

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Different Perspectives on Majority Rules (1996)

People of Color in Predominantly White
Institutions

April 1996

Transforming the Ivory Tower: Ebony Women Redefining the Academy. Embracing Contraries: African American Women in the Academy

Anne S. Butler

Kansas State University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/pocpwi1st>



Part of the [Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies Commons](#)

Butler, Anne S., "Transforming the Ivory Tower: Ebony Women Redefining the Academy. Embracing Contraries: African American Women in the Academy" (1996). *Different Perspectives on Majority Rules (1996)*. 22.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/pocpwi1st/22>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the People of Color in Predominantly White Institutions at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Different Perspectives on Majority Rules (1996) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Transforming the Ivory Tower: Ebony Women Redefining the Academy

Embracing Contraries: African American Women in the Academy

Dr. Anne S. Butler

Kansas State University

“The session concludes with a framework of an African American ‘womanist’ moral leadership ethic, which, if embraced, can serve as a paradigm for transforming the academy in the twenty-first century.”

Within the context of college and university settings, several contradictory factors serve as oppositional forces to the success and well-being of African American women faculty members. These include: 1) the concept of a glass elevator being in, but not necessarily of, the department; 2) hyper visibility-consistently being seen and counted as more than one person; 3) the operation of a conspiracy of silence as it relates to research and scholarship about ourselves; and 4) the color blind fallacy, in which race is not supposed to matter. Operating alone or in concert with each other, these factors seriously threaten and may erode the well-being of an African American faculty member.

As a faculty member and director of a Women's studies program, the presenter speaks of how African American Women 'make it ova' despite the sometimes bewildering effect of the multiple contradictions. Rather than presenting the "how to's" to counteract the negative contraries, she sets the stage for a way of looking that triggers in the participants specific things to do they may not have thought of otherwise. The session concludes with a framework of an African American "Womanist" moral leadership ethic, which, if embraced, can serve as a paradigm for transforming the academy in the twenty-first century.

PRESENTER

Dr. Anne S. Butler is the Director of Women's Studies and Assistant Professor, counseling and educational psychology at Kansas State University. She received a Ph.D. in curriculum and policy studies from Kansas State University in 1990.