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Black Women Teacher Educators, Race Uplift,
and the Academic Other-Mother Identity
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Abstract

This paper examines the intersections of teacher educators' identities and the notion of race uplift. It is based on a larger study that explores the experiences and practices of Black women professors at three different higher education institutions. The author maintains that as a result of their outsider-within position and race uplift stance, Black women teacher educators may produce an academic other-mother identity. While considering the concepts of womanist theory, this paper attempts to offer a thick description of the kind of race uplift practiced by teacher educators of color. The author defines the outsider-within position and the historical relationship between the race uplift theme and womanism, reviews current literature about teacher educators of color - highlighting their experiences and how they view their work in the academy, and examines the outsider-within position in Black women teacher educators. The author concludes with a discussion of the other-mother identity and Black women teacher educators.

Research indicates that the experiences of Black women faculty involve racist and sexist practices by colleagues and students. Additionally, these women experience feelings of isolation, discrimination, and tokenism. Collins (1998) cautions that being marginalized in intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and/or citizenship places a variety of well-meaning intellectuals engaged in higher education in common border zones, and these same systems of power reproduce hierarchies in "outsider-within locations." Middle class African Americans in the United States, for example, are aggressively recruited to join elite institutions of higher education and other sites of institutional power, only to find themselves, upon arrival, confined to a new designated "place", or "outsider-within location" (Collins, 1998). Professor Annette Henry, also a teacher educator, describes the outsider-within location clearly from personal experience:

> Standing like an oak by the photocopier, a White male graduate student utters the only words he has ever said to me during his years in the college of education: "You're lucky you got this job;" he mutters, assuredly, un-stapling a document. "They don't usually hire, well;" he leans toward me and whispers,"outsiders," as if telling me a deep dark secret. (Henry, 1998, p. 5)

That is, they appear to belong, because they possess both the credentials for admittance and the rights of

formal citizenship, "but that does not automatically translate into substantive citizenship rights" (Collins, 1998, p. 5). Several Black women scholars have termed the race-, sex-, and class-based oppression they experienced in institutions of higher learning as "double", "triple", or "multiple oppressions" (AnzaldÃºa, 1998; Guy-Sheftall, 1995; James, 1999; James & Farmer, 1993; King, D., 1993). These terms are meant to suggest the cumulative effect of experiencing, gender, race, and class exploitation (Knight, 1998).

These new spaces that marginalized Black women occupy in the academy, coupled with the possible erosion of activism within teaching due to a growing Black middle class (Collins, 1990), led me to ask questions such as: what is the current relationship between agency and teacher preparation?; in what ways are teaching practices influenced by these new "outsider-within" locations?; and, how do contemporary Black women teacher educators utilize notions of "race uplift" to shape their work?

This paper examines the intersections of teacher educators' outsider within identity and the notion of race uplift. While considering the concepts of womanist theory, it attempts to offer a thick description of race uplift as practiced by Black women teacher educators. It is based on a qualitative investigation of three Black women teacher educators that sought to answer two questions: In what ways do their experiences inform their teaching practice, and how does the notion of race uplift inform their work? The sample was clearly purposive because the goals were to deepen society's understandings of the significant experiences and practices of Black women who prepare teachers for K-12 classrooms.

Methodology

As a teacher educator and aspiring womanist, I am enticed to unearth and document the experiences of historic Black women in the teacher education professoriate. I am also interested in exploring the experiences and practices of my contemporaries. Black women teacher educators and other faculty of color are remarkably underrepresented in higher education institutions and research about them remains under-explored (Ducharme & Ducharme, 1996; Goodland, 1990). They have stories to tell, and I am interested in their stories. Why and how did they enter the profession? How do they prepare students for teaching in K-12 classrooms? What are their accomplishments and their coping strategies? In what kind of research are they involved? What have been their experiences in being and in becoming teacher educators? In what ways do they work toward educational survival and wholeness?

Selection of participants was based on a six point criteria. Each participant has a doctoral degree in education or social science; teaches, advises and/or supervises pre-service students at their respective college or university; teaches pre-service courses in educational foundations, and/or pedagogy; is at least a second year faculty member at their current institution; has prior experience teaching in a K-12 setting; and, has a womanist perspective. Respondents' perspectives and criteria were assessed through a preliminary interview which questioned participants on their educational philosophies. Specific preliminary questions included: "Describe your perspective as a Black woman teacher educator.", "What knowledge and skills do you think teachers should possess?" and, "What is your philosophy of education?" I employed these criteria because I wanted the sample to be able to speak from experiences in both K-12 classrooms and higher education institutions. Participants were also available to meet with me at various times throughout the semester.

In order to obtain research sites, fifteen institutions were chosen as possible research sites based on the institution's reputation, geographic accessibility for the study, and Carnegie foundation classification. An internet search of each of the 15 institutions substantiated teacher education programs and indicated school of education faculty. A list of female faculty within the respective schools of education was compiled. Potential participants were contacted by mail from that list. I also relied on recommendations from professors and students at these and other higher education institutions to obtain and narrow the research sample.

At the time of the study, each participant was on the faculty at three different Carnegie foundation (1994) classified institutions: comprehensive I, doctoral/research I, and liberal arts II. One research site is also a historically Black higher education institution, while another site was part founded by members of the Caribbean community which the college mostly serves. As such, these environments provided a rich context for analyzing how race uplift might inform pedagogy. After obtaining institutional review and participant consent, data collection occurred in three forms: interview, shadowing, and document review. Formal interviews lasted approximately one and one-half hour and commenced the data collection process. Informal conversations took place during and/or immediately after each day of shadowing. In shadowing, the researcher was permitted to be with the participant for several hours at a time as she went about her daily life. (See appendix A for interview questions).

I conducted intensive shadowing of each participant throughout the fall, spring, and summer sessions of the academic year 2000-2001. I spent a total of 30 hours throughout several weeks shadowing and observing each participant. On the days that I shadowed participants, I conducted pre- and post-interviews, and collected documents for review while observing a variety of teaching practices. Specific documents that were reviewed included course syllabi, text books, student evaluations, letters to/from students, curriculum vitae, books, and/or other scholarly works authored by participants.

Portraits were developed to describe the research site, the participants' life histories, and their respective pedagogies. Data analysis was ongoing, occurring simultaneously with data collection. Transcribed interviews, observation and shadowing notes, and selected documents were analyzed for emergent themes that revealed similarities, as well as differences, among the participants.

Race Uplift as a Womanist Ethic of Care

Womanist traditions are a reflection and extension of Black women's commitment to the eradication of oppression and to the establishment of a just society (Collins, 1990; Henry, 1998; James, 19p9; Ladson-Billings, 1996; Walker, 1984). They evolve out of the experiences with and developing consciousness of race-, gender-, and class-based oppressions and affirm the importance of grounding Black women's activism, in this case seen in their teaching practices, within their own cultural heritage.

Historically, the major educational philosophy within Black culture, characterized by the theme "race uplift," was embraced by Black women who "grew up with a mission to help their race" (Perkins, 1993, p. 275). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this philosophy simply meant that the educational obtainments of all African Americans, male and female, would be for the advancement and 'uplift' of the race. Indeed, the term "race uplift," coined by Booker T. Washington in the beginning of the 20th century, is rooted in the American enslaved experience, where the overall philosophy of education was for group effort (Washington, 1901). Nineteenth century education for African Americans was "not for individual gain, but to assist in the economic, political, and social improvement for the enslaved and later emancipated African Americans" (Collins, 1990, p. 148).

Taylor (1995) notes that, after the American Civil War, African American women educators came from various parts of the nation and from diverse backgrounds to teach newly freed slaves. "Their teaching conferred on the newly freed African American students the power that results from knowledge, and challenged prevailing notions about the abilities and educability of African Americans" (Taylor, 1995, p. 202). Taylor further suggests that African American women's collective commitment to uplift their people "helped lay the foundation for the education of the freed men and women" (p. 202). Perkins (1993) characterizes this "race uplift" philosophy as having a (Black) feminist perspective "which stressed that the contributions of all members were necessary" (p. 265).

Womanist and feminist standpoints capture the cultural activism of Black women who fulfill the need to

uplift the race. Walker (1984) defines a womanist as a Black feminist or feminist of color who is committed to the survival and wholeness of an entire people. Unlike a feminist care ethic that emphasizes colorblindness, a womanist ethic of care emphasizes knowledge and pays close attention to the issue of race (Thompson, 1998). In the context of this study, "race uplift" is knowledge work for the betterment of the African American community and larger American community.

Teacher Educators of Color and the Race Uplift Theme

Twenty-first century education for African Americans continues to carry the tradition of race uplift. Yet, Collins (1990) contends that the changing social class structure of African American families and communities is affecting the shape and effectiveness of the long-standing tradition of Black women's activism. Many fail to see the importance of gaining an education either for group survival or institutional transformation. Collins further maintains that, as an area of Black women's political activism, teaching has been eroded by factors such as increased access to other careers. Even still, some teacher educators of color see their work in the academy as a mission. (Goodwin, 1996; Kemp, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2001).

A commitment to change educational practices for themselves, their students, and future teachers was a major theme that emerged in Kemp's (1997) study examining the life experiences of women teacher educators. One participant, an African American, spoke about her work as a "mission"; a mission to increase the number of Black and Hispanic teachers by creating an environment that supports their growth. This effort is collaborative and communal. By this, she means that education does not occur alone, but occurs instead through collaboration with and the help of others.

Goodwin's (1996) interviews exploring the perspectives of teacher educators of color suggests that their "empathetic understanding for the lives of children of color results in a strong desire to engage in social action and redress inequalities", (p. 17). Her findings show that teacher educators of color hold themselves to a standard of commitment that they feel is lacking in the academy and that they will readily go against what is considered standard schooling, or the conception of education that is designed to legitimate and perpetuate the unjust hierarchical structuring of our society (Goodwin, 1996).

In Goodwin's investigation, participants' work is defined as teaching, advisement, and supervision. As teachers, participants indicated that their perspective influenced the kinds of materials they used in classes, the ways in which the content was presented, and the kinds of issues raised. Within advisement, respondents discussed how students of color perceived them. Several participants felt that students of color seek them out and feel more comfortable speaking with them, particularly about non-school related concerns. Respondents reported working with students even if they were not "'official advisees' " (Goodwin, 1996, p. 14). Participants' work as supervisors involved challenging students' views and helping students focus on the possibilities rather than problems in student teaching classrooms, particularly in classrooms where children of color are present.

Ladson-Billings' (2001) interviews with seven African American teacher educators about their experiences in the academy indicated that the structures in the academy limit their intellectual work. They also expressed a desire to effect change both in their specific institutions and the larger teacher education community. Moreso, participant interviews indicate that African American teacher educators expressed a desire to engage prospective teachers in more thoughtful and rigorous conceptions of teaching that challenged social inequity and cultural ignorance.

Ladson-Billings (2001) looks at teacher education from the perspective of the "it" being the slavery "big house" and examines the tensions that African American academics historically had between "field work" and "house work." "Field work" implies to those in the cotton fields during slavery. She asks about the responsibilities that those with access to the "house" (or academy) have to those who are left in the fields?

Ladson-Billings notes that being "in the house" did not mean that one was "of the house". This notion connects to Collins' idea of "outsider-within locations" that faculty of color share in the academy. The participants in Ladson-Billing's study share this tension. "They are in the academy but not of the academy. Their roles are circumscribed by race and the social conditions of African Americans in the broader society" (Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 7). For example, Ladson-Billings' participants have research agendas that address the education and culture of people of African descent, and most have been challenged about this focus. One participant noted several occasions when colleagues and/or administration commented that her work was too narrow and should be less "multicultural."

Each participant in this study each indicated that her reasons for entering the profession were related to racial uplift and the opportunity for bettering society. Yet, the new spaces that marginalized Black women occupy in the academy coupled with the possible erosion of activism within teaching due to a growing Black middle class led the author to the following question: how do contemporary Black women teacher educators utilize notions of "race uplift" to shape their work as they become positioned in outsider-within locations in the academy?

The Black Women Teacher Educator as an Outsider-Within

The three study participants, Olivia, Tulip, and Tulani are professors at three different higher education institutions in the northern and southeast regions of the United States: Olivia teaches at a suburban comprehensive university where students and faculty of color number approximately 30% each. As 4.4 percent of the full time faculty, Black women teacher-educators in the College of Education are less than one- fourth of the total percentage of faculty of color. Tulip teaches at a liberal arts college in a largely Caribbean community. At this institution, students of color exceed the percentage of faculty of color at the respective rates of 97.7% and 90%. Yet, out of a total of 11 full time faculty members in the Department of Education where Tulip teaches, three members are Black women. Tulani teaches at a historically Black research university where the percentage of students of color is 99% of the total student body and the percentage of faculty of color is 90%. Black women comprise 44 percent of the full-time faculty at Tulani's institution.

Despite the fact that two study participants teach at institutions where they may find cultural and ethnic similarities to their groups of origin, each participant has had and continues to experience positions as an "outsiders-within." Collin's (1998) notion of "outsider-within," defined as locations or border-zones that Black women professors and other marginalized groups tend to occupy as faculty in institutions of higher education, accurately characterize Olivia, Tulip, and Tulani's experiences in becoming and being teacher-educators. "We are newcomers to a world defined and controlled by discourses that do not often address our realities, that do not affirm our intellectual contributions and that do not seriously examine our worlds" (Turner, 2002, p. 75). This leads many Black women academics to ask, "Can I be both Black and a professor without compromising my principles or my identity?" For this reason, professors of color often live contradictions, an experience that confirms their status as outsiders-within.

Olivia, Tulip, and Tulani were outsiders-within as graduate students, learning in environments that did not support diverse perspectives. As professors, they are outsiders-within by nature of the limited numbers of women of color in higher education institutions, and by virtue of frequently being the only Black professor in their department or college.

The Academic Other-Mother Identity

How does the theme race uplift shape the teaching, supervision, and/or advisement of Black women teacher educators in "outsider-within" locations? Findings show that one way in which the theme of "race uplift" shapes the teaching, advisement, and/or supervision of Black women teacher educators is in the creation of

an other-mother identity. Findings also show that the other-mother identity is enacted in two ways: by engaging in *straightforward and honest dialogue* with their students and emphasizing the importance of creating strong *connections to community*.

African American patterns of mothering and other-mothering have stimulated what Collins (1990) refers to as a generalized ethic of care that causes Black women to feel accountable to all the Black community's children and to "treat them as if they were members of their own families" (p. 5). Tulip, for example, reflected on her first day of teaching in a low performing, predominately African American elementary school. "One of the things I establish when I walk into a classroom on the first day is that we're all family. I am the mother, and it doesn't matter what color you are, in this room, you are sisters and brothers" (personal communication). Tulip explicitly positions herself as the mother of the classroom and her students as the children, providing the same components of mothering to all students. In the context of her classroom, students are informed that "we are family" and "it doesn't matter what color you are." Her establishment of this family-focused environment helped Tulip's students provide essential support for each other and pushed them to excel in their studies.

Participants almost always communicated with students using a certain straightforwardness and honesty likened to that of a mother and her children. Indeed, participants could not describe their formal and informal teaching experiences without talking of their multifaceted roles as teachers or emphasizing community involvement. These characteristics gave rise to the two ways that other-mothering might be enacted: by engaging in *straightforward and honest dialogue* with their students and emphasizing the importance of creating strong *connections to community*.

Straightforward and Honest Dialogue

Stereotypically perceived as too authoritative and un-nurturing, Black female professors are frequently asked not to be so demanding of their students. "Our legacy of demanding excellence as an advantage against the racism of the world is viewed negatively" (Randolph, 1999, p. 4). Despite this perception, and with an understanding that the quest for excellence in learning is a protective device, honest dialogue is characteristic of the other-mothering styles of Olivia, Tulip, and Tulani. Exemplifying the notion of honest dialogue in the advising of students, Tulip stated,

> When teachers are coming into my classroom, I tell student teachers, the only thing I want to know is, why? Give me an essay on why you want to become a teacher? I had one student who wanted to become a teacher because he has a family; he has to make some money, so he can go to law school. Then this is not the place for you! No, sir, I think you'd better find another job. And he was a lousy teacher. He was lousy in the classroom. (Tulip, personal communication)

In a womanist ethic of care, there is a Black standpoint that recognizes that others don't have to like you, but it is imperative that you be responsible for your actions, professional in your work, and in charge of yourself and situations under your guidance. In the above quote, Tulip pushes students to be honest with themselves about their reasons for wanting to teach. She notes that entering the teaching profession simply to make money or to have summers off are not reasons that work to benefit children. Tulip understood that honesty is hard, that students are initially reluctant to hear the truth but, are finally grateful for the decisions that honest assessments allow them to make. Part of her classroom mantra is the statement, "I have to be honest with you." She also insists that students be honest with themselves. While assisting students with a student teaching self-assessment, Tulip notes: "I want you to do some soul-searching and to be honest with yourself. And if you need help, reach out".

Believing that teaching is not a job to be taken lightly and that good teachers must be multifaceted and well-trained, Tulip also supervises students utilizing honesty in dialogue. She begins with positive reinforcement

and continues with questioning. Tulip discusses follow-through with classroom management and how a teacher must be a model for students. She explains that "follow through and making an effort to call every child is imperative in classroom environment and management in all classrooms, but especially in inclusive classrooms."

During an observation, Tulip notices that her student teacher, Shakira, did not execute the planned lesson. Instead of immediately telling Shakira how poorly she did, Tulip compliments her and asks for a self-evaluation. After questioning, Tulip begins an honest dialogue. The first of Shakira's methods that were "not in place" was not providing specific feedback for her students.

Twice, Tulip makes mention of not being pleased with Shakira's growth as a teacher. In the first instance Tulip states that she has been telling Shakira about her teaching voice for over a year. "Before you were yelling. I had a problem with that." In another instance, Tulip states that they have discussed the importance of modeling appropriate learning strategies for students. She advised Shakira to watch her spelling, "Children will pattern after you."

Likewise, Olivia expresses an honest dialogue characteristic of other-mothering as part of her process of student advisement and, in her protective role, gives special attention to the needs of Black students who might be experiencing outsider-within status in their institutions. For example, she attempts to help one student understand the importance of knowing the range of courses available at the university as well as requirements for completion of each specialty. Picking up a university catalog, she states, "You must become familiar with the courses. Get one of these books." Simone, an African American secondary education major listens and takes notes on the following:

> Get one before leaving campus today. Don't be caught out there trusting others to advise you. When I was in college I advised myself. Not that I didn't trust them, but I need to know for myself. You know what type of student you are. Study and become more familiar with the (praxis) exam. Take it early. (Olivia, personal communication)

Olivia demonstrates other-mothering by honestly telling this student about the survival tactics that are important for African Americans who attend higher education institutions. In this case, the guidelines caution against sole reliance on others for essential information. Similarly, several participants in Goodwin's (1996) study reported making sure that they held students of color to high standards or the same standards as all students because they, "feel and know that an excellent education is the key to survival for many people of color in this country" (p. 14).

Again, within a womanist ethic of care, Black women teachers provide students with the strategies needed to survive racism. In the above example, knowing that the national teacher's exam is culturally biased, Olivia advises her student to take it early enough "to have time to take it again if necessary".

Correspondingly, Tulani has honest dialogues with her students. She talked about the difficult task of counseling some students against selecting teaching careers through use of a "concerned counsel form".

> So there were some people that I tried to counsel out. We had a concerned counsel form, sometimes we didn't get past that, sometimes it was just the counseling out, letting them know what it entails and trying to get people away from the whole idea - that things have changed. People say that things have changed, and we are now expected to be like pseudo parents to the kids and I would say things have changed back because we were always expected to be pseudo parents to the kids. (Tulani, personal communication)

Tulani's belief that a teacher is equivalent to a parent aids her decisions to counsel students who are not

well-suited for teaching. Her belief makes her comfortable in stating that those who are not ready for the responsibility of the multifaceted roles of teaching should find other professions. In Tulani's eyes, "pseudo-parenting" or other-mothering has always been a role for Black teachers.

Honest dialogue also sets expectations of high performance for supervisees and outlines one's philosophy of instruction. For example, when working as an educational district supervisor for mostly White teachers, Tulani's first statement to a female teacher emphasized the primacy of children in her considerations. She stated that "I am here to help you and more than help you, I am here to help these children. So none of this is about us. This is all about them, so don't take this personally." Tulani was clear about her perspective and commitment. In turn, the student teacher became aware that she would be assessed in relation to what was "honestly" good for children. As a result of being an outsider-within, combined with the notion of uplifting African American's, Tulani positioned herself as other-mother for the children who were taught by her supervisee.

Some might consider Olivia, Tulip, and Tulani to engage in "tough love" with their students. Participants also produced honest written feedback for students that were clear and helpful. Participants were opposed to inflating students' grades, simply for attendance, like some professors are known to do. Included in the feedback to one particular student who contested her C-grade, Olivia writes:

> Your actual grade point average in the course according to my grading scale meticulously outlined in the syllabus is a D, numerically a 68. I however issued you a grade of a C- as a result of your class participation. It would be both unethical and unjust to grant you a grade of a C since you did not earn this grade in the course. (Olivia, personal communication)

Similarly, Tulani gives straightforward written feedback. Reviewing what constitutes each grade during the first class session is used to support her decisions about student grades if questioned later. "And students always come to ask about a grade they thought they should have gotten, but I don't give A's". Of all the professors in their departments, participants had high standards and were known by students as "hard" professors.

In addition to the honest dialogue that characterized the other-mothering displayed by study participants, Olivia, Tulip, and Tulani felt that a connection to community was important for their students. For these three teacher educators, womanist perspectives coupled with early experiences in their own communities aid their belief that teachers must have a strong knowledge of and commitment toward community.

Connection to Community

All participants were connected to their communities in ways that enhanced their teaching. Tulip reflected that one component of effective teachers is relational, namely knowledge of the community or communities that supply students to their local school and provision of a positive context for parents whose children attend the local school.

> It is important to know how to work with other people. You must know the community in which you are teaching. When I was teaching I made it a point to get to know the owner of the candy store where I got my morning coffee. I got to know the grocer nearby. He always wanted to know when I gave parties so he could contribute. It is also important to include the parents. For many a year they never felt welcomed in the school, especially the Black and Puerto Rican parents. When I was principal we had a room designated for parents. (Tulani, personal communication)

Like students, parents need to feel welcomed into their child's classroom and the entirety of the educational

experience. When teachers are teaching students who are different from themselves, they must call upon parents in a collaborative fashion if they are to learn who their students really are (Delpit, 1995).

Olivia also values community knowledge among teachers.

> Well, they need to definitely know about the backgrounds of the students in which they teach. That's paramount, and that might mean footwork, that might mean looking at books, that might mean holding conferences at schools, that might mean building strong parent-teacher liaisons and partnerships, so that's key, that has to happen. Because if I don't know too much about who I'm teaching, I'm not going to probably teach them in the most effective way. So I need to know about them as a person, individually, and also racially. (Olivia, personal communication)

As a profession, teaching extends beyond the classroom and into communities and families. For example, while teaching high school in my neighborhood, I remember seeing my students at the local grocery store and reminding them to complete their homework. My identity as teacher did not stop when I exited the school building.

Olivia's belief about teachers knowing their students personally brings another important point about teacher education to the fore. Teachers must know their students in order to teach them. They must know of the "baggage," background knowledge, and/or cultural knowledge that accompanies their students to school. In Olivia's eyes, if teachers do not know their students, then instruction is less likely to be effective. Knowing one's students is one of the core themes in culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1996).

Tulani expresses her desire to stay connected to oppressed communities as one of her personal goals as an educator.

> I will stress though - that being connected to African people and all oppressed people is my goal here. People are different. There is a value attached to difference. If we pretend like everyone is equal and everything is fine we are destined to have this conversation [about hegemony and oppression] again and again. (Tulani, personal communication)

For most African American faculty, ties with the Black community are extremely important, partly due to "the African heritage of communalism" (Gregory, 1999, p. 8). Yet African American teacher educators have frequently been criticized about what is considered a narrow, race-based research focus (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

Despite these concerns, participants also exemplify the standard of community involvement. Olivia, for example, continues to be involved with teacher preparatory programs at her university with the adjacent urban community. Tulip recently received an award from the parent teacher association of a nearby elementary school for her dedicated services to the school and community. Tulip received honors from her college for dedicated service to the college and community for the past five years.

Tulani's participation in the community outside of her university includes coordinating a community program that she founded three years ago. Her project focuses on bridging students in nearby urban schools with students at other national and international urban areas. She is also an advisory board member of a community recreation center near her home. This community involvement reflects an ethic of care, and is also a component of other-mothering.

African Americans have a tradition of other-mothering that is so engrained within the culture that it is present in literature, theater, and film. For example, the feminist writer and philosopher bell hooks describes other-mothering when she describes the commitment of African American teachers at her elementary school:

> Almost all of our teachers at Booker T. Washington elementary school were Black women. They were committed to nurturing intellect so that we could become scholars, thinkers, and cultural workers - Black folks who used our minds. (hooks, 1994, p. 2)

With a strongly identified tradition of accountability (the ethic of care) to all community children, and status as other-mothers conferred as a consequence of maturity and dedication to the community's traditions and culture (Collins, 1990), study participants brought their cultural protectionism into their classrooms as well. In the way that bell hooks describes, study participants are committed to creating scholars, thinkers, and cultural workers in K-12 institutions.

Discussion and Implications

Participants' reflection in relation to race uplift as an outsider within indicated that "race uplift" and their work in the academy is strongly related to a womanist ethic of care that, while different for each participant, emphasizes shared knowledge and experience. Knowing the position of some of their students as outsiders as well, these three women positioned themselves as other-mothers, women focused on and concerned with creating a realm of protection that facilitated learning and allowed them to make meaningful contributions to the growth and development of their communities. Straightforwardness and community emphasis are two characteristics that comprise the core of their other-mothering qualities.

There is a problematic nature of this finding in terms of the stereotypes of Black women. Black women have often been seen as mammies, matriarchs, (Collins, 1990) and even superwomen (Wallace, 1978). Being a student's other-mother, may not allow Black women to be seen as leaders with positions of power, but instead as caretakers. Caretaking correlates to a reason why women in academia also face obstacles to productivity. There is a perception that women do less research and publishing than men, in a career that makes high demands in these areas (Lewis, 1993; Maitland, 1990). Women spend more time teaching and preparing for teaching, counseling students, serving on committees, and are assigned more undergraduate courses than men (Ducharme & Ducharme, 1996; Lewis, 1993; Maitland, 1990).

However, the roles that Black women maintain as teacher educators have important and potential implications for practice in education. Their pedagogies and those of their students are shaped, interpreted, and reinterpreted by other-mother support. How these professors support students encourages other college professors to think of new ways to teach, assess, and interact with prospective teachers.

Indeed some teacher educators may already take on this other mother identity. Yet what seems ordinary and commonplace is actually extraordinary in practice. Prospective teachers can only benefit from more of their professors emphasizing a connection to community.

While considering the concepts of womanist theory, this paper offers a thick description of race uplift as practiced by Black women teacher educators. I have defined the historical relationship between the race uplift theme and womanism, and highlighted current literature about how teacher educators of color view their work in the academy. Highlighting the need for an expanded pool of historically underrepresented faculty nationally and internationally was an underlying sentiment. Although Black women are underrepresented in higher education institutions and concentrated in the lower ranks, their numbers in the U. S. outscore those in other countries. In Britain for example, there are 16 Black professors out of more than 7000 professors.

In this paper, I have also examined the relationship between the outsider within location and race uplift and began to define a womanist identity that might be taken on by women of color in the academy. Black women teacher educators with social justice philosophies and positioned as outsiders-within may develop an academic other-mother identity to continue in their pedagogical work to uplift the race. This kind of

visionary pragmatism is indicative of the third wave of womanism where the struggle for freedom is different for everyone involved yet still accomplishes the same goal of a just society (Hill, 2002).

This paper adds to the literature that informs through use of stories about the methods, styles, perceptions and motivations of teacher educators. This form of inquiry is vital - it helps us gain knowledge about who individual teacher education faculty are and what they do, offers knowledge about teacher preparation, and suggests alternative ways to document and collect qualitative data. These findings are one way of understanding how "race uplift" informs and shapes the teaching practices of three Black women teacher educators and, from their contributions to their students, have potential to influence a new generation.

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Appendix A
Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. This interview has three sections: Choosing the Academy; Perspectives as Teacher Educators; and, The Teaching of Teachers.

Choosing The Academy

1. Tell me the story of how you became a teacher educator. What experiences led you to the field of teacher education?
    A. Why did you decide to become a teacher, in K-12 and in higher education?
    B. How did you become interested in teacher education?
2. What were your experiences like while you were in the graduate school?
    A. What kind of informal or formal support did you have in graduate school?
    B. What encouraging experiences have you encountered in becoming a teacher educator?
    C. What discouraging experiences have you encountered in becoming a teacher educator?
3. What are some of the most rewarding aspects of teaching at the college level for you?
    1. What research (or other contributions made to the field) has been most meaningful?
    2. In what ways do you feel supported in your work?

Perspectives as Teacher Educators

4. Describe your perspective as a Black woman teacher educator?
5. How have your experiences shaped your perspective?
6. What ways do you believe your perspective as a Black woman who educates teachers influences your work?
    A. in teaching, supervision, student advisement?
    B. in service to the community?
7. How is what you bring to the college classroom different from your colleagues of other races and ethnicities?

The Teaching of Teachers

8. What knowledge and skills do you feel teachers should possess?
    A. What do pre-service teachers need to know?
    B. What kinds of information do you make sure you teach in all of your classes?
    C. What kinds of field experiences should student teachers be exposed to?
    D. How could teacher education programs be improved?
9. Describe the ways in which you supervise student-teachers.
    A. How do you prepare students for student-teaching?
    B. How many times do you visit them at their placements?
    C. What kinds of feedback do you give students?
    D. How do you attempt to challenge students' sometimes normative views?
10. Describe how you advise students.
    A. What kinds of standards do you set?
    B. In what ways do you try to relate to students?

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