No doubt, if she had been married to a leader more would have been said of her.

\(^{17}\)This was the time of the Great Depression throughout the world. Conditions abroad had effects on Jamaica and riots broke out all over country. People wanted social and economic changes.
During this period of Jamaica’s history women were defined by their relationships to men (their husbands). There are other women who stood by the men during the struggles of the 1930s, but not much is known about their lives and work either. History books written about that period in Jamaica fail even to mention their names. Patriarchal traditions have rendered the true work and contributions of women to national building and development invisible.

Men talk about Jamaican women as the power behind their success, but the women’s real lives and contributions to the development of their country remained backstage. Today, women outnumber men as heads of corporations, entrepreneurs, educational institutions, and are still the heads of most households (Department of Statistics, Jamaica, 1990). However, men are still the country’s political leaders and only a few political offices are or were ever headed by women. These include that of Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and Minister of Education. Despite their educational achievements, women still have very little voice by way of the written word, as very few of them write.

Edith Clarke, (1952), one of Jamaica’s first known women writers, in her famous book, My Mother Who Fathered Me, based on anthropological research, addresses the strength and resilience of the Jamaican woman. Clarke speaks of the roles women play in keeping
families together and how they undertake the upbringing of their children, educating them socially and politically. The men, she says, impregnated the women and left them to be fathers and mothers of the children, as they moved from relationship to relationship. This she blames on the legacy of slavery, when men were used as studs to produce more hands for the farms, but did not have a paternal obligation to their offsprings. Despite the fact that the book heralds pages from Jamaica's colonial era, the remnants of this kind of behavior still hold true. Her work has helped me to see that one's life is political and that most of one's behaviors are influenced, if not shaped, by politics and history. The lives of citizens are determined, to a large extent, by the political climate of the country.

Women in teaching and education in Jamaica have come a long way. They were not always thought to be responsible for shaping, educationally, the future of the young of the country. That was the job of the men. It was believed that only a man could teach and prepare the future generation. Women were not considered capable of such an important task. Although today teaching is seen as "women’s true profession," (Hoffman, 1981), in early Jamaica teaching was not considered easy enough for women to do. They were maternal nurturers and could therefore only be wives and mothers, sew, cook and clean. That was their "calling". Women were going to be married
and take care of their husbands and children. They did not need an education for this as these things came "naturally". This was something embedded deep in a historical, colonial and patriarchal tradition.

The moment women entered teaching it was demoted to a secondary profession. It was no longer attractive to men and neither was it a real profession. The teaching profession moved into a position where it has remained ever since. It is less than equal in status to male professions, and a source of satisfaction and power for women (Hoffman, 1981). One has only got to look at the way teachers are treated and how much they are paid when compared with other professionals.
CHAPTER TWO
JAMAICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

History of Jamaica's educational system

To fully comprehend the roles and contributions of Jamaican women in education in general, and the life histories of my "life historians" (Mbilinyi, 1989; Munro, 1991) in particular, it is necessary to take a look at the history and development of the formal educational system of the country. Education for the masses cannot be said to have existed in Jamaica before 1834. The chief reason for this was that slaves were to be kept ignorant. Education was considered by the planters to be subversive to both slavery and the plantation system as an educated slave was a dangerous slave. It was not good plantation policy to have educated slaves. The story is told of one educated slave, Sam Sharpe, who forced the hands of the planters to bring a quick end to slavery in Jamaica. Sam Sharpe was a house slave and his master was said to be a kind man and taught him to read. Sharpe read the newspapers and letters that were sent to his masters from England and discovered that slavery should have been abolished many years before. He called a meeting of the slaves in Western Jamaica and planned and burnt all the plantations and great houses. Sharpe was killed for his part in the rebellion but this sped up the emancipation process. He has been named a National Hero. During
the period of apprenticeship the most enlightened planters allowed some missionaries to teach the rudiments of reading to a few slaves, but this was as far as education went. The Moravian Missionary Society provided missionaries with alphabets, children’s hymn books and manuals of Christian Doctrine or religious education.

The real education of slaves took place in the Sunday markets. This was a meeting place for the slaves where important news and information was read to them by the women missionaries. The slaves received no formal education, but the missionaries ran church schools on some plantations in the "hope of bringing civilization to the heathen and providing the slaves with some spiritual comforts for Christianity" (Foner, 1973: p.38). The sugar plantocracy was supreme. They were white, wealthy, and the better educated in the country, since they could afford to send their children to schools in the "Motherland".

Jamaica was a colony for close to five hundred years. The Spanish occupied the island from 1494 until 1655. Then the English took possession of it from 1655 until 1962. Missionaries taught the slaves to read the scriptures when they attended church or Sunday markets; the white men were the preachers and their wives assisted them as teachers. The school and the church were one and the same.

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18 This was the period of time that the planters were supposed to use to prepare the slaves for full freedom.
The first "free schools" (Augier, Gordon, Hall & Reckford, 1971), or formal schools, were set up a few years prior to the abolition of slavery and they were for the education of ex-slaves who were boys. When a formal education system began, it focused on men. All the schools and teachers colleges were established with a distinct male bias in terms of teachers and students. They were established to provide education for, and to educate men and boys. Formal schooling was not part of Jamaica's history until after emancipation in 1838 when the British gave the missionaries money, known later as The Negro Education Grant, which lasted from 1835-1845, to convert the ex-slaves. This, they had hoped, would "teach the ex-slaves religion so they would accept the position in life in which they found themselves" (Augier & Gordon 1971, p.179). Schools existed on the island before that, but they were to educate the children of the planters who were not able to return to England to be educated. The first teachers colleges were set up in 1835. These colleges were to provide teacher training for men teachers for elementary schools. Oddly, this opportunity was provided by an Englishwoman, Lady Mico. Lady Mico never thought about leaving that money for the education of girls. This no doubt was due to her upbringing and education. Or she believed that girls did not need an education. In her will she bequeathed the sum of 1,000 pounds (Augier & Gordon, 1971, p.179), a large sum of money at the time, to
be used for the education of ex-slaves, boys, throughout the West Indies, to prepare them for full freedom.

At that time, education of women was considered unnecessary as they were going to be married, keep house, rear children, and be dutiful wives and mothers. The common belief was that a woman did not need an education, for mothering, as parenting, came "naturally" to her. She was sent to school but only to be taught the basics so she could perform her duty as housewife and mother. Formal schooling ended for women at age sixteen when they left the elementary schools. Women who wanted to be teachers were not sent to colleges for formal training. Instead, they were allowed to attend evening classes with trained schoolmasters\(^\text{19}\) and, at the end of the training, they were given approval to teach if the men deemed them qualified.

However, some of the earliest women teachers of Jamaica did not receive formal educational training, (Miller, 1989); that is, they did not attend the evening classes to be tutored by the schoolmasters. It is my belief that they did not want to seek male approval. Many of these women started schools in their homes, teaching their own children and those of the neighborhood for a small fee. Very often these schools

\(^{19}\) In the early days the heads of schools were called schoolmasters. Only men were principals, hence the term schoolmasters.
were held on verandas and were furnished with makeshift furniture as the need for more seats arose. These types of schools mushroomed all over the country, and today some of Jamaica’s finest schools can trace their history to such humble beginnings (Miller, 1989).

Finally, when the training of women teachers became part of the education planning of the Crown Colony Government, two colleges were set up for them, Bethlehem and Shortwood. The curriculum lacked the same depth of that offered to the men. According to Gordon (1968) in Reports and Repercussions in West Indian Education 1835-1933, The Lumb Report of 1898, suggested that women teachers should be trained in domestic duties. Gordon paraphrases that section of the report as follows:

> We desire to emphasize our opinion that the training of women teachers should be combined with subjects of a practical nature and we think this will be attained if they (women teachers) take part and receive instruction in cooking, laundry work and domestic arrangements. This will reduce the large staff of servants and will be of great benefit to the students and to others when they leave College, for it must not be forgotten that female teachers by their example to others may be of incalculable good or evil. Any such changes in the domestic arrangements should be gradually introduced (p. 126-127).

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20 This was one of the committees set up by the British Legislature to report on the need for education in the West Indies.
There were several Endowed Schools in Jamaica and as early as 1770, these provided education for white boys of poor parentage. The funds for these schools came from wealthy estate owners. Many of these schools are still in Jamaica, only now they are owned and operated by the Jamaican government. Rusea’s, Hampton, Munro, Titchfield, St. Jago, Wolmer’s and Manning’s are examples of these high schools. All but three of these schools named are now coeducational. Munro is still a boys’ school and Hampton is still a girls’ school. Wolmer’s has two schools, one for boys and one for girls. Girls were first admitted to the others in the early twentieth century. Some of the older girls became monitors, and helped to take care of the younger children. This, no doubt, paved the way to women’s entry into the teaching profession in the 1820s and 1830s, mainly as infant school teachers (Augier & Gordon, 1971).

Education, especially that of women, was one of continuous neglect throughout the West Indies. In 1865 Jamaica experienced an uprising, Morant Bay Rebellion as history calls it, by ex-slaves who protested the social conditions in the country. After emancipation the Jamaican Assembly was set up and an acting-governor sent out from England. The ex-slaves were suspicious of the Governor, John Eyre. He did not listen to the grievances of the population and took no steps to improve their conditions (Augier, et al, 1971). One of the leaders of the
Morant Bay Rebellion, George William Gordon, was a magistrate and newly influential colored landowner and he tried to draw the Governor's attention to the social condition of the people. Gordon protested whenever he could. Eyre proclaimed martial law and tried Gordon by court-martial for high treason where he was condemned to death. He was hanged in front of the court.

The ex-slaves saw the need for education because this would provide upward mobility and allow them to participate in governing their affairs if they were really emancipated, but they lacked the opportunities to get an education. It was not easy to move upwards through capitalist activities because of the static, caste-like class structure that existed in Jamaica (Smith, 1970). Education, therefore, became very important in the lives of the subordinate classes and hence one of the reasons for the revolt. The British Government responded by building more schools and funding education by sending out English teachers who prepared the ex-slaves with a British education.

Michael Manley, (1990) in his book, The Politics of Change, argues that Jamaica imported its educational system from England at a time when British education was, perhaps, the supreme example in the world of that kind of education. The colonies served the mother land and so the education provided prepared the colonists for that purpose.
Children were educated to be good Englishmen and gentlemen. The curriculum of schools gave little place to the history of the West Indies. It alienated the local people from their environment and denigrated local culture because it was educating people to serve a developing British capitalist society. The education bore no relevance to the situation, needs, or problems of the Jamaican population. Jamaica's educational system did not reflect a realistic balance between the country's need for development and training.

The sexism and sex stereotypes which were part of the British system were transmitted to Jamaica. The image of the man as head of the household and as breadwinner with economic responsibility for the family, and the "ideal woman" as housewife and mother, were values of the British middle class which ignored the plight of working class women in Britain (Augier & Gordon, 1971).

Any kind of formal education that was provided for black women in the early eighteenth century in Jamaica was supported and operated by the churches. It followed the English thinking at the time, that popular education was a religious matter. The Anglicans, Baptists, Catholics and Methodists were among the first groups to provide education for black women (Augier & Gordon, 1971). Church buildings were used as schools during the week. The main education provided was reading, writing, arithmetic and domestic subjects like
sewing and cooking. Even this education was preparing women to take their places in the homes, so the churches did much to strengthen the belief that a woman’s place was in the home. One has only to consider the lasting impact that the single-sex school and its related curriculum has had on the courses and programs of study followed by women. Although these schools are now a dying concept in Jamaica, courses of study instituted by them continue to influence strongly the programs many girls follow, even when they have the option to make inroads into courses traditionally considered "for men".

There were labor disturbances throughout the British West Indies, of which Jamaica was a part, in the 1930s. These disturbances are generally regarded as marking a turning point in the relationship between the Imperial Government (Britain) and her colonies. This was also the period of the Great Depression throughout the world. In Jamaica the disturbances shook the foundations of the colonial economy and forced a number of important reforms.

Educationally, things began to change, though very slowly, after the unrest of the 1930s. Colonial agricultural countries, like Jamaica, shared in the economic depression of the imperial and industrial countries. A series of strikes started in Jamaica and other West Indian islands. The people protested against the Colonial Government, which had made it impossible for the colonies to do anything against the
hardships that they faced such as, low wages, lack of jobs, and poor social conditions. During this time Jamaicans suffered greatly socially and economically and appealed to the British Government for reforms. The British Government sent out the Reserves to control riots. The Moyne Commission was set up to investigate and make policy recommendations concerning the uprising of the "fairly law abiding negroes in Jamaica" (Augier & Gordon, 1971). This commission determined that unemployment, poverty and illiteracy were the main contributors to the discontent of the masses. The illiteracy rate was sixty percent, with literacy loosely defined as the ability to sign one’s name (Keith & Keith, 1992). This was just a carry-over from the post-emancipation period when plantation politics conspired to block the path of the ex-slave’s right to education. The process of decolonization set in motion economic and political changes which ultimately led to important reforms in the educational system and changes for women. The Hammond Report, and later the Kandel Report of 1941 and 1943 respectively, included information for educational reform (Miller, 1989). Politically, the period gave birth to local political parties and an increased Trade Union activity.

Women were also given the franchise to vote under Universal Adult Suffrage granted by the New Constitution of 1944. There was talk of Jamaica’s independence from Britain. Women of the middle
class supported the movement for self-government and struggled to get women elected to political office. It was a struggle against two forces—their own men and the British colonial administration. This period also saw many Jamaican men and women going off to England for higher education as there was no opportunity for higher education in Jamaica.

Many of the educational trends established by the end of the nineteenth century were perpetuated during the first half or so of the twentieth century. A rigid dual educational system was in place. For example, the curriculum still offered education by British standards, and Jamaican children attending academic high schools had to pass the General Certificate of Examination (GCE), a British examination, in order to work in their own country. These examinations were the exit tests for the elite, mulattoes\(^2\) and middle classes, in Jamaica, whose parents could not afford to send them to England. These examinations later became the standard by which traditional high school graduates were judged. Three local examinations, the First, Second and Third Jamaica Local Examinations were offered but these were not considered very important. They were offered to students whose parents could not pay to send them to the traditional high schools, and who had to terminate

\(^2\)These were the offsprings of the white master and his slave mistress.
schooling in the All-Age\textsuperscript{22} Schools. Most of these students took extra or private lessons after school in order to pass these examinations. Successful students at the third level in these examinations had access only to the nursing and teaching professions. Some used these professions as stepping stones into others. Although these examinations were considered local, the courses covered were also based on Britain. All the literature and history Jamaican children were exposed to during this period was British. In addition, they received a lopsided look at history. The history books told only of the virtues of the colonizers. Elementary, Senior and Industrial Schools continued to emphasize the training in domestic sciences, shorthand and typing courses for girls. In the early 1960s, another examination, the Jamaica School Certificate (JSC), was introduced into Jamaica, but again this was for students who did not attend the high school. The rigid dual system of education for the rich and poor did not come to an end until 1956 when the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) or 11+ was introduced where a child could compete for a place in high school based on his/her ability. Any child, regardless of his/her socio-economic status, can now get a high school education provided he/she passes the common entrance examinations. However, high school places are limited, and therefore very competitive. Many lower

\textsuperscript{22}These schools offer education to children from age 7-15 years.
class students find it hard to compete with students whose parents have the money to provide the extra tuition and materials required for passing the examination. Students who did not go to the traditional academic high schools went on to the New Secondary High Schools, previously called Junior Secondary\textsuperscript{23} School, or All-Age Schools and have limited chances of pursuing post-secondary education. There is the view by many Jamaicans that making access to academic high schools mainly dependent on the CEE did not improve the relative chance of the lower classes, and may even have worsened their position in some respects, as the middle classes were most able to take advantage of the new provision (Nunes, 1976; Woolcock, 1984). By this means, it would appear that the plural social legacy of the colonial period is preserved, providing one kind of education for the rich and another for the poor. This is summed up by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Sector Survey Report on the development of secondary education in Jamaica.

Although there is a variety of types of secondary education, basically there are two categories: the High Schools, Technical High Schools, and Comprehensive Schools... and

\textsuperscript{23} These schools are considered to offer a lower standard of education than traditional high schools. There is no screening to enter these schools and only the students who fail to gain entrance to the high schools by way of the Common Entrance Examination go on to these schools.
others. This difference can be seen in terms of admission, curriculum and future education and life chances. Those sixth grade students who are selected by the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) go to the high schools and those not selected go to the other schools. The high school curriculum has an academic bias and orientation holding out the promise of post secondary studies, whereas, for the other schools, the curriculum is largely intended to be terminal and oriented towards basic skills needed for the world of work; with a very limited possibility of continuing in tertiary, non-university education.


Jamaica had its first Ministry of Education in 1953. This marked the beginning of education for Jamaicans being handled by Jamaicans in their own country. Prior to this, all middle or top level administrators and high school principals were male expatriates.

Colleges in Jamaica produced women teachers for the elementary schools. All the principals were males.

**Female bias in teacher training**

Although teaching began as a profession for men in Jamaica, today there are more teachers colleges offering training to women than men, and the profession is inundated with women. Bethlehem, Church, Mico, Sam Sharpe, Moneague and West Indies colleges are all co-educational, and St. Joseph’s and Shortwood offer teacher training to women only. It would appear that a definite shift has been made to
offer training to women. There is no deliberate drive to recruit women into the teaching profession, however. More women just enter the profession and remain there. Not only have the number of women increased in the profession, but they surpassed men in their performance in teacher education as well (Miller, 1994). Teaching in Jamaica, has become truly a woman’s profession.

The institutional provision for the training of teachers from the inception of teachers college until the 1990s can be classified into three distinct periods. First, from 1834 to 1899 teachers colleges were single sex with a heavy bias to the training of men. Second, 1900 to 1955 the institutions remained single sex but the bias shifted to the training of women teachers. Third, 1956 to 1990 the policy of coeducation has predominated (Miller, 1994; Appendix). It must be noted too, that colleges which had previously trained teachers for the elementary/primary schools have diversified their mission and curriculum and have been preparing teachers in secondary education as well as special education (Miller, 1994).

Jamaica gained its independence in 1962 but it was more of a process than an event. The process began when the colonial administrators started handing over the reins of government and management to the local leaders. In the late 1960s, when I graduated from high school, most of the high school principals were white male
expatriates. The exceptions were a few boarding schools for girls headed by white expatriate women. This was because expatriates who were in the country prior to independence remained in their positions until retirement. Others were used to train Jamaican men to take over leadership positions.

In many places, the legacy of colonialism lingered on for many years after independence. Many women sought political offices so they could have a voice in the political affairs of their country, but they remained, by and large, out of top political leadership positions (Miller, 1989).

When the University of the West Indies opened its doors in 1948, the student population was mainly male. Females, however, rapidly took advantage of education, although this was usually in the non-science fields. A Bachelor of Arts degree gained them increased access to certain areas of the Civil Service, as well as social work, teaching, librarianship, and to a lesser extent, business and commerce. Their representation in the traditionally masculine fields of medicine, engineering and law continued, however, to be limited, although a few women have begun to make their mark in these professions (Miller, 1989).

There were many reforms in the educational system of Jamaica in the 1970s, but perhaps the most striking among them was the
reversal of leadership in schools, both at the secondary and primary levels. Most schools were now headed by women and over seventy-five percent of the teaching force was also women (Miller, 1989). The population census does not indicate that there are more girl babies being born, but there are more girls in schools. According to Miller (1994) "the Jamaican population over the last 100 years, has slightly more boys than girls in the age group from birth to fourteen years" because more boys are born than girls (p. 99). Every child of school age is enrolled in primary school in Jamaica. There is compulsory education from age six to fifteen years. It is evident that more women than men enter the teaching profession and remain there. Several plans and reports have identified teachers and teacher training as important in education and national development. Men have evidently left this up to the women. The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the New Deal for Education in Jamaica (1966) reported the noticeable imbalance of gender in education. UNESCO report stated that "every effort should be made to introduce more men in the teaching profession" (Education Planning (1965, p. 45) so that pupils will have male role models to emulate as many of these pupils are coming from homes without males.
A new politics

The 1970s was a time of change—political, educational and social—in Jamaica. The government of the day, the People's National Party, (P.N.P.), headed by The Right Honorable Michael Manley, was bent on changes in the constitution of Jamaica. He introduced Democratic Socialism24 into Jamaica in the 1970s. This he said was based on the philosophy of self-reliance25. Manley said he shared the view held by Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania, that it is not possible to create either a modern economy or a just society if most of the adult population is denied the social tools, reading and writing, which are most important for full participation in either the economic or social system of a modern country...(p. 175). One of Manley's philosophies was to create a classless society, and for him, "the process of transformation from a stratified to a classless society must begin with the educational process" (p.176). This was the rationale behind the introduction of universal free education, political education and an adult literacy campaign in Jamaica in the 1970s. Perhaps the greatest

24 Democratic Socialism is a political and economic theory under which the means of production, distribution, and exchange are owned and or controlled by the people (Principles and Objectives—People's National Party Ideological document, p. 29).

25 "Self-reliance implies the ability on the part of the people of a country to make common efforts towards the general development and welfare of the group" (Manley, 1975, p. 43).
reforms in the country were made in the educational system during the 1970s. Errol Miller (1989) in "Educational Development in Independent Jamaica" lists the reforms as follows:

1. The introduction of free high school and university education. This measure abolished tuition fees for students and offered some form of assistance for boarding where required.

2. Curriculum development for all levels of the public system. The 1966 reforms had restricted its curriculum efforts mainly to the junior secondary schools which were its major focus. Reform of the curriculum, was now extended to all areas of the public not covered by previous efforts. The particular program was named the Curriculum Development Thrust (CDT).

3. The transformation of the junior secondary schools into five year secondary schools by the addition of Grades 10 and 11.

4. The establishment of an in-service program of teacher training to provide opportunity for those pre-trained teachers who for various reasons were unlikely or unable to go to college. This program was called the In-service Teacher Education Thrust (ISTET).

5. The inclusion of schools for handicapped children as part of the public system of education. Before these schools were organized and funded almost exclusively by private sources.
6. The establishment of community colleges. These colleges were created to serve three main functions: to prepare students to qualify for entry to the university, to train personnel for middle level jobs in the labor force, and to be a community training resource in the cycle of training and re-training that is not common as a result of rapid changes in technology.

7. The establishment of the Jamaica Adult Literacy Foundation\(^{26}\) (JAMAL) with the mandate to eliminate illiteracy in the out of school population.

8. The introduction of the double shift system whereby primary and secondary school buildings would be used twice per day to accommodate two sets of teachers and students.

Apart from the introduction of free high school and university education, the inclusion of special schools in the public system, the establishment of JAMAL and the community colleges all other reforms were adjustments and rationalizations of various aspects of previous reforms (Miller, 1989). JAMAL won a United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) prize for its contribution to social progress in August 1989 (Manley, 1990). It was during this period of reform also that the health and social welfare of students was

\(^{26}\) JAMAL was established to eliminate illiteracy from the adult population, as up to then it was estimated that great section of the adult population was lapse literate of illiterate.
addressed. According to The Education Thrust of the 70s, as of May 1973, "government recognizes that given the socio-economic situation of most Jamaicans, health and social welfare services have to be provided to lessen the gap between enrollment and actual attendance of children, particularly in the Primary Schools and to make the education system more meaningful and effective. To this end, facilities are to be provided for the implementation, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Health and Environmental Control, of improved health services, a redesigned and expanded school feeding program and expansion of the existing scheme for provision of uniforms" (p. 19). For the health services, all new primary schools were to be redesigned to include a sick bay and medical inspection room. Because "unbalanced diets and their attendant ills affect adversely and retard the performance of growing and learning children" (p. 19), highly nutritious meals were provided for children at school to supplement those normally given at home.

In 1978, Manley appointed Jamaica's first woman Education Minister, one of the participants in this study. The late Prime Minister, and leader of the People's National Party (P.N.P), under the slogans of "the politics of change" and "democratic socialism" made a concerted effort to include women in his politics. Women's issues, or issues that concerned women and children, were a large part of Manley's political
platform so it was not surprising that his government appointed Jamaica's first woman to head the Ministry of Education. Manley used his office to enact reforms for women who he thought were not given equal opportunities under the law. Manley credited his wife, Beverley, for sensitizing him to women's concerns and for ultimately including them in his politics of change. Beverley Manley was a strong feminist and an advocate of women's rights during the time of her spouse's administration. The United Nations had declared 1975 the International Year of the Woman and at the United Nations World Conference on the International Year of the Woman in Mexico Beverley Manley spoke. She explained that "a new world economic order was needed to achieve real (gender) equality and she called for the practical training of women in industry, technology, agriculture and commerce" (Levi, 1990, p. 164). Although "Manley grew up in a family of strong women he inevitably absorbed the patriarchal and sexist values of his time and place and indeed Western civilization" (p. 162).

In his book, The Politics of Change, Manley (1976) speaks of these inequalities thus:

No discussion of an egalitarian society would be complete without consideration of the special position of women. Equality is indivisible. But in many societies women are not equal. Jamaica is no exception. Jamaican women do not have full equality before the law in a number of respects and particularly in marriage... There are only two
women members in an elected Parliament of fifty-three, only one woman member of a Cabinet of nineteen, no women ambassadors and no women in top Civil Service posts. All this happens in spite of the fact that girls have equal access to education and have a generally superior record of academic performance. It happens, too, in spite of the fact that women have been the backbone of the Jamaican family for a century and tend to be just as active in the political system. Clearly, therefore the disabilities from which they suffer are the products of systematic discrimination reflecting deep-seated prejudices of the society (p.195).

These were some of the inequalities that Manley’s administration sought to change during his tenure in office. In 1974, a Women’s Bureau was established and headed by a political directorate, named Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office. For the first time in Jamaica’s history, women had a legitimate place to have their issues addressed. Women could express their concerns about politics, seek help to get jobs, and have personal problems addressed. It was the duty of this Minister, who was a woman, to attend to women’s concerns. She also acted as a liaison between the Ministry of Education to address the concerns of girls and young women. It was the mandate of this Bureau, for example, to set up and staff Women’s Crisis Centers and deal with teenage pregnancies. According to Reddock (1994) the move to have a women’s bureau made Jamaica one of the first countries in the world to institute a government bureau.
to deal with the status of women, and this was done even before the declaration of the International Women's Year in 1975. One can safely say that this was the period of the feminist movement in Jamaica.

Henry-Wilson (1989) comments that if nothing else was achieved during the first few years of the creation of this agency, women in Jamaica have agreed that the creation of a state agency specifically to address ‘women’s issues’ contributed to a feeling of female empowerment in decision-making. The period 1973 to 1975 saw an abundance of legislative reforms and the introduction of programs which benefitted women directly or improved the quality of their lives by providing legislative or material help for their children (Henry-Wilson, 1989). The education thrust of the government saw many policy changes and projects that were directly beneficial to women and their children.

Among the number of educational and social reforms witnessed in the 1970s were free education to high school, university education, and other tertiary institutions; in other words, tuition fees for students were abolished and boarding grants were offered to students who wanted them. A student revolving loan program was also set up. Students could borrow money to purchase books and other items

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27 This was a stipend provided to students in tertiary institutions. It was disburse through the Student Loan Bureau.
needed for college. Upon graduation this money would be repaid upon terms set up by the Student Loan Bureau28 and the debtor. There was the legislation for the Family Court in 1974, Equal pay for Men and Women Act in 1975, and the Status of Children Act29 in 1975, which abolished bastardy. In introducing the Status of Children Act the government made the norm of the country which formed the majority of the Jamaican society the legal norm. Most children were born out of wedlock. Prior to this Act, children born out of wedlock did not enjoy the same benefits under the law. The law made all children equal in the event of an inheritance. The Maternity Leave Act30 of 1975 provided all women in the work place with paid maternity leave whether or not they were married. Women also benefitted from a wide range of anti-poverty programs like the Minimum Wages Legislation, Maternity Leave with pay, Family Court and Equal Pay for Women. The Minimum Wages Legislation set a flat minimum wage that could be paid to anyone regardless of their gender. Prior to that legislation,

28 This was a department set up in the Bank of Jamaica (BOJ) to deal with student finances.

29 All children, whether they were born in or out of wedlock, should inherit from the father. Before this law only legitimate children could inherit.

30 All women married or unmarried could now get maternity leave with pay. Prior to this act unmarried teachers had to stop working when they discovered they were pregnant.
unskilled women got less pay than unskilled men per hour for the same task performed. The government integrated education and employment. The family court was set up so women could have a place to air their grievances and sue men for child support. Before this court was established, many women would not sue the men for child support as the other courts were considered too public. It was recognized that without the necessary support for child nurturing, women would not have a fair chance to become economically independent.

The Prime Minister and women members of the People's National Party worked together to change the status of women and children. It was out of this action that the Women's Bureau was instituted. Jobs were created for women through Special Employment Programs of the Women's Bureau (Henry-Wilson, 1989). However, in order that these women could work, child care had to be provided. Several daycare centers, creches and basic schools were opened up all over the country. These provided a place for women to leave their children while they worked, and they also provided more employment opportunities for many other women. It was during this period that an effort was made to have more girls than boys enter secondary schools through the common entrance or eleven plus examination. Since then "there has been evidence of women’s increased access to education
and girls exceed boys in secondary school attendance and performance" (Reddock, 1994, p. 114).

At the University of the West Indies in Jamaica and other parts of the Caribbean, women’s enrollment equals that of men and exceeds them in some faculties: in particular in the arts, and humanities, education and interestingly, in the natural science (Reddock, 1994).

**Women officially recognized**

Although women have always played their role in the region it was not until the late 1970s that the University of the West Indies officially address the place of the Caribbean woman in history. The Department of History at Mona has been the pioneer when it comes to teaching and researching the history of women of the Caribbean. The very first PhD thesis to be done on women’s history was done in the History Department. Since 1993, the department has introduced women’s history courses. Women and Gender in the History of the English-speaking Caribbean and Women in Europe are two such courses. There is also gender courses done through the Center for gender and Development Studies.

One may say that the 1970s was a period of political and social change in Jamaica as during this time not only did Jamaica get a woman education minister, but other women ministers of government as well. Jamaica’s first woman ambassador, assigned to France, was
appointed, as was the first woman Puisne Judge of the Jamaican Supreme Court.

Who are Jamaicans?

Jamaicans are a multi-racial group of people. Neville Dawes, a Jamaican writer, and Director of the Institute of Jamaica in 1974, writes that "a Jamaican is anyone white, black or mixed who grew up in Jamaica and traces ancestry back to the period of the institution of slavery in Jamaica". "Jamaicans can claim to have several identities, ... but it is the Jamaicaness of the Jamaican that really matters rather than his being White (Euro), Black (African), Chinese or East Indian" (Nettleford, 1974, pp.5-6).

One of the leftovers of colonialism can be seen in the different hues of the Jamaican. No person has a single identity. The Jamaican man or woman is an example of the melting pot as in his and her veins runs the blood of many different nations—Europeans, Africans, Asians and East Indians and all the others who came, hence our national motto, "Out of Many One People". These are all the people who came to Jamaica and through miscegenation of these different groups produced the peoples now known as Jamaicans. Miscegenation was not always mutual decision of the parties involved, as during slavery

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31 This was taken from an address to the Lions Club Montego Bay, May 2, 1974 (mimeographed).
black women were raped or kept as concubines by the white planters. Many of these relationships produced "half-breeds" or mulatto children. The population of the indigenous Jamaicans—the Arawak Indians—was wiped out long before the English set foot on the shores of the island in 1655. The Spanish who occupied the island from 1494 to 1655 did the ground-breaking work of decimating the indigenous population. No present day Jamaican has the blood of the Arawak pulsating through his/her veins. In a real sense Jamaicans are all immigrants—most of them longstanding and forced—but immigrants nevertheless.

Errol Miller (1991) refers to Jamaicans as lost in the melange of different representations and perceptions. They are the "descendants of slaves, who have been alienated from their lineages, ancestral villages, natal languages and root cultures and therefore lack essentials for social recognition and cultural meaning in Africa" (Miller, 1991). He continues that they are "the reflected glow of past imperial glory and this can be seen in the cultural links that the former Caribbean colonies retain with their former overlords" (p.66). North Americans, Miller believes, regard and treat Jamaica as their backyard. He sums it up appropriately when he writes that the peoples of the Caribbean of which Jamaica is a part, "are Indians without caste, Chinese without dynasties, Lebanese without militia, Africans without tribes and Europeans without class!" (p. 66).
Norman Manley\(^{32}\) (1961), while Premier of Jamaica, in an address to the National Press Club in the United States, summed up Jamaica’s peculiar position along these lines:

We are neither Africans though most of us are black, nor are we Anglo-Saxon though some of us would have others believe this. We are Jamaicans. And what does this mean? We are a mixture of races living together in perfect harmony and as such provide a useful lesson to a world torn apart by race prejudice (p.40).

Nettleford reminds us that “Jamaica is a non-racial nation and the non-racialism, besides being a distinctive feature, is an essence of the Jamaican identity” (p.40).

**The cultural identity of the Jamaican**

For the purpose of this study it is necessary to situate Jamaica and Jamaicans culturally. As I seek to do so I shall try to find out what roles class, gender and race play in the cultural identity of Jamaica. It is difficult to determine exactly what is meant by a "Jamaican identity". It is often expressed as ‘things Jamaican’ or ‘the Jamaican image’ (Nettleford, 1974). Jamaica, like other parts of the Caribbean and the world underwent a period of slavery and colonialism. Both events have undoubtedly left their imprints on Jamaica and Jamaicans. The

\(^{32}\) Norman W. Manley was Premier of Jamaica in 1961, and father of the late Prime Minister, The Right Honorable Michael Manley. The quote given is an excerpt from his speech which was reported in the New York Times in April 1961.
search for an identity has been the focus of Jamaican for sometime.
Nettleford says that "Jamaica and the Caribbean are often defined in
terms of their cultural pluralism by social scientists and cultural
anthropologists" (p.1). The country is a young Caribbean nation island-
- under forty years of age- which lies about two hundred miles south of
the tip of Florida. As a "developing" country it is classified as a Third
World by the United States and other more developed nations. Carl
Stone (1986), Jamaican economist and writer, remarks that "by Third
World standards Jamaica is not a poor country. It is in fact a
middle Third World country" (p.xii). Jamaicans do not feel like a Third
World country however, as Seaga (1980) said in a speech.

The world has become accustomed to the
easy terminology of first, second and third
world(s): North and South, communism,
socialism, and capitalism. In these stark terms
of black and white categories into which we
are all made to fit there is oversight of the grey
areas into which many countries which do not
conform to the stereotyped molds fall.
Jamaica is one of those grey areas...We are
the Third World, yes, but much of our urban
communities, by their level of economic
advancement and dynamism, could easily be
identified with the small urban centers of the
first world. We are like southern residents with
northern ambitions and lifestyles. We do not fit into
standard ideological labels.
(Stone, 1986, p.19)

Despite efforts to find their own place in the world, the legacies
of a historic past lingers on in Jamaica. Maybe it will take another four
hundred and sixty-eight years to uproot the tree of colonialism; the same number of years it took for the seed to be planted and germinated. Unlike the United States where blacks are in the minority, blacks in Jamaica are in the majority. There is not that marked racism based on color in Jamaica as it existed in colonial times or as it exists in the United States today. People are not given jobs based on the color of their skins but instead based on their qualifications. Jamaica is more a class conscious society. There is a marked distinction between the classes based on socio-economic mobility and this difference is not based on the color of one’s skin.

Language

No cultural identity can be complete without reference to language, both oral and written. Language is the major indice of culture and it is through this that a people’s civilization is known. Standard English of the metropolitan brand is culturally mandatory if one is to get ahead in the Jamaican society. However, the majority of Jamaicans speak "Jamaican talk" or "patois", however, the dialect of the country. This a broken form of English thrown together with words from the different immigrant groups which came to the island. Patois is not standardized nor is it written; it is a spoken dialect. The dialect is in myriad forms and differs, from parish to parish, country to town and from one social group to the next (Nettleford, 1974). Several
Jamaicans have been trying to put the dialect in written form but again these differ from writer to writer.

Prior to independence citizens were looked down at when they spoke the dialect. It was a mark used to distinguish the social class to which someone belonged and was also the target of middle-class snobbery. Today, that is no longer the case as the educated person finds that the dialect is beautiful and distinctively Jamaican. It is the "language" which most Jamaicans speak most of the time. However, people who are educated find it easy to switch between the colorful dialect and standard English. The less educated citizens have difficulty expressing themselves in standard English however, and communicate in patois. The dialect is also used in the field of entertainment. Plays that are distinctly Jamaican are presented in patois. Louise Bennett, writer and folklorist, was among one of the first Jamaicans to use the dialect to entertain at both the national and international level. She has also published the dialect in written form in her book, Jamaica Labrish. Miss Bennett (1966) declared that if the Jamaican dialect was to become a standard language in her life time she would "still write in the free expressions of the people"— that is, to use her own words, "a manner of speaking unhampered by the rules of (standard English) grammar, free expression- a dialect" (p. 9).
Class, gender and race in Jamaica

Class is entrenched in Jamaica’s cultural identity. Manley (1975) remarks that "post-colonial Caribbean society is completely class dominated and Jamaica is perhaps the... Caribbean community in which class boundaries are most entrenched" (p. 176). He continues that "there is a school of social anthropology that class divisions in Jamaica are so deeply rooted as to create the conditions of a plural society" (p. 176). There are the "haves" and the "have not", the rich and the poor. Unlike during the colonial period, this dichotomy did not form along rigid racial lines. There are wealthy blacks, as well as poor blacks, but because of the numeric make up of the population (75% black), naturally there are more poor among blacks than found in any other group. Other ethnic groups also fall in the low socio-economic category. It must be pointed out, however, that ethnicity is not a label in Jamaica. One is regarded by one’s socio-economic status rather than race or ethnicity.

Miller (1991) remarks that up to the early 1940s race and color were explicit criteria for obtaining employment in white-collar jobs in Jamaica. Employers advertising for a variety of jobs always stated the color and racial preferences of prospective employees. The lighter skin tone one had, the better was one’s chances of gaining certain types of employment. Even light skinned blacks would not entertain darker
blacks in their homes. The constitutional changes of 1943, which included adult suffrage and representative government, virtually erased race and color from such advertisements although the attitudes of people took a much longer time to change. These constitutional changes gave blacks, who form the majority of the population, the right to the vote. Despite the power of the black votes, the political stage did not change as whites and mulattoes where still in positions of government leadership. This remained so until after independence.

Educational credentials emerged as the standard by which employment to white-collar positions were given. Education also provided opportunity for social mobility from one social group to another.

During the period of constitutional changes, women were given greater access to secondary and tertiary education and this allowed them to overtake men in the middle strata of the labor force (Miller, 1991). Men at Risk, Errol Miller’s book, has its main focus on the "marginalization of males" in the Jamaican society. He talks about the lethargic disposition of men in the halls of higher learning, while the women display aggressive attitude where success is concerned. Many Jamaicans have also been addressing their concerns about the noticeable absence or reduction of the presence of men in the classroom and other areas of leadership. For example, in the leading
newspaper, The Daily Gleaner we read, "women have taken on a new, militant approach to their circumstances, and are bent on being placed at worst on par with men, and at best, proving that they are 'stronger' than men" (Salmon, August 21, 1996, p. 1 c). Similar articles appear on a weekly basis inquiring about the increasing disappearance of men from the classrooms of the nation's schools. In an article appearing in the San Francisco Chronicle, of September 12, 1991 under the heading "Women in Jamaica Forge Ahead", Dr. Gladstone Mills, professor of political science, at the University of the West Indies is quoted as saying, "eight out of ten Jamaican teachers are women, and women account for sixty percent of the graduates at the UWI" (p. 73). The reasons for the disappearance of male teachers may provide an interesting topic for another research project. This study does not intend to address that issue.
CHAPTER THREE

LIFE HISTORY METHODOLOGY

Stories and narrative, whether personal or fictional, provide meaning and belonging to our lives. They attach us to others and to our own histories by providing a tapestry rich with the threads of time, place, character, and even advice on what we may do with our lives. (Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p.1)

What is life history method?

Life history research aims to understand the life as lived and experienced in the present and as influenced by personal, institutional, and societal histories. The first life histories, in the form of autobiographies of American Indians, were collected by anthropologists at the beginning of the century (Goodson & Ball, 1985; Langness & Frank, 1991). Life history was used to document the lives of Native American Indians by anthropologists who sought to describe a culture that was quickly vanishing. Developed as an investigative science by the Chicago School of Sociology in the 1920s and 1930s, life history fell into disuse when a new research method emerged which stressed testing (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Since then, researchers have come to realize that not all aspects of human life can be subject to statistical measurement. Life history is now a standard technique in anthropology, and within social science research the method is becoming more widely used. As a core of qualitative research, life
history method has become a much more tried and tested method of research, and has an increasing recognition in standard methodological texts. This is due in part to the growing respectability of qualitative research in general. More recently, life history approaches have been adopted by educational researchers to study teachers’ lives and careers, teaching, schooling, and curriculum (e.g., Ball & Goodson, 1985; Beynon, 1985; Goodson, 1981, 1988, 1991, 1992; Knowles, 1992, 1993; Woods, 1988; Casey, 1993;). There was once a reluctance to use the method in social and educational research and this is understandable, since the method has a number of practical and methodological difficulties. While one admits that the method has a number of difficulties, it must be pointed out that some of these problems have been overstated. Plummer (1983) Geiger, (1986) and Munro, (1993) believe that what were previous criticisms of the method, like its lack of representativeness and its subjective nature, are in fact now its greatest strengths. Researchers have come to acknowledge the subjective, multiple and partial nature of human experience. To measure these subjective and intangible variables, life history research is ideal and has been the reason for the renewed interest in this research methodology.

A life history "involves a retrospective account of a person’s life that has been prompted or elicited by another human" (Watson and
Watson-Sparks, 1985, p.20). The questions asked and the responses they elicit help the researcher to uncover threads of the interwoven fabric of the teachers’ professional and private lives. The life history research assigns significance to the person’s own story, or interpretations that people place on their own experiences as an explanation of their behavior (Becker, 1996). Life history method documents the inner, subjective reality as constructed by the individuals themselves, showing how they interpret, understand, and define the world around them. This research method allows the informant to tell her story, in her own words, and from her own perspective, to the researcher (Plummer, 1983; Watson & Watson-Franke, 1985; Langness & Frank, 1991; Munro, 1993).

Life history research has become very popular in the development of oral and local history (Denzin, 1970). Life histories are well suited for illustrating some aspects of culture that are not usually portrayed by other means, and for illuminating gender relationships.

Why life history?

When I decided to pursue this study I knew I wanted a methodology that would allow my participants to relate their experiences as educators and the meanings they give to these experiences. I wanted to be able to transmit their oral stories into writing with as much of their narratives as possible and for their
experiences to take center stage. I knew that this had to be an ethnographic study and I chose the life history methodology as it seemed to be the best methodology for a study of this nature. I wanted, in some way, to give history back to these women, and to the women of Jamaica before them, and in the process help to make our own futures.

I had no documented reference point for oral/life histories of Jamaican women educators to which to turn, hence I consumed the work done on the oral histories and life histories of teachers here in the United States and some Third World countries. As I read the life histories of women—Munro’s (1991) A life of work: Stories women teachers tell, I Answer With My Life (Casey, 1993), Unrelated Kin: Race and Gender in Personal Narratives (Etter-Lewis & Foster, 1996), Tapestries of Life (Aptheker, 1989), Composing a Life (Bateson, 1990), Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History, (Gluck & Patai, 1991) and My Soul is My Own (Etter-Lewis, 1993), I realized that I could in fact give history back to these women in their own personal voices. I could use their oral/life histories to let these women describe their daily lives and the meanings they give to their experiences as educators.

Munro’s (1991), A life of work: Stories women teachers tell, which describes and analyzes the life histories of six women educators and provides the context for understanding the meanings they give to their
work, was among the first life histories I read. This work fuelled my desire to look at the life histories of the women educators in my own country. I wanted to know how different or similar would be the experiences and meanings the women educators of my country give to their work. How did they see themselves? I answer with my life: Life histories of women teachers working for change (Casey, 1993) is another work on the lives of teachers which influenced me to do this research on women educators in my country. I liked the way the authors write up their research. The work empowered the women teachers researched. The voices of the life historians are on the pages, in their narratives, their stories. I like this kind of writing as it is my belief that narratives provide a natural vehicle for educators to listen to each other and to themselves. Stories make permeable the boundaries of our own and other's life experiences (Smith, 1991). Through telling and listening to stories, individuals are able to "put the personal and particular into perspective" (Rich, 1979, p. 43). Jalongo and Isenberg, (1995) too, remind us that stories are "uniquely suited for the personal and professional odyssey" (p.xvii).

I was attracted to ethnography "as it is as dynamic and complex as the human beings it undertakes to study" (Ayers, 1989, p.11). Life history seemed the ideal methodology as it allows for thick description, for self-reflexivity, for collaboration, and for narration of the voices of my
participants. The method also allows me to convey the contradictory, partial, and subjective nature of life history (Munro, 1991, p.83).

It is through others that we come to a knowledge and understanding of ourselves. This project is an attempt to make sense of my own life as a woman and an educator. My life and the lives of my informants/life historians are intimately and intricately intertwined as the threads of gender, culture, academics and history are woven together to create the tapestry of the lived experience. At the same time, I am aware that there is no one lived experience, no one life, and that the stories we tell about our lives change from day to day and as often as we repeat them.

I am also aware that there is no single feminist or woman's experience. No one group of women can speak for all women. The women of the Caribbean experience a different world view of a woman’s role and also a different kind of feminism from the women of the United States and other countries in the world. White women experience the world differently than black women, or African-American women, and so too do the women of developing countries, than those of developed countries. It is my hope that I can show how my life historians make sense of their lives and experiences in their culture.
I like the oral narrative form and chose it for sharing the stories of my life historians. It is said that the human brain actually runs on stories, and many thinkers argue that the narrative mode is a supreme means of rendering otherwise chaotic, shapeless events into a coherent whole, saturated with meaning (Jalongo & Isenburg, 1995; Bruer, 1993; Coles, 1989; Rosen, 1988). Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995, tell us that "narratives offer exciting alternatives for connecting the lives and stories of individuals to the understanding of larger human and social phenomena" (p.113). According to Jalongo (1992) "personal narratives are an effective way for educators to arrange, understand, and organize their experiences, giving them shape, a theme, a frame" (p.70). She continues to remind us that "narratives bring new perspectives and a sense of connectedness with other educators experiencing similar struggles" or situations. Psychologists and sociologists like Bruner (1991, 1996), Fisher-Rosenthal (1995), McAdams (1993), Polkinghome (1991) and Rosenthal (1997) believe that personal narratives in both form and content are people's identities. "Stories imitate life and present an inner reality to the outside world" while they shape and construct the narrator's personality and identity (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashhiach & Zilber, 1998).
Am I a feminist?

Life history methodology appeals to me as it is directly concerned with the experience as it is lived. I am not sure if my decision to use the life history methodology has anything to do with being a feminist. I am still unsure if I am a feminist, given my childhood upbringing, and the different definitions of feminism. As a child, I never felt that there were defined women's roles as opposed to men's roles or privileges, or even that as a girl, I had no right to speak and be heard. In my home, I was taught to express my feelings openly; I was encouraged not to suppress how I felt. I could tell my father he was wrong, if he was, without fear of reprisal. Even as a child I was asked my opinion on matters that concerned the family. If being a feminist means standing up for women to ensure: that we have equal voices and opportunities; that our voices are validated in the curriculum of schools, to make ourselves present in history; and that we can define ourselves as authors of our own worlds in a patriarchal society, then I may be a feminist. However, I do not like labels. I hate feeling that I must identify with one group or another. It is very oppressive to me. I feel very uncomfortable being called by anything but my name, the name given me by my mother and father at the time of my birth. I am not the Jamaican woman, someone’s daughter, someone’s wife, or someone’s mother. I am not a radical, a socialist or liberal. I do not
like to be defined by my relationships. I am Ethel. Ethel King-McKenzie. I refused even to let go of the name given to me by my parents to completely take on the name patriarchal traditions said I should adopt when I married. Maybe my reluctance and refusal to name or label myself is my way of opposing and resisting patriarchy. I do like the feminist approaches to research however, and readily embrace qualitative research, which is one type of research some feminists use to explore the lives and experiences of women. By feminist research I mean, "research (that) attempts to describe and analyze how the social world actually works without imposing a different reality upon women's experiences" (Armstead, 1995, p. 628). I also became drawn to feminist writing and research because of my admiration and respect for some women professors with whom I have had classes, who proudly call themselves feminists. Several of them have exposed me to feminism and I see them as agents of change; however, it is my belief that I can initiate change without labelling myself.

There are as many different feminist research projects as there are feminisms, but there is a consensus that feminist research differs from traditional social science in many ways (Armstead, 1995). Feminist research attempts to create an egalitarian relationship between the researcher and her informant(s), although no research is
without its exploitative nature. Life history seems to be less exploitative than other research methodologies as the narrative or voice of the researched becomes part of the text. Their stories, even though retold, form the body of the research. Feminist researchers acknowledge and validate the informant’s own knowledge. The political agenda of feminist research is to eliminate and, or, reduce inequalities based on gender. Little wonder then that life history methodology has emerged quite strongly in feminist theory and research, where it has been developed as a contribution to methodology that crosses gender lines, and listens to and validates the experiences of its participants (Armstead, 1995). Feminist researchers have been attracted to qualitative research in general, and life history methods in particular, because it enables the interpretations of women to move from the margins and to take center stage (Weiler, 1988). In survey research, often seen as patriarchal research by feminists, women are placed on the periphery and their world and their experiences trivialized. Life history provides an alternative method that helps women to reflect on the traditional way they have recounted and recorded their experiences-through story-telling. I wanted a method that would not trivialize the experiences of the women I study.

With this in mind, I chose to use the life history research method for this study because of its potential for ‘laying bare’ the dailiness of
women's lives, and because the methodology offers strong possibilities for the roles women play in "transforming the curriculum of our schools and addressing women's issues" (Weiler, 1988, p.24). I also chose life history because it offers me the opportunity to see "how the person copes with society, rather than how society copes with a stream of individuals" (Mandlebaum, 1973, p.177).

Paulo Freire (1993) urged that theory be grounded in human narratives. These narratives are locations in which the oppressed may imagine liberation in the context of their own experiences. They yield knowledge about the peculiarities of people's suffering and offer multiple possibilities for their emancipation (xi-xii). There is, therefore, a need for this ethnographic research in order to illuminate how women view themselves in the education process. Freire encourages academics to listen to, and to ground our own educational praxis in the language of everyday experiences (Freire ix-xi). Through the stories of the women I have chosen to study, I hope to discover insights into their experiences as educators which have not been portrayed in the annals of Jamaica's educational history and to give them the opportunity to tell their stories in their own words and their own voices.

This research methodology seemed most appropriate for me to use, given my desire to allow the women to speak in their own voices. Life history allows the researcher to discover the lives of the participants
through an insider, or "emic", view of a particular culture (Langness & Frank, 1981). Life history methodology is also very appropriate for my study as it can illuminate certain aspects of culture not generally recognized, such as minority and women's views. In addition, it can provide the opportunity for a more in-depth understanding that is not attainable with other research methodologies (Langness & Frank, 1981).

I have tried to write the stories in the narrative form as much as possible, as Petra Munro reminded me in a conversation with her that the "narrative form becomes a window to the ways of knowing". Casey (1993), also in her work I Answer With My Life allowed me to see women teachers as authors of their own life history narratives and as authors of their lives by the way she wrote up and presented their narratives. This work has encouraged me to present the narratives of my participants in a similar way. These insights will be more purposeful and contextualized than traditional research methods allow. An understanding of our own and other women's life histories involves going beyond the personal to the public. The public and the personal lives of the teacher are closely knit and seem almost impossible to separate. These lives are as closely interwoven as the threads that are weaved together to make fine silk. However, these two lives are never always that smooth. There is always the juggling of responsibilities and duties. The educator's life is not an orderly professional path, but
rather, it is a personal journey shaped by context, choices, perspectives, and values.

**Collaborative nature of life history**

I have chosen to use life history as it has emerged quite strongly in feminist theory and research, where it has been developed as a methodology that does not reproduce traditional gender-bias or exclusion of women's voices (Weiler, 1988). This is achieved through an emphasis on participation and collaboration. The life history research method lends itself more to collaboration than other research methodology and both the researched and the researcher can benefit.

I also chose the life history methodology because as Wolcott (1990), suggests, the method offers the opportunities and the challenges to regard ourselves as humans who conduct our research 'among' rather than 'on' other humans. Unlike traditional empirical research, life history gives me the chance to conduct my research in the laboratory of the lived experience of my participants and not in a laboratory behind closed doors. I am able to talk with my "life historians" (Mbilinyi, 1989; Munro, 1991) and have them corroborate their stories.

I like the method because there are no specific outcomes that are expected. I did not seek to find any "truths". The participants
spoke freely, and I wrote up the research in their own words. In a way, they became co-authors of their own lives. I am cognizant of the fact that the final draft bears my name as the author, but the participants had the opportunity to reject those parts of their stories they did not want to be published. I realized that sometimes when we are being interviewed we say things that we would not say if we were writing and had the time to read it over. I provided my participants this opportunity as I did not want to hurt them in anyway.

I was reminded that this collaborative effort is not always easy to achieve as Munro (1993) found out when she conducted her research. She faced the dilemma of having her first attempt at establishing a collaborative relationship rejected (p. 167). Munro wanted to share her stories, as her life historians shared theirs, but they were not interested in hearing hers. I, too, had my moments of despair when one participant heard something she had said played back and requested that it be "off the record". Although this would have added greatly to the understanding of the life of this complex participant, I had to respect her wish. To do otherwise would be going against the very thing for which I strive: for my participants to be co-authors of the work and for us to have a non-exploitative relationship. I know, however, that it is difficult to establish a truly egalitarian relationship as there is always someone (the researcher) who steers the questioning.

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and decides what gets published. I had to change one method of collecting data. When I asked my life historians if they would write an essay, saying who they were, in addition to the interviews, the request was turned down. Both life historians hinted I could ask them about anything I chose, but an essay or paper would be out of the question. They both said they were too busy to take on a project like that. At other times, the participants would reveal stories when the tape recorder was turned off that they seemed reluctant to speak of on tape. McRobbie, (1982), Stacey, (1988), and Munro (1993) remind us that no matter how hard the researcher tries to establish an egalitarian relationship, the research is inherently unequal and potentially exploitative. According to Patai (1991) "the possibility of exploitation is built into almost all research projects with living human beings", (p.139). The practice of research in academics of "giving voices to the informants", whether it is by speaking for them, or by letting them speak for themselves, by presenting their narratives, is always and inevitably a device which reinforces, rather than weakens, the researcher's authority (Patai, 1991).

Oakley (1981) suggests that the researcher be prepared to invest her own personal identity into the relationship. Feminist research requires empathy, caring and partial identification with the women being researched, (Fonow & Cook, 1991). However, Stacey (1991)
reminds us that even research which relies on empathy and collaboration between the researcher and those being researched is not free of power relations and warns that this kind of research may present a masked and, therefore, more dangerous form of exploitation.

Dilemmas of life history research

Life history research is not without its ethical, moral and social dilemmas. In this section I hope to address the dilemmas of privacy, anonymity, exploitation and those faced by the insider ethnographer (or the researcher returning to study her own culture). Although I have already mentioned several of these dilemmas, I would like to devote this section specifically to addressing some the problems that life history researchers face, and how to deal with some of them. I do not claim to know all the problems that will be encountered, nor do I have all the answers to all those that may occur while conducting a life history research. At the same time, I hope that the reader is made aware of my understanding of the dilemmas posed by life history research.

The life historian's right to privacy

As the researcher I had to be aware that the life historian was telling her story to someone who was going to make it public. I obtained written consent from each of my life historians to publish her story. This consent was drafted by me, the researcher, and signed by the researched. After I transcribed the tapes I furnished my life
historians with copies of the transcribed interviews. I did this because I am aware that sometimes the informant may want to change, modify or have sections of her story deleted. This may pose some difficulties for the researcher as it may change the focus and content of her research. My life historians did not require that anything be changed. It is my belief that the views and wishes of the researched should be respected. In the process of relating one’s story, there may be things told that were not intended or may prove embarrassing or cause harm if printed. If this would hurt or cause embarrassment to the participant in anyway the researcher should weigh very carefully the outcome. One does not want to do anything to jeopard the integrity of the research or one’s integrity as a scholar.

**Exploitation**

As researchers, our intent is to inform and improve society, not to hurt anyone. Yet as Stacey (1991) reminds us, the researcher’s attempt to make the research collaborative in life history research is not without potential for exploitation. As researchers, we need to reflect, assess the situation, and make decisions about how far to push the informant to provide the kind of information that is really going to inform the study. We need to always respect the individual’s reservation for self-disclosure. The participant holds the power for self-disclosure. The researcher is the final author of the story as told, as she
may have to write up things with which the researched does not always agree. We should realize that women interviewing women is not without problems. We should listen attentively to what is being said and not what we think is said.

**Need for anonymity**

In most cases it is an ethical obligation to protect the anonymity of the participants. This can be done by changing their names and places of residence. The convention of rendering informants anonymous, or pseudonymized, is in itself a dilemma, however. How can researchers "give voice" or speak for someone whom the research renders nameless. The researcher must grapple with this dilemma. If one wants to use the names of the participants, their permission should be attained.

The problems become even more complicated when the ethnographic "others" are from the same society, or are members of the same gender and class background as the ethnographer. Some of these problems have been addressed in the section below.

**"Insider" ethnographer**

Traditionally the ethnographer packs her bags and leaves her homeland and culture to live among the strange, and 'exotic other' to write about their culture. Unlike these traditional ethnographers, however, I was born and bred in the place I returned to study. I am a
"native ethnographer". The paradigm which set up the polarization of "native" and "non-native" or real ethnographers was born in colonialism from which the discipline of anthropology was forged (Narayan, 1997). It is commonly thought that with advances in communication and technology, the world is becoming a more homogeneous, integrated and interdependent place, and with this process the truly exotic, and vision of difference it held, is disappearing (class notes, 1994).

I packed my luggage and returned to the land of birth, my country, and my culture, to conduct research. Ethnography is changing and that 'exotic other' (insider) is beginning to write about her culture. Studying one's own culture is indeed different from studying a "foreign" culture, and the theoretical and even epistemological implications of such studies are profound. When the researcher and the researched are from the same cultural background and social status, the oral narration assumes a different appearance (Etter-Lewis, 1993). I had many of the same social characteristics as the women I interviewed: educated woman from Jamaica who experienced the educational, social and political changes of the 1970s. As a participant observer, an insider, who shared many commonalities with the women in my study, I did not pretend to be an expert. Rather, I approached the interview situation seeking to be informed by two
women who were my superiors, who were older, and who were more experienced educators than I was.

Many researchers from developed countries do not take kindly to Third World ethnographers (insiders) researching their own culture as they claim that these insiders are unable to employ an objective perspective. There is also the fear that the insider (other) may romanticize and sensationalize her culture. Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1989) is an attack on the genres of writing developed in the west to represent non-western societies. He suggests that the ethnography of the Westerner is not about cultural description or cultural interpretation but a tool which promotes imperialism and colonialism. In recent discussion on "postcolonial research", "some anticolonial movement and present-day struggles have worked what could be labelled reverse Orientalism, where attempts to reverse the power relationship proceed by seeking to valorize for the self what in the former system had been devalued as other" (Abu-Lughod, 1991, p. 144). One must not forget, however, that the same researchers who fear this, have themselves on many occasions done the same to the culture of the ‘exotic other’. These outsiders even do harm on some occasions to the ‘other’ by the way the research data is written up and presented. To illustrate, Malinowski (1922) called the Trobriand natives "savages" despite his aim to be objective. Ethnographers like Geertz (1975) have been criticized
for the assumption that they can interpret the unarticulated concepts which shape the lives of the ‘Other’ by simply using the lens of objectivity as an outsider. Minh-Ha (1991) speaks harshly to those ethnographers who think that Westerners (outsiders) can present non-Westerner (insiders) more objectively than we can present ourselves. She is not the only insider who writes about her culture and resents the way in which the outsider represents the culture of the ‘Others’.

Much like Said’s critique, Fabian (1983) shows how ethnography has tended to devalue eastern subjects relative to the west, often in spite of its best intentions, by premises about time embedded in its rhetoric and categories of thought.

Jamaica is a western country and I would not face the east/west criticism, but surely there is the critique of the Third World ethnographer versus that of the ethnographer of the Developed Countries. The criticisms are much the same. Some ethnographers in the developed countries assume that people in developing countries are incapable of conducting ‘good’ ethnography. They believe that insiders write about their own cultures from a position of intimate affinity. There are voices critiquing this belief however. One such voice is that of Aguilar (1981) who concludes that "cultures are not homogeneous, society is differentiated and a professional identity that involves problematizing
lived reality creates distance and the extent to which anyone is an authentic insider is questionable" (p. 63).

According to Malinowski (1922), the goal of the ethnographic researcher is "to grasp the natives' point of view, his relations to life, to realize his vision of his world" (p.25). From this, one can see that to understand the native's point of view the ethnographer must of necessity become both an observer of, and a participant in, her native culture. Who is better able to understand the natives than a native herself? She is better equipped to tell the difference between a wink and a blink. A good ethnographer knows how to balance her stance between being an observer and a participant and therefore situates herself as a detached outsider inside the world, the world of her informants. It is not possible to acquire more than a crude notion of the insider's world until one comprehends the culture and language that is used to communicate its meanings (Hall, 1966). Spradley (1980) reminds us that "the most productive relationship occurs between a thoroughly enculturated informant and a thoroughly unenculturated ethnographer" (p.58). Most humans do not give up the insider's world of meaning and action except to a person who is a member or who is said to have 'gone native' or become the 'phenomenon' (Langness & Frank, 1991). When this happens, Langness and Frank warns, the researcher may be lost to the community of science as the research
may become contaminated by subjectivity and personal feelings. It is
difficult for the outsider to become a ‘true insider’ as there will always
be differences. Minh-Ha (1991) tells us in her work, When the Moon
Waxes Red, that it is difficult for the native ethnographer (insider) to
remain a ‘true insider’ once she has lived away from her homeland for
any period of time. Citing her own personal experience, she sums the
problem up as follows:

The moment the insider steps out from the
inside, she is no longer a mere insider (vice
versa). She necessarily looks from the outside
while also looking from the inside. Like the
outsider, she steps back and records what
never occurs to her the insider as being worth
or in need of recording. But unlike the outsider,
she also resorts to non-explicative, non-
totalizing strategies that suspend meaning and
resist closure. (This is often viewed by the
outsiders as strategies of partial concealment
and disclosure aimed at preserving secrets that
should only be imparted to initiates). She
refuses to reduce herself to another, and her
reflections to a mere outsider’s objective
reasoning or insider’s subjective feeling (p.74).

The researcher has to be constantly reflexive so she is
able to detect her biases- so she will not be blinded by what she thinks
she knows- but will listen to what is told to her by her informants. There
has to be a balance- a switching back between worlds. As an insider
researching participants with whose lives as educators I was familiar, I
found that I had to constantly switch between the insider and the
outsider ethnographer. Having lived away from Jamaica for over eight years I returned to my country with fresh eyes. I saw things I had never noticed before or that I had taken for granted. This may have been due to the fact that I returned to see my country through the lens of a student and ethnographer. It felt strange asking questions of people about things and events I thought I knew about. I was getting another perspective, seeing things and events through different eyes. On many occasions I felt like an outsider in my own homeland. I was able to apply self-reflexivity and constantly distance myself from my life historians, yet there were times when I could hear myself saying "yes" in confirmation of something they said. At other times, I had to force myself not to say, "that is not the way it was or the way it happened".

I am aware that studying the life histories of these participants puts me in both a privileged and a difficult position. I tried to maintain a balance and be self-reflexive. I have the privilege of telling the stories of these women from the perspective of the "insider", but I also had the difficulty of maintaining distance. Gaining enough distance is one of the alleged problems of studying one's own culture according to Abu-Lughod (1991). It is my belief that I was able to switch back and forth between the insider's perspective and an analytic framework. This was facilitated by talking over field experiences with colleagues. Langness and Frank (1991) suggest that the "insider" researcher ask
questions of people who know the participant/s and that the field
notes be discussed with colleagues to see if the data has been
compromised because of the insiders' perspective. I interviewed and
talked with others because I wanted to add to the richness of the
stories of my participants, not because I thought there was a 'truth' out
there or to get the stories of my participants "right". I know that there is
no "right" story. Tierney (1992) reminds me that my task as a researcher
is not to discover the 'true' interpretation of my participants story, for
none exists. Instead he bids me to "uncover the multiple voices in
society that have been silenced" (p.197). I am also reminded by the
Personal Narratives Group (1989) that:

> When talking about their lives, people lie sometimes, forget a lot, exaggerate, become confused, get things wrong. Yet they are revealing the truth. These truths don't reveal the past "as it actually was," aspiring to a standard of objectivity. They give us instead the truths of our experiences (p.261).

Then Pagano (1991) suggests that "there is more than one way to
tell a story and more than one story" (p. 16). I know that it is possible
that someone else can analyze the data I have collected and
interpreted, and come up with a totally different study. I have carefully
and specifically described the methods of investigations I used to arrive
at conclusions and, or, assumptions. From talking with others, which
will be discussed later, I, the researcher was able to assess how my own
personal biases and experiences that have affected or influenced the
research. Unless the perspectives of others are brought to bear upon the informant’s statements, the researcher has no way of assessing the idiosyncrasies of those interpretations. This also provided a sort of medium of self-reflexivity for me. I was able to be self-critical, introspective and analytical as I scrutinized myself as a researcher. In so doing, I believe I was able to, as Myeroff (1982) defines self-reflexivity, to not just address what I know, but how I know what I think I know.

Into the field

The field was Jamaica, my homeland. I had returned to make the familiar strange, the invisible, visible, bring the margin to the center, give voice to the voiceless, and make the trivial important.

The selection of the life historians in this study was a deliberate decision. I am in the field of education and felt the need to make my contribution to that field by attempting to write the oral life histories of women educators and thus attempt to ‘unsilence’ their silent voices. When I began thinking about what I should do, I thought I would look at women who had made contributions to the field of education in my country. Several names came to mind and friends and colleagues suggested women I could study. There were several women educators who fit this category but accessibility to them was limited to telephone calls and letters. Many of them had migrated and therefore could not be reached for a face to face interview; neither
would it be possible for me to be out in the field with them observing them at work. The list was also long, so I decided to narrow it to include only women educators who had come up "through the ranks" and had made it to the top of their career to occupy positions once male-dominated or that seemed to be labeled "for men only".

It did not take long before I decided who my participants would be, and started to research the lives of three women educators. Again fate had a hand in my plans, circumstances changed, and the number was reduced to two.

I explained the reasons for wanting to do the project to Marlene and Phyllis at our initial meeting. I was careful not to reveal too much. I wanted them to speak freely and allow themes to surface. In addition to telling them my reasons, I explained that they would receive copies of all transcribed interviews for feedback. I also requested their permission to use their names in the project. Marlene and Phyllis were each given a Consent Form to sign. A copy of this form can be found in appendix A.

In order to answer the questions which motivated this study, life history research and interviews were conducted over a period of two years, during summers, springbreaks and semester breaks beginning in 1995 and culminating in January of 1998. These were the times

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33 These are women who were classroom teachers at some time or another.
convenient to both my participants and me. Because of the distance between my participants and me and my lack of financial resources, I was unable to do an indepth study of their lives. That is, I was only able to interview them during the times stated above. I would have loved to spend more time with each of them over the two year period, but that was not possible.

The primary source of my data collection was interviews. Four formal interviews lasting about two hours each were conducted with each of my participants. These interviews were generally non-directed and took place in offices, and during walks with my participants. Their homes were far away from their places of work and my participants kept very long work hours. I conducted multiple interviews with my life historians, often revisiting the same topics over and over again. I made sure I tried to listen to the voices of my participants. There were also several informal interviews. These were done via the telephone or faxes, and in informal settings, such as during rides in their cars. Letters and electronic mail were used to maintain contact with my life historians between interviews.

I began the first interview by asking the participants to, "Tell me your life story." There were times when I needed specific answers and had to take a direct approach; however, the non-direct, open-ended approach of interviewing was maintained throughout the whole
fieldwork. My main purpose was to keep the interviews as open-ended as possible so the life historians would emphasize those experiences which they considered central and most important to their lives. These interviews were taped and later transcribed.

Life history interviews provide an invaluable means of generating new insights about women's experiences of themselves in their worlds (Anderson & Jack, 1991). The spontaneous exchange within an interview offers possibilities of freedom and flexibility for researchers and narrators alike. For the narrator/life historian, the interview provides the opportunity to tell her own story in her own terms. For the researchers, taped interviews preserve a living interchange for present and future use; we can rummage through interviews as we do through an old attic – probing, comparing, checking insights, finding new treasures the third time through, then arranging and carefully documenting our results (Anderson & Jack, 1991; Duchein 1993).

Several other techniques were employed in data collection for this study. I poured through several newspapers and history books in the Institute of Jamaica, the West India Reference Library34, located on East Street, the Education Documentation Center at the University of

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34 The West India Reference Library is one of the greatest and most valuable treasures of Jamaica and the Caribbean. It houses the finest collection of rare books, documents, maps, newspapers, manuscripts of life and work in the Caribbean for over three centuries (Nettleford, 1978).
the West Indies, the Main Library at the University of the West Indies, The Gleaner Company on North Street and The Library at Gordon House in Kingston, Jamaica trying to find articles written about these women in the local newspaper. There was very little information on the two women. From these sources, I also tried to glean information on the history of women in teaching in Jamaica, the history of Jamaica’s educational system and again very little information was yielded. This is due to the fact that newspaper clippings are not maintained and nothing has been stored on microfiche, microfilms or on computers. I informally interviewed three colleagues and four past students of each of my participants. I was privileged to interview the Governor General\textsuperscript{35} of Jamaica, The Right Honorable, Sir Howard Cooke at his residence, King’s House, Jamaica in July of 1997. He was at one time a colleague of one of my participants. The Governor General said that in his "own experience women have been more important than men in the development of Jamaica. It is a fact that men have held the executive positions but women have held sway in the field of education...We are somebody because our mothers and our (women) teachers took the initiative" (interview, on July 16, 1997).

\textsuperscript{35} When Jamaica gained independence from Britain she accepted the Queen of England as sovereign head of state. Her proxy is a Jamaican Governor General whom she appoints upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister.
The life historians also made accessible to me, pictures, newspaper articles, educational papers and speeches they had written, curriculum vitae, (Appendix B) and other artifacts. These were very useful in enhancing my understanding of the lives and experiences of my participants. They also completed a short questionnaire in which they supplied specific information concerning their work experiences and family history (Appendix C). The field was not always accessible or helpful. I spoke informally with several persons who know the life historians or have worked with them. One male educator with whom I spoke told me, "You should really be looking at male educators and the reasons for their at risk status in the education system". He immediately produced a newspaper clipping from the drawer of his desk. I obtained a copy of the clipping from the Educational Documentation Center at the University of the West Indies and have included it in appendix F of this study. When I countered with my reasons for wanting to study women educators, I felt as though I was dismissed from his presence, as he became aloof and suddenly remembered that he had a meeting and could spend no more time with me since he would be late if he did not leave immediately.

The final source of data collection was my field notebook in which my reflections were written. Spradley (1980) and Watson & Watson-Frank (1985,) encourage the use of fieldnotes as a mean of
identifying immediate and specific conditions under which a life history is recorded. I kept extensive fieldnotes in which I recorded those observations and happenings that could not be captured on tape. I did this in shorthand, and at the end of each day while the events were still fresh in my memory I rewrote my fieldnotes in essay form. My fieldnotes aided greatly in the writing up of this research.

**Data analysis and procedure**

The interviews were over. The tapes were transcribed and I was now faced with the task of analyzing and writing up the life stories of these women. It was a difficult process. I kept putting it off. I struggled. I revisited my reasons for wanting to do this study. I questioned my ability to adequately represent the lives and stories of these women in print. Where do I begin to write a life story? Did I now want to present their lives and lay them bare for everyone to read? How would I write up their narratives? How should I begin? Should I proceed in chronological order? Should I just write their narratives and enable readers to make their own analyses or, out of respect for these women, should I use quotes in addition to paraphrasing. If I presented their narratives how should I proceed? Should I write up the stories of one life historian and then the other, or should I look at themes from their narratives simultaneously. It was a real struggle and I tried doing them together and separately to see
which worked better for me. I struggled with the maelstrom in which I found myself. I read and reread the transcripts of the interviews.

What will the life stories of these women say about me? Was I willing to expose myself? Was I ready for self disclosure? What about stories told to me that I cannot use, but that would make great quotes in my research? I kept remembering what Judith Stacey (1991) says: "the lives, loves, and tragedies that field work informants share with the researcher are ultimately data–grist for the ethnographic mill, a mill that has a truly grinding power" (p. 113).

I struggled. I cut and pasted quotes from each participant on pieces of paper, and I color coded the themes, an idea given me by Munro (1995), in a doctoral seminar. I tried to identify themes and order and similarity in the stories of my life historians. This was a difficult task. It was not easy to fit the stories of these women’s lives into little slots, categories or compartments, as there were always overlapping themes of family, work, resistance and personal choices which were constantly interweaving and emerging. These themes seemed to surface again and again in the lives my life historians as I read, re-read and analyzed their narratives. I seemed to be seeking clarity, although deep down I know that the lives of these women, like my own, were filled with contradictions, tensions and ambiguities. I tried to find some logical order, even though I know that life stories are not linear. Finally,
I gave up and just began to retell the stories of my life historians. Munro (1991) and Bateson (1990) warn against the temptation to disassemble the lives of individuals. Bateson contends that when this disassembling is done "the pattern and loving labor in the patchwork is lost" (p. 10). I was unable to separate the pieces of their stories that go so well together to make the beautiful quilt of their lives. The lives of my participants, like my own, were not orderly professional pathways, but, rather, personal journeys shaped by context, choices, perspectives and values. Our perspectives are not static and my own personal baggage that I took into the field undoubtedly affected what I have written.

I struggled even harder to capture the richness of the oral stories of these women in writing. Anything I wrote fell short of the tones and nuances in which their stories were related and captured on tape. The facial expressions, and body language as they related their life experiences, cannot be captured adequately in my writing, and I wrestled with the idea that these would be missing like the fine threads that are needed to hold a quilt together.

Another dilemma with which I struggled was deciding which story should be told. Which stories should I retell? What criteria should I use to chose the stories to retell? Pagano’s (1991) words, about more than one way to tell stories and more than one story to tell, kept pounding in
my head. In retelling the stories of my participants, whose story would eventually get told? How will what I write reflect the issues with which I grapple in my own life? How do I strike a balance between the stories of my participants and my own reflections, without trivializing or romanticizing their stories? I know that this requires situating myself both reflexively and critically. I do not want to create the sin of having done "vanity ethnography" of which Van Maanen (1988) writes. I know that the relationships I developed with my life historians during the period of research did not only provide me with data for this study, but also provided the wellspring from which my interpretations and analyses flow.

In the narratives which follow, I will attempt to incorporate my understanding of my participants' stories with my own because I have come to realize that our lives are intertwined. Stories illuminate one person's life experience, yet in doing so evoke stories from others and remind us of our interconnectedness (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995). Furthermore, "stories are one of the ways in which women give meaning to the things that happen in a lifetime, and the dailiness of life also structures the telling, the ordering of thought, the significance allocated to different pieces of the story" (Aptheker, 1989, p.44). Heilbrun (1989) reminds us that not only do cultural texts shape the stories we tell about ourselves, but that the stories we tell form who we
are and how we live. In many ways the stories of my life historians are also the story of my life.
CHAPTER FOUR

THEIR STORIES-- MY STORY TOO

...how we tell our stories rather than what is told. How we tell our stories, the narrative form becomes a window to ways of knowing. (Petra Munro quoted in Life History and Narrative p. 115).

In doing this research I tried to be present in the stories in the hope of removing the detachment so often found in academic writings which perpetuate the myth of remaining objective and neutral. In an attempt not to erase or objectify myself or my life historians in this research project, I tried to interweave my voice with their voices where possible. Leslie Roman (1989) points out that the (researcher) ethnographer is written into the text, but seldom appears as a social subject in relationship with those that she researches. I was also thinking of what Renate Klein (1983) says, that we are not able to speak for others but we must try to speak out of others, when I decided to present the voices of the women in my study and include my own whenever I shared a personal experience. This I believe gives a clearer and more honest picture of the process in which my life historians and I were engaged throughout this research. My voice also frames the narratives. It is my belief that self-reflexivity is central to ‘good’ research.

I was drawn to the oral personal narrative form of reporting the life experiences of my life historians after I read Etter-Lewis (1993).
uses the "raw" narratives, with minimal editing, of the women she researched. This approach "offers an intimate perspective of the narrator’s interpretation and understanding of his/her own life unabridged" (p.xii). Narratives illuminate our professional lives and connect us to the past, the present, and to other teachers and our students.

I have presented some of the direct narratives of my life historians along with my personal paraphrasing. This was done in a deliberate attempt to make my life historians co-authors of this research. I also wanted to give the reader glimpses of my participants’ lives. As Bruner (1990) reminds us, "stories of a life told by one person to another are joint productions; they are in a real sense "co-authored". I am aware of the views of hooks (1989) and Minh-ha (1991) on the power relationships embedded in research. Even under the guise that we are "giving voice" to our participants by speaking for them, they become our "objects" of study. And as objects, one’s reality is defined by others, one’s identity created by others, one’s history named only in ways that define one’s relation to those who are subjects" (hooks, p. 43). Out of respect for the women’s words, and to reduce potential errors in communicating their thoughts, I have presented as much of the words of my life historians as possible. The quotes enable the reader to form their own analyses. I wanted my life historians to be
present on the pages so the reader can hear them speak and be able to interact with, and react to them. The reader has the opportunity to feel the presence of these women and experience the culture in which they live. Barbara Hardy (1977) sees narratives as very important when she writes, "We dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative" (p. 12). And Becker (1997) asserts that, "narratives, the stories that people tell about themselves, reflect people's experience, as they see it and as they wish to have others see it" (p. 25).

The Personal Narratives Group (1989) reminds us that working with personal narratives raises the questions of authorship, and Carolyn Heilbrun (1988) writes that the decisions as to which stories will be told and which suppressed not only give definition to a life but serve as a form of power for the writer. I am aware that ultimately my own voice will be privileged. My voice will be the loudest as I am the person who chose the stories that are included in the research; however, to have the direct words of these educators included makes a difference in the way that the stories are re-told.

University of the West Indies and me

Most of the interviews for this research were conducted on the campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona, Jamaica,
where both life historians are actively engaged in the educational process. The Mona campus occupies lands that were formerly part of two large sugar plantations during slavery, a direct contrast to today. Then the illiterate slaves worked the land; today the land is home to the highest educational institution in Jamaica. There are still remnants of the ruins of those plantations present on the campus. The long aqueduct which runs through the width of the campus is a dominant feature, an outstanding landmark, and a stark reminder of that period of the country's past. Today, the aqueduct is dry, but this was the source of the estates' water supply back in the days of slavery. Places like the Dramatics Theater and Old Library, which are in use on the campus, are part of the historic past (From University of the West Indies Historical Guide, revised version pp. 4-5).

I had returned to the campus of the University of the West Indies, my alma mater, for the first time, fifteen years after obtaining a Bachelor's in Education degree there. I approached the campus without the fear and trepidation of those earlier years. I was not going to be "ragged" because I was not a freshman on campus. It was a different kind of anxiety that I felt. I was an undergraduate then, and she, my life historian, was my professor. Today, I am a graduate

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36 Ragging is a kind of initiation into university life provided by seniors and super seniors to freshmen or new students. Sometimes it can be very scary.
student at another university and I am going to interview my former professor. She is now Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC) of the largest University in the country and the West Indies. The University of the West Indies has three campuses located on three islands. The campuses are Cave Hill, in Barbados; St. Augustine, in Trinidad; and Mona, in Jamaica. I was also going to interview the person who was Jamaica’s first woman Minister of Education. Today, she is serving her country in another capacity on the campus of the University of the West Indies. The interviews were set up two hours apart. This would not be a problem as both participants were located on the same campus.

I was early for my appointment so I decided to take a walk around where I used to run, many years ago, on that historical campus. How different everything appeared. The chapel in which I found sanctuary during those rough undergraduate days now appeared so small. It did not feel as comforting as it did then. The mural on the southern wall of the Senate Building was just as beautiful as it was when I walked that campus as an undergraduate.

The poui37 trees were in full bloom and their fallen yellow stars formed carpets on the ground around their trunks. Today, I stopped to pick up and look closely at some of the fallen petals. The poui flowers were no longer intimidating. Legend has it that by the time the poui

37 The poui is a tropical plant that flowers once per year.
starts blossoming any student who is not prepared to face examinations will never be ready. The poui starts flowering from about mid March to mid April; examinations on the university campus begin in May. The bougainvillea flowers were also blooming. The flora on campus was as beautiful as ever.

**Meet Marlene**

It was now time for my first appointment and I returned to the administrative building and the office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor’s. Her secretary announced my arrival and Dr. Marlene A. Hamilton met me at the door. She appeared to be the same warm, effervescent person I had as a professor years ago. Her curly, auburn hair was shoulder length. Marlene is about five feet eight inches tall and weighs about one hundred and fifty-five pounds. On this day Marlene was wearing a pretty yellow dress and her smile was captivating. She had on a pair of dark tinted spectacles, a kind of trademark for her. For as long as I have known Marlene she always wore a pair of dark lensed glasses. Later, during one of our interviews I would learn that she is shy, and she believes the tinted lenses provide a kind of shield or protection for her.

Her office is a large and spacious suite located on the second floor of the building. The floors were carpeted from wall to wall. On one wall of the room hung her diplomas and a cabinet held her accolades. The flags of Jamaica and that of the university each stood
on brass flag poles about seven feet high on either side of this cabinet.

On display on a long table behind her were pictures of her family.

There were more pictures of her husband and two daughters than there were of any other family members. There were also several pictures of her grandbaby.

Dr. Hamilton is a graduate of the University of the West Indies (UWI) and holds the Bachelor of Science in Botany and Zoology, the Diploma in Education with Distinction in the Practice of Education, the Higher School Diploma in Education, Masters of Arts in Education and the Doctor of Philosophy in Education (1976). Her dissertation is entitled, "A Study of Certain Personality, Educational and Environmental Variables Associated with Science Orientation, in a Selected Group of Fifth Form Students in Secondary Schools in Jamaica". As a teaching assistant in Science Education in the School of Education, she joined the staff of the University of the West Indies in 1971. She was later lecturer in Educational Psychology (1973) in the Faculty of Education and later promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1980. Still later, Marlene became Head of the Department of Educational Studies (1982-86) and Dean of the Faculty of Education in 1989.

Prior to becoming Pro-Vice Chancellor, Dr. Hamilton was responsible for initiating and implementing new programs and courses in the Faculty of Education, including the University of the West Indies
Distance Teaching Enterprise\textsuperscript{38}, (UWIDITE) the Certificate in Education, the Bachelor’s of Education degree with the College of the Bahamas, Mico Teachers College and the Bernard Van Leer Early Childhood Education\textsuperscript{39} (The Daily Gleaner, July 4, 1991).

This life historian has served on several public service committees in Jamaica, including the Education Sub-Committee of the National Preparatory Committee for the United Nations End of the Decade of Women World Conference from 1984-1985). She also acted as a consultant to the United Nations Educational Scientific Organization on the Environmental Education and Nutrition Education in the Caribbean, as an evaluator for the College of Arts, Science and Technology’s Personnel Management certificate courses and was a delegate to the World Conference on Education for All in Thailand in 1990. Marlene has also been a member of several professional service committees. She has been given several awards and recognition for her work in the

\textsuperscript{38}UWIDITE links three campuses with each other and with the University Centers in Antigua, the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, Belize, the Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis and St. Lucia by telecommunications network. This facilitates education through the School of Continuing Studies (From Introducing the University of the West Indies brochure).

\textsuperscript{39}A program for the education of children too young to attend elementary school. They are in a preschool program.
field of education. The Kiwanis Club of Kingston named her 1994 Woman of the Year.

Marlene came into the teaching profession in a roundabout way. This life historian was forced to study the sciences while in school and college as her parents wanted her to be a medical doctor. Marlene’s father, William Clarke, was an architect/builder. Inez Clarke, her mother, was a secretary. She remembers her mother as being "firm in the finest traditions of Jamaican motherhood, but very progressive in her outlook. She was no nonsense, and she really believed that women needed to be themselves, to be independent and resourceful". Her father she remembers as a very strong-willed person who believed in "do as I say". Both her mother and father were a team when it came to Marlene’s education. They made her study the sciences, but "left to have my own way and make my own choices, I would have been an artist, a historian, or a dreamer maybe". Her father believed that she should have broken the mold of "women becoming teachers" and be the brilliant doctor of medicine he dreamed of for her. They lived to see her receive the doctor of philosophy but died before she went into administration. Marlene said that although she did not become that medical doctor, her parents were very proud of her. Marlene had choices. She was born to a middle class family who could afford to pay for her education. She pursued the sciences in
high school and college. Why then did she choose the teaching profession and what motivated her to remain a teacher/educator? She told me she has no regrets remaining in education.

If I had my life to live over, I would become an educator again though I might not have taken the same courses in school. I'll say my first degree was in science, and I had some A levels with distinction but it was really hard work because I was not a science oriented person by any stretch of the imagination. So if I had the opportunity to make my own decision at an earlier stage I might have done other subjects. They might not have taken me into teaching but then again I might have. I really do like teaching but at the University level.

Marlene Annette Hamilton was born in Kingston, Jamaica on February 15, 1942, and is the only girl and youngest of three children. She recalls that she virtually grew up as an only child since her brothers were much older than she was and were always away from home. During her childhood she spent a lot of time with books. Books became her friend and companion. Marlene said that whenever she had a book, supplied by her parents and the local library, she never felt lonely.

Marlene has been married for over thirty years to Howard Hamilton, who was Managing Director of the Shell Company of the West Indies when I conducted my first interview. Since then he has become President of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce. Marlene recalls that she met Howard, who attended Wolmers Boys School, when she sold him a bottle of champagne at a school fair. They became
friends. He helped her cut her birthday cake at her sweet sixteen birthday party. Her eyes sparkled with a kind of childish mischievousness as she told that story. Marlene is the mother of two daughters, ages thirty-one and thirty-two years old. The elder Tracey, is an attorney at-law and Michelle is a computer graphics artist. "They are both very successful", Marlene says proudly. Marlene recently became a grandmother and is elated. She said, "The grandbaby is the apple of my eye. I spoil her rotten. On weekends I take her away from her parents and just love her to death." This grandmother is full of life and still maintains her girlish figure.

Marlene has always seemed so full of self-confidence that I was shocked when she said, "I am basically a shy person....My husband and daughters have unknowingly done a lot of work to help me overcome my shyness. I really appreciate all that they have done to help me in that area."

Dr. Marlene Hamilton was appointed to the post of Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC) of the University of the West Indies on October 1, 1991. She is the first woman to hold such a high level administrative position at the university. The Flair Magazine of March 14, 1994, in an article about Dr. Hamilton, reported, "In 1991, a very self-assured woman broke into the well-established male domain and became Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies...Dr Hamilton was
elevated to one of the highest seats in academia in the land, taking the women of Jamaica another rung up the ladder of progress" (p.8).

Dr. Hamilton came to this office on promotion from Dean of the College of Education.

Marlene's stories

I had spoken and written to her prior to my arrival for the interview. I assured Marlene that she could change her mind if at anytime she felt that she no longer wanted to be part of the study. She assured me that she was aware of her options. Marlene displayed a calm and easiness throughout our conversations, having grown accustomed to being interviewed. She had conducted several interviews herself during her college years and had sat through many since she became Pro- Vice Chancellor. Marlene confided that later that day she was going to be interviewed on television.

I began the interview by saying, "Tell me your life story." Marlene laughed, tilted back in her large, brown leather chair at her desk, breathed deeply and replied;

That's a long and complicated tale to tell.
Believe me you do not have the time to hear the stories of my life. Where should I begin?
Which story do you want to hear?

Her response to my request to tell me her life story intrigued me. Marlene wanted to know which story I needed to hear. She was in fact confirming Pagano's (1991) words about having more than one story to
tell. However, I did not ask for personal or any other stories, for as Watson & Watson-Franke (1991) remind us, when the researcher asks participants for personal experience stories, they are asking participants to engage in an activity that may bring unexpected insights which may change the participant’s view of past experiences. I did not want to tell her what stories I wanted to hear. I did not want to reveal too much. If I changed my request I might steer the stories in one direction. My request to "tell me your life story" left it up to Marlene to tell what she deemed most central to her life. I insisted that she tell me her story and Marlene began with a teaching story.

I came into teaching at the resistance of my father. While in school I was encouraged to pursue the sciences. You see my father wanted me to pursue a medical career. I did all the sciences in high school. If I had an option I might have done the arts. I had no interest in being a teacher. I would never have pursued teaching but I did not want to be a doctor either. When I graduated from Wolmers Girls School I was offered a job to teach science to the lower forms there. After spending a year at Wolmers, I decided to go on to university and applied for and was awarded a scholarship to the University of the West Indies but turned it down, as one stipulation was that the recipient teach for a period of three to five years. I did not want to be tied to teaching. I swore I did not want to be a teacher. I had no interest in teaching. I took an open bursary instead which had no ties. When I graduated in 1966, I was thinking about getting married and starting a family. Suddenly, I realized that teaching permitted holiday time which would be advantageous if I was going to start a family. You see I got into teaching for the wrong reasons. I did not apply for my
first teaching job. I got an offer from Kingston College (KC)\(^4\), which you know is a boys' school. They desperately needed a science teacher and asked me to come. I agreed to do so for a short time. If you know anything about KC even in those days it was a tough school, but then I realized that I enjoyed teaching and enjoyed teaching the boys. That short time went to a year then two years. At that stage I felt now I had an interest in remaining in teaching, and if I was going to do so, I needed to prepare myself properly for the profession, so at the end of the third year at KC, I went off again to the university to do the diploma in education. I figured that I might as well learn to teach properly because I found myself in the position of being very critical of some persons who taught me in high school. I wanted to be sure that I never fell into the category of the woman who just got up and talked and never really did justice to the subject.

Marlene did not explain the reason for her ambivalence to teaching nor her resistance to her parents' wish for a career in medicine. I pressed her for her reason for not wanting to go into teaching and she said she did not see herself as a teacher. She considered teaching to be a profession for older women. Marlene quickly added, "I was young then, all the teachers around me were older men and women". Not only did she resist her father's request not to become a teacher but Marlene says she "went into teaching for the wrong reasons". She saw it as the ideal profession to go into in order to be an effective wife and mother. It would offer her the time she needed to spend with her family. Is her reason for going into teaching

\(^{4}\)KC is the abbreviation for Kingston College, one of Jamaica's leading boys schools.
confirming the patriarchal idea that teaching is a natural extension of women’s nurturing capacities and teaching is "woman’s true profession" (Hoffman, 1981)? Marlene did not know exactly what she wanted to do with her life but she went into teaching for a short time. I, too, went into teaching for a short time with the hope of using it as the springboard into the career of my choice. I thought I would work and save money to finance law school but I remained in teaching because I fell in love with it. It was so much fun to teach the children and see children respond. I did not choose teaching because of the time it would offer me to spend with family. I was a teacher for many years before I became a wife or mother.

Although Marlene said she stayed in teaching because she fell in love with it, I was forced to ask and wonder if she remained in teaching because it provided her the opportunity to nurture her family. Her own admission that she "came into teaching for the wrong reasons" would lead one to think that is the reason why she remained; however, Marlene assures me that she had grown to enjoy teaching. When asked what was it about teaching that she enjoyed, Marlene had this to say:

At KC, I taught the fifth formers who were repeating for...in one instance a third time. I found it a challenge. I cannot remember ever backing down from a challenge. I wanted to teach the slower students. When you teach these students and look in their eyes and see that there is an awakening—a light—that says I understand now, it is a
wonderful feeling and a great sense of satisfaction for the teacher. After all these years I can still see the expressions on the faces of those boys. They are all men now but I still see them in my classes as if it were yesterday. Many of them have kept in touch with me all these years and that is some—twenty years ago. A number of them have migrated and keep in touch with me ever so often by telephone. They are important people in society and I am really proud of them. I find I value those years and would opt to teach remedial classes again if I went back to the schoolroom. Sometimes I miss it very much as you can actually witness lives being changed.

So, although teaching was not really what Marlene saw as a profession, but rather a site from which she could earn money and care for her family, she came to love the profession. She came to see it as a profession in which she could make a difference.

I inquired if she recalled any stories or any memories she shared with her students while she was in the classroom. She squinted, and remained silent for a few moments as if she was searching the storehouse of her memories to find the "right" story. Then between laughs she recalled the following story.

Oh, I am sure if I think, there are many funny events and stories I could share about those students and sometimes in my quiet moments...(sighs) I do not have many of these days... I muse over those memories. (Laughs in a girlish way) One event comes clearly to mind now as if it happened yesterday. When I started teaching I was sufficiently young that the boys would fall in love with me. I was not much older than most of the students I taught. I remember one student asking me for a date and I told him he was my student and
therefore we could not go out together. About a year or two after he graduated he returned to me and said, "I am no longer your student, I’ve graduated. Now will you go out with me?" I was shocked. I remember my mouth dropped open. When I regained my composure, I was able to say, "I am sorry I cannot go with you. I am married. I still recall the disappointment on my student’s face whenever I tell that story. I had a few of these encounters with the boys even as I grew older. I suppose it is what happens to female teachers working among male students.

As we talked, Marlene told me about her years in the classroom. She said that she cherished the memories of the four years she spent as a high school teacher, but after gaining the diploma in education she did not return to the classroom. Marlene said when she got her PhD she was already on faculty at the university as a lecturer for two years. However, when it was announced that she got the doctorate, one of her daughters said, "Good, Mommy. Now you can get a job!" Was her daughter also saying that teaching is not a profession by telling her mom to get a job?

Marlene received all her academic training at the University of the West Indies (UWI) where she also spent the majority of her years of teaching. She enjoyed her work at the university level where she taught psychology, and now misses that kind of interaction with her students.
Asked how she juggled the responsibilities of scholar, educator, housewife, wife and mother, Marlene replied:

You do what you have to do! (pauses). It used to be very difficult earlier when my daughters were very young. My husband has his own career and worked long hours. I always supervised the homework of the children. From very early in their lives I insisted that they get a profession and if later they decide not to use it, then fine. But I always told them that preparation for a career was paramount. I never, however, like my parents, dictated what career I thought they should follow. I left the decision up to them. I had helpers who assisted with the general housework. When I was Dean of the School of Education it used to be difficult and I must say my husband was not the most sympathetic of persons in thinking about my commitments. He was not against me getting ahead in my career but he did not promote it. I was fortunate to have my mother around. When she was alive and the children were younger she was always available to help me out. It was difficult but it paid off. The children were not deprived of Mommy. Mothers just seem to find more hours in a day. I made sure I spent quality time with them as often as I could. I do not think my family or my job suffered, in other words one did not take from the other. They co-existed side by side and still do. I do not seem to be able to separate them. Can they be separated? It is not as difficult today as the children are grown and I have always been blessed with good helpers. My present helper has been with me for twenty years. She knows exactly what to do in the house. So when my husband who has the penchant for telling me as am walking through the door in the morning, "Oh, did I tell you we are having twelve people for lunch". Where that used to give me high blood pressure, I just reply, "Tell Edna. Send your driver
for her so she can do the necessary shopping." So I am really fortunate there, because I recognize if I did not have that type of support I would not have had the freedom to indulge my own aspirations or move on the job. Now it’s easier because it’s just the two of us. I travel an awful lot. I travel at least twice per month. He does too. We sometimes meet outside of Jamaica, because we don’t see each other much in Jamaica. Juggling is not a problem now. The problem is sometimes he might want me to travel with him somewhere and I’ll have to say I don’t have the time. And he will say then "can’t you make the time, you’re head of the office". But I know my commitments and I am pretty good at keeping them.

Marlene had a network of women around to help her with the children. Her mother and domestic helper provided a support system and she was always there to supervise the homework for the girls. So Marlene had help from other women to carry out her expected gender roles in the home. She states that her spouse was "not the most sympathetic person" in thinking about her commitments. Marlene somehow seems to think that her husband’s work was more important than hers when she said, "he had his own career and worked long hours". She never mentioned the role her husband played in the life of their children or her upward mobility. He was not against her getting ahead but he did not promote it, is the way Marlene says it. She seemed to be the one there to assist with the homework and see to the welfare of the children. The women are always there to see to the welfare and
needs of the children even when there is a father in the home. Is this patriarchal’s socialization of the Jamaican woman?

Marlene said her daughters have often expressed their gratitude to her for not telling them what professions to follow. It was out of a feeling of resentment from her parents’ constant telling her to be a doctor that she stayed clear of her children’s career choices. I asked Marlene how she thought her husband and children feel about her achievements. She said they would be the best people to answer that but added, "I think they are proud of me. I really think so because of what they tell their friends." I was unable to talk with these family members to get their thoughts and or opinions as they were always away on vacation or business trips when I was in Jamaica. I wanted the interviews with them to be done in person.

My next request was for Marlene to tell me about the time she served as first woman Dean of the School of Education. Marlene responded:

Yes, I was Dean of the School of Education for two years before I was offered the post as Deputy Principal and Pro-Vice Chancellor. Before I was elected Dean I was Head of the Department (Chair). Those were good years I found that I had a budget and so I could do everything I wanted and staff and students were very supportive. I did many things from putting us into the computer age (because we did not have computers before) to upgrading offices. I did real crazy things from like having the doors painted different colors to liven up the place. I enjoyed those years but then I became Dean. I did not enjoy this position as much although I managed to get a faculty office...
large complex across there (she points towards the School of Education) that’s my project. But then it is easy to raise money and build new buildings. To actually bring a development program on stream is a different thing. I found I had more leeway as Head of Department. The other thing I did as Dean was hopefully to put the postgraduate program on a sound footing because that came directly under my purview.

Marlene sees her role as Dean as one that gave her more autonomy and authority than her present position. As Pro-Vice Chancellor she seem to be always carrying out the directives of the Chancellor.

Marlene explains what her duties are.

My post is equivalent to Vice-President or Vice-Chancellor to the Chancellor. I deal with undergraduate studies. I have responsibilities for all first degree students and the studies they pursue. In addition I deal with quality control. I put in place different committees that deal with different aspects of student life. For example we have started making provisions for the handicapped. I am pleased to say that one of our protegees has been appointed Senator, the first blind senator. My work is not limited to just the campus here at Mona. I work with all three campuses. It is really a difficult position but I think I do a pretty good job and the reward for good work is more work, so my responsibilities keep growing.

Has gender anything to do with it?

Throughout the interviews with Marlene, the theme which keeps coming up again and again is that of gender and her resistance to gender. She refuses to name herself a feminist. Although Marlene does not consider herself a feminist, she espouses some of the values and beliefs that could be called feminist by some. Marlene hopes that
being a woman had nothing to do with her getting the job as the first woman Pro-Vice Chancellor. She hopes she was chosen because of her qualifications and contributions to other areas of the university and not because of her gender. If gender was ever one of the criteria for her appointment she hopes that it fell last on the list. When asked to explain her position on feminism, she said.

I am not a feminist! No! Well let me backup. I am not a rabid feminist... I am not a feminist at all. I do not wear labels very well. I’m all for the promotion of women. My position is that a woman must have opportunity to decide. If she wants to be a nuclear physicist and she has the academic competence to do so, then she should be allowed to do that. If she wants to be a housewife and that’s her choice, one should respect that also. But she should not be forced to take on perceived feminine—women’s roles. The traditional jobs which we were given by men is totally unfair. We do anything we put our minds to. I am all for the ascendency of women. I believe most feminists take feminism too far and do not talk about equality of roles but rather role reversal. That I think is foolishness. We do not live in a world where there is one gender. There are two, male and female so we have to look at them together. Years ago I taught a course, which I named "The Gender Roles in Education." Some of my colleagues said I should look at women in education. But how could one do that? They cannot be isolated. You have to look at boys and girls, men and women. That is my perspective. Students took the courses for various reasons. Some wanted to study gender issues as they had already been exposed to them, some saw it as a soft option; others regard it as new and exciting—a forum where they could air non-traditional issues and other because they could not get into other courses. Both men and women signed up for the course. I am not a feminist nut I think I was able to address the issues of gender. I also do not believe in a special pleading for women to get a job or to get ahead. I think that if a woman and a man apply for a position then the decision should be
based on competence. I would hate to think that gender had anything to do with my appointment to this position. I would really be hurt if gender had anything to do with my appointment as PVC.

There was no way for me to find out if Marlene’s appointment to this position had anything to do with her gender. It is interesting to me however, that Marlene would resist gender and would be offended if gender had anything to do with her holding the position of Pro-Vice Chancellor. I was also startled to find out that someone who is resist gender so adamantly would teach a course about gender. I tried to get a syllabus of the course but was unable to do so. Marlene assured me that the course was not about male bashing nor about any gender being superior or inferior to the next. "It was all about equal opportunity for all", she said. It is my belief that it is just naming/labelling of herself as a feminist to which Marlene is opposed. According to Rile (1989) to take up identities conveys a form of resistance through which (women) become subjects, when resistance is understood as reactive acts of opposition that operate outside the forces of power. Munro (1993; 1998) calls the resistance to naming themselves as subversive and often women’s ways of denying gender oppression as teachers or as women. Marlene’s refusal to call herself a feminist may be her way of deconstructing the dichotomies of the male-female and active-passive, which reify dominant gender discourses (Munro, 1998). Her refusal to
name herself a feminist might be deeply rooted in her agency to reinforce the patriarchal mapping of the world in which she grew up. She is a woman and is not expected to occupy a man’s position. Is this a conscious or an unconscious decision? Why is she afraid to call herself a feminist when she clearly supports the ideas of feminism? Does she feel that others will feel threatened or does she want to be the dutiful daughter and invisible complacent woman?

Being the first woman to be PVC has not been the only first in Marlene’s professional life. She was the first person to get all her degrees at the university and then work as a member of staff there. Not only has she been the first woman to be Pro-Vice Chancellor at the University of the West Indies, but she was the first woman to be Dean of the College of Education. Since then there have been about three other women deans. When I questioned Marlene about the reaction of men to her as a woman, and first woman in the Pro Vice Chancellor’s position on the campus of the University of the West Indies, she responded as follows:

I think there was some amount of patronizing initially but it didn’t last. If I deal with the deanship period as the first woman dean, I think it made a few people uncomfortable. Changes always bring about uncertainties. It was a kind of changing of the guards. Since then there have been about three or four women to fill that position. I am sure it did not have the same kind of effect on the men. I don’t know. I think sometimes we (women) are so sensitive that we look for instances of men talking down or...
patronizing when it is not really there. When I became Principal and Pro-Vice Chancellor there definitely was a bit of that. The Chancellor would have no part of it. Once he set the tone no one would take any liberty in this regard. I decided that I was not going to look for instances of this. It would be straight ahead and certainly, now, except for stating the fact that I am the first and only female pro-vice chancellor in a positive light, there is nothing said about gender here at home (Jamaica).

From the response, it would appear as if Marlene speaks from the position of her power. She is able to say specifically that when she was named Dean some people were uncomfortable. According to Chase (1995) women who deny connections of gender as a means of securing upward mobility in male-dominated systems have been "co-opted" (p. 183). Marlene is all too ready to blame herself and other women as being sensitive and "looking for instances of patronizing or talking down". Then she adds that "the Chancellor had to set the tone". It seems to me that there was more than looking for instances of "talking down". She said she decided that she was not going to look for instances of gender discrimination and this Chase (1995) refers to as "wearing blinders". Chase says this metaphor fits some successful women who deny that they experience any form of discrimination on their way to the top of their male-dominated profession.

One of the very first experiences of resentment about or lack of knowledge that a woman could occupy a man’s position on the campus at UWI was displayed to Marlene on her first day on the job as
PVC. She shared the following anecdote with me. Marlene said she was invited by the Chancellor over to the administrative building that was housing her office. They were having meetings to get her acquainted with her role in the university. Marlene said the parking spots for visitors were all taken. The only spot vacant was one marked "Pro-Vice Chancellor". She said the reality of the office had not sunken in yet so she tried to find another space. She drove around for a while and then decided she would park in her designated spot. One of the traffic wardens walked over to her car before she got out and told her that was a reserved spot so she could not park there. Marlene tried to explain that it was reserved for her. The warden either did not hear or did not want to hear. He said to her, "Oh, you are the secretary... You can park there but you have to remove your car before the PVC comes as I am expecting him in a few minutes." That warden still displays a kind of remorseful embarrassment whenever Marlene and he cross paths. Marlene says she has tried to set him at ease but it does not help. That anecdote suggests that there was some form of resistance to gender (women) in positions of power by men. The male warden so socialized could not see Marlene as the Pro-Vice Chancellor he was expecting. Marlene’s emphasis placed on the use of HIM in the anecdote tells she was not looking for instances of talking down but that it came right at her.
She was adamant about gender having any place in her appointment as Pro-Vice Chancellor.

**Why don’t women educators write?**

Now it was time to ask one of the questions that motivated me to pursue this research in the first place. I asked this life historian, "Why don’t you write your autobiography or something about yourself from your perspective? Why don’t Jamaican women educators write about each other and themselves?" Marlene looked me full in the face, thought hard and long, and then modestly replied,

I don’t know why Jamaican women educators do not write. For my part I have not seen myself as being that interesting that anyone would want to read about me. What I would try to find time to write would be in terms of academic publications and that has become increasingly more and more difficult to do as my administrative work has expanded and become more demanding on my time. I have written a few academic papers. I prefer to call them monographs but nothing about women and our experiences as educators. I would say time is a problem and secondly, I do not have the interest. In fact someone surprised me the other day. I was cleaning house when moving office and I threw out a lot of things—odds and ends, and he said to me, "You cannot throw out any of these things because these should go towards your biography one of these days." I said to him, "I do not see myself in those terms." Honestly, I do not see my work and myself in those ways. I write speeches. I give many speeches and people may think one just gets up and speaks. Even the greatest orators prepare their speeches. I prepare carefully and it takes quite a nit (sic) of preparation. I have
done hundreds of speeches over the last few years. As you know, when something or someone new comes along in this country, it is considered a novelty. I thought maybe that my popularity on that forum would have faded long ago but I am still called upon to address different groups. So, in that light I am writing, but about myself—no.

Marlene does not consider herself interesting enough for anyone to want to read about her so she does not write about herself. Again, I wonder why this woman who holds one of the highest academic offices in her country does not see her life story as interesting. Is this modesty on her part or is it again the work of patriarchy? Heilbrun (1988) argues that accomplished women's life narratives have been severely constricted by the cultural prohibition of women's desire for power and control over their own lives. Women therefore suppress or disguise ambitions and success in recounting their stories. I also note with interest that the man who told her that she should not dispose of her "things" told her they could go towards her biography, not her autobiography. Did he not think that Marlene as a woman could represent herself?

I asked Marlene if she would let me see some of those "things" and I noticed that she did not boastfully show them to me. She called someone on the telephone and asked if he had thrown out the box of things as she had requested. Evidently, the person on the other end
said, "No". Marlene then asked if he could bring it to the conference room. I was privileged to see some of those "things", those "odds and ends" and I agreed with the man who told Marlene that these should not be thrown away as they tell more about her life as an educator, mother, and woman than she is able to convey about herself. They would be the base for an intriguing autobiography. One item, a card, evidently old, was made by a student and tells of how much he admires her as a teacher and how much he has come to enjoy science because of her. It reads, "Miss Hamilton, thanks for helping me overcome my fear of holding frogs. I was always afraid of them, I would not touch them but when I see you holding a frog the other day and patting it on the back I knew I could do it too... I love the way you make science come alive. I have learned so much in your class. Please do not let the other students know that I was afraid they will call me a sissy". Another item was a poster from her daughters, a mother's day card, telling how if they had a choice to choose their mother they would pick her from all the mothers in the world. The childlike scrawling and handprints tell that her daughters were very young. There were pressed flowers as homemade bookmarks saying "thanks for being the best teacher ever." Then there were speeches for the girl guides and the Rotary Club and school graduations. When I

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41A boy whose behavior is said to be effeminate.
told Marlene that the items tell a lot about her and the way many people perceive her, she smiled and said, "I don’t think anyone would be interested in reading about me and those things." I do not think that Marlene realizes how interesting her life really is, and what an inspiration it would provide for other Jamaican women educators to read her life story. The artifacts and memorabilia spoke volumes about her life experiences and contributions as an educator. They show that this life historian have touched the lives of many people family, students and others. They were especially helpful in enhancing my understanding of the life of this woman. I agree with Heilbrun’s observation of accomplished and successful women in a patriarchal society who make themselves unimportant since that is what is expected of them. Marlene does not consider herself interesting enough for anyone to want to read about her. Why? Is this a resistance to representation? Is her denial of the importance of herself corroborating what Heilbron says about successful women in a patriarchal society? Is Marlene making herself unimportant because she thinks that is what is expected of her?

When asked if she ever wondered why she was chosen as the first woman Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University. Marlene replied:

I am still surprised... Surprised? (is that the correct word) that I was selected to become the first Pro-Vice Chancellor at the UWI. Yes, even after all these years, I still wonder how I got here. The most important question I constantly ask
myself now though is, not how I got here, but how am I doing on the job? That I do well is my paramount concern and ambition. I want other women to be proud of my achievement. I try to work twice as hard to get the work done. I am here long before the work day starts and long after it ends. Women have to do so when they take on assumed men’s roles. You see there is always a man watching and waiting to say, "Just like a woman..." I am confident that I am doing a good job, however. So many people both men and women have complimented me.

Marlene keeps insisting that she is not a feminist, yet she wants to perform her job so that other women can be proud of her and so that men will not criticize her because of her gender. Why is this so important to her? Though not a self-proclaimed feminist women in Jamaica look up to her. She has been asked to address many women’s groups. In an address delivered to the Kiwanis Club on the celebration of International Women’s Week in 1994 Marlene spoke out like a feminist when she rejected Sigmund Freud’s views on the female psyche. She said then:

It is true that now, more than ever, women are becoming increasingly visible in corporations, universities and governments of the world— a situation which Freud would be hard put to even consider. But at the same time there is a paucity of women in positions of real decision-making and power.

The full text of this address can be found in appendix D.

Marlene was asked to say how her position as first PVC has changed

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42 A week in which the advancement and achievement of Jamaican women are highlighted.
her as a professional woman and educator and what were her goals for the university. To this she responded as follows:

Suffice to say that the way I see myself has remained virtually unchanged. I still see myself as a basically shy individual (although, admittedly lecturing and addresses made me accept, and act accordingly, that one ought not to present one’s self as a "shrinking violet"). I have thus over the years been able to adopt a persona which, I think comes across as reasonably self-assured and confident. I also see myself as more people oriented (not in conflict with the shyness I referred to before)... I accept that I have grown tremendously over the years, particularly the last ten years or so. I want to see more young people especially women, getting into university. I want more women to get into the sciences and traditional men’s areas. One of my goals is to help faculty to find more innovative ways of presenting their classes. I am also trying to see if the university can offer more courses. Courses that are moving in the direction that the country is going. I believe in not just turning out graduates or people with degrees, but people who are going to make a contribution to the life and development of this country.

Again Marlene refers to her shyness and again she stresses her interest in seeing women admitted to men’s domains. I was not able to get a sense of what she means by being a shy person. She does not appear shy to me. Marlene acts almost overconfident.

On another occasion, our interviews took place while nestled in the buttress of the large ficus tree\(^\text{43}\) which stands mid-way between the College of Education where Marlene was Dean, and the Senate Building which now houses her new office as PVC. I spent some very

\(^ {43}\) This is a tropical plant. It is a kind of fig tree.
useful moments in the shade of this tree while I was on campus as a student. Not only does this tree provide shade and a place of rest for tired students, but one gets a panoramic view of the university campus from under this tree.

The tree to me was a kind of symbol, a metaphor, for the woman I was interviewing. The tree is very tall, tropical (homegrown), strong, sturdy and beautiful. I was interviewing a very strong, sturdy and elegant woman, who has her roots planted as deep in the University of the West Indies as the tree does. She too has sheltered many anxious undergraduate students who have turned to her, especially during those first days on campus, for succor and shade from the seniors who ragged them, as many have turned to find shade under the branches of the ficus tree.

Marlene uses the metaphor "homegrown" to describe herself. In an interview with her in January of 1998, she quipped, "I came to this university in 1961 and have been here ever since". Marlene received all her degrees from the University of the West Indies. She has gone on short professional courses at different times in both the United States and England. Marlene is the PVC responsible for undergraduate studies and she is also a nature lover.

As we settled under the tree she told me how she loves the campus and believes it to be one of the most beautiful campuses in
the world. Wistfully, Marlene reflected that it had been a long time since she has had the time to enjoy the beauty of the campus from the shade of the ficus tree. We both took a few minutes to observe the flora of the campus before we began the interview and it was indeed beautiful, especially at that time of the year. The poinsettias were in bloom, "blood red in warm December" (McKay, 1919). Marlene said that every morning she is reminded of the beauty of nature in the setting of the university as she drives through the main gates before the campus comes alive with people and vehicular traffic. For her, "it is then that one sees nature at its best. One is able to enjoy the different hues of green and brown of the St. Andrew Hills also which form a backdrop for the University."

One of my interviews with Marlene took place on the campus of Louisiana State University, in the Spring of 1994 when she was on a visit to discuss with her counterparts there the possibility of establishing some kind of link between both universities. We settled on the steps under the clock tower in front of Thomas Boyd Hall. It was a crisp day in spring and the azaleas and camellias were in bloom all around the campus and their fragrances filled the air as the cool wind blew. The colors of the flowers were breathtaking. Marlene remarked that she liked the campus as its beauty reminded her of UWI. On this occasion
our talk was just an introduction for the life history stories I began collecting when I went to see her in the Spring of 1995.

Throughout our interviews there seemed to be a resistance to self-disclosure as well as to gender. Marlene does not tell her stories like the "typical" woman; mostly linear. They are not laced with anecdotes, nor are they episodic. Sometimes her answers were evasive. I think here of what Petra Munro says that "how we tell our stories is just as important as what we say." In You Just Don't Understand, Deborah Tannen suggests that in general men and women talk in different ways about their achievements. Marlene's talk with me did not match the way Tannen says that women are supposed to tell their stories. The private was kept separate from the public. There was seldom an intertwining. It was very difficult to knit the pieces of Marlene's stories together to come up with a complete garment or a fine quilt. Several times I tried both by telephone and electronic mail to fill in the gaps or to find the pieces of those stories, but I came away without the missing parts. Each time I felt this resistance to disclosure, I kept wondering why Marlene's stories are told as they are. Is it because of her position in Jamaican society? Does it have anything to do with her being a woman in a position once dominated by men? Or is Marlene denying herself agency as a woman?
Meet Phyllis

This life historian too works presently on the campus of the University of the West Indies. Dr. Phyllis Claire MacPherson-Russell is a widow, with two daughters, who are not her biological children. One is a pharmacist and the other is the personnel manager of a firm. Phyllis is one of three children. Her brother is an attorney-at-law, and also a politician, and her sister is a nurse. Phyllis’ mother, Beryl, was an accountant and worked outside the home and her father, Caleb Aston MacPherson, was a large farmer with hundreds of acres of land and many heads of cattle. He was a member of the Jamaica Agricultural Society\(^4^4\) (JAS) and a founding member of the People’s National Party\(^4^5\) (PNP), in the early 1940s.

Phyllis, a petite woman, is only five feet two inches tall, and weighs about one hundred and forty pounds. Her short wavy, snow white hair, has a few black strands blending in which gives it the appearance of more than the "salt and pepper" look.

\(^4^4\) This is the agricultural organization to which large farmers belonged. One had to own several acres of lands before one could be a member of this society. Agriculture was Jamaica’s number one industry before it was displaced by tourism in the 1970s.

\(^4^5\) This is one of the two leading political parties which grew out of the depression of the 1930s. The two political parties are the Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) and the People’s National Party (PNP). The first leaders and founders were Sir Alexander Bustamante and The Right Honorable Norman Washington Manley respectively.
Born in rural St. Andrew, Jamaica, on November 18, 1923, Phyllis attended Wolmer's Girls School. She entered the teaching profession at age eighteen, with the opposition of her father, and was for a long time a classroom teacher at the secondary level. Evidently, her father wanted her to be a doctor, but she had other ideas. After graduating from her own high school, there was a vacancy for someone to teach mathematics. A brilliant student who liked mathematics, Phyllis was offered the position as a pupil-teacher and took the job since she knew she could handle it. That opportunity led her to the teacher training college. She taught mathematics in Jamaica in secondary schools and colleges. Sent on scholarship to the United States to study "The New Mathematics," she returned home to train other teachers. She also taught mathematics in the United States and England.

This participant was summoned to the political arena in 1978, sixteen years after Jamaica gained independence. After several male predecessors, Phyllis took on the job of Minister of Education, the first woman to hold such a position. She was not elected to the House of Representatives by national votes, but was a Senator. This was a break from tradition as Ministers of Government were always selected

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Senators are a group of men and women nominated by the Governor General upon the advice of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to form the Upper House. There are two Houses in Parliament...The House of Representatives consisting of elected officials and the Senate consisting of nominated officials.
from elected politicians. The then Prime Minister, Michael Manley, proclaiming "women and their opportunity for national contribution" (Manley, 1976) as part of his political platform, used his political powers to name her Minister of Education. Phyllis assumed office when there was nothing short of a revolutionary change taking place in the education system in Jamaica. Her appointment as the first woman to be education minister was itself a change in the status quo. When Phyllis came to office the Prime Minister had introduced free education from elementary to tertiary levels. This was a revolutionary act. Prior to this, university education was expensive and only those who could pay could go. Under Manley, elementary students were given free books, one set of school uniforms per year, two meals—breakfast and lunch—per day, and new and modern facilities. Teachers received one of the largest percentage salary increases and got subsidized medical insurance for the very first time in the country’s history.

It was during Phyllis’ tenure as Minister in the 1970s that the Bureau for the Affairs of Women was set up. This life historian participated in changes that could be felt at every level of the educational system. How was she able to play such a role in education in less than one term in office? She was there for a little over two years. How does she see herself as an educator? How and why did she remain in education when, as an upper middle class woman,
she had multiple choices and could have gone into any other profession?

This participant has had many different career titles but has always remained in the field of education. She was at one time a lecturer in the Extra-Mural Department of the University of the West Indies\textsuperscript{47}, and the Institute of Education. Phyllis has worked directly with the Ministry of Education, as Senior Education Officer, supervising education officers, and with teachers’ colleges trying to implement the New Mathematics\textsuperscript{48}. She was also Chairperson of the Minimum Wage Advisory Commission as well as Chairperson of the National Family Planning Board. Phyllis served on many committees and many civic organizations prior to becoming Minister of Education and after. Included in these services are: The Chairperson of the Jamaica National Family Planning Board (1974-76); member of the Jamaica Public Service Commission (1974-78); a board member of The University Hospital of the West Indies (1976-1978); Chairperson of the University of the West Indies Health Services Committee in 1991; and a member of the Jamaica Education Advisory Council (1970-1976).

\textsuperscript{47} This is a satellite of the University of the West Indies.

\textsuperscript{48} An ordered system for teaching fundamental concepts of mathematics that emphasizes unifying themes, the development of the ability to solve problems, and preciseness in vocabulary and definition. This mathematics was being taught to students in the United States in the early 1950s but was introduced into Jamaica in the late 1960s.
Dr. MacPherson-Russell is presently working as an honorary consultant in Human Resource Development. When I asked her if she has ever thought about retiring, she responded laughingly that there is really an age limit, but there is a "policy at the university to keep people working as long as they are not decrepit." Phyllis has retired from other jobs before but she says she likes to keep herself busy and occupied, contributing to the education of others. Dr. MacPherson-Russell says she is looking forward to another retirement and jokingly adds that she thinks she has more retirements on record than any other person in Jamaica. In her present position Phyllis thinks is helping others—especially women to make choices—"good choices concerning their lives." Asked to elaborate on what is meant by good choices, Dr. MacPherson-Russell explained that "most of the people with whom I work are mature men and women who are trying to be independent and self-reliant. Many of them are taking a second chance at life." They are divorced or widowed people who are seeking ways and means to go it alone.

Phyllis's office is located in the Social Welfare Development Center on the campus of the University of the West Indies. It is surrounded by lush green flora, opening up to a quadrangle, which has a well manicured lawn. Around this is a hedge of beautiful blooming plants. On the side of the quadrangle where her office is located is a
wire, makeshift trellis on which there is a curtain of a creeping vine from
which hangs small, bluish-purple bell-like blooms. This vine provides just
enough shade from the warm summer sun and allows a gentle breeze
to filter through.

The walls of her office were draped with screen printed craft work
of different plants found around Jamaica. The floors had an area rug
and the tiles around it glistened from freshly applied polish.

When I spoke with Dr. Phyllis MacPherson-Russell on the phone,
her voice triggered memories and I immediately remembered
occasions where I had listened to her address groups of teachers or
teachers in training. Her voice, kind of raspy, was as beautiful as ever.
I remembered one specific occasion on which I listened to her as she
stood by the side of the then Prime Minister, the late, Right Honorable
Michael Manley, and spoke to students and teachers at Grange Hill
Secondary School where I worked in 1978. She had been named
Minister of Education a few weeks before and she was trying to visit all
the schools in Jamaica to tell both students and teachers about her
plans for education in their schools. Although she had addressed the
nation via radio and television, she still wanted to visit the schools and
meet the teachers and students in person.

Phyllis looked different from the woman that I had known years
before. She did not look much older, but she did not look the same.
Maybe I expected her to have aged more. I did not tell her this. I suppose the years change us all, because she said she remembered seeing me before but could not place my face.

Today, Dr. Phyllis MacPherson-Russell seemed a little slower physically but still very mentally alert. Her face was radiant and beautiful, growing old gracefully. Her hands belied her age. They seemed as if they belonged to someone much younger, not a septuagenarian.\textsuperscript{49}

The following was the announcement concerning Dr. MacPherson-Russell's appointment to the office of Minister of Education which was published in the \textit{Jamaica Gazette} on Thursday, August 24, 1978.

His Excellency the Governor-General in accordance with Section 70 (1) of the Constitution of Jamaica has appointed Senator Dr. Phyllis MacPherson-Russell, Minister of Education, with effect from August 21, 1978.

Dr. MacPherson-Russell came to this position at a time when the Prime Minister needed a woman to help him implement his educational changes. It was very important that the Prime Minister fulfill his promise to the electorate. He had promised to incorporate women in his "politics of change". Manley said:

\begin{quote}
Social justice and common sense alike dictate the need for a systematic program of legislation and institutional
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{49} A person between seventy and eighty years of age.
modification to the end that women take their full and equal place as dynamic and involved participants in society and contributors to the processes of change...Jamaica must work consciously towards a situation in which women play full part in every aspect of national life, bringing to bear their equivalent general abilities...(p. 214).

Manley had to follow through on his speeches and promises to incorporate women in his administration. He named a woman to the Ministry of Education and later another woman to the Ministry of Tourism.

When questioned about his colleague as Minister of Education, the present Governor General, Sir Howard Cooke, who was at that time a member of the House of Representative also, said that, "Phyllis MacPherson-Russell was chosen for the position because she was a woman of outstanding ability and she was totally committed to the education system. She shared the same philosophies on education as the Prime Minister and therefore they worked well together" (interview, July 16, 1997). The Governor General continued to say that Dr. MacPherson-Russell was also bringing the broad base experience and knowledge she had gleaned from her travels, her education, and her association with schools and universities at the national and international levels to the ministry. He went on to say that, "Dr. MacPherson-Russell came to the Ministry at a time when there was need for stabilizing in the education system,... and she did much to
bring about that stability in the short period she was there.

There is no doubt that she had the support of the Prime Minister“
(interview, July 16, 1997).

Phyllis\' stories

Dr. MacPherson-Russell knew why I was there so we began the interview after exchanging pleasantries and sharing some memories. I assured her, as I had done Marlene, that she could change her mind if at any time she did not want to continue to be part of the research project. She told me she was knowledgeable of her options.

I began the interview as I did with my first life historian, "Tell me your life story," I requested of Phyllis.

She began:

Just where do I begin? I have so many stories (pauses)
What do you really want to hear? Are you interested in my teaching stories or political stories? What do you want to hear?

Again, I became very guarded and did not rephrase the request. I asked again, "tell me your life story". My intention was to get her to talk about those experiences that she thought were most important to her life. I also found it interesting that like Marlene, Phyllis wanted to know which stories I was interested in hearing. So Phyllis responded:

I suppose I will have to begin somewhere and see where I end up. It is a very hard request though. I can remember from very early in my life that I wanted to be a teacher. I cannot recall any specific event or circumstance that
made me come to that conclusion. I know that my parents wanted me to go into the field of medicine. (Laughs) I remember as a child I would play games about teaching and school and my father would discourage me and encourage me to play the doctor games. No one in my family was a teacher so I really do not know where I picked up the idea that teaching was what I wanted to do. But then there were no doctors in my family either. It was like a silent war being waged between my father and me. There he was planning my future as a doctor and I had already made my decision about what I was going to become. I was going to be a teacher.

Phyllis believed from very early in childhood that she had an aptitude for teaching. From an early age in school she did not like the way her teachers taught her; maybe, she thought, she could be a better teacher. Then she recalled several times when her teacher of mathematics taught a concept and none of her classmates understood but were too scared to ask questions. "You see these teachers were men and gave the impression that they were not supposed to be questioned", she said. Phyllis said she took her classmates and showed them how to solve problems. As she had this natural aptitude for mathematics, they often turn to her to explain some mathematical concept. Phyllis said she had always been a teacher, teaching her pets, plants or toys. She is not very sure if that was what made her decide to go into teaching. It did not matter what anyone said or wanted her to do, for her teaching was her "calling". Phyllis said that there must have been something else that
motivated her choice. What made her decide to become a teacher is unclear to her; however, she knew that she chose mathematics because "...English did not make sense to me. I could reason out mathematics but I could not understand the rules of English. You see my thinking was always linear, and along logical lines." Phyllis' early recognition of her special teaching talent turned into a lifelong commitment.

She was not sure if she had said anything to anyone about wanting to be a teacher, but she started teaching as a pupil teacher at her alma mater as soon as she graduated from high school. "I took off my uniform today, and appeared at school dressed in my own clothes as people used to say, the next day." (Jamaican boys and girls wear uniforms to school and they are referred to as school clothes, other clothes are their "own clothes"). She was prefect and headgirl at the school before graduation so the transition was not too strange. In these offices she sometimes sat in classes when a teacher was absent. Jamaican schools do not have

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50 Someone allowed into teaching immediately upon graduation from school. This person is usually placed with a trained teacher who monitors and provide guidance.

51 A member of the student government.

52 A headgirl is head of the student government in a single sex (girl) school. Headboy is head in a boy's school. In co-educational institution there would be both a headboy and a headgirl.
the luxury of substitute teachers. If a teacher is absent for a day or two, prefects were used to supervise the work left for the class by the teacher. Phyllis was in the same environment with her teachers and students who knew her. The setting was familiar. Students were accustomed to being respectful and obedient to her just as they would be to a teacher.

Phyllis taught for a few years. This time in the classroom helped her to cement the decision that she wanted to be a teacher for the rest of her life, but she needed to be prepared for the profession. Off she went to the University of London in 1945, where she obtained her Bachelor’s degree in Mathematics and later the Teachers’ Diploma from University College in 1948.

Dr. MacPherson-Russell said that she did not have to become a teacher as:

Naturally, there were other things for me to do than become a teacher but that was my choice. I had the choice to be the doctor my parents dreamed of or I could be a pharmacist, lawyer or even a nurse. I applied for and received a very competitive Jamaica Scholarship to the University College in England. This was the time when Jamaicans went off to England for training. At that time we did not have the University of the West Indies. That was just being thought about and planning was in its early stages. So I could not take advantage of that. So like hundreds of other Jamaicans seeking professional training I headed for England.
Phyllis' educational training took place during the 1940s. During this time Jamaica was still a British colony. Immigrants from the mother country were imported to fill top level positions. Upper and middle-class Jamaicans were trained in Britain to fill middle management positions. All attorneys and medical doctors received their training in Britain. One could not receive a degree in Jamaica as there was no university. The University of the West Indies did not open its doors until 1948. Teachers were being trained in Jamaica at the existing teacher training colleges during this time but only for the primary\textsuperscript{53} schools. Never envisioning herself as a teacher in the primary school system, Phyllis applied for and received the prestigious Issa Scholarship\textsuperscript{54} which took her to the University College in London, England. While in England, Phyllis pursued a degree in teacher education and specialized in the teaching of mathematics. Upon graduation she remained in England and taught mathematics there from 1948 to 1951. "This experience", Phyllis said, "was very educating". She learned more about teaching in the classroom than she learned from her professors. However, she had an obligation to return to her country because the Issa Scholarship she

\textsuperscript{53} This is the same kind of school as the elementary. In Jamaica it is called primary.

\textsuperscript{54} A scholarship set up to fund brilliant Jamaica scholars pursuing higher education. Only two students were selected to receive the funding each year.
received required it immediately upon completion of her course of studies. She was able, however, to obtain a waiver when she reported that she wanted to gain work experience in a foreign country. After gaining that experience, she returned to Jamaica and her alma mater to teach. Phyllis said that she then became interested in, and supportive of, things professional.

I became interested in not just teaching children but things that had to do with the teaching profession. This was my profession and I was going to be the best teacher I could. I became a member the newly formed Jamaica Union of Teachers\(^5\), later called the Jamaica Teachers’ Association.

It did not take a very long time for her to realize that she needed further training, so off she went to the United States to get graduate training. She earned the Master’s of Arts in Supervision and Curriculum Development from Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, in 1956. One year later she received the Education Specialist diploma. Again, Phyllis wanted to have the experience of teaching in another culture so she took a teaching position at Edgewood School, in Scarsdale, New York, and stayed for nearly six years while pursuing her doctoral degree. In 1961 she received her doctorate in Supervision and Curriculum Development from Teachers College, Columbia University.

\(^{5}\)This is a teachers’ organization that represent teachers and protects their rights. It is not a trade union, but negotiates with government on behalf of teachers for benefits.
University, after defending her dissertation, Developing a Curriculum for Children and Youth in Jamaica. Three years later she returned to Jamaica.

I asked Phyllis if she could recall any stories from her days in the classroom that stand out in her memories. She related several stories to me, but I have chosen two to retell that Phyllis says constantly reverberate in her mind. The first took place while she was teaching in the United States. There was a little girl, a pupil, seated in the back of her class. The child talked incessantly and disrupted the class that day. Phyllis said she requested on several occasions that the pupil remain quiet. She went over to her to find out if there was a problem and the child said, "no." As soon as Phyllis started teaching again the child started talking, not to anyone in particular. Again Phyllis asked her to be quiet but in a raised voice. The child immediately became quiet. It was now question and answer time and Phyllis asked the child a question, certain she knew the answer, but the student did not respond. Instead the girl gave a paper to her classmate upon which she had written, "tell the teacher I am being quiet as she asked me to do, so she is not to ask me any questions to let me start talking again." Phyllis said she commended the child for her brilliance and wit.

The next story took place while she was teaching the "new math" to a group of students in Jamaica in the 1960s. She thought everyone
had learned the concept that she was teaching. "Out of the blue a boy with a puzzled look upon his face said, 'so you are teaching new math now, and there is old math, what kind of math will you be teaching to my child when he comes to school, postmodern math?'" Reflecting, Phyllis said that was the first time she had heard the word "postmodern" although it is today so popular. She said she was so surprised at the young man's question that she cannot recollect what she said to him or if she said anything. Phyllis says she still finds both students ahead of their time every time she thinks about them.

Throughout my research with Phyllis, she was very confident and at ease with the tape recorder. It was quite clear that she had grown accustomed to the tape recorder, having been interviewed many times before, especially in her capacity as Minister of Education. Her stories were episodic and laced with lots of anecdotes, moving between the private and the public, the political and the social.

**The activist/politician**

On one occasion when I went to interview Phyllis I had a problem with transportation. It was the close of the working day when the interview came to an end. I had asked Robert, a friend, to pick me up at four-thirty that day—half an hour after I thought the interview would have ended. I left Phyllis' office and was seated on one of the benches in the courtyard with the tall shadows of the trees behind me,
as the tropical sun began its descent over the western horizon, and the soft evening breezes bathed my face and wafted through my hair. I waited for Robert. At about five thirty, Phyllis emerged from her office and was headed towards her car when she saw me. She asked what had happened? When I told her that my ride had not turned up, she took a seat beside me on the bench and said she would wait with me for half an hour. Then, if my friend did not come, she would take me home. She explained that it was not very safe to be alone on that side of the campus after the workers had left, as it got very lonely and thugs usually pass through to see what they can find.

Phyllis and I began talking again and it was during this talk that I discovered some of the most interesting things about her. It was as if without the tape recorder on, or pen and paper in my hand, she felt free to talk. She was no longer the researched and I was no longer the ethnographer/researcher, just two women talking. We chatted for a very long time and finally decided that she would take me home. As we crawled in the heavy evening traffic, a journey that should take half an hour turned into two hours as the traffic snarled along. Our conversation continued, becoming more and more intriguing and I dared to take out my notebook and pencil and wrote as she spoke.

It was during this trip that I learned that Phyllis was a kind of activist when she was younger, although she did not so name herself. I
hope she is not offended that I have labeled her, especially as an activist. At no time during the taped interviews did she hint her desire to bring about social/political changes in Jamaica. Actually, at the beginning of the interview on that day she had asked if I wanted to hear her political or teaching stories, however, I steered clear of telling what I wanted to hear. I wanted her to tell me what she deemed important in her experience. I was rewarded as during the course of the interviews Phyllis told both her teaching and political stories.

During the time she spent in London, she came in contact with other Jamaicans and Caribbean men and women. Phyllis said:

West Indians at London University, Oxford and Cambridge and other institutions of learning were caught up in the tide of nationalism that was sweeping the colonial world. We wanted out of colonialism so our young men would not be forced to fight wars in which our countries were not directly involved. The Caribbean Students Association was the activist forum within which we could work to change our homeland. It provided for each of us a means of defense in a foreign country, and prepared us for the struggle to be rid of colonialism and to reshape our society. We were able to see ourselves as part of a group of people that were supposed to make something happen. We were supposed to implement change. No one asked us to do so. I do not know how we would accomplish it, but we just knew there must be changes in our country. It was not something we talked about or discussed. It was like a secret code. We knew what we were about but we did not name it. I do not know why.

Dr. MacPherson-Russell said that it was during this time that she came to the realization that she was going to develop not just as an effective
teacher of children, but that she had to develop relationships with colleagues and contemporaries. She knew, she wanted to have a say in the development of her country. Phyllis and others had formed the Caribbean Students Association\textsuperscript{56} while studying overseas.

It is noteworthy that the Prime Minister, under whose administration this life historian became Minister of Education, was one of the Jamaicans with whom she was associated while attending university in England. Michael Manley, like many Caribbean elites of the time, received his education in Britain. Both Phyllis and Michael are products of two schools in Jamaica which were only accessible to the rich and were members of the Sixth Formers Association. Phyllis MacPherson-Russell went to Wolmers Girls' School and Michael Manley, attended the boys school, Jamaica College (JC). (It must be pointed out here that high schools for boys in Jamaica were referred to as "colleges", a status symbol for boys, and several of these schools have still kept the college in their names). Michael Manley was the son of The Right Honorable Norman Washington Manley. The elder Manley was founder of the People's National Party and one of the founding fathers of independent Jamaica. He became Premier\textsuperscript{57} of Jamaica

\textsuperscript{56} Students getting together to form a kind of support group for one another as they reside in a foreign country.

\textsuperscript{57} The title used for the head of the country during the pre-independence period.
during the pre-independence era and was one of the architects of the Federation of the West Indies. This was during the 1950s when Jamaica and other British West Indian colonies were struggling to cut the apron strings of colonialism as referred to in the beginning of this research.

Phyllis’ training overseas coincided with the period of World War II. Many of the Jamaican young men who were there at the university with her were drafted for the war. To her, war had nothing to do with Jamaicans and everything to do with Britain. She kept asking herself, Why were Jamaicans being asked to go to war? If only there was a way to end colonialism, she thought. She was not happy with the situation, especially when students had to disrupt their studies and risk their lives. She in fact lost a few college friends who died in the war.

Phyllis thinks that the war had a very significant impact on her life. It was one of the things that shaped her interests and concerns about constitutional changes in Jamaica. She believed also that women should have a place in the administrative affairs of the country. When she returned to Jamaica, she began to look at her homeland differently. In particular, with regard to Education, she saw the need to develop the whole person rather than development in just the academics. There were men and women in Jamaica who could and were making contributions to the development of their country who did not have access to a university degree. She said she believed that
they should be given access to training for personal growth and life skills that offer something to fall back on if and when the academic training cannot be used. It was out of this rationale, she said, that a course was introduced into the New Secondary Schools teaching children to use indigenous materials to make items that could be marketed.

At the end of the trip, I asked Phyllis’ permission to include this last story as part of her life story and she gave me permission. I would have liked to go back and have a taped interview about what she told me during that trip, but I doubt if Phyllis would have spoken to me as freely and openly about that part of her life again. Even if she did, the story related a second time would probably not be the same.

Periods of changes

Phyllis recalls almost in reverie, "I seem to be always caught up in periods of change in my country’s history." Asked why she thought so, she said, "in reflection, all major points in my life were also times of major changes in the history of Jamaica." She received her educational training in a time when Jamaica was undergoing most of its greatest changes or transitions. Phyllis recalls:

My mother and aunts were evidently in a transitional period in terms of Jamaica. I recall that my mother and two aunts were among the first women, I think, in Jamaica who were working in occupational activities outside of
the home, not in a factory setting, compared with my grandma who was, like many women were, in a sewing business at home. By the time I became a young woman (at the end of high school) another transitional period was on because that was the time of adult suffrage and the 1938 disturbances. I am sure all these changes in the country must have fuelled the desire in me and my contemporaries to get in the change mode, however, I cannot recall any specific situation or circumstance that made us decide that we would try to make changes in our country and the lives of its people. It might have been one of my main reasons for going into education however. Thinking about the development of my life and experiences, I believe that there was an acceptance that women did not belong only in the home situation. It might have just been my home, but I was made to believe that I could choose something important to do with my life. I chose education. One of my aunts had already broken the perimeter set for women or by women. She was working as a laboratory technician.

Phyllis' mother and aunts were among the first generation of women to work in non-traditional women's jobs. Her family did not believe that a woman's place was in the home. Dr. MacPherson-Russell said that her choice of teaching had nothing to do with limitations of professions for women. She believed that teaching she was doing something important with her life.

At the moment, Phyllis is happy trying to help people see the importance of health and education in the enhancement of their lives as she works between the School of Continuing Education and Human
Resource Development. Her new role is challenging and brings together many of her interests. Phyllis believes that if we are to get quality in our existence we need to develop and strengthen "personhood".

I asked Phyllis to tell me about how she came to the office of Minister of Education and to say what it was like to be the first woman to occupy that position. She responded with much enthusiasm about how there had been a lot of reshuffling of education ministers between the time the government took office in 1972 and when she was asked to head that ministry in 1978. Phyllis related how one evening she was at home in bed when the telephone rang and to her surprise, Prime Minister Manley was on the line. He wanted her to accept the position of Minister of Education and that he needed a reply in twenty four hours. Phyllis said it was neither a request nor a command, but there was something about the Prime Minister’s voice that told her he was not expecting "no" for an answer. She said she told her husband, Oliver, what the Prime Minister had said, and he advised her that she should think about it. She also called her daughters and asked what they thought about the Prime Minister’s request. They told her she should "go for it". Phyllis said her daughters told her that "if anyone can bring about a change in education and fixing its woes, it’s you, mother."
Dr. MacPherson-Russell said she thought about it as she could think of nothing else. She was in a state of euphoria and was sure she gave a reply in the affirmative long before the twenty four hours expired. She said she believed that if the Prime Minister thought of her as capable of heading that ministry, then it was an honor and a privilege she could not afford to turn down. Besides, this was her chance, she said, "to make contributions in education at the national level". There were many changes she wanted to see in education. Phyllis said that between the request and the acceptance her brain went into overdrive.

I began to think of all the changes I was going to implement. More students to be trained at the university, vocation colleges offering degrees. More school places for high school students. Health insurance for teachers. I never wondered where the money would come from nor what were the Prime Minister’s and the party’s goals for education. All thoughts were about what I was going to do for education in Jamaica.

There was especially one thing she had always wanted to see changed, and that was the area of integrating vocational education and academics in schools. She believed there was too much reliance on academics in Jamaica. Students who were not academic fell through the cracks. There should be opportunities for those students who had non-academic skills to pursue training beyond technical school in Jamaica. Phyllis wanted a kind of polytechnic university.
Parents and students looked down on manual work. They did not see the need for it. It was work to be done by the unskilled they believe. I believe that it was the slavery syndrome... but I believed it was time to put an end to it. There were too many young people who did not possess life skills. I was happy when the Prime Minister agreed with me that a life skill course should be part of the curriculum of the Junior Secondary Schools. I saw a change in the attitudes of parents who came to realize that agriculture and home economics were not gender specific courses nor were they for the unskilled. So many boys and girls became interested in doing the courses in school. They even took up our offer to do the revolving project. I do not know if you know that the Ministry gave money to these young people to buy domestic animals and rear them in the homes. They were required to make a profit and repay the loan. I have spoken to several successful men and women today who have said that the project was where they got their start in life. When I stressed the need for training in the vocational areas there were people who resisted, saying the Prime Minister and I were trying to perpetuate the welfare (underclass) syndrome. It became a political issue.

Dr. MacPherson-Russell also wanted to implement changes that would bring about a better way of life for women and children who were not included in education planning. This was her chance to work with the Prime Minister to make educational changes at the national level.

Dr. MacPherson-Russell reminisced almost in soliloquy:

58 This was money loaned by the Government to students in the New Secondary Schools to purchase domestic animals or run a home based business. As soon as they began to make a profit the loan was to be repaid so other students could access the money. This was one way of teaching students to run a business.
The seventies in Jamaica was full of passion largely because the person at the head of the government was such a passionate person...He was able to rally the nation to do what he wanted done as no Prime Minister has done before or since... So you see when you work with someone who was that charismatic one does things without thinking...Well, apart from being very exciting, being a woman and having come out of a girl's school it was a very demanding job. I was very much like the new girl in school feeling very uncertain and unsure. I think that was a feeling that came from inside of me though as I was on very unfamiliar ground...political administration. You see this was the first working environment that I was in as the only woman. I had a lot of homework to do. The men made me feel welcomed. I did not notice any special treatment towards me...negative or positive. As far as they were concerned I was just another person in the conference room and in parliament. When I made a contribution to any bill or paper I think I got their attention. My job was challenging but I always thought I had their support. When I became minister it was my job to bring some cohesion or rather to diffuse the set of conditions that existed within the ministry. Jamaica was watching this woman. What was she going to do different than the men? That put a lot of pressure on whichever woman was sitting in that chair. I worked hard but I could not have accomplished anything without the support of the Prime Minister and he was really fixed on bringing about changes in education and changes for women and children. He had his goals for education laid out. He knew what he wanted for education in Jamaica. Beverley, his wife, was very instrumental in sensitizing him to the plight of the Jamaican woman and her children. She always said she came from the working class and was acquainted with their plight. You could say the Prime Minister...
needed a woman to help him implement his policies and that was my job.

Dr. MacPherson-Russell said the time she spent as minister was short but significant to her as she was able to see some of her dreams for education in Jamaica started. The Prime Minister had started implementing the changes in education despite the reshuffling of ministers. At one point it was said that Prime Minister Manley was minister of education as well as leader of the nation. This was because of the power he swayed over that ministry. In hindsight, it would appear that the Prime Minister was so eager to implement changes in education that would impact women and children that he worked closer with the Ministry Education than any other ministry then. Dr. MacPherson-Russell remained in office until the government was defeated at the polls in the general election of 1980. Most of her predecessors were not teachers. They were attorneys or from other professions. Phyllis believed the populace was glad that there was someone heading the ministry who was knowledgeable about education and the educational system. She thinks that helped to stabilize the educational landscape at the time as there was a constant shuffling of Education Ministers in and out of the ministry just before she assumed office. She admits that she was not able to accomplish all she had planned to do for education as the Prime
Minister’s agenda had to be done first. She insists however, that many of the Prime Minister’s plans for education were also ones she had. There was never a conflict of philosophies or interests.

One may say then that Phyllis’ role as Minister of Education was a kind of "ambiguous empowerment", (Chase, 1995). She was head of the ministry, a position of power, which seem to empower women, but she was in fact implementing the policies of the male Prime Minister. The Prime Minister wanted a woman to carry out his philosophies for education. Phyllis was the woman chosen. Susan Chase (1995) addresses this kind of ambiguity of professional women’s empowerment in her book *Ambiguous Empowerment* when she says:

...women of public accomplishment implicitly stress uncertainties of the personal, denying rather than glorifying ambition, evading rather than enlarging private selves. They use autobiographies (stories), paradoxically, partly as a mode of self-denial. Although they have functioned successfully in spheres rarely open to women, their accounts of this activity emphasize the hidden costs more than its rewards and draw back—as women have traditionally done—from making large claims of importance (p.9).

This was not altogether the whole story, however, as Phyllis said she had her own agenda for educational changes and some of them coincided with those of the Prime Minister. Many of these, like the representation of students and workers at all levels of the education decision-making process on the Board of Schools, as well as free
breakfasts, lunches and uniforms, were her ideas. She said she especially felt that education must prepare the young for responsibility and that students should become accustomed to taking part in the management of their own affairs hence her support of the Prime Minister for students to be represented on the board of schools.

**Has gender anything to do with it?**

I asked Dr. MacPherson-Russell if she thought gender had any role to play in her appointment as Minister and she responded:

Definitely! Being a woman had everything to do with it. The Prime Minister wanted women in roles of leadership in his government. It did not surprise me that with the reshuffling he would have chosen a woman to head the Ministry of Education. What surprised me was that he chose me. There were many other women who could have done the job. Many women who were far more qualified than I am or was. However, I was elated that he asked me. Then because he did not want "his leap of faith" to fail, he supported me all the way. I could not have done what I did during that time without the help, direction and support of the Prime Minister.

Phyllis acknowledges without hesitation that gender had everything to do with her appointment as Minister of Education. She knew she was called to serve because of her gender. "That was one of the first criteria," Phyllis said; "I am sure there were many men with my qualifications but the Prime Minister needed a woman at that point in time". Dr. MacPherson-Russell was fulfilling one of the Prime Minister's
points on the agenda for the "politics of change". One sees Phyllis downplaying her importance as she was surprised that she was asked to head that ministry. She thought there were other women far more qualified for the task. Chase (1995) calls this the "mode of self-denial" and says this is expected of successful women who have made it in traditional male positions (p.9.). I wondered if Dr. MacPherson-Russell was still education minister, would she have spoken out so boldly that her appointment was gender driven? Or would she be intimidated and feel the need to protect herself and others in answering that question? Although Phyllis gives the impression she was happy that as a woman she was called to serve her country in this capacity, she does not consider herself a feminist. The thought of gender does not cross her mind when given a task to perform. "It had never occurred to me that because I am woman I had to outperform or do better than men," said Phyllis. She is more interested in having the job done and done well, so she works hard. This she attributed to her upbringing. Her home did not have gender specific roles. Dr. MacPherson-Russell does not believe that there are specific roles in society for women and men. She said her role in the Ministry at that time only strengthened her belief that a woman is just as capable as a man, and can perform any job a man can.
One of the first duties she performed was to table a paper\(^{59}\), which later became law, to have students and all levels of workers represented on school boards. For her, this was necessary if education was to move forward. People who work or are engaged within the system should have a voice in the decision-making process.

As she spoke I found myself in reverie in the seventies with her. I was one of those young women who looked to the Prime Minister’s choice of a woman for action and changes within the ministry. I was one of those women Phyllis spoke about who thought that the Prime Minister had made a great choice in Dr. MacPherson-Russell. I lived in that era. It was part of my history. I was one of those teachers who enjoyed some of the changes in education, such as the introduction of subsidized health insurance, that were made during the tenure of my life historian. The Ministry of Education paid sixty percent of the cost of health insurance for each teacher to Blue Cross of Jamaica and for the first time all teachers had access to health insurance.

As I listened to my life historian I knew she enjoyed the time she spent as minister and was happy to serve her country. Dr. MacPherson-Russell’s voice then became choked up and her

\(^{59}\)This is to present for discussion something that one would like to become law.
eyes filled with tears. After she regained her composure and was able
to speak again she related:

I am not one who cries easily, but every time I think
of those last few days in office I fight to hold back
the tears. The Prime Minister and I had such
wonderful plans to reform the education system. We
had just received a very large loan from the United
States and then we lost the election. I cried on those
last days in office too, I cried, not so much because
we lost the elections but because I knew that our
plans and programs were going to be discontinued
or shelved and I thought what a messy thing politics
really is. It is not to provide help for all the people,
but for some of the people.

Even today, Dr. MacPherson-Russell continued, some of the plans
she had for education have not been implemented. When one
government leaves office, the plans of the previous government are
discontinued or dismantled. "Some", she says, "have continued and
have been expanded." I asked for examples and she said that the
representation of workers at all levels in the education system on the
Board of Schools, the issuing of uniforms to needy students, and
compulsory education are three that she is proud to say have
continued. "I am so proud when I listen to the government having to
call on workers and students for their input in educational reforms.
Free uniforms and books are still being issued to primary school children
and there is still compulsory education for these pupils", the former
education Minister said. These are important for the democratic
process to continue. "Workers must have 'a voice at the workplace'
and there must be a place in school for every child, and every child must be in school," is the way Dr. MacPherson-Russell summed up her happiness that some of her philosophies are still being implemented.

I tried to find out what problems if any, she encountered as a woman in a man's place when she became Minister of Education. Phyllis said that she cannot recall being treated any differently because of her gender. She did not think that anyone showed her any special favors or special respect because of her gender. Maybe this was because of the party leader's outlook on having women as active members of his government. She then recalled what happened at the end of her first cabinet meeting in the House of Representatives as minister, when she was the only woman among over thirty male ministers:

The Deputy Prime Minister invited me to join him and several other members of the cabinet to someplace they apparently frequented. I went and I was the only woman there. I do remember feeling pleased that they had thought of this...that they included me and did not see my gender. I do not think a meeting of that nature ever recurred, but it was not

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60This is one of the Houses of Parliament. Parliament consist of two Houses, the House of Representatives (Lower House) and the Senate (Upper House). The House of Representatives consists of 60 members (the maximum allowed by the Constitution) elected under adult suffrage. Eighteen is the legal voting age. The Senate consists of 21 Senators, Thirteen are appointed by the Governor General upon the Prime Minister's advice and the other eight are appointed upon the Leader of the Opposition's advice.
necessary, because of the numerous other things we did together and the camaraderie we shared.

Was Phyllis co-opted or was her denial of discrimination an attempt to disconnect herself from the group known as "women" in order to identify with professionals in general? Holloway (1989) says that women who do not accommodate any concept of sexism can refuse to admit sexism. I am wondering if the reluctance of my life historians and myself to call ourselves feminists, or to admit that we have been faced with discrimination because of our gender, is cultural. Is it that we have been so socialized to accept patriarchy as "being in charge" that we do not see or acknowledge our oppression? Personally, I did not look for differences between the treatment of one gender and the next until my exposure to gender studies at Louisiana State University in the 1990s. Does this mean that my life historians and I have been living in different worlds than the men in our country, producing in us what socialist-feminist Dorothy Smith (1990), calls a "bifurcated consciousness"? She argues that "as growing number of women, especially feminists enter mainstream academia, distinctive understandings of, and perspectives on, the world are brought to bear based upon women's places, experiences, and training" (p. 40). Has the time I spend at Louisiana State University reversed my "bifurcated consciousness"? Almost everything has a gender underpinning for me now and I examine
situations from a gendered perspective. I still think this has nothing to do with being a feminist however. I just think that with exposure I have come to view everything through a different pair of lenses.

Although Dr. MacPherson-Russell said she did not feel any pressures or opposition due to her gender when she became minister, she recalled another time, several years before, when her gender made her feel out of place in her country. This was before Jamaica's independence in 1962. On returning from the United States with a doctorate in education she felt she was under continual scrutiny. The doctorate was not held by many Jamaicans in the field of education and there were even fewer women who had it. She remembers being asked on more than one occasion, by both men and women, why she did not remain in the United States. What was she coming back to Jamaica to do with a PhD? Did she think her doctorate was going to make a difference? It was as if these men and women feared her, Phyllis said.

When I asked Dr. MacPherson-Russell if she was a feminist she laughed and responded as follows:

I prefer to say I am a woman. I never think of myself as anything else. I have been pleased however that the feminists have not put me entirely out of their grouping, although they wished I had done more especially as Minister. (What they have to remember is that the a Prime Minister had his agenda). You see they saw my position as one rung up on the ladder of the feminist movement. I saw myself as a woman trying to do something for women and
children. I believe in what feminists are fighting for and against,... but no, I am not a feminist.

So Phyllis supports the feminist movement but she does not consider herself a feminist. It is interesting that although she does not consider herself a member of the group she does not want to be alienated.

Why don't Jamaican women write their stories?

When I asked Phyllis that question she replied:

I doubt that my life story would make interesting reading for anyone. Like I told you before, I am not a person who knows English very well and that is required to make writing and reading interesting. I do not think writing is my thing. I have nothing against anyone who writes but I am someone who lives to do things. I like to make things happen. Why write another book and place it on the shelf when you do not know if anyone is going to read it or want to read it when that time could be used helping people to do something with their lives?

Phyllis, like Marlene, has not written any books or articles about herself, but has made several presentations and speeches and has served on numerous committees and boards. She too, does not see herself as being a very interesting person or that anyone would want to read or write about her life. This life historian goes on further to say that she believes in doing the practical things in life and she would rather be out there to "help to implement changes than to write about how changes can be implemented." She has nothing against those who write, but feels the desire "to be doing hands-on things rather than adding another book to the shelf and have it stay there." My life
historian quipped that one day when she is "too old and decrepit to be actively working" she may, with my help, write her autobiography now that I have helped her to reflect on her life. She said that although in over her nearly sixty years as an educator she has kept journals, she has never really reflected on her life as the interviews have caused her to do. She likes writing her thoughts down and sometimes re-reads them and find things there that she doesn’t remember giving thought to, however she has not found these jottings interesting enough be anything more than they are. I asked if I could see some of these journals but Phyllis did not want to share them. Pinar (1975a) says that perhaps the journal can provide the one area in which the confirmation of the individual is possible in which there is time and space for a teacher to give a "genuine reply to one’s being" (p. 89).

Does the response of my life historians as not seeing their "lives as important" have anything to do with the patriarchal society in which they grew up? I keep wondering if this was something embedded in the psyche of the Jamaican woman that her story is not important and therefore does not deserve to be told. But I realize that this is not really a true representation of the Jamaican woman. I clearly remember the Women’s Movement in Jamaica fighting in the 1970s to get the contributions of Nanny of the Maroons and that of Aggie Bernard to the nation’s development recognized. Why then was Phyllis minimizing
her own importance as a woman who has risen to the top of her profession? Again, I question is this modesty or is it that successful women are supposed to deny themselves agency? But Dr. Wendy Kohli, my major professor, reminded me that both circumstances can operate simultaneously as they contribute to the complexity and contradiction of gender.

In 1993 Phyllis Claire MacPherson-Russell was the recipient of the Pelican Award of the Guild of Graduates of the University of the West Indies. The citation tells of the contributions and modesty of this life historian: "It is an Award by no means lightly made if the awardee is of formidable stature that is enduring and of the finest texture the Caribbean can produce. For Phyllis MacPherson-Russell is of a generation of West Indian thoroughbreds...who shared the experience of student sojourn as contemporaries in post-war London and returned to the region to make a difference... Sound and solid as a rock yet never flamboyant, Phyllis MacPherson-Russell epitomizes the dedicated, committed public servant of academia, given to goodness, humility, and service while being of fine character". The full text of this citation is included in appendix E.

Asked if she was given the chance to live her life over would she return to the classroom, Dr. MacPherson-Russell reminded me that she has not yet left it. Even when she was the Minister of Education she
found the time to visit the classroom and talk with teachers and students. Most of her visits were unannounced. Then she said,

Given the chance I would be a teacher again. Teaching is my profession, my life... I cannot think of another profession in which one can serve and be as fulfilled. I love teaching. I am a teacher. I will always be a teacher.

Phyllis sees teaching as her "true profession". Phyllis refused offers to be principal of different schools as she thought it would limit her access to the classroom and she kept saying that she was never really interested in being an administrator. She grasped the opportunity to be Minister as she knew she would be in a position to implement changes in education for teachers and students and the office would be for only a time. As principal, however, her focus would be on one school and she would not have the same rapport she wanted to have with her students.

For her distinguished service in the field of education the country bestowed on her the honor of Commander of the Order of Distinction\textsuperscript{61} for Services to Education in 1991. This is the highest national honor awarded to educators. In 1987 she was given the Mathematical Association of Jamaica Award for her contribution to the development of Mathematics Education. I have included a copy of her vitae in the appendix of this research.

\textsuperscript{61}This is a very high honor awarded to citizens on National Heroes' Day, in October of each year, for services in different fields of nation building.
CHAPTER FIVE
MY OWN REFLECTIONS

Woman’s oral history... is a feminist encounter, even if the interviewee (interviewer) is not herself a feminist.
(Sherna Gluck, 1979, p.5)

Gluck continues the foregoing quote by explaining that women’s oral history is a feminist encounter because it creates new material about women, it validates their experiences, enhances communication among women, discovers women’s roots and develops a previously denied sense of continuity. Women’s oral history allows women to share stories that would otherwise be left hidden in their hearts. It helps women to share their experiences and in sharing, they sometimes learn about themselves and other women. Gloria Anzaldua (1988) asserts that shared stories link tellers and listeners: "The ability of story (prose and poetry) to transform the storyteller and listener into something or someone else is shamanistic" (p. 30). Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992) further argue that it is the storyteller in particular who has the potential to be transformed through the tales:

...The stories people tell about themselves are interesting not only for the events and characters they describe but also for something in the construction of the stories themselves. How individuals recount their histories—what they emphasize and omit, their stance as protagonists or victims, the relationship the story establishes between teller and audience—all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives. Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one’s life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned. It is the formative--

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and sometimes deformative power of life stories that make them important (p.1).

Collecting the life histories of my informants was not an easy process. Distance, time and lack of financial resources impeded what could have been a more in-depth research. I would have loved to visit with these women over longer periods of time and observe them in different settings. This I am sure would have yielded a richer and more colorful life history. During the course of conducting and writing this research, I learned that the process of getting these women’s stories told and converting them to text was more difficult than I had anticipated. I had collected what I considered very long and rich life histories of two women with whom I was already acquainted. What was making the writing of their words so difficult? I kept reflecting. Will they see themselves the way I have portrayed them? Will they recognize their life stories? How will they react to my interpretations of their stories? Will they like the stories that I have chosen to retell? What will be their reaction to my interpretation of their stories? What made me chose the stories that I have retold? I think the stories that I have chosen to retell have come out of my own life story; they resonate with my own lived experience and helped me to weave my own stories, thus creating a kind of tapestry. Could it be my own resistance to disclosure that made the writing up of these stories so difficult? I struggled not to let my own stories come out in my writing while I retold
those of my life historians. That is not good research, I thought. Maybe I have gotten too close to my life historians and have lost the 'objectivity' necessary for analysis. I remember what Leslie Roman (1989) says about the ethnographer being written into the text but rarely appears as a social subject to those she has researched. I looked at my research and I am written into the text and also appear as a social subject. I am not invisible. This is almost my autobiography. I am worried. Is this supposed to happen? Has my research failed? Is this research what Van Maanen (1988) calls 'vanity ethnography'? Or is my research what Lather (1986) refers to as an 'emancipatory research'? She thinks that interviews when conducted in an interactive dialogic manner require self-disclosure on the part of the researcher (p. 175). This, Lather continues, encourages self-reflection or what Campbell (1990) refers to as reflexivity. Chevigny (1984) says that in the process of women researching women, one unconsciously identifies with the subjects' experience and in "some measure recreates them" (p.358). She views this as a risk as well as an opportunity. I revere and hold these two women in very high esteem; consequently, I made a deliberate effort to represent them in a positive light and chose only those stories which reflect this. I, too, am a Jamaica educator and shall have to return to my homeland to continue my professional life. This did not make the writing up of the research
easier; in fact, it made it more problematic. Another real problem with which I wrestled was that my life historians are not anonymous. If they had been, it would have removed at least one layer of constraint on what I retell. Maybe too, my life historians would have spoken more freely about themselves. In the back of my mind, I kept thinking about the repercussions of writing anything negative. Not only will I have to answer to my life historians but other Jamaican women as well. As an insider ethnographer and Jamaican, I have knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of the Jamaican woman to which an outsider would not be privileged. The outsider ethnographer could collect the narratives of the these women and leave them behind, forgetting to write or keep in touch. I, on the other hand, shall have to return to work with my participants whether directly or indirectly.

**How empowered are Jamaican women?**

I came to the research with the impression that the Jamaican woman was empowered. She was capable and free to do almost anything she wanted. That is the way I saw her and that was what I grew up to believe. As I went through interviews, I discovered that this was not really the whole story. I now realize that seemingly empowered women are really in positions of "ambiguous empowerment" (Chase, 1995). Phyllis was empowered to be named the first woman Education Minister but had only as much power as
given her by the Prime Minister. She was in office to implement the educational policies of a patriarchal leader, even if a few of her own got implemented as well. The policies that were considered most important were the ones deemed priorities by the Prime Minister.

In Marlene’s capacity as Pro-Vice Chancellor, her directives come from the Chancellor who is a man. All the other Pro-Vice Chancellors are also men. Marlene too, although in a position of power, is only empowered as far as the Chancellor designates that power. Very little, if any, of her own ideas for education at the tertiary level can be implemented without the nod from the Chancellor. The Jamaican woman seems only as empowered as the patriarchal ruled society in which she lives allows her.

**Issues of resistance**

My life historians were constantly resisting. They resisted self-disclosure, their parents choice of profession for them, representation and naming. A number of times during our interview both participants, separately, made references to matters that they did not wish to pursue further because they did not believe that they could be explained adequately in the context of the research, or simply because they did not want to go public with the information. I constantly reminded myself that I had an ethical and a moral responsibility to the women I was researching, and that as researcher, it was my duty to attend to
the issues of confidentiality and rights of the researched to self-disclosure. These instances gave me time to reflect on my own agenda for wanting to pursue the research and what it was that I wanted told. Why did I want to have the stories of these women told? What was my reason for pursuing this research project? Cole (1994), urges us that "as researchers we need to stand or sit back and assess the situation, and make decisions... about how far to push the participant to provide the kind of information that really is going to inform the research" (p. 16). On several occasions during the course of the interviews, I made other attempts to get them to answer questions or encouraged them to talk about the matter they had not wanted to discuss, but again, I felt that the life historians were resisting self-disclosure on those points so I abandoned the idea. I did not persist. I felt as if I was caught in a double bind. I wanted to "un-silence" these women but felt sometimes as if they were making this impossible. Why were these women resisting? Would their disclosure lead to repercussions for themselves or others?

Although my life historians are separated by nearly two decades in age, several sections of their lives seem to connect by similar threads. I am not saying that the women led/lead similar lives, as that is not true. What I am saying is that their stories do resemble each other in places. Both women attended Wolmer's Girls School, were headgirls, and
taught at the school immediately upon graduation. Marlene had refused a scholarship which required her to teach for a number of years because she did not want to be a teacher. However, she ended up in teaching because she eventually saw teaching as "woman's work", convenient and compatible with being wife and mother. Phyllis knew she wanted to be a teacher but was unable to say why or how she came to choose the profession for her life's work. She is still not clear what motivated her decision. They both said that it might have been that first taste of teaching at their alma mater that eventually led them to resist the wishes of their family to become doctors and caused them to pursue the field of education. Was this the real reason for their not going into their fathers' choice of career for them, or was their defiance and resistance to go into the traditional female careers a way of contesting maleness? Could it be that they were resisting the patriarchal script for women by entering teaching as a way of coming to terms with their female subjectivity? Were they adhering to the patriarchal script for women when they entered the teaching profession? According to Munro (1998) women are both victims and agents of patriarchy, although their "acts of resistance need not conform to acts of agency inscribed in primarily patriarchal discourses. This opens up spaces in which to envision the woman teacher as simultaneously rejecting dominant discourses as well as
accommodating them" (p.35). Women who take up traditionally male positions somehow lose their female subject identity. Was Marlene’s and Phyllis’ choice of career an attempt to hold on to their femaleness? Fathers are symbolic of patriarchy. Were Marlene and Phyllis resisting patriarchy by resisting their fathers or were they victims of patriarchy by going into teaching? Phyllis came to the limelight as the first woman to occupy a male-dominated office during a time when there were political and social changes being made in the life of the country. Although she did not single handedly make the changes that took place during the time she occupied office, she believes that she made a tremendous impact on the education landscape when she served. Marlene, on the other hand, came to the position as the first Pro-Vice Chancellor after Jamaican women educators were carrying the ‘gender torch’ into every profession possible. Thirteen years before, Phyllis had been appointed Minister of Education and had broken the glass-ceiling for women in education in Jamaica. It is no small feat however, that Marlene was named the first woman to be PVC of the University of the West Indies. Again, Marlene’s position does not allow her to make drastic changes in the policies and regulations of the university, but as a Vice-Chancellor and as a woman, she sees herself as a "represented voice" of other women at the highest level of the educational pyramid.
The narratives indicate that both women made personal choices to become teachers. Parental and class pressures did not make their choice of teaching as a career easy, as they had to resist their parents’ choice for them. Their resistance to parental pressures took different forms, however. Phyllis described her resistance to parental pressure as a "kind of silent war" as she proceeded to choose her own career path and block out the pressure of pursuing the path her parents wanted her to go. Marlene acceded to the wishes of her parents, and did the science courses they told her to pursue, but opted at the last moment to become an educator for personal and family reasons. Both life historians remarked that if they had their lives to live over, they would still be educators, but would make some adjustments because of the experiences they have gleaned over the years.

Resistence to naming

My life historians refused to call themselves feminists, however, they support women going into any profession they may choose. Both life historians support many feminist ideas and goals. They believe that there should be no gender boundaries. It is evident that they think that one does not have to be a feminist to believe and support the causes of women. I too, believe that one does not need to call oneself a feminist in order to support the advancement of women. It makes me wonder if our unwillingness to name ourselves is a conscious or an
unconscious act of resisting patriarchy. Nancy Miller (1989) and Petra Munro (1995; 1998) claim that the very act of refusing to name ourselves as subjects is an act of resistance. And Bettina Aptheker (1989) says that women's resistance is shaped by their subordinated status to men. It may be interpreted that my life historians and I refused to be named feminists so as not to collaborate with or accommodate patriarchy. Men have the power to name, and to refuse naming ourselves is a form of resistance to patriarchy. Aptheker reminds us that resistance comes in many ways when she says:

Women's resistance is not necessarily or intrinsically oppositional; resistance is not necessarily or intrinsically contesting for power. It does, however, have a profound impact on the fabric of social life because of its steady, cumulative effects. It is central to the making of history, and... it is the bedrock of social change (p.173).

One must be reminded that Jamaica is a Third World country, although many Jamaicans resist that label also. By the standard assigned to measure 'third worldness', Jamaica is far more developed. I wonder if our resistance to naming ourselves has anything to do with our geographical location and socio-historical position? Is this the reason for my life historians resistance to be named feminists? According to Audre Lorde (1984), Bettina Aptheker (1989), and Gloria Anzaldúa (1990), women of third world countries and women of color
hold a different view of feminism than European and American white women. Women of color are wary of feminism as they think white women create theory in the same way that their male counterparts create "theory" and pronounce their "universal" claims leaving colored (and third world) women marginalized (Aptheker, 1989). Neither of my life historians wants to be labelled as feminist but they both support the advancement of women. I am beginning to wonder why two women who clearly support feminist goals for women resist being labelled feminist.

Although Marlene and Phyllis do not consider themselves feminists, they broke new ground for women and the feminist movement in Jamaica. Their positions of power have empowered women in their country as they made history and heralded social change for women educators. Phyllis’ appointment as Minister of Education was part of the change in the status of women in Jamaica. A decade and a half later, Marlene became the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the highest educational institution in the country. Here are two women who deny themselves agency to even see their life stories as important. When asked why they did not write their stories, both responded that they did not think their stories were interesting enough for anyone to want to read about them. Susan Chase (1995) remarks that women who function successfully in spheres rarely open to them.
often use autobiography as a form of self-denial, "as women have traditionally done-from making large claims of importance" (p.9).

Again, I am forced to ask if my life historians really think that their lives are uninteresting or are they acting out the patriarchal script for successful women?

**Issues of representation**

The central theme in the stories of my life historians is one of resistance to representation. I am not surprised that gender did not emerge as the central theme. Apart from Phyllis' acknowledgement of the role of gender to her appointment as Minister of Education, she did not saw it as influencing any other aspect of her life. Subconsciously, however she sees gender in other areas of her life when she remarked that one of her aunts had "broken the perimeter set for women or by women by become a laboratory technician long before women entered that field in Jamaica". Again, she shows her awareness of gender in her life when her mother and aunts were among the first women in Jamaica to engage in occupational activities outside the home. Gender influenced her as she performed her job as Minister of Education. She said that she saw herself "as a woman trying to do something for women and children". Again this suggests that she was aware of the inequalities in the education system and attempted to do something about them.
Marlene hopes that gender had no role to play in her appointment as Pro-Vice Chancellor. She is however, aware of the role gender plays in the performance of her work when she expressed concern about how men and women view her. As she remarked, she wants "other women to be proud of my professional achievement so I work hard...Women have to do so when they take on assumed men’s roles. You see there is always a man watching to say, Just like a woman...". In this case Marlene is clearly aware of gender disparities. Gender also played a significant role in the life of Marlene when her children were growing up. She had a strong network of women—her mother and household helpers—on whom she relied as she climbed the ladder to the top of her profession.

As I have stated elsewhere in this research, for me gender did not seem important until my exposure to gender studies at Louisiana State University. Then I started viewing life differently. Since then, I have come to realize that gender has been and is such an implicit part of our daily lives that it is often taken for granted. For example, when I made the choice to quit law school and go into teaching, little did I realize then that I was making a gendered decision. No one forced me or suggested that I make that choice. Did I unconsciously make a choice based on something to do with gender? Did I think then that I was a woman and my male cousin should be the one to go on to law
school? Or what did my Uncle mean when he said that if I continued to speak my mind so freely he did not know what was going to happen to me? Was he making a gendered statement? I am uncertain. I still remember that I was allowed the same rights and privileges as my male cousins. My exposure to gender studies has caused me to question everything. I agree with Bateson (1990) who says that we wake up everyday with the gender question and that we do not even notice it. Is the refusal of my life historians and myself to be named or labelled cultural, or is it that we are blinded by the patriarchal structure in our society, or could it be both? Do we have a negative view of feminists and feminism? Is our resistance to be labelled born out of colonialism or homophobia?

Both life historians talked about the roles their families played in the choice of their career as well as other decisions they made during their climb to the zenith of their profession. There are however, themes present in one life that are absent from the other. For example, Marlene received all her training in Jamaica at the University of the West Indies and constantly refers to herself as a "homegrown product". On the other hand, Phyllis received all her training overseas between Britain and the United States and kept saying that she had to make adjustments to see how the education and training she received could be adapted to suit the Jamaican situation.
It is also noteworthy that the relationship between Dr. MacPherson-Russell and the Right Honorable Michael Manley had its genesis in high school when they were part of a Sixth Form Association. Later, they met at university in England and were part of the Caribbean Student Association. It was there that both Phyllis and Michael unknowingly decided that they were going to bring about changes in Jamaica. Phyllis was studying mathematics education and Michael was eyeing the trade union movement in his country. What was not evident to them then was that they would one day serve their country together, as a team and in the political arena.

**Implication for women's movement in Jamaica**

The women's movement seemed to have gained momentum in Jamaica during the 1980s but still not much is being done to carry on the flame which was lit then. In order for women to take on a more active and decisive role in the future of the country, there need to be courses addressing gender issues and feminist theory in the College of Education at the University of the West Indies where educators are trained. This will expose the teachers to women studies and allow them to go out and address women's and gender issues in the classrooms throughout Jamaica. They can do this by changing the curriculum of the schools and exploring new forms of pedagogy. Those educators who are presently in the classrooms can also teach about the
contributions that women have made and are making to the
development of Jamaica. For example, teachers can have students
collect oral histories on Jamaica women. Furthermore, they can write
and encourage their students to keep journals. It is out of these journals
that an autobiography could one day develop.

The Jamaican woman has to learn that no matter what she
chooses to call herself, her gender greatly influences her identity and
role in society. Issues of gender disparities concern all women
regardless of color or nationality. Jamaican women should strive to
remove the taboo that feminism is to be feared or that it is only for the
women of developed countries. Feminism should not be viewed as
another form of colonialism nor as a movement for white women
alone. More than anything, women must support the advancement of
other women as they seek to contribute to the development of their
country. I have said elsewhere in this study that women are very
critical of each other when they dare to take on positions considered
"male". The reason for this criticism is not clear. Could it be that when
women take these positions they tend to lose their "womanness"? They
deny themselves agency to remain women. They seem to be "co-
opted" (Chase, 1995) in the patriarchal surrounding in which they find
themselves.
No conclusions

There are no conclusions. There can be no real conclusions to this study. "The narratives people tell do not necessarily have clear resolutions, endings or conclusions... Instead of having end points, such narratives describe situations as portions of complex journeys that continue to unfold" (Nespor & Barber, 1995, p.60). For me, this research is the beginning of a journey, a journey which will continue when others join me in writing the life stories of Jamaican women educators and the contributions they have made and are making to the field of education.

My main reason for doing this research was not to find resolutions or conclusions, but to present the life stories of these women educators as text so that they may take their places in history. I want others inside of Jamaica and outside the country as well to know about them, their work, and contributions to the field of education. Several times while writing up the stories of the lives of my life historians I caught myself reflecting, wondering, questioning and reminding myself of my reason for pursuing this research. Now that I got their stories, did I retell them "correctly". Was there a "correct" way to tell their stories? Will they deny or disagree with the stories I have chosen to retell? How will they react to what I had said about them? That I have attempted to write their life stories is a beginning, not a conclusion, as I hope that this work
will start a conversation. I have only scratched the surface of the lives of these women and that of Jamaican women educators. I want this study to be the small pebble that starts the ripples in that calm lake. It is hoped that this pebble can disturb the waters so other educators will also begin to throw their own in also.

In this research, there are several reasons why the entire life histories of my participants were not told: I did not get all their stories; some stories seem to be near and dear to the researcher; or because at some point I had to make a decision, as one cannot address all the issues and themes which emerge in a life. All had a part to play in this research but I think the second listed was the strongest factor. As the final authority in the writing up process, I decided which stories would get told. This reinforces, rather than weakens, my authority, as Patai (1991) reminds us.

From the very outset of this research, the goal was to write up the research in a way that it is accessible to everyone—not just to educators—but to the women in my country who do not walk in the halls of academia. This too, was a real struggle. The challenges were to reach beyond the culture of academia and yet I had to use the language and style of academia to write up my research. I wanted to write it in such a way that young girls and boys in Jamaica will be able to read and understand the lives and experiences and contributions of
the two women in the study and of women educators in general. I am not certain that I have met the goal that I set for myself. It was also my hope that through the voices of the women in this study, people will come to know of women in education and in the life of their country in general.

As I examined and analyzed the stories told by Marlene and Phyllis, I reflected and analyzed my own teaching stories and my decision to go into teaching. I have come to understand my intentions to be a teacher in a fresh light. I view this from multiple perspectives. I wanted to make the lives of children better. I was trying to make children's lives better by making their lives more like my own, growing up in a middle-class family with upper class aspirations. Not only have the stories of these women given me a chance to reflect on my own practices as a teacher, but they have performed a kind of transformation. When I return to my homeland to continue teaching I hope I shall be in a better position to encourage students and teachers to write journals and their own life stories.

The narratives in this study convey the meanings these women educators give to their lives and it is my hope that, in retrospect, they see their lives as more interesting now than when we began this research project.
REFERENCES


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Dawes, N. Address to Lions Club Montego Bay, May 2, 1974 (mimeographed).


Mair, L. Jamaican women and their quest for economic independence. In UNESCO Features No.676/677/678 (p.11).


*The Jamaica Gazette*, Vol Cl; No.49.

*The Lumb Report, Jamaica, 1898*

*The University of the West Indies: Cave Hill/Mona/St. Augustine*. UWI Press.


A: Consent form
CONSENT FORM

Title of Research: Women in Education: Two Jamaican Life Histories

Name of Student: Ethel King-McKenzie
Address: 3650 Nicholson Dr #1175
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Tel: 225 387 0246

Major Professor: Dr Wendy Kohli
College of Education
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
Tel: 225 388 2446

Purpose of Research: To study the contributions two Jamaican educators have made to the field of education and to use their life stories to add to the annals of women's work in Jamaica.

Procedures for Research: I will be interviewing you at different times for a total of six hours. Because I am away from Jamaica I am asking that these times be during holiday periods (during summer, Spring-breaks or Christmas). I would like to see journals, pictures, speeches and memorabilia. I also plan to speak with your past students and or colleagues.

Potential Risk: You, may say things during the interview that you do not wish to make public. I will present you with a draft of the interviews and ask for help to protect whatever it is that you do not wish to make public.

Potential Benefits: Apart from newspaper clippings there is no written information about the lives and work of these women. There is nothing written about them from their perspectives. It is hoped that the proposed study will document your experiences as educators from your perspectives and add to the work of women in education in the West Indies in general and Jamaica in particular. I further hope that the study will encourage other students to research the lives of women educators in Jamaica.

Protection of Confidentiality. Because you are well-known and your contribution to education has national impact and is of historical importance it is not possible to maintain your anonymity. Anyone familiar with Jamaica's history knows who you are and by extension people overseas will also be able to access your contribution to education.

Signature: I have fully been informed of the above described procedure and its benefits and risks and give my permission to participate in the study.

[Signature of participant] [Name (Print)] [Date]

Phyllis C. MacPherson-Russell 17/11/
CONSENT FORM

Title of Research: Women in Education in Jamaica: Two Life Histories

Name of Student: Ethel King-McKenzie
Address: 3650 Nicholson Dr #1175
          Baton Rouge, LA 70802
          Tel: 504 387 0246

Major Professor: Dr. Wendy Kohli
                College of Education
                Louisiana State University
                Baton Rouge, LA 70803
                Tel: 504 388 2446

Purpose of Research: To study the contributions two Jamaican educators have made to the field of education and to use their life stories to add to the annals of women's work in Jamaica.

Procedures for Research: I will be interviewing you at different times for about a total of six hours. Because I am studying away from Jamaica I am asking that these times be during holiday periods (during summer, Spring-breaks or Christmas). I would also like to see journals, pictures, speeches and memorabilia. I also plan to speak with your past students and or colleagues.

Potential Risk: You may say things during the interview that you did not wish to make public. I will present you with a draft of my interpretation of your stories and ask for help to protect whatever it is that they do not wish to make public.

Potential Benefits: Apart from newspaper clippings there is no written information about the lives and work of these women. There is nothing written about them from their perspectives. It is hoped that the proposed study will document your experiences as educator from your perspectives and add to the work of women in education in the West Indies in general and Jamaica in particular. I further hope that the study will encourage other students to research the lives of women educators in Jamaica.

Protection of Confidentiality: Because you are well-known and your contribution to education in Jamaica has national impact and is of historical importance it is not possible to maintain your anonymity. Anyone familiar with Jamaica's history knows who you are and by extension people overseas will also be able to access your contribution to education.

Signature: I have been fully informed of the above-described procedure with its possible benefits and risks and I give my permission for participation in the study.

Signature of participant Name (Print) Date

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B: Curriculum vitae
TERTIARY EDUCATION

1974-1976
University of the West Indies (Mona)
Doctor of Philosophy (Faculty of Education)
Title of Thesis: "A Study of certain Personality, Educational and Environmental Variables associated with Science Orientation, in a selected group of Fifth Form students in Secondary Schools of Jamaica."

1971-1973
University of the West Indies (Mona)
Master of Arts (Faculty of Education)
Title of Thesis: "The Development of an Introductory Ecology Course for Third Year students in Secondary Schools of Jamaica."

1969-1970
University of the West Indies (Mona)
Higher Diploma in Education (Faculty of Education)
Specialization: Educational Psychology

1968-1969
University of the West Indies (Mona)
Diploma in Education (Distinction in the Practice of Education) (Faculty of Education)
Specialization: Science Education

1961-1965
University of the West Indies (Mona)
Bachelor of Science (Faculty of Natural Sciences)
Specializations: Botany and Zoology

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- Jamaica Government Bursary (1961-1964)
EMPLOYMENT RECORD - 1965 TO PRESENT

Kingston College - Teacher of Biological Sciences, Forms 4 to 6, Chemistry to Form 3 (September 1965 - August 1968)

Wolmer’s Boys’ School - Teacher of Biological Sciences, Forms 4 and 5 (September 1969 - August 1971)

University of the West Indies -

Teaching Assistant, Science Education, School of Education, Mona (1971 - 1973)

Lecturer in Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, Mona (1973 to the present); granted Tenure (October, 1978), and Senior Lectureship (October, 1980). Crossed Bar in the Senior Lecturer’s scale, October, 1986

Deputy Principal, Mona Campus, 1991 - 1996

Pro-Vice Chancellor, Science Education and Women and Development Studies, 1991-1993

Pro-Vice Chancellor, Student and Alumni Relations, 1993 -1996

Pro-Vice Chancellor, Undergraduate Studies, and Chair, Board for Undergraduate Studies, 1996 to the present
ADMINISTRATIVE INPUT

Administrative and other Posts Held

a. Pro-Vice Chancellor, responsible for Women and Development Studies and Science Education, September 1991 - July 1993: Pro-Vice Chancellor, responsible for Student and Alumni Relations, August 1993 - July 1996; Pro-Vice Chancellor, responsible for Undergraduate Studies, and Chair of the Board for Undergraduate Studies, since August 1996

b. Deputy Principal, Mona Campus, 1991 - 1996


d. Head, Department of Educational Studies (formerly the Teaching Section), Faculty of Education, Mona: 1982-1986

e. Coordinator of UWI/College of the Bahamas Diploma in Education and Bachelor of Education programmes: 1982-1986

f. Chair, University Library Committee and Mona Library Committee (1990-1993)

g. Chair, Advisory Committee, Gender and Development Studies (since 1991)

h. Chair, Board for Undergraduate Awards and Mona Campus Awards Committee (since 1993)

i. Member, Board of Directors, UWI Development and Endowment Fund (since 1994).

PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/ACTIVITY

- British Psychological Society (Graduate Member). Elected member of the Education Section of the BPS in 1982
- International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology
- American Psychological Association (Foreign Affiliate)
- Association for Science Education in Trinidad and Tobago
- International Council for Education in Teaching (ICET); Member of 1986 World Assembly Planning Committee

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Caribbean Education Research Review (CERRAG)
- International Association for Human Resource Laboratory Training (Life Member)
- Acted as UNESCO consultant on Environmental Education and Nutrition Education in the Caribbean on several occasions
- Addressed numerous educational bodies (PTAs, graduating classes, students, staff, JTA, etc.)
- Addressed service groups (Rotary, etc); also private sector organizations, on staff development
- Participated in conferences/workshops sponsored by women's groups, both in Jamaica and region-wide
- Represented in Jamaican Diocesan Commission on Ministry at the Provincial Commission meeting in Antigua, May, 1984
- Acted as evaluator for CAST Personnel Management certificate courses (on-going)
- Government of Jamaica representative on Fact Finding team visiting Russia and other CIS countries, October, 1992
- Government of Jamaica representative on OAS education selection committee for Andres Bello award, Washington, D.C., September, 1993
- Representative named by USIS (Jamaica) to serve on selection panel for Eisenhower Fellowship, 1995.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITTEES/ACTIVITY

- Board of Governors, The Queen's High School (1981-1984)
- Board of Governors, Mona Preparatory School (1988 to the present)
- Education Sub-Committee of the National Preparatory Committee (Jamaica) for the United Nations End of Decade of Women World Conference, 1985 (1984-1985)
- Unesco Advisory Committee on the Social Sciences (1982-1984)
- College of Arts, Sciences and Technology Business Education Advisory Committee (1984 - 1988)
- National Interim Committee on Education (1990-1992)
- Strategic Planning Committee, United Way of Jamaica
- Patron, Friends of the KSAC Library (1991-1993)
- Member, Board of Governors, Creative Production and Training Centre, Ltd. (CPTC) (1991-1993)
ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTION

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Forty-six (46) published monographs, articles and chapters, as well as unpublished papers and conference contributions are listed in chronological order below.

MONOGRAPHS


ARTICLES


--- Article also reproduced in The Daily Gleaner (Supplement) of February 4, 1979.


--- Documented in data bank of Inventory of Marriage and Family Literature (IMFL) Vol. 7, University of Minnesota.


SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS
(Some papers since published)


6. Scientific Attitudes - Some Considerations for Teachers. Paper read at Inaugural Consultation on Science Education Research in Latin America and the Caribbean; Trinidad and Tobago, February, 1986.


14. **Gender Differences in Creativity - Fact or Fiction?** Paper read at the Third Disciplinary Seminar (Education) of the Women and Development Unit, Jamaica, November, 1989.

15. **The Secondary School in Jamaica as an Agent of Socialization.** Paper read at Open Lecture Series, UWI, St. Augustine, on Gender Issues In Education, June, 1991.


17. **Managing Change through Education.** Keynote paper read at the Annual Conference of the Jamaica Teachers' Association, August, 1991.

18. **Development Issues in the Caribbean.** Keynote paper read at Seminar, Kellogg Fellowship in International Development, April, 1992.


**SUPERVISION OF POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Thirty three (33) post-graduate students supervised by the writer have been awarded degrees:

- Doctor of Philosophy - 9
- Master of Philosophy/
  - Master of Arts (Education) - 20
- Master of Education - 4

These have mainly been in the areas of Educational Psychology, Gender Roles and Science Education.
NAME: DR. PHYLLIS CLAIRE MACPHERSON-RUSSELL, C.D.
ADDRESS: 6 SULLIVAN AVENUE, KINGSTON 8, JAMAICA
DATE OF BIRTH: NOVEMBER 18, 1923
MARITAL STATUS: WIDOWED
NATIONALITY: JAMAICAN

GRADUATE OF WOLMER'S GIRLS' SCHOOL, KINGSTON, JAMAICA

EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION

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<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>DATES OF ATTENDANCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of London, London</td>
<td>1945 - 1948</td>
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<td>University College</td>
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<td>1949 - 1951</td>
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<td>Teachers College, Columbia</td>
<td>1954 - 1956</td>
<td>M.A. in Supervision and Curriculum Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>University, New York</td>
<td>1956 - 1961</td>
<td>Ed. D. in Supervision and Curriculum Development</td>
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</table>

Title of Doctoral Dissertation: Developing a Curriculum for Children and Youth in Jamaica

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Issa Scholarship, Jamaica 1945 - 1948
Grace Dodge Fellowship, Columbia University 1956 - 1957
National Science Foundation, U.S.A. 1962 (Summer)
USAID Training Grant 1973

PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Mathematical Association of Jamaica - Contribution to the development of Mathematics Education 1987

NATIONAL AWARD

Commander of the Order of Distinction for Services to Education 1991
UWI APPOINTMENTS

University Hospital of the West Indies (Board Member) 1976 - 1978
Faculty of Medicine, Family Planning Unit (Advisory Board Chairman) 1978 -
Department of Extra-Mural Studies
Women and Development Unit (Advisory Committee Member) 1978 - 1986
Social Welfare Training Centre (Advisory Committee Member) 1982 - 1984
University Health Services (Board of Management Member) 1982 - 1984
Health Development Planning and Management Project (Advisory Board and Executive Committee Member) 1982 - 1986
University of the West Indies Health Services Committee (Chairman) 1991 -

PUBLIC OFFICES HELD

Jamaica College Board of Management (Member) 1968 - 1978
Jamaica Education Advisory Council (Member) 1970 - 1976
Jamaica National Family Planning Board (Chairman) 1974 - 1976
Jamaica Public Services Commission (Member) 1974 - 1978
Jamaica State Trading Corporation (Director) 1977 - 1978
Senate of Jamaica (Member) 1978 - 1980
UNESCO Advisory Board (Member) 1980 - 1981

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

Pi Lambda Theta (1955) and Kappa Delta Pi (1957)
Jamaica Teachers' Association (1965 - 1971)
Mathematical Association of Jamaica (President 1969 - 1974, Life Member)
Inter-American Conference on Mathematics Education (Alternate Member of Organizing Committee for Central America, 1972 - 1975)
Wolmer's Old Girls' Association (Vice-President 1973 - 1975, Life Member)
Soroptimist International of Kingston (President 1974 - 1975)
EXPERIENCE

1/44 - 8/45 Wolmer's Girls' Sch. Jamaica Teacher of Mathematics and Latin
9/48 - 6/49 Fulham County Sch. London England Practice Teaching
9/49 - 12/51 Putney County Sch. London England Mathematics Teacher
1/52 - 8/54 Wolmer's Girls' Sch. Jamaica Mathematics Teacher
9/55 - 6/56 Teachers College Columbia University New York U.S.A. Assistant in Department of Curriculum and Teaching
9/58 - 6/64 Edgewood Sch. Scarsdale New York U.S.A. 5th Grade Teacher
10/64 - 1/75 University of the West Indies, Mona Jamaica Senior Research Fellow
2/75 - 8/78 Minimum Wage Advisory Commission Jamaica Chairman
2/77 - 8/78 University of the West Indies, Mona Jamaica Staff Tutor, Human Resources Development
8/78 - 10/80 Government of Jamaica Jamaica Minister of Education
2/81 - 2/82 University of the West Indies, Mona Jamaica Consultant, Human Resources Development
4/82 - 9/84 University of the West Indies and The Johns Hopkins University, Evening College and Summer Session Jamaica Principal Faculty Member in Joint UWI-JHU Master's Programme in Applied Behavioural Science
3/82 - 9/86 University of the West Indies, Mona Jamaica Training and Development Coordinator, Health Development Planning and Management Project
3/82 - University of the West Indies, Mona Jamaica Staff Tutor/Consultant Human Resources Development
9/84 - 6/87 UWI Faculties of Social Sciences Jamaica Instructor, Human Resources Development and Management
1985 - UWI Department of Sociology & Social Work Jamaica Instructor, Human Relations and Communication

SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS

1969 - 1971 Assistant Director of Peace Corps Training Project conducted in the U.S.A. and Jamaica
1972 - 1974 Director of Peace Corps Training Project conducted in Jamaica
**TRAINING & CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES**

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES**

**Human Resources Development Unit**

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<td>Training Officers Programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>UWI-JHU Joint Programme in Applied Behavioural Science</td>
<td>April 1982 - September 1984</td>
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**Health Development Planning and Management Project**

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<th>Coordinator/Instructor</th>
<th>Ministry of Health, Barbados 1982-1985</th>
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<td>Ministry of Health, St Lucia 1982-1986</td>
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**Trade Union Education Institute**

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<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Project for the Development of Caribbean Trade Unionists 1987-1989</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Advanced Course for Trade Unionists 1989-1990</td>
</tr>
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# Social Welfare Training Centre

**Facilitator**
- Regional Symposium on "The Implementation of Social Development Policies in the Caribbean" November 12-14, 1975
- Regional Seminar on the Integration of Women in Development in the Caribbean January 6-10, 1977

**Consultant (Conference Design)**
- Regional Symposium on "The Implementation of Social Development Policies in the Caribbean" November 12-14, 1975

**Member of Planning Committee**
- Regional Seminar on the Integration of Women in Development in the Caribbean January 6-10, 1977

# Women and Development Unit

**Consultant**
- Training of Trainers Programme Barbados, St Lucia April-September, 1984
- Staff Development Programmes 1989, 1991
- Leadership Programme for Women's Organisations Trinidad & Tobago 1989

**Facilitator**
- Staff Development Programmes 1989, 1991
- Leadership Programme for Women's Organisations Trinidad & Tobago 1989

# Women and Development Studies

**Member of Organising Team**
- Interdisciplinary Seminar on "Gender, Culture and Caribbean Development" June 8-19, 1987

# Advanced Training and Research in Fertility Management Programme

**Session Leader**
- Developing a Team Approach 1979-1986
- Designing on-site Planning Workshops 1982-1987

**Facilitator**
- Evaluation Team Visits Nassau, Dominica, Bermuda, Antigua March-April, 1981
- Planning Workshops St Lucia, Barbados April 18-23, 1983
- Needs Assessment Eastern Caribbean May 1987

**Consultant**
- Planning Workshops St Lucia, Barbados April 18-23, 1983
- Needs Assessment Eastern Caribbean May 1987

**Facilitator**
- Workshop to develop UWIDITE Courses in Reproductive Health September 26-27, 1983

**Outreach Coordinator**
- Family Life Education Programme, Eastern Caribbean, Jamaica 1989 -
Personnel Department

Facilitator - Effective Techniques in Human Relations
November 1-3, 7-9, 1983

Caribbean Food & Nutrition Institute


NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS (JAMAICA)

National Joint Consultative Committee - Consultation on Leadership Recruitment and Training 1975-1976

ALCOA Minerals, Jamaica - Organization Development Programme 1975-1978
- Consultation Services 1981-1984

ALCAN, Jamaica - Consultation Services 1982-1984

Victoria Mutual Building Society - Consultation Services 1982-1984

Palace Amusement Company Ltd. - Seminar for Managers Orientation of Staff June 4-6, 1981 September 27-28, 1982

Caribbean Conference of Churches - Consultation with Council of Voluntary Social Services, Belize May 8-14, 1982
- Facilitator of Working Groups at Fourth General Assembly, Barbados September, 1986

Jamaica Institute of Management - Lecturer in Human Resources Management 1988-
GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES/AGENCIES (JAMAICA)

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<td>Ministry of Education - School of Education Mathematics Project</td>
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<td>Cassette Programme in Mathematics</td>
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<td>M.Sc. Programme in Mathematics Education with Central Connecticut State College</td>
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<td>Personal Development Education Project</td>
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<td>Ministry of Health</td>
<td>Training Programmes for Family Planning Education Officers</td>
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<td>Air Jamaica, Ltd</td>
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<td>Development Company</td>
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<td>Women's Bureau</td>
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<td>Ministry of the Public Service Manpower Development Division</td>
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<td>Jamaica Telephone Company</td>
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<td>Corporation</td>
<td>Workshops for Managers and Supervisors</td>
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<td>Jamaica Public Service Company</td>
<td>Management Seminar</td>
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<td>Jamaica 4H Clubs</td>
<td>Lecturer in Human Resources Development</td>
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### INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

#### COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATION

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<th>Consultant</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting of the Commonwealth</td>
<td>April 20-28, 1970</td>
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<td>Caribbean Nurses, Barbados</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dean of Workshop</td>
<td>Team Building Workshop</td>
<td>February 15-18, 1971</td>
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<td>St. Vincent</td>
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#### PAHO/WHO

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<th>Consultant</th>
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<tr>
<td>Temporary Advisor</td>
<td>Consultation on Nursing Education, Barbados</td>
<td>August 2-5, 1975</td>
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#### CARICOM SECRETARIAT

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nursing Education, Barbados</td>
<td>August 26-30, 1975</td>
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<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>Workshop on Nursing Education, Antigua</td>
<td>September 4-8, 1975</td>
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<td>Seminar on Women in Development, Jamaica</td>
<td>November 22-28, 1981</td>
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#### ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

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<tr>
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<td>Tour Guide Seminars</td>
<td>September 3-13, 1985</td>
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<td>St. George's, Grenada</td>
<td>June 2-13, 1986</td>
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<td>St. John's, Antigua</td>
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#### WORLD BANK/UNESCO

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<th>Educational Consultant</th>
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<td>Study mission on the financing and</td>
<td>October-December,</td>
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<td>management of the education system of</td>
<td>1986</td>
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<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
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#### CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (CESO)

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<th>Member of Evaluation Team</th>
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<td>Project of Cooperation in Women's Studies (UWI and Institute of Social Studies)</td>
<td>1988, 1990</td>
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#### UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

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<td>Evaluation of UWI Diplomas in Community Health</td>
<td>1991</td>
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PUBLICATIONS


REPORTS ON TRAINING/CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES


### MEETING/CONFERENCES

#### National Training Laboratories
**Meeting of Latin American Trainers**
- Taboga Island, Panama, 1969
- Participated in examination of relevance of Applied Behavioural Science for groups and organizations in Latin America
- Established support of NTL for development of Applied Behavioural Science in Jamaica

#### Meeting of the Commonwealth Caribbean Nurses
- Bridgetown, Barbados, 1970
- Acted as Consultant to the meeting called to plan the establishment of the Regional Nursing Body and presented a paper entitled "Teacher Education - A Regional Approach"

#### Inter-American Conference on Mathematics Education
- Bahía Blanca, Argentina, 1972
- Presented Jamaican experience in modernising the teaching of Mathematics

#### Peace Corps Conference of Latin American Directors
- Caracas, Venezuela, 1973
- Presented Jamaican experience in localising training of Peace Corps Volunteers as alternative to US-based training

#### First Caribbean Workshop in Health Education
- Kingston, Jamaica, 1973
- Assisted in planning and conduct of Workshop
- Report of proceedings has formed basis for development of Health Education in the Region

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Conference on Woman and her Human Rights - A Programme for Progress

- Presented a paper entitled "New Concepts about Human Relationships" to Conference sponsored by the Jamaican and Canadian National Commissions for UNESCO

Sixth Commonwealth Education Conference

- Participated as member of the Jamaican delegation with special responsibility for planning and mounting exhibition on "Educational Innovations in the Caribbean"

Annual General Meeting of Regional Nursing Body

- Observed proceedings as preparation for assignment as Consultant in meeting of Working Party on Nursing Education

Meeting of Heads of Commonwealth Governments

- Performed protocol and administrative duties with responsibility for Liaison Officers assigned to nineteen Heads of Government

Conference of International Association of University Presidents

- Participated in panel discussion on "Women in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean"

UWI - University of Miami Seminar on Future Collaboration

- Assisted in organising the Conference and participated in discussion on collaboration in Education

Kingston Jamaica 1974

St. George's Grenada 1975

Kingston Jamaica 1975

San Jose Costa Rica 1981

Miami U.S.A. 1982

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UNITED NATIONS

International Women's Year Conference
- Participated as member of the Jamaican delegation and as Rapporteur of the First Committee

Mid-Decade Women's Conference
- Led Jamaican delegation and presented Jamaica's policy statement to the Conference

UNESCO

UNESCO Expert Meeting
- Presented paper entitled "Determining Qualitative Changes in Education: Analysis of the Relationship between Historical, Psychological, and Educational Determinants in the Jamaican Society"

General Conference
- Led Jamaican delegation to the 20th Session, presented Jamaica's policy statement and initiated Caribbean Caucus resulting in Collaboration between Caribbean Member States and support for establishment of Regional Office in Jamaica

Regional Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean
- Led Jamaican delegation, elected Rapporteur of the Committee on Education, delivered statement on behalf of Caribbean Member States regarding level of Caribbean representation in the Regional group
General Conference

- Led Jamaican delegation, presented
  Jamaica's policy statement, elected
to the Advisory Board as representa-
tive of the English-speaking
Caribbean

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

CEPCIECC Regional Conferences

- Led Jamaican delegation
  Bridgetown 1979
  Barbados
  Bogota 1980
  Colombia

Chaired Education Committee

May 1992
C: Life history questionnaire
LIFE HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: 

Age: 

Place of Birth: Date of Birth

Family History

Father’s name: 
Birthplace:
Occupation: 
What does/did he consider highlight of his life?

Mother’s name: 
Birthplace:
Occupation:

Any information you can and would like to give about your grandparents/great-grandparents or family history:

How many sisters...........brothers...........do you have?

Occupations:

Your marital status:

Do you have children?........If yes, how many?............

If you have children, please list their gender, ages, and occupation.

Your Education:
School attended:...........................
Primary school:..........................
High school:............................
Colleges/Universities:.....................

Work History:

Please list all the jobs you have had, include, length of time, position, and the reason for leaving or changing jobs.

...........................................
...........................................
...........................................

List any important information about the jobs.

...........................................
...........................................

Personal Information:

What major event(s) have impacted you life? Describe.

Tell me about your career as a teacher, include why you went into teaching, and what you consider most important about teaching.

How would you describe your life?

Note: You may use a separate sheet of paper to respond to the questions above.

Thanks.
D: Kiwanis club address
ADDRESS AT KIWANIS CLUB OF NEW KINGSTON
CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK
FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 1994

SALUTATIONS

MADAME CHAIRMAN, MAY I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WISH YOU AND THE LADIES OF THE KIWANIS CLUB OF NEW KINGSTON A HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK, AND TO THANK YOU MOST SINCERELY FOR THIS HONOUR WHICH YOU HAVE PAID TO ME. THANK YOU TOO, FOR INVITING ME TO ADDRESS YOU THIS AFTERNOON.

YOU KNOW, IN JAPAN THE SPEECH COMES BEFORE THE MEAL. THAT'S SO THE SERVING OF THE LUNCHEON WILL AUTOMATICALLY STOP THE SPEAKER WHO GOES ON TOO LONG. IT IS NO WONDER THAT THE JAPANESE LEAD THE WORLD IN PRODUCTION!
WHEN I WAS ASKED TO ADDRESS YOU TODAY, MY INSTINCTIVE REACTION WAS TO PUT ON MY HAT AS PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR, AND TO TALK ABOUT OUR PROGRAMMES AT UWI; AND THERE ARE MANY EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS OF WHICH I AM PROUD AND WHICH I COULD SHARE WITH YOU, ESPECIALLY ON THIS THE EVE OF OUR 45TH ANNIVERSARY. INDEED, I SEE THIS HONOUR YOU HAVE BESTOWED ON ME AS, IN EFFECT, RECOGNISING OUR UNIVERSITY, AND I DO WISH TO REGISTER MY APPRECIATION ON ALL FRONTS. INSTEAD OF DIVING FEET FIRST INTO A DISCUSSION OF UWI’S PROGRAMMES, HOWEVER, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHICH PRESENT A VISION OF THE WORLD THAT FOCUSES ON THE HUMAN FACTOR, IT HIT ME THAT I AM SPEAKING DURING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S WEEK TO THE VERY WOMEN WHO BLAZED A TRAIL IN FORMING THE FIRST ‘NON-MALE’ KIWANIS CLUB IN JAMAICA.

I REALIZED THAT HERE WAS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ME TO CELEBRATE IN THE COMPANY OF SISTERS, THE STRIDES WHICH WE AS WOMEN HAVE MADE AS INDIVIDUALS, AND AS CITIZENS
BOTH IN THE REGION AND THE WIDER WORLD. IT ALSO GIVES ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE WITH YOU THE TASK THAT Still Lies Before Us.

IN PREPARING FOR MY TALK TODAY, I CAME ACROSS A COMMENT MADE BY SIGMUND FREUD WHO, YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH, IS STILL REVERED AS THE FATHER OF MODERN PSYCHOLOGY. AND IT IS STILL CONSIDERED BY MANY AS ALMOST ICONOCLASTIC TO QUESTION HIS THEORIES ON HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY. IT IS THEREFORE WITH FITTING SOLEMNITY THAT I QUOTE DURING THIS WEEK OF CELEBRATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH WITH DR FREUD'S VIEWS ON THE FEMALE PSYCHE:

"WE REGARD WOMEN AS WEAKER IN THEIR SOCIAL INTERESTS AND AS HAVING LESS CAPACITY FOR SUBLIMATING THEIR INSTINCTS THAN MEN. THE POSITION OF WOMEN CANNOT BE OTHER THAN WHAT IS - AN ADORED SWEETHEART IN YOUTH AND A BELOVED WIFE IN MATURITY."
THANKFULLY, LADIES, PSYCHOLOGY HAS COME A LONG WAY SINCE FREUD'S TIME.

TODAY, AS MUCH AS WE MAY REJECT, INTELLECTUALLY, HIS GROSS MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE FEMALE PSYCHE, THE REALITY IS THAT THE CLIMB TO SELFHOOD AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION FOR MILLIONS OF WOMEN AROUND THE GLOBE IS STILL A SLOW AND PAINFUL ONE. IT IS TRUE THAT NOW, MORE THAN EVER, WOMEN ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY VISIBLE IN THE CORPORATIONS, UNIVERSITIES AND GOVERNMENTS OF THE WORLD - A SITUATION WHICH FREUD WOULD BE HARD PUT TO EVEN CONSIDER. BUT AT THE SAME TIME THERE IS STILL A WOEFUL PAUCITY OF WOMEN IN POSITIONS OF REAL DECISION-MAKING AND POWER.

THE BARBADIAN EDUCATOR, PAT ELLIS, HAS NOTED THAT WHILE THERE IS A MOVEMENT OF WOMEN INTO TRADITIONALLY MALE-DOMINATED AREAS, AND INTO POSITIONS OF POWER, WE ARE STILL IN THE MINORITY, AND THE
MAJORITY OF WOMEN CONTINUE TO BE IN LOWER PAID, LOW STATUS JOBS. THE SYNDROME IS ADEQUATELY DESCRIBED BY A RECENT WALL STREET JOURNAL AS, "LESS RANK AND MORE FILE."


BUT WHETHER BY CULTURAL, OR RELIGIOUS CONDITIONING, WE HAVE CONSTANTLY BEEN MADE TO FEEL THAT WOMAN'S NATURAL PLACE IS EITHER AS A HEWER OF WOOD AND CARRIER OF WATER OR AS THE SUPPORTIVE MATE BEHIND HER MAN, WITH BOTH CONNOTATIONS DEPENDENT OF COURSE ON
THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF OUR PARTICULAR MAN. IT IS MY UNREPTANT BELIEF THAT MEN AND WOMEN ARE BORN EQUAL. BUT SOCIALIZATION IN THE HOME AND SCHOOL PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN.

THERE IS A PARADOX IN THE WAY WOMEN ARE SOCIALIZED IN THE FAMILY. TRADITIONALLY, MOTHERS WILL ALLOW THEIR SONS TO PLAY UNHINDERED ALL DAY, SOMETIMES LEAVING THE HOME WITH JUST THE VAGUEST INDICATION OF THEIR DESTINATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, GIRLS ARE GIVEN HOUSEHOLD CHORES - IN SOME CASES, INCLUDING THAT OF CLEANING UP AFTER UNTIDY AND CAREFREE BROTHERS - AND THEIR PLAY-TIME IS SEVERELY LIMITED. WE HAVE ALL HEARD THE REPRIMAND, "YOU JUS A RUN UP AND DOWN LIKE BWOY PICKNEY." I BELIEVE THIS KIND OF SOCIALIZATION HAS TWO MAJOR EFFECTS ON US AS WOMEN, ONE POSITIVE, THE OTHER, NEGATIVE. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, WE LEARN TO TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR GETTING THINGS DONE; BUT, ALSO, WE LEARN THAT SOMEHOW, WE ARE NOT AS IMPORTANT AS THE BOYS.
AND THIS CARRIES OVER INTO OUR PROFESSIONAL LIVES. MANY OF US HERE TODAY KNOW THAT IN ORDER TO BE JUDGED HALF AS CAPABLE AS ANY MALE PEER WE HAVE TO PUT IN TWICE AS MUCH WORK... AND OFTEN BE TWICE AS GOOD AT WHAT WE DO. I BELIEVE THAT IT IS THIS "NOT AS GOOD SYNDROME" WHICH ALLOWS A CAPABLE WOMAN TO SIT FOR YEARS IN THE SHADOWS OF HER PROFESSION, WITHOUT TAKING THE STEPS NECESSARY TO MOVE INTO A POSITION OF GREATER POWER.

LET ME FOCUS FOR A MOMENT ON POWER.... THAT "P" WORD FROM WHICH SO MANY OF US SHY AWAY. BY AND LARGE WE AS WOMEN HAVE NOT BEEN GROOMED FOR POWER. I BELIEVE THAT MOST WOMEN HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY, BUT THE IDEA OF GOING AFTER A POWERFUL POSITION, THE TOP POSITION, THE HIGHEST LEVEL IN OUR FIELD... FILLS US WITH UNCERTAINTY. NOTHING IN OUR
UPBRINGING HAS PREPARED US FOR THAT, AND THOSE OF US WHO ACHIEVE POWERFUL POSITIONS MUST NAVIGATE OUR OWN WAY IN LARGELY UNCHARTED WATERS.

TO GO AFTER POWER MEANS THAT WE MUST BELIEVE WE DESERVE IT - ANOTHER CATCH PHRASE, "WE DESERVE IT"! WHILE MOST OF US CAN LOOK AT THE TOP POSITIONS IN OUR FIELD AND THINK, "I CAN HANDLE THAT", VERY FEW OF US ARE ABLE TO VERBALIZE, "I DESERVE THAT," AND MOST OF US STILL TEND TO ASCRIBE OUR SUCCESSES TO LUCK, TO HOLD OUR HEADS DOWN AND TO HOPE NOBODY Notices HOW FAR WE HAVE MANAGED TO GET.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH FOR US TO DECIDE THAT POWER IS A MALE THING AND LEAVE IT AT THAT. TO BE IN A POSITION OF POWER MEANS BEING IN A POSITION TO MAKE AND INFLUENCE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT OUR LIVES. IF THIS SOUNDS AS IF I AM ADOPTING A "WOMAN'S LIB" STAND, LET ME REMIND YOU OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN ROLI AND ONE OF HER YOUNG RELATIVES.
UNMARRIED FRIENDS THE OTHER DAY. "WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE WOMEN'S LIB MOVEMENT?" ASKED ROLI. "I THINK I WOULD LIKE TO BE LIBERATED," SAID THE YOUNG FRIEND, "BUT FIRST I WANT TO BE CAPTURED!"

ON A MORE SERIOUS NOTE, WE LIVE IN A FRIGHTENING WORLD, WHERE EVERYDAY IMAGES OF VIOLENCE AND HUMAN DEGRADATION ARE SPLASHED IN NEWSPAPERS AND PARADED ACROSS OUR TELEVISION SCREENS. WAR RAGES IN MANY CORNERS OF THE GLOBE AND OFTEN THE WORLD WATCHES HELPLESSLY. AND IN EACH SITUATION OF VIOLENCE AND VIOLATION, WOMEN AND CHILDREN BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE PAIN AND SUFFERING.

GLOBALLY AND HISTORICALLY, WOMEN AND CHILDREN HAVE BEEN THE MOST TO BE AFFECTED BY POVERTY, WARS AND A HOST OF OTHER MAN-MADE DISASTERS. IN MANY OF THE DECISIONS MADE THAT AFFECT US GREATLY, WE HAVE BEEN NO MORE THAN SILENT SPECTATORS, AND INDEED ARE OFTEN THE
VICTIMS. IT IS TIME FOR US TO CHANGE THAT. WE MUST
GROOM OURSELVES AND OUR DAUGHTERS TO FEEL THAT WE
BELONG WHERE THE DECISIONS ARE BEING MADE AND THAT
OUR VOICES DESERVE TO BE HEARD.

TO MOVE INTO A SITUATION OF EMPOWERMENT, AND THAT IS
WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT HERE, DEMANDS THAT WE
CHALLENGE CERTAIN ASSUMPTIONS WHICH SERVE TO KEEP US
POWERLESS. THE FIRST IS THAT IF WE ARE GOOD, AND DON'T
ROCK THE BOAT, SOMEONE WILL NOTICE AND Usher US INTO
THE RANKS OF THE POWERFUL. IN A SOCIETY FOUNDED ON
THE PRINCIPLE OF THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE, AND
THE WOMAN BEHIND THE MAN, WHY SHOULD WE EXPECT MEN
TO ASSUME THAT WE WANT ANYTHING MORE, UNLESS WE SAY
SO?

BY THE SAME TOKEN, WE MUST DISCARD THE ALMOST
INSTINCTIVE REACTION THAT THERE IS SOMETHING
INHERENTLY WRONG WITH ANY WOMAN WHO HAS GONE
AGGRESSIVELY AFTER HER GOALS. TOO OFTEN, WE AS WOMEN DECry THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OTHER WOMEN BECAUSE IT IS EASIER FOR US TO CRITICIZE A WOMAN WHO HAS BEEN ABLE TO GET AHEAD, THAN TO WONDER WHY WE COULDN'T HAVE MADE THE SAME STRIDES.

ANOTHER ASSUMPTION THAT WE AS WOMEN MAKE... THOUGH MANY OF US WOULD NOT ADMIT TO IT... IS THAT THE MASCULINE GENDER IS BETTER. MANY OF US, GIVEN A CHOICE BETWEEN A MALE OR FEMALE LAWYER, DOCTOR, POLITICIAN OR DRIVER, WOULD JUST AS SOON GO WITH THE MALE VERSION. AND EVERYONE OF US WHO HAS SAT QUIETLY IN A CAR WHILE A SPOUSE, BROTHER, FATHER OR SON HISSED AT AN OFFENDER, "IT MUST BE A WOMAN DRIVER," IS GUILTY OF BUYING INTO THIS ASSUMPTION.

WE MUST LEARN TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER. FROM THE FEMALE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO THE POLICEWOMAN ON THE BEAT, WE AS WOMEN MOVING INTO GREATER POSITIONS
OF POWER AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION ARE LARGELY MAKING IT UP AS WE GO ALONG, AND THUS NEED THE AFFIRMATION AND SUPPORT OF OUR SISTERS.

THAT IS WHY ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS YOURS ARE VITAL AT THIS TIME. WE MUST BUILD OUR OWN NETWORKS AND LEARN FROM EACH OTHER.

THE REALITY IS THAT OUR MEN ARE ALLOWED MUCH GREATER FREEDOM TO STRETCH THEMSELVES INDIVIDUALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY BECAUSE THEY DO NOT BEAR THE GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOME MANAGEMENT AND CHILD CARE. IN SHORT, MEN HAVE WIVES, WE DO NOT.

THE ONLY THING WHICH HAS KEPT THE SEXES STILL SMILING AT EACH OTHER IS THE SUPPORT SYSTEMS WHICH WOMEN HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GENERATE THROUGH FAMILY, OR THROUGH RELIANCE ON DOMESTIC HELP.
FOR MANY OF US A HELPER IS AN UNAPPRECIATED LUXURY, UNTIL SHE FALLS ILL, OR HER CHILD FALLS ILL, AND SUDDENLY, INEXPLICABLY, OUR ENTIRE PROFESSIONAL AND DOMESTIC ROUTINE CRUMBLES.

I FEEL WE MUST EMPOWER EACH OTHER. IF WE DEPEND ON ANOTHER WOMAN TO TAKE CARE OF OUR CHILD FOR 12 OR MORE HOURS A DAY, WE MUST CARE ABOUT THE SITUATION IN WHICH SHE HAS LEFT HER'S. WE WHO HAVE RELATIVELY MORE POWER AND CLOUT MUST HELP LOBBY FOR BETTER DAY-CARE AND HEALTH FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE WOMEN WHO KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE.

IF WE ARE GOING AFTER POWER, WE MUST TAKE SOME LESSONS FROM THOSE WHO HAVE POWER. WE MUST BELIEVE WE DESERVE IT. WE MUST FORM NETWORKS TO SUPPORT AND AFFIRM EACH OTHER, AND WE MUST STRENGTHEN OUR SUPPORT SYSTEMS.
AND FINALLY, WE MUST GROOM THE NEXT GENERATION TO ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF FEMALE EMPOWERMENT. WE NEED TO SUPPORT THE ASPIRATIONS OF OUR DAUGHTERS, AND NOT DAMPEN THEIR COMPETITIVE SPIRIT. WE NEED TO TALK TO THEM IN POSITIVE TERMS, AND SHOW THEM BY OUR OWN ACTIONS, THAT FOR WOMEN, THE SKY IS ONLY AS HIGH AS EACH OF US WANTS IT TO BE.

BUT WE MUST ALSO PASS ON TO OUR SONS THE MESSAGE THAT WOMEN MATTER. THAT DOING LAUNDRY, AND DISHES, AND ALL THE OTHER TASKS WHICH NOBODY LIKES, IS NOT JUST A WOMAN'S JOB. WE MUST CHALLENGE THEM TO THINK MORE IN TERMS OF INDIVIDUALS, RATHER THAN IN NARROW MALE/FEMALE STEREOTYPES.

WE MUST SPEAK OUT AGAINST VIOLENCE IN OUR SOCIETY, VIOLENCE THAT ALL TOO OFTEN IS DIRECTED TOWARDS WOMEN. WE MUST SPEAK OUT AGAINST IMAGES THAT DEGRADE AND MARGINALIZE WOMEN. WE CAN DO THIS FROM
THE PODIUM, IN THE BOARDROOM, AND IN THE HOME. WE MUST LIVE WHAT WE BELIEVE.

FOR THIS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK, LET US EACH COMMIT TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, HOWEVER LIMITED. LET US START WITH OUR CHILDREN, OUR SPOUSES, OUR ASSOCIATES BY SHOWING THEM THAT WE TAKE OURSELVES SERIOUSLY.

I HOPE THAT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ADD MY VOICE TO THOSE CALLING ON WOMEN TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. THE MESSAGE BEARS REPEATING. MY FINAL WORDS TO YOU AS MEMBERS OF THE KIWANIS CLUB OF NEW KINGSTON IS.... LET YOUR VOICES BE HEARD TOO. I THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR INVITING ME, AND I WISH THAT THE SENTIMENTS WHICH HAVE COME TO THE FORE DURING THIS WEEK WILL GUIDE US THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AS WE FUNCTION IN OUR JOBS AND IN OUR PRIVATE LIVES.

Marlene A Hamilton, Ph.D.
Pro-Vice Chancellor &
Deputy Principal

March 9, 1994
E: Pelican award citation
PHYLLIS CLAIRE MACPHERSON-RUSSELL is the 1993 recipient of the prestigious Pelican Award of the Guild of Graduates of the University of the West Indies. It is an Award by no means lightly made if only because the Awardee is of formidable stature that is enduring and of the finest texture that the Caribbean can produce. For Dr Phyllis MacPherson-Russell is of a generation of West Indian thoroughbreds of the ilk of Elsa Goveia, Winnifred Hewitt, Louise Bennett, Lucille Mathurin-Mair and the incomparable Eugenia Charles all of whom shared the experience of student sojourn as contemporaries in post-war London and returned to the region to make a difference.

Such quality stock was to foreshadow the current spread of higher education to the gender that was once barely let in the front-door but which, with retributive vengeance, now threatens not only to fill the entire room but to occupy the vantage points of that room once monopolised by the Other. Someone like Phyllis Russell and her cohorts had long established that brilliance does not reside exclusively among that other gender and that while muscle-driven sprinting may bring immediate glory, the real prize belongs finally to the patient, persistent, skillfully paced long distance runner.

Dr MacPherson-Russell has been every inch the latter, staying a course of sustained application, dedicated service, and patient tending from the time she won the prestigious Issa Scholarship, then one of the major academic prizes along with the Jamaica Scholarship and the Rhodes which was not open to women in any case. A Bachelor’s Degree from London University...
followed by a Teacher's Diploma and an Academic Diploma in Education prepared her for resumption of teaching at her alma mater, Wolmer's Girls School.

So she was among those who prepared students for the fledgeling UCWI in the early Fifties. Direct service to the University was to await her return from Teachers College, Columbia University, New York where she obtained her Masters in Supervision and Curriculum Development and the Doctorate in Education for a thesis entitled "Developing a Curriculum for Children and Youth in Jamaica". Children and the youth of Jamaica have been her undying concern informing a remarkable track record not only in the training of tens of thousands for educational service but also in her own public service to Jamaica and the region as a whole.

In 1964, work in research and the training of teachers in mathematics singled out this young woman in a field dominated by men. Her success was assured and recognised not as in that famous advertisement declaring a down-and-out deprived soul the "maths brain from primary school"; but rather as a public-spirited, practising intellectual reaching out beyond the Institute of Education at Mona where she was a Senior Research Fellow into the wider society and especially to rural educators and other such clients of the Ministry of Education with which she also worked on a number of Mathematics projects.

In 1975, she was hijacked by the Government of Jamaica to chair the Minimum Wage Advisory Commission which demanded more than the ability to count, that is, much of what she otherwise possessed, namely, the vision, sense of caring, deep social concerns for the people to whom the bottom-line dollars and cents should stretch to concerns of self-esteem, self-empowerment, human dignity and social justice.

A short stint as Minister of Education in the Seventies was a natural development out of this. But none of this would have made sense had it not been for her innovative spirit and foresight coupled with her capacity to make intellectual attributes serve everyday human needs.

She had returned from secondment as head of the Minimum Wage Commission to the University where, being the maverick she really is underneath that surface display of conventional calm, she made a major shift to Human Resource Development then nowhere as fashionable as it was to become in later days. She shifted locale as well, from the Faculty of Education to the Department of Extra Mural Studies (now the School of Continuing Studies) where mavericks flourish and psychic space is more often than not allowed for ordered chaos and stable disequilibrium.
Thus followed a series of innovations by Dr Russell which placed her in progressive collaborative encounters with colleagues University-wide. Such encounters produced a wide range of programmes (internal and outreach) which received the benefit of her well-honed skills of drawing out of her students their richest potential for creative learning and helping them to focus more sharply on what is their ample store of experience as source of productive action.

It is a gift that has served the tens of thousands of adults who have been afforded added steam for their careers and personal development, whether in the field of the Teaching of Mathematics, Applied Behavioural Science, Health Management, Social Work and Applied Sociology, Human Relations and Communication, Workplace Relations involving managers and employers on the one hand and workers and unions on the other, women and development, Community Nutrition or Family Life Education and Human Development Training.

As facilitator and friend to the learner, she is well known for that special brand of sanity ever-present in her characteristic repose supported by her compassion, caring and deep consideration for those she is called upon to tutor. Hence her reputation as one of the most learner-friendly tutors to be found in the UWI system - whether the students be undergraduates on the Mona Campus, graduates from all over as in the case of those who pursued the joint Johns Hopkins-UWI Masters programme in Applied Behavioural Science which she spearheaded, or outreach students located off campus throughout the region. It is a unique and invaluable contribution to the University of the West Indies which, in its present state of protracted transition is plagued with the certainty of uncertainty, and at a time when the normal complexity of West Indian existence is further compounded by her compatriots' genius to find a problem for every solution.

Fortunately for the University, Phyllis MacPherson-Russell is adept at finding solutions to problems; and she embarks on every such project with the courage of the explorer, the determination of the pioneer and the well guided unorthodoxy of the unbranded yearling.

Let a close and current colleague speak on her behalf. "Phyllis brought to the programme of Family Life Education a quality of leadership, a methodical and mathematical mind and an ability to co-ordinate the complex fragmentation of activities to streamline them into an effective movement, and moreover to make them work.

In her quiet unruffled and convincing manner she makes the possible out of the seemingly impossible...She does all this, getting people to do the most difficult of tasks with little or no tears."
"people person", she believes in the ability of everyone to succeed at learning — given the opportunity. In any case for her, education is not received; it is achieved.

Her colleagues go on to describe her as "charming, polite and respectful; polished, buoyant yet reserved, loving as well lovable. It is her devotion to duty, her sense of caring and sharing, her awareness of people and their needs which makes her the unique person she is".

Sound and solid as a rock yet never flamboyant, Phyllis Macpherson-Russell epitomises the dedicated, committed public servant of academia, given to goodness, humility, service while being of fine character. Herein lies the innate greatness which characterises her contribution to academic life, to the transmission of knowledge in the education and training of her people, young and old.

The Guild of Graduates of the University is therefore pleased to bestow on Phyllis Claire MacPherson-Russell the 1993 Pelican Award for her unique and outstanding contribution to the region's major institution of higher learning and for a life of dedicated service to the social and educational development of the wider society served by the UWI.
F: Where are the male educators?
Where are the male educators?

By Harvey Brown
Youth Link Writer

There is a serious state of affairs emerging in the education system which needs to be addressed urgently. There is a shortage of males in the classrooms both as teachers and as students. They face an unparalleled competition from the females who are rising to the daily challenge.

Men have become the endangered species and the marginalisation process is inevitable. Is it that they are in hiding? Or is it that they are busy in some other chosen field? Whatever the answer or the reason, every well-thinking educator seems to be asking, Where are the men?

Some educators argue "men are scarce". From my perspective, it is not that they are scarce but they are taking the course of least resistance. It is sometimes paradoxical: put the hard facts on the table of life but let's be honest and do it. When one looks around we see the prisons bursting at the seams and the streets corners are packed with youngsters.

There is cause for concern when one walks the streets in rural and some urban areas. Young boys idling when they should have been in school. Instead of searching for knowledge, they rummage for that which will sustain and perpetuate life. This seeks to solidify the fact that there are certain physiological needs to be met before intellectual activities begin. Let's face the sheer truth that if a child goes to school not properly fed or abused, there is a high improbability that the youngster can be intellectually motivated.

The crisis is deepening and is beginning to have serious effects on the educational system. Men no longer have an interest in the classroom. After Emancipation, teaching was a male-dominated vocation, until the early 20th century when women started to break through into teaching.

Today, we are witnessing the profession becoming a "feminised one". Recently, I looked around we see the prison full of men who are getting enrolled in Mico Teachers College compared to the number of females.

The number of men leaving tertiary institutions is beyond one's wildest dreams. The men are turning their backs on teaching and Government and the private sector should find ways of making the classroom an aura of attractiveness. We need more trouble-shooters who will come up with more workable solutions to teaching troubles.

The time is ripe for us not to only accept the challenge of classifying data and formulating hypotheses as to the problems but to be able to formulate conclusions and evaluate them.

An absence of male teachers results in a lack of father figures in the classroom. There is a sub-culture emerging among our young people and the presence of more father figures would do well in helping to train the nation's boys.

--- Harvey Brown is a student attending Mico Teachers College in Kingston.
VITA

Ethel King-McKenzie was born in Westmoreland, Jamaica, West Indies. She is the foster daughter of the late, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Palmer. Ethel attended Manning’s High School. Upon graduation she attended Mico Teachers’ College, where she received the diploma in teacher education. Later she graduated from the University of the West Indies with a Bachelor in Education degree.

Mrs. King-McKenzie has taught at several high schools throughout Jamaica and was at one time Assistant Principal at Elim Agricultural School in St. Elizabeth. She also worked as Work Experience Officer for the Ministry of Education, Jamaica. In this position she placed eleventh grade students in jobs to gain field experience and supervised them at the workplace. Ethel was also a lecturer at the College of Agriculture and Passley Gardens Teachers’ College, now the College of Agricultural Science and Education (CASE). Here, she taught courses in Curriculum and Instruction and Communication Skills. She also supervised teachers on teaching practice.

In 1992 Ethel received the Master of Arts in Education degree from Louisiana State University and the Education Specialist diploma in 1993. She is presently a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy in Education. Her area of specialization is Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on gender studies.

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She has been married to Dr. James McKenzie for twenty-three years. The union has produced three daughters, Nsa, Allison and Jodi.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Ethel King-McKenzie

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Title of Dissertation: Women's Voices in Education: Two Jamaican Life Histories

Approved:

[Signatures]

Wendy Kohli
Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: 3/17/99

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