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The Educational Leadership of Anna Julia Haywood Cooper
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Anna Julia Haywood Cooper (1859-1964) was one of the most influential African-American educators of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Heralded as a community activist, author, and scholar, Cooper dedicated her entire life to the education and empowerment of African-American youth and adults. Her commitment and passionate belief in the power of education as a vehicle to social, economic, and political freedom was a driving force in her life. As a classroom teacher, high school principal, and college president, Cooper initiated and implemented pioneering educational reforms, which reflected her distinctive vision of education for Blacks, females, and working-class people. Cooper's vision of education challenged the dominant discourse concerning how African-Americans, females, and working-class adults should be educated by offering alternative ways of educating these disenfranchised groups. Indeed, her ideals of education were framed by her social location as a Black woman in an era when few Blacks and few women were educated, and when most were disenfranchised.

Cooper lived and worked amid a time frame when the political rights of African-Americans were under systematic assault. It was also a period when women were oppressed politically and economically due to their gender status in society. "To be a Black woman in nineteenth and early twentieth century America," argued historian Dorothy Sterling (1984), "was to live in double jeopardy of belonging to the 'inferior' sex of an 'inferior' race" (p. ix). Refusing to succumb to the yoke of oppression, Cooper made noteworthy contributions to the field of education. Driven by a deep commitment to helping her race and gender through education, Cooper rose to head one of the most prestigious Black high schools in the nation's capital--The Washington High School for Colored Youth (later Paul Laurence Dunbar High School) by 1902. Later on, in 1930, Cooper served as second president of Frelinghuysen University, an independent university for working-class African-Americans. After working many years as an educator, Cooper eventually earned a Ph.D. in 1925 from the Universite de Paris, Sorbonne in Paris, France, at the age of 67.

Cooper was also a major player in the Black women's club movement during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Active in numerous social and civic organizations, and associations on the local and national level, Cooper co-founded and assumed substantial leadership roles in community improvement, "racial uplift," and anti-lynching associations. As an author and feminist, Cooper wrote *A Voice from the South* in 1892. This book, considered a Black feminist treatise, consists of a collection of essays that reflects a Black feminist analysis on racism and sexism. It focuses on the race problem in 19th century America as well as

educational concerns for African-Americans and higher education for women. This article will examine Anna Julia Cooper's role as an educational leader as well as her philosophical views on education.

Early Life and Socio-Historical and Educational Influences

Anna Julia Haywood Cooper lived to be 105 years old, witnessing several critical periods in United States history--from the antebellum era to the Civil Rights Movement era. Annie, as she was affectionately called, was born in August 1859 under the inhumane system of slavery to Hannah Stanley Haywood in Raleigh, North Carolina. Her father, George Washington Haywood, was her mother's slave "master." Annie was the youngest of three children. Her brothers, Rufus and Andrew, were 22 and 10 years older than Annie respectively.

Annie Haywood's early years were spent during a time of tremendous upheaval in the South. Two years after her birth, the Civil War started. During the war years, Annie's state of North Carolina was practically ravaged by the numerous military conflicts fought on its soil. Finally, in 1863, freedom came to little Annie (and approximately four million enslaved African-Americans of this nation) when Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Two years later, the Civil War came to an end. Annie was six-years-old when the war ended. Anna Julia Haywood's early childhood years were spent within this socio-historical context of devastation and despair.

During the period of Reconstruction, the hope for freedom served as a theme for many of the enslaved. Annie, like many newly freed men and women, was "shaped spiritually and intellectually by the optimistic worldview of the Reconstruction period" (Baker-Fletcher, 1994, p. 33). Many of these formerly enslaved individuals, like Annie, possessed a strong thirst and desire to read, write, and critically reflect upon their world. After 250 years of enslavement, freed African-Americans were able to assert their rights for the first time. Like Annie, the majority of African-American North Carolinians viewed education as the key to their true liberation. As educational historian James Anderson (1988) notes, "for the freedmen [and women], schooling was a matter of personal liberation and a necessary function of a free society" (p. 18). They believed that an education would remove the vestiges of slavery, illiteracy, and powerlessness, and would ensure their rights to American citizenship.

Several crucial events in Haywood's early life contributed to her philosophical ideals about education and her development as an educator. When she was close to ten-years-old, Annie enrolled in the Saint Augustine Normal School and Collegiate Institute. This school, founded under the auspices of the Protestant Episcopal Church, had as a mission to "educate teachers of both sexes [as well as provide] a training school for the preparation of Colored men for the .ministry" (Halliburton, 1937, p.1 & 73). Annie Haywood's academic preparation included the classical course of study, in which she did extremely well. The school had a great impact on her intellectual development and influenced her philosophical views about education with regards to Blacks and females. She recalled the following of her schooling experiences:

.that school was my world during the formative period, the most critical in any girl's life. Its nurture & [sic] admonition gave not only shelter & [sic] protection from the many pitfalls that beset the unwary. The whole atmosphere contributed [to] growth & [sic]

nourishment beyond the power of words to estimate. (Cooper, n.d., AJC papers courtesy of MSRC)

Annie's education at St. Augustine was an enabling experience that enhanced her capacity to dream of a world of possibilities--one that would not limit her life chances. It was a setting, as Annie saw it, that not only nurtured her talents and academic abilities, but which also ensured she would be prepared to fulfill her duty and destiny to uplift the African-American community (Johnson, 2000).

Although Annie Haywood recounted her years at St. Augustine with an optimistic perspective, she also recognized it as a place that attempted to stifle aspects of her intellectual growth, due to prevailing Victorian social doctrines that dictated differing educational experiences for men and women. At St. Augustine, female students such as Annie were discouraged from learning Greek and pursuing other classical studies; these intellectual paths were open to male theology students only. After encountering this discriminatory policy, Annie became cognizant of the fact that higher educational opportunities between the sexes must be equal (Johnson, 1997). No doubt, Haywood realized that she was one of the few fortunate African-Americans (and even fewer Black or White females) in the U.S. to be granted the opportunity to receive an education, particularly higher education. In 1870, just several years before Annie began taking undergraduate classes at St. Augustine, there were 582 institutions of higher education in the United States. Fifty-nine percent of these were for men only, while 12% were for women and 29% were coeducational. Of these percentages, the male and female students were predominantly White and middle-class. Still, among the general population few Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or class, attended college (Bohan, 1999; Solomon, 1985). Ten years later, when Annie enrolled in college-level courses at St. Augustine, the overwhelming majority of female collegians (who were obviously White and middle-class) between the ages of 18 and 21 represented 1.9% of the total college enrollment (Solomon, 1985, p. 64).

Early educational opportunities for African-Americans on the post-secondary level were extremely limited especially prior to 1861, with the exceptions of Lincoln University (est. 1854) and Wilberforce University (est. 1856). These two schools were established for the sole purpose of providing post-secondary schooling experiences for African-Americans. Wilberforce University, which began conferring bachelor degrees in 1867, was a coeducational institution. On the other hand, Lincoln University was an all male school until 1952 when it began admitting African-American women. Although the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary, which was established in 1881 (later renamed Spelman College), provided elementary to post-secondary schooling experiences for African-American women, it did not open its first college department until 1897. So, veritably, Annie believed it was vital for the empowerment and survival of the Black community in the late 19th century that Black females were granted the same educational chances that Black men were offered on the higher educational level.

Concerns relating to the scarce educational opportunities for females, particularly in higher education, shaped Cooper's work in education and civic activism. Hence, issues of gender as well as race and class influenced her distinctive ideals on education. Decades later, in her passionate argument for the higher education of women, Cooper (1892) wrote:

I ask the men and women who are teachers, for the highest interests of the race, that they give the girls a chance.. Let us insist on special encouragement for the education of our women and special care in their training.. Teach them that there is a race with special needs which they and only they can help.. The earnest well trained Christian young woman, as a teacher, as a homemaker, as a wife, mother, or silent influence even, is as potent a missionary agency among our people as is the theologian.. Let us then, here and now, recognize this force and resolve to make the most of it-not the boys less, but the girls more. (p. 78-79)

As explained by critical feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (2000), "the commitment to the value of [female] education by prominent Black women such as Anna Julia Cooper. [led them] to champion the cause of Black women's education." (p. 210). Like many African-American women educators of Cooper's era, Cooper deeply felt that the destiny of the race lied in the hands of African-American women. Therefore, she argued that it was imperative that Black females are granted the opportunity to become well-educated because it is the women of the race who must embark on the moral and social mission of guiding African-Americans to race, gender, and economic uplift (Collins, 2000; Harley, 1982; Johnson, 2000).

In the late 1870s, Annie was successful in fighting for the rights of female students to take Greek courses. As a result of her fight, she and other female students were allowed to take Greek classes at St. Augustine.

It was at that school she met her husband, George Christopher Cooper, a theology student and Greek instructor. In 1877, the two were married. Unfortunately, George Cooper passed away within two years from "hard work and exposure," according to Annie Cooper (Cooper, n.d.). When she was eighteen, Cooper completed her course of study. Even though she was well prepared academically at St. Augustine, the institution did not confer any diplomas or degrees. Thus, two years after the death of her husband, Cooper left North Carolina to further her education at Oberlin College (now university) in Oberlin, Ohio.

Oberlin College was founded by a minister and missionary of the Congregationalist denomination in 1833. According to James Harris Fairchild, Oberlin's president during Cooper's tenure as a student, "the two founders were both reformers, strongly impressed with the conviction that the Church as well as the world needed to be lifted up to a higher plane of life and action" (Fairchild, 1883, p. 14). Further, this institution served as an Underground Railroad stop during the antebellum era. It was one of the few colleges in this nation to open its doors to women in 1833 and African-Americans in 1835.

Unlike many women who enrolled in the school, Cooper took the four-year "gentlemen's" course of study leading to the B.A. degree, rather than the two-year "adies'" course of study, which she felt was "inferior in scope and aim," only leading to a certificate (Cooper, 1892, p. 50). She wrote that Oberlin had been "the college of so many happy memories" (Cooper, 1951, p. 3). For Cooper, Oberlin was one of the most influential institutions in her philosophical development with regards to issues on race, gender, class, and education. Her professors at the institution cultivated in her a dedication to a life of service--especially toward the disenfranchised. Three of her "intellectually stimulating" professors, she wrote, "inspired my faith, encouraged my hope, deepened my love in and privilege of a life of service" (Cooper, 1925, n.p.). Fairchild, one of her favorite professors, espoused that

Each student belongs to the world, not isolated from sympathies and obligations and activities.. [Therefore] [t]he college is a place for education, not merely for the

acquisition of learning.. The great object is such a discipline as is qualified for service in the world. (Fairchild, 1883, n.p.)

Fairchild was a significant role model to Cooper. His ideas about educated students' role in the improvement of overall society inspired Cooper's beliefs about "service in the world." Upon receiving her B.A. degree, Cooper was ready to devote her life to the struggle against the social inequities and exploitation that African-Americans like herself were experiencing (Hutchinson, 1993).

Career, Leadership, and Educational and Philosophy

After earning her B.A. degree from Oberlin College in 1884, Cooper went to work at Wilberforce University, a historically Black institution in Xenia, Ohio. There she taught French and German languages and literature from 1884 to 1885. Cooper left Wilberforce University in 1885 and returned to North Carolina to take care of her elderly mother and raise her deceased brother's six children. After this move, Cooper soon earned a position at her alma mater, St. Augustine's Normal and Collegiate Institute, teaching Geometry, Latin, and Greek. During the two years Cooper was employed at St. Augustine, she invested her energies in an array of educational concerns. She fought to secure equal treatment and salaries between African-American and White teachers in North Carolina's segregated public schools. As an active member of the North Carolina Teachers Association, she pushed for measures that would provide for the increase of equitable and quality educational opportunities for African-American youth. In addition, she established an outreach extension program under St. Augustine's aegis and she founded a Christian mission guild and Sunday school (Hutchinson, 1981).

The period between 1887 and 1906 marked a turning point in Cooper's professional career. By 1887, Cooper

accumulated three years of teaching experience on the collegiate level. Based on this experience, Oberlin College awarded her a Masters of Arts degree in Mathematics, her undergraduate major (Hutchinson , 1981). In that same year, she was offered a teaching position at the Washington Preparatory High School for Colored Youth (commonly referred to by the nickname "M Street" High), the prestigious public high school for African-Americans in Washington , D.C. This school, known for its academic excellence and highly educated teaching and administrative faculty, was established in 1870, nine years before any founding of a high school for White students in Washington , D.C. Unlike the majority of segregated public school systems in the U.S. , the school system in the District of Columbia was almost totally controlled by an African-American superintendent and Black school board members until 1901. These administrators wielded influence over teacher appointments and curriculum. They were strong advocates for high performing schools for the African-American population (Dabney, 1949; Gatewood, 1990; Moore, 1999).

The Washington Preparatory High School for Colored Youth graduated a multitude of students who would go on to achieve prominence in the local Washington community as well as the national and international communities. An overwhelming majority of the teaching staff were African-American. Further, they held college degrees as opposed to Normal School teaching certificates, which was unusual for public or private school teachers during that era. Many of the African-American graduates of Oberlin College were educators at the school. It is important to note that three years prior to Cooper's employment, "M Street" provided a college preparatory, four-year classical arts curriculum, later expanding to offer trade and business curricula. For classical arts curriculum to be implemented in a school for African-Americans was rare at this time, due to the fact that the prevailing viewpoint of dominant society promulgated the philosophy that an industrial education provided the best and most appropriate model for educating Black students. An industrial education, among other things, was one way of keeping Blacks in a place of economic subordination. "M Street's" college preparatory program would later prove to be problematic and it would come under the attack of the D.C. school board. Cooper herself would play a role in this controversy. I will discuss this issue later because it will become a major point of contention in Cooper's later career.

Cooper spent a number of years at Washington High School . Her professional and personal growth and her development as a teacher and principal was cultivated at this institution. During her first two years she taught Math and Science. Then, from 1889 to 1902, she served as head of the Latin Department.

At this school, colleagues and students perceived Cooper as a hardworking, loyal, and zealous teacher and strict disciplinarian who imbued in her students high ideals of scholarship, racial pride, and self-improvement. She was described as being a "motherly" concerned educator who took personal interests in her students' cognitive and social well-being. One former student noted, ".I was a member of [Mrs.Cooper's].Latin .class..I remember her.. put[ing] her whole heart and complete dedication into the performance of her job of teaching, **demanding** [emphasis from text] attention and participation from her students" (Gabel, 1982, p. 66). This same student further recalled: "she showed the young girls .that it was possible to be a lady and a scholar" (Gabel, 1982, p. 66-67).

Cooper truly enjoyed being an educator. She stated, "Teaching has always seemed to me the noblest of callings," a profession which she desired to pursue "not far from kindergarten age" (*Negro College Graduates' Questionnaire* , n.d.). As an educator, Cooper was interested in the complete development of her students' intellectual growth, as well as in their social and emotional development. She articulated, "the elemental principal and foundation of all education everywhere. [is] the fullest development of the individual in and by and for the best possible enviroing society" (Lemert & Bhan, 1998, p. 258). "Any scheme of education," she asserted, "should have regard to the whole [person], not a special class or race of men, but [individuals] as the paragon of creation, possessing.infinite possibilities for physical, moral and mental development" (Lemert & Bhan, 1998, p. 258). Cooper believed in the transformative power of education. For Cooper, education was an instrument that should assist in the enlightenment and social uplift of the individual and collective Black community.

Cooper, like many Black women educators during the period of legalized segregation, believed that she had a special mission and responsibility to African-American students and to the Black community as a whole-- a mission that she alone could fulfill (Harley, 1982). Like other Black women educators of her time, Cooper saw herself as a social and moral change agent (Collins, 2000). From her philosophical standpoint, education and educational institutions were meant to assist in the economic, political, and social improvement of African-Americans. She argued, "if a child seems poor in inheritance, poor in environment, poor in personal endowment, by so much the more must organized society bring to that child the good tidings of social salvation through the schools.." (Lemert & Bhan, 1998, p. 258). Hence, for Cooper, education and schools were linked to the "creation of social practice," notes critical theorist Peter McLaren: "they were the moral referents necessary for the construction of a democratic public sphere" (1994, p. 240).

The compilation of the achievements of Cooper's students was a significant number. Many of the students who came under her tutelage and influence made major contributions and played prominent roles in American society. Reminiscing on her educational experience at "M Street," Ursuline Brooks, a former student, stated, "At 'M Street,' we were taught that our lives were to be lives of service and uplift to our race and our country" (Moore, 1999, p. 93).

When Washington High School 's principal, Robert H. Terrell, resigned from his position to accept a presidential appointment as a justice of the peace in 1902, Anna Julia Cooper was appointed principal of the school. During her four-year tenure as principal, the school's college preparatory program was considerably changed and expanded (Terrell, 1917, p. 259). M. G. Hundley (1965), a former student and school historian of the school's history, explained that Cooper's vision and leadership "reaffirmed the college preparatory goals and standardized the curriculum" (p. 15). In a similar critique, another historian of "M Street" High wrote, "[P]rincipal Cooper strove unceasingly to prepare her pupils for successful admittance to non-segregated northern and mid-western universities, [such as], Amherst, Brown, Harvard, Radcliffe, Oberlin, Yale, Cornell." etc. (Robinson, 1981, p. 6).

During Cooper's time as principal, the Washington Preparatory High School for Colored Youth achieved significant success and recognition. The school was accredited by Harvard University (Robinson, 1981, p. 6) and a large number of students were awarded admissions and financial support to Ivy League universities (Hundley, 1965, p. 19). Throughout the time of Cooper's leadership, "superior instruction was fostered by insistence on high standards of scholarship" (Gabel, 1982, p. 49). In addition, Cooper made provisions for "special tutorials to prepare promising students for college entrance examinations" (Gabel, 1982, p. 49). Some of Cooper's "M Street's" applied to their alma mater for scholarships for their students. Hundley pointed out that teachers appealing to their former colleges and universities for scholarship aid for their students "became a school tradition which continued until the mid 1950s" (1965, p.131).

Cooper's leadership, contributions, and far-ranging accomplishments at "M Street" speak to a remarkable legacy, particularly given the socio-historical context of her era. By the time Cooper was appointed head of "M Street," segregation had become a full-fledged effort to subjugate and stigmatize African-Americans (Cottrol, Diamond, & Ware, 2003). Six years before she became principal of the school, one federally sanctioned 1896 Supreme Court decision, *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, "established the 'separate but equal' doctrine regarding public facilities and services used by" African-Americans (La Morte, 2002, p. 286). The sanctioning of legal racial segregation by the Supreme Court gave rise to numerous public policies that articulated the importance of maintaining a caste system catering to the political and economic interests of the White ruling class while oppressing and exploiting people of color. In terms of its effects on public schooling in the District of Columbia and the South, the "separate but equal" dictum not only contributed to the solidification of a dual system of schools segregating Blacks and Whites, it also championed an educational ideology and curriculum that emphasized rudimentary literacy and industrial educational skills for African-Americans. However, as mentioned previously, the District of Columbia 's Black high school was unique in that the liberal arts educational curriculum it offered was the norm, as opposed to an anomaly.

Unfortunately, Cooper's educational practices and initiatives at "M Street" eventually were tested and challenged.

A year prior to Cooper's inauguration as principal, Booker T. Washington was widely recognized as the preeminent leader and spokesman for African-Americans. The Tuskegee Institute, B.T. Washington's industrial training school, "was emerging as the model for Black education and consequently was playing into the prejudices of Whites who believed in Black intellectual inferiority" (Washington, 1988, p. xxxiv). Also during this period, African-American public schools were reorganized in the District of Columbia . Many African-American board members lost their positions and the Black superintendent position was abolished. In turn, a White male superintendent was appointed to control both the White and Black public schools.

After visiting the Tuskegee Institute, the White superintendent of the D.C.'s "Colored" schools recommended that "M Street" High School be reorganized to function more like the Tuskegee Institute. His rationale was that African-American students were "incapable of taking the same [classical] studies" as the students in the District's White high schools. He maintained they needed a course of study equal to their "inferior" status in U.S. society (Hutchinson, 1981, p. 67-68). The curriculum at Tuskegee Institute was a replica of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute's curriculum, another historically Black school, founded by Samuel Chapman Armstrong in 1868. According to educational historian James A. Anderson, "Armstrong developed a pedagogy and ideology .that did not challenge [racist and classist views of] inequalities of wealth and power" (Anderson, 1988, p. 33). Armstrong espoused the philosophical belief that the "Negro, was above all else immoral" (Watkins, 2001, p. 47) and so, therefore, schooling should consist of "training in common morality as well as the habits of industry" (Watkins, 2001, p. 47). Washington, a student of Armstrong, "developed a philosophy of racial uplift," according to educational historian William Watkins (2001), "that accommodated existing racial or economic relations" when Washington became president of Tuskegee Institute (p. 60).

Cooper, in response to this paradigm, adamantly opposed any lowering of academic standards at the high school and she fought to keep the curriculum classical and college preparatory. Despite the fact that Cooper's fierce struggle to maintain the college preparatory program at "M Street" drew citywide attention and support as well as extensive coverage in the *Washington Post* newspaper , she was charged with insubordination and was eventually dismissed from her position as principal of the Washington High School for Colored Youth. All too often educators such as Cooper who implement anti-racist teaching practices and "who seek to redefine curriculum and social relationships inside and outside the classroom, find themselves in conflict with existing [racist, classist, and sexist] patriarchal ideology and hierarchical relationships," notes feminist educational scholar Kathleen Weiler (1988, p. 101). This was indeed the situation Cooper found herself in. She ardently believed that education, especially for African-Americans, should be one that focused on the classical course of study. In response to the call for industrial education for African-Americans, Cooper argued for a strong push for classical education. In the following, she argued:

Teachers from Aristotle to the present have sifted and analysed [sic] the various branches of learning to get at their worth as educative factors.. They are universally accepted by teachers and thinkers as a reasonable and proper basis for the education of [humankind] (Lemert & Bhan, 1998, p. 252).

This curriculum "gives direction of thought-power, power of appreciation, power of willing the right.. and to the divine possibilities in all human development," Cooper maintained (Lemert & Bhan, 1998, p. 252).

Cooper was removed from her position of leadership because she represented a substantial force against the narrow view of what African-Americans should be. She argued,

.no people can progress, without vivifying touch of ideas and ideals. The very policy of segregation renders

all the more the necessary leadership that has been on the Mount. If any group or class cannot be allowed living contact through seeing, hearing, feeling the best of life in their day and generation, there is no compensation morally or socially except to let them find their thrills through the inspiration of the broadest education and generously equipped schools. (Cooper quoted in Hutchinson, 1981, p. 83)

To fully comprehend the dynamics of the controversy at Washington High School, one needs to identify and deconstruct the relationship between education and the capitalist economy. Interlocking structures of domination, power, privilege, and oppression "have, since the origin of public education, used schooling to reinforce dominator values," cultural theorist bell hooks argued (2003, p. 1). Further, critical pedagogue Peter McLaren (1994) stated that "the political space that education occupies de-emphasizes the struggle for teacher and student empowerment" (p. 1). As articulated by McLaren, educational programs are "designed to create individuals who operate in the interests of the state.[as well as] correspond to the demands of industry, thereby reproducing in schools the existing class, race, and gender relations in our society" (McLaren, 1994, p. 1-2). Even though Eurocentric western hegemonic masculinist values were taught in segregated Black schools, many of these schools were sites where alternative ways of thinking gave rise to the insurrection of subjugated knowledge, marginalized experiences, and oppression (hooks, 2003, p. 1-2).

Implicit in the superintendent's proposal to reorganize and supplant "M Street's" curriculum with an industrial education program was the design to prepare the Black students for lives that would fulfill the expectations of the segregated order--lives based on racial and gender oppression and economic subordination (Johnson, 1997). Cooper was not opposed to "industrial training as such but to the proposed supplanting of the classical curriculum at her school.an industrial program supposedly more realistic and appropriate for [African-Americans]" (Gabel, 1982, p. 51).

Cooper also got fired because the Board of Education was opposed to her teaching methods, which Cooper called "sympathetic" methods that enable "weak" students in their academic achievement. In addition, Cooper and her staff collectively refused to use the Board adopted textbooks, instead developing and using books that Cooper felt were more appropriate for her students' academic achievement. It was the interest and for the betterment for Black students and the Black community, rather than racist, classist, archaic school policies that Cooper did what she perceived was best. Schools, particularly during Cooper's era, have a long legacy of forcing teachers to live "lives of mechanical routine," and subjecting them "to a machine of supervision, organization, classification, grading. uniformity.etc" (Giroux & McLaren, 1996, p. 301). Schools in Cooper's era, as one 19th century educator observed, did not allow for "room in the school culture for individuality, ideas, independence, originality, study, and investigation" (Giroux & McLaren, 1996, p. 301). McLaren (1994) points out that too often in the public school setting teachers are stripped of their decision-making potential; this was because the school boards viewed teaching as "nearly synonymous with executing pre-fashioned methodologies and delivering prepackaged curricula" (p. 1).

When Cooper challenged the status quo by refusing to be what critical educator Henry Giroux calls a "clerk of the empire," she was in effect attempting to empower her students' and teachers' dreams, desires, voices, and rights to have access to an equitable and educational experience. This kind of educational leadership not only reflects a revolutionary pedagogy of resistance but also a form of Black feminist activism essential to the struggle for African-American group survival and institutional transformation (Collins 2000; hooks, 2003; Johnson, 1997, 2000).

Cooper's Presidency at Frelinghuysen University

If the Washington High School for Colored Youth experience thwarted Cooper's efforts in implementing pedagogical perspectives and practices, ones which did not reinscribe racial hierarchical forms of domination, her presidency at Frelinghuysen University allowed her the freedom and autonomy to set her philosophies in motion. However, at this institution her educational focus was centered on adult education.

On June 15, 1930, Cooper was inaugurated the second president of Frelinghuysen University in Washington, D. C. She served as president until her retirement in 1940. Despite her retirement as president, Cooper continued working at the school in the capacity of the registrar, from 1940 to 1950 (*Second Decennial Catalogue of Frelinghuysen University* , n.d., p. 3, c).

Frelinghuysen University , founded in the home of Jesse Lawson in 1906, was an institution created for working-class nontraditional African-American adult students who had limited or no basic literacy skills (*Second Decennial Catalogue* , n.d., p. 3; Waugh, 1946). The school was named in honor of the late Senator Frederick T. Frelinghuysen (1881-1885) who "had been of great service to the cause of the Colored people" during his political years (Hutchinson, 1981, p. 157). According to the Frelinghuysen University *Second Decennial Catalogue (n.d.)* , the aim of the school was to "enable men and women who cannot make their leisure time fit into the schedule of a college or university to pursue higher education as seen suited to their capacities and aspirations" (p. 3).

Although this institution was called a university, it was not one in the traditional sense. It did not confer degrees. Nevertheless, Frelinghuysen provided an excellent educational experience for its students with limited resources. It offered a complete high school education as well as academic work on the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Hannah Stanley Opportunity School, a department named in the honor of Cooper's mother, prepared individuals for community service and a general education course of study (*Second Decennial Catalogue* , n.d.). The college level course work included liberal arts, applied science, theology, law, and pharmacy (Dabney, 1949, p.184).

The Hannah Stanley Opportunity School had a broad appeal because it "emphasized both Booker T. Washington's trade and semi-professional training approach and W.E.B. Du Bois' push for professional education" (Chateauvert, 1990, p. 265). To accommodate the needs of its employed constituencies, Frelinghuysen offered night classes; it implemented a "home college" whereby classes were held at various convenient locations to eliminate long distance travel to and from classes; and the tuition fee was very low and affordable (Chateauvert, 1990; Dabney, 1949; Hutchinson, 1981; *Second Decennial Catalogue* , n.d., p. 3). However, Frelinghuysen had problems securing a permanent location. Thus, Cooper decided to house the school in her home. Six rooms of her spacious home were used as classroom and the library space. She did not charge rent and only accepted a salary of 50 dollars a month. Further, her devoted teachers worked for little to no pay (*Negro College Graduates' Questionnaire* , n.d.).

Cooper was 71-years-old when she became president of this institution. She brought to this institution many years of successful teaching, organizational and administrative skills, and a strong sense of commitment to her students. Cooper stated the following as to why she accepted the presidency at Frelinghuysen:

.while there are [several universities, colleges, and night schools for White adults and middle-class Blacks].there is absolutely no door open to the struggling [low-income] colored man or woman, aspiring for the privileges of advanced education and not able to make the hours scheduled at Howard [University].We are poor, our constituency is poor, and it is hard. to realize this means. (Chateauvert, 1990, p. 266)

Cooper wanted "Frelinghuysen to represent the ideals I stood for & [sic] worked for & [sic]. I plan to devote it to the education of colored people." (Cooper, 1932, n.p.). She viewed educational opportunities as a human right which should be granted to all U.S. citizens regardless of class and gender status in a given society. It was the disenfranchised working-class unlettered adult students that Cooper perhaps had the greatest impact on in her role as an educator. Cooper stated that the University's purpose would be to reach the "lowest down, the intentionally forgotten man, untaught and unprovided [sic] for either in the public schools for all classes or in the colleges and universities for the talented tenth." (Cooper, 1932, n.p.).

For Cooper, making Frelinghuysen a "beacon of hope" for marginalized adult students was a fulfillment of

her philosophy and pedagogy (Cooper, 1932, n.p.). Speaking of the necessity to cultivate hope, bell hooks (2003) makes the point that "educators who have dared to study and learn new ways of thinking and teaching so that the work [educators] does not reinforce systems of domination. have created a pedagogy of hope" (p. xiv). Arguing on a similar theme, Brazilian educator Paulo Freire contended that "one of the tasks of educators is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be" (Freire, 1994). In Freire's view, "it is imperative that [educators] maintain hope even when the harshness of reality may suggest the opposite" (hooks, 2003, p. v). The hope Cooper envisioned for the students was that Frelinghuysen University would enable them to "stand on their own feet [and] pluck the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge not for self-centered exploitation or childish glorification, but as a high responsibility for thoughtful investments in service for the common good" (*Second Decennial Catalogue*, n.d., p. 5).

The Frelinghuysen University consistently experienced financial problems. In spite of efforts to keep the school afloat, it permanently closed its doors in 1964.

On February 26, 1964, at the age of 105, Anna Julia Cooper died in her home. In honor of her memory and her contributions to the nation's capital, the District of Columbia named a street *Anna Julia Cooper Memorial Circle* (3rd and T Streets, NW), which is located in the landmark community of *LeDroit Park*.

Anna Julia Cooper's Legacy

Anna Julia Cooper's legacy is that of a consummate educator who was an advocate for equitable educational opportunities for African-Americans, females, and low-income, unlettered adults. For Cooper, education was a liberating force. This force was needed to resist the interlocking structures of oppression that characterized the lives of disenfranchised groups during the post-Reconstruction, Victorian, and Jim Crow eras--through which Cooper's professional career spanned. Discontent with the prevailing societal notions that circumscribed the lives of Blacks and women, Cooper found the strength and resiliency to actively seek solutions to the problems experienced by these groups. She was truly dedicated to helping her students build better lives and realize their dreams and possibilities despite the institutional barriers that blocked them. She compassionately worked to produce successful students who would not only seek intellectual accomplishment and human fulfillment but who would "serve the best of one's powers in the advancement of one's generation" (Cooper, n.d.).

Cooper's effectiveness as an educational leader provides a valuable resource and useful addition to contemporary literature on educational leadership, minority education, and social justice education. The themes of racial, gender, and social justice are found throughout her work as a teacher and administrator. These themes are significant, particularly in light of the fact that for many low-income, urban youth, the promise of educational equitable experiences continues to be a fleeting reality in contemporary society, fifty-two years after the passage of the Supreme Court *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision (a decision which reversed the 1896 *Plessy vs. Ferguson* decision by declaring that the "separate but equal" dictum had no place in public education). The continued persistent and pervasive disparities in the academic achievement among racial/ethnic student groups, students from low-income and affluent socioeconomic backgrounds, are a well-documented dilemma in this nation's public schools. This major problem has indeed drawn national attention to the urgent need to improve the academic achievement for all children via initiatives that would close the achievement gaps between various student groups. Hence, in today's society, we need educational leaders, such as Cooper, whose vision and activism would not only address and improve the academic needs of our young people, but would also prepare them to be life-long learners, cable of appreciating the world in which they live. Also, they would have the competence necessary to learn and thrive as productive citizens throughout their lifetime. We also need educational leaders who will continue the tradition that Cooper started--the tradition of tearing down the walls of race, class, and gender oppression; building institutions and supporting philosophies that are non-oppressive and inclusive of the experiences and perspectives of diverse racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. Cooper's educational ideals embodied these concepts, and as a result

she was successful in educating generations of students who in turn committed themselves to fighting for a better world.

Cooper's lifelong struggle for educational equity reveals continuous patterns of social activism on the part of Black women educators of her time. In analyzing her life's work, one sees that her resiliency came from her ability to help develop and head significant educational institutions which provided quality educational experiences for African-Americans. The courage, determination, and single-minded dedication displayed by Cooper in her struggles to transform society and educate and uplift women and the African-American race best epitomize her overall legacy.

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