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FROM THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN:
WOMEN AND EDUCATION IN
FRANCOPHONE CENTRAL AFRICA

BY

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Teacher Education

1991

ABSTRACT

FROM THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN:
WOMEN AND EDUCATION IN
FRANCOPHONE CENTRAL AFRICA

By

Diane VanBelle Prouty

This work examines the personal journey of one woman as she seeks to better understand the status of women in a Third World country and why girls are treated differently in the classroom than boys. The conflict between feminist philosophy and ethnographic objectivity is a pivotal praxis throughout the work, demonstrating how hard it is to occupy a defensible middle ground position. This conflict eventually forced her to confront her own gender and cultural biases. Although, the context of this study has some very unique parameters: African schools, teachers and students with a mix of languages, there are some underlying themes that emerged and insights gained that are globally applicable to school personnel.

The data for this ethnographic study, was conducted for a one-year period. Interviews with parents, teachers, administrators, government officials and students were conducted. Participant observations were also conducted in two classrooms at both the primary and secondary level.

Findings demonstrate that girls experience an apprenticeship for marriage that significantly influences their socialization and gender interactions. This

apprenticeship limits the educational opportunities that are available to them--not only in unequal access patterns and supplies but also in the kind of teacher interactions that take place and expectations for girls to learn and excel. Because of strong cultural expectations that exist, girls, afraid to fail and be unable to fulfill their natural role as wives and mothers, disengage from the academic community, marry and become mothers. Although resistance by girls to the cultural expectations that "girls marry and have children" does exist, cultural pressures both within and outside school are so strong, that most girls leave school before terminating primary level studies.

Interviews with nearly 200 parents show that parents have differing perceptions of what school is for than educators, policy makers or development agencies. Interviews with well-educated, career women discuss the dilemmas and tensions that they face in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. They reveal their personal struggles to get an education including the threat of abuse. They discuss their frustration because of the triple obligations of domestic, childcare and career responsibilities, male patriarchy and control.

You gave me love, support, a
wonderful childhood, and even
good genes. You were always
there for me and the kids when
I was bogged down and needed
some help. You read this,
reread this and ploughed
through it again. Mom and Dad
this is dedicated to you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

In the Beginning

> Lucia looked up and smiled faintly. Her
> eyes that had once shone like the bright
> glow of the full moon when the sky is
> clear and the drums beat loud were now
> dim like the last fading embers of a
> dying fire on a late and somber night.
> "I'm going," she said calmly. "Kwa heri
> (Good-bye)." And with that, she closed
> her eyes and was gone.
>
> They buried her on the hillside near her
> home. The grave is unmarked, as most
> graves are, and no one quite remembers
> where it is (R. Prouty, 1986, p. 33).

It is said a journey begins with the first step, but I'm
not so sure. In the book, Journey from Peppermint Street,
when Siebren leaves his home village of Weirom to visit his
aunt, he says that you aren't truly journeying until you have
gone past the farthest point that you already know--it is then
that your journey really begins. As Siebren walks along the
winding dirt road, he anxiously waits for that moment to come.
But around each bend, he discovers to his great
disappointment, that the road still looks familiar, that he
isn't truly a "journeying stranger" yet. For Siebren, the
journey is almost half over before it finally, truly, begins.

I went to Africa in 1978, literally dropping from the sky
into a world I had never even imagined. But my larger Siebren
journey had not yet begun...

...The six-seater Cessna broke through the clouds and I
could see the ground below me--a patchwork masterpiece in

greens and browns. As the plane descended, I watched palm trees wave in the wind. I watched dug-out canoes skim across the lake and herds of cows graze alongside the road. I watched as women trudged along the paths that wove in and out of the patchwork, babies tied to their backs and baskets balanced on their heads. The scenery below absorbed me, and its power over me gained in intensity the nearer we came to the ground. I had a literal sensation of two worlds colliding as the plane bounced on the grassy strip and came to a jerky stop.

Women and children were standing along the edges of the airstrip. Young boys, clad in shorts and T-shirts, waved sticks in the air and jumped and chanted and shouted. The young girls huddled together, clapped their hands and danced in quick, short steps that barely took their feet off the ground. The pilot spoke to my husband, Bob, in French. I couldn't understand what they were saying and that, combined with the strange environment, caused a wave of uneasiness to engulf me. I pulled three-year-old Heather closer and held two-year-old Danny tighter in my arms.

Later that evening, as I lay in my bed, I listened to the rhythmic sounds of drums beating in distant villages and women singing a shrill, repetitive chant as they danced in the moonlight through the night. As I listened to the hypnotic, discordant music, my feelings of self-doubt overwhelmed me and I wondered what I was going to do here on this mysterious

continent. How did I fit in, knowing neither the language nor the people? How would I survive?

My own doubts were those of a woman. And the images I remember were those of women and of girls. Images that have been indelibly burnt into my memory. One which haunts me still is that of a pregnant mother with a baby slung about her waist, bent low over the ground as she carries a heavy load of logs strapped to her back. Sweat is beaded on her brow. A rope woven from elephant grass is tied around the load of wood and pressed across her forehead, while her hands clasped together behind her neck push forward in an attempt to counterbalance the weight of the wood that pulls her back and weighs her down. After years of carrying such loads, the flat weave of the rope is permanently pressed on her forehead and on her hands, like a tatoo, a symbolic mark of the beast of burden that she has become.

The life and hard work of the women is a shared experience. They hoe and they harvest with a baby ever present on their backs. They call out to other women in neighboring fields as they work. Or as they forge ahead in great masses on their race to the marketplace (to be the first to sell their goods), they trade stories, laugh together, share one another's grief. The sun has yet to awaken as each journey begins, and thin pieces of cotton material are thrown over their bare shoulders to ward off the early morning chill and to try to protect sleeping babies carried tight against

their backs. Baskets of goods, precariously balanced on their heads, sway ever so slightly as the women turn to talk to the others in their group. Barefoot toddlers run to keep up with mothers who confidently rush down the road with walking sticks firmly in hand. Even the older "mamas" with their wooden pipes and their graying hairs, carry heavy loads of produce to the market and, as often as not, have a small child tied to their backs. This common bond of endless toil brings the women together to nurture one another in their shared struggle. It is their acknowledged lot in life and they accept it with courage because they recognize that there is no other way, no release.

In sharp contrast, men in rural central Africa have few job responsibilities in the village and contribute little to the subsistence of the family. Traditional agricultural divisions of labor that have been passed on for generations assign the more exhausting and physically demanding work of clearing the trees and preparing the land to the men of the village. The women have traditionally been assigned the lighter work of hoeing, planting, weeding, and harvesting. Yet as more land has become cleared, and agricultural labor has shifted away from old slash and burn techniques, job responsibilities have remained essentially the same. Most agricultural production is now done on small plots of land which don't require plowing or clearing and are worked by the same family until the natural fertility of the soil is

diminished. Men who are reluctant to cross the gender boundaries and do work traditionally undertaken by women find themselves unable to contribute significantly to the family's support. Instead, many men gather together, play games, listen to the radio, and drink banana beer, as the women labor in the fields.

In some areas, men join in a communal agricultural effort to plant goods for sale to entrepreneurs who transport the produce to the larger, more populated areas. Agricultural pursuits like these are socially acceptable; working in the smaller family plots is not. More enterprising men enter into business endeavors on their own, such as establishing small dukas, makeshift portable roadside stands that sell anything from bread and candy to soap and flashlights. Or they may travel to the lake regions on bikes, buy a basketload of fresh or salted fish, and make the return voyage to distant villages where the fish can be sold for a higher price. In general, the lack of a significant industrial sector, limited business opportunities, and the strong, cultural gender boundaries that limit mens' contribution mean that they, too, have become victims of the system that enslaves the women. But, if one thinks that the lives of the men are hard, the lives of the women are harder.

Their hard lives begin when, as pre-adolescent girls, they assume the dual responsibility of caring for younger siblings and helping the family to earn a living, tending the

family gardens and bartering in the marketplace. It is not uncommon for younger sisters in a family to accompany an older brother or sister to their married home as domestic help. They may be obliged to journey with them to areas that are quite distant from their home villages and their term of service may continue for many years.

Even after their own children are raised and on their own, women continue their long hours of toil as grandmothers, helping in the family's food gardens and the homes of their eldest son. But, despite the major contribution that women make to support the family, they have marginal status and their access to power and decision making is negligible. Much of this reflects the low status to which they are relegated in the family due in part to traditional kinship ties in a patrilineal culture (where lineage and inheritance are passed from father to son) and a patrilocal society (where brides leave their village after marriage to join their husband's family in his natal village).

My introduction to the status and role of women in Africa didn't take long. Anxious to meet the new missionary family, an endless stream of villagers arrived at our door during the first week to welcome us and to bring us little tokens of their appreciation that we had honored them by coming to live among them. Invariably, these scenes would unfold in the same manner. The husband and wife would come separately-together. The wife would follow the husband by a short distance carrying

a basket of eggs, or a sack of potatoes, or some other gift of her labor. The husband would knock at the door and she would carry the gift forward. Then, her husband would talk with my husband while she'd stand behind her husband, waiting for the visit to be terminated. Sometimes as the wives would stand there, they'd begin to laugh uncomfortably and raise their hands to their mouths to stifle the sounds of their laughing. There we were, standing across from each other, mirror images: the African wife unable to speak French, standing behind her husband and the American wife, also unable to speak French, standing behind her husband. Two women, two cultures, two solitudes.[1]

Almost immediately after my arrival, my life became intertwined with the lives of the village women. As the wife of a missionary, certain kinds of behaviors were expected of me, both by other missionaries and local church leaders.[2] One

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[1]. As the years passed and my skills in French significantly improved, I came to realize that many of those men who welcomed us were also unable to speak French very well. Consequently, the wife's inability to effectively communicate in French was less the issue than the man's control of the situation.

[2]. All the work that I did during the five years while we lived in Zaire was unpaid "voluntary" work. In fact, Bob is the only one who received any service credit for retirement benefits or salary for the years we spent in Zaire. According to our church policy his is the only presence that was officially recognized--a policy that years later while living in Rwanda I would unsuccessfully fight to have changed.

activity was to help in a program to "improve"[3] the domestic skills of the women: teaching them to sew, to bake bread, to provide nutritious meals for their families, and to "improve" their child-care skills. That I needed to improve these skills myself was incidental. I was white, and the underlying assumption held by local men and women both, was that I had access to knowledge that the local women lacked. Most importantly, it was further assumed--particularly by the men-- that these skills were genetically, biologically coded in me because of my femaleness and that these skills would be well developed and transferable to the local women because of their femaleness. Echoes of the local men's oft repeated replies when I'd suggest that maybe they might like to join these classes are still fresh in my memory. "Oh no, Madame, that is a woman's job. See, even you do them in your home. Women all over the world do them. Women can do these things better than

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[3].   It was actually very ethnocentric that I could so easily believe that I could teach the local women how to improve their cooking skills. I was used to cooking out of cans and buying most everything I needed at a modern, well supplied grocery store. Furthermore, I had modern conveniences in my kitchen in North America. In Africa, we had to cook everything "from scratch" (including grinding our own flour from wheat kernels), cooked over fires (I had a wood stove) without the aid of electrical appliances (I took some electrical appliances with me but there seldom was any electricity) or modern conveniences. It would be more appropriate to say that we learned cooperatively and if anything, they taught me far more than I ever taught them.

men. You were <u>born</u> to do them better. No, it is right that our wives learn how to do these things."

Most of the activities that I was expected to oversee and supervise were extensions of the work that I did in my own home. There was the added challenge of trying to communicate with the wives of the students[4] in their different languages-- French, Swahili, Kinande, Kinyarwanda. But, for the most part, what I was expected to teach them wasn't much different from my own daily chores. However, some of these were things that I hadn't expected or wanted to oversee and supervise. These were things that I found emotionally draining and traumatic. Even to tell of them now remains hard.

Two kilometers from our mission, just around the big bend in the road, was a self-supporting Catholic mission run by three Italian missionaries: two priests (Giovanni and Gianni) and Concetta--a lay sister. New features were continually being added--one year a sawmill, one year a co-op, later a

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[4]. During this period, my family was living at a secondary school in the northern part of the Kivu province of Zaire. There was also a post-secondary ministerial school with an enrollment of thirty students--all male. For the most part, it was the wives of these students and a few village women who attended the classes that I conducted. Although several of the wives had moderately "good" educations (through the primary level) none of them furthered their studies while at the secondary school. Financial constraints would have been a problem but more significantly, they were too busy working in their gardens to provide food for the family to take time off to go to school.

carpenter shop, still later a primary school. But of everything they did, nothing was more beneficial or more appreciated than the building of a maternity clinic. Giovanni and Gianni built the clinic, and Concetta ran it. At first, only a few "mamas" came from their villages to wait for the delivery of their babies. Eventually, however, the beds were full and the halls echoed with the voices of expectant mothers and female family members who'd come along to care for the mother and forthcoming baby.

The mothers who came were the difficult cases, the ones who never had babies easily, ones who often labored and lost. Concetta and her trained staff helped many of these women, saved many babies' lives. But they couldn't help all the women. For some, when it became clear that doctors instead of midwives were needed, and a hospital instead of a clinic, Giovanni or Gianni would make a hasty trip through the rain forest to the nearest hospital an hour's drive away. It would seem much longer than an hour to the laboring woman lying on a thin mattress in the back of the car, however. The combination of jolting road and tightening labor could be almost unbearable as the old Land Rover bounced from pot hole to pot hole.[5]

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[5].   I know the pain of a trip like that well. It remains in your memory long after the ordeal is over. When our last child, Jonny, was born, we raced to the only hospital with a doctor which was two hours away. But ours was a race to ensure that there would be no problems unlike the race against death that these women

Whenever the Land Rover refused to run, or when it was gone, the night watchman would hastily ride from the Catholic mission to the Adventist mission on Giovanni's motorcycle to let us know that help was needed. Day or night, rain or shine, we'd drive to the clinic and then on to the nearest hospital in a race for life.

The women who needed to be rushed to the hospital were often the ones who'd waited too long. After being in labor for days, after the village fetisher or mid-wife had given up hope, eight village men would be chosen to carry the mother, exhausted from labor and weak from pain, over the mountain paths in a woven stretcher to Concetta. Sometimes an arm or leg of the undelivered baby would be exposed and partly delivered. All too often the baby would already be dead and the mother barely clinging to life.

At night, when Bob raced off to the hospital, I'd watch the headlights of the car, beacons of light in darkness, wave up and down as the car bounced over the gutted, rocky and muddy roads. I'd stand, looking out the window until the lights faded from sight. Even if I went back to bed, I'd never sleep. My thoughts would be with the mother, praying that this time they'd make it, that this time the baby would live, praying that next time they'd come to Concetta a little earlier.

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faced.

One night, almost at midnight, I heard the all too familiar knock at the door. I knew the night watchman had come. All the men at our mission, including Bob, were gone, and I was left with the only car on the compound. This time, I would have to make the race with death. The mother was young, too young to be fighting for her life. Her face was worn from fatigue, her arms cradled her swollen belly, and she was in pain. Yet she didn't utter a sound. I remember asking Concetta what her problem was, and she told me, "I'm afraid her uterus might rupture. Get her there as fast as you can. But be careful of the bumps..." Her words trailed off and we both knew that the road ahead of us was long and rough and only speed would save her.

I began the journey to the hospital, splashing through mud holes, swerving around washouts. The young mother in the car clutched at her stomach while the older woman accompanying her grabbed her firmly by the shoulders and held her in the seat, constantly repeating words of encouragement as we sped over the road. The road seemed endless that night, and the trip seemed to last forever, but we finally saw the lights of the hospital in the distance as I went around the last bend in the road. I jerked the car to a stop, jumped out, and ran around to open the door and help the mother out. Slowly, she made her way to the benches inside the door and hesitantly, weakly sat down.

I looked about me. Outside, lying on patches of grass, were six or seven pregnant women in varying stages of labor. Other women, some pregnant, some not, cradled the laboring women in their arms, rubbed their backs and stomachs, rocked them to and fro. One woman was chanting mournfully, and her arms were interlocked in the pregnant woman's arms giving her something to push against. Still others had their heads bowed low near the ear of the expectant mother, softly whispering words over and over. A few of the women moaned in pain as the labor intensified, but most didn't make a sound. Instead, they just quietly rocked back and forth to ease the waves of pain.

I've had four babies. I remember the pain, the long hours of labor, the wondering if it would ever end. I also remember a soft bed and a sterile room. I remember pain killers, and doctors and ever-present nurses. I knew that my baby would be okay, that we'd make it through the night. But these were mothers who didn't know if their babies would be okay, women who genuinely must have wondered if tomorrow would ever come.

I pounded on a locked door off the waiting room until a nurse in a blood-splattered lab coat opened the door and peeked out. I told her that the young girl needed help, that Concetta had sent her to them. The nurse walked into the room, turned her head, and stared intently at the young girl. She nodded her head and said, "We'll get to her when we can."

Then she turned around, walked away, and went back through the door that clicked shut behind her.

I sat down on a bench across from the young girl and kept watch over her. She never said a word, never made a sound. Back held rigid and arms encircling her abdomen, she silently waited for something to happen, for someone to come. Occasionally, the old mama, who'd accompanied the young girl, would break the silence and ask the young girl a question. The girl would only nod her head in reply, never breaking her silence, too busy enduring her pain.

By the time help came in the cold and impersonal form of a disinterested doctor it was too late. The next day I learned from Concetta that the baby had died, but an emergency hysterectomy had saved the mother. Concetta's eyes were misted over and her voice was full of emotion as she spoke, and I knew she was thinking of Lucia.

Lucia had been an old mama who had come to Concetta many times. But the last time she'd come, it was one birth too many and she was too old, and the birth was taking too long. They tried to get her to the hospital in time, but each hospital they went to had no doctor, and Lucia didn't have the strength to hold on while they searched for yet another one farther away that might have a doctor there. Concetta held her in her arms, whispering words of courage, hope, and strength. And Concetta wept as Lucia died in her arms in the back of the ancient Land Rover. They saved the baby, but the

father didn't want him, so Concetta cared for him, raised him, loved him as her own. And each time a mother or a baby died, Concetta remembered Lucia and cried just a little bit more.

This mother wasn't like Lucia; she had survived. Yet the tragedy wasn't over. Concetta knew all too well that a young woman unable to bear children could easily be abandoned by her husband. These were the hard things, the emotional things, traumatic things that made me angry and frustrated at the system. I was angry at everyone and everything--the nurse who could walk away and leave her there to suffer, the place, the traditions, the patriarchy--and especially the labor of women.

As the years passed and I began to understand the local languages better, I also began to get a better understanding of what life was like for women in central Africa. My first impressions involved the heavy work load, the endless poverty, the segregation. These were the visible manifestations of their low status. Other aspects of their lives, especially symbols of social relations and social structure such as kinship ties and the system of brideprice, were less visible and more difficult for the outsider to understand. Still another aspect that was hidden from our view was the fear of physical abuse that terrorized some of the women. Kavira, my house helper, introduced me to both issues, brideprice and abuse.

Kavira was nineteen years old when she came requesting work. Although she had a three-year-old daughter, she continued to live in her parents' home in a village seven kilometers from our mission compound because she was an unwed mother. I soon found her to be an invaluable worker: she taught me how to do so many of the tasks that I never had done before; furthermore, she learned quickly and worked well.

It was my custom to let her off work early on Friday afternoons so that she could arrive home in time to prepare for Sabbath. One Friday, however, I gave her a few jobs in addition to the normal duties, and she left considerably later than usual. The following Sunday when she arrived at work, I noticed that she had a dark scarf tied around her head hiding most of her face. I asked her about this, and she mumbled something about "doing something to (her) scalp" and left the room to begin her tasks. Several hours later, another missionary wife came to me and asked me if I "knew about Kavira". She then explained that because Kavira had arrived home later than usual the previous Friday afternoon, her father thought she'd met a boy on the way home. Since he didn't want any more "illegitimate babies to lower her brideprice," he intended to teach her a lesson. When she arrived home, he confronted her about her tardiness; then he beat her. All the village heard her screams. They heard her daughter's screams as well. Her family could do nothing. Her

neighbors would do nothing. The code of silence in the village was too strong.

I asked Kavira what had happened, and she denied that anything had taken place and kept turning her face so that I couldn't see the puffiness around her eyes, the bruises, the lacerations. But the emotional pain was greater than the physical pain and couldn't be hidden behind a veil of silence. She wept in my arms as she told me about her father's drunken rage, her fear that he would beat her to death.

Bob spoke to her father. He was told that this didn't concern us; Kavira was his daughter and his to do with as he chose. Bob began to ask questions in the village, talked to persons of authority in the area, and everyone said the same thing--we didn't understand; we weren't to intervene. All our probing made Kavira's situation at home more precarious, and I wondered if we shouldn't offer her a place in our home. She intimated that she would refuse any offer of help. All I could do was to make sure Kavira never left work late again.

Although we didn't speak of this incident again, several months later Kavira told me about the relationship that she'd had that ended in the birth of Masika. It wasn't uncommon for young girls to have a child out of marriage. Boys anxious to prove their sexual prowess could become quite demanding. Even in situations where girls would be reluctant to establish a sexual relationship, "there's not a whole lot we can do--men are in charge and they won't listen to us when we say 'no'."

So, Kavira had gotten involved, and when it was all over, she was left with the responsibility of caring for a small child.

Kavira explained how her brideprice had been influenced by Masika's birth. In the very traditional areas of Africa, such as central Africa, most marriages were still arranged by the parents. Parents of adult males would begin to search for eligible young women to marry their sons[6]. They'd want to find a girl that would be an asset to their family, if they could afford to pay the price in goats or cows. Many characteristics are considered when negotiating the brideprice ("la dot"). In this particular region, being a good worker who is willing to tend family gardens, with a strong family history of bearing many healthy children, and a primary-level

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[6]. In general, families would try to negotiate with the family of an eligible young girl as their son reached his late teens or early twenties. However, if the groom's extended family would be unable to pay for the girl's brideprice or dot (which in this particular ethnic group was paid in installments at specific points in the negotiation process) it was unlikely that arrangements for a marriage would be finalized or even considered. In the region of Zaire where we lived the average dot consisted of 7 goats, several yards of cloth, cooking oil and beer. The goats would be shared with members of the girl's extended paternal family; the cloth would be given to her to make a wrap-around garment similar to a sari and would often be the last new piece of cloth she would have for years; the cooking oil would be for her mother; and the beer would be for her father. Because it could take so long to accumulate the wealth to pay for a girl's dot, men tended to marry women five to ten years younger than themselves.

education would all be considered assets when establishing the brideprice.

Because so many young girls in Kavira's tribe had a child before marriage, the girl's ability to bear children could be considered an asset in the negotiations. Kavira told me that her pregnancy and the subsequent birth of a healthy daughter had caused her father to raise the number of goats that he was asking for her. However, because a family would be reluctant to have their son marry a girl who brought the added responsibility of several children, more pregnancies before marriage would considerably reduce a girl's chances of marriage and lower her marriageable status to the equivalent of a widow with children, a situation in that region which was particularly grim. Despite my attempts to understand brideprice in the cultural context in which it was practiced, it was difficult for me to see it as anything but a way in which monetary value was placed on women as they were bartered and sold. From my perspective, it appeared that a woman's worth was measured by her brideprice, and her role and function in society were intricately caught up in this system. From birth a girl was raised to believe that she would become some man's wife, live with and labor for his family yet never be a part of the family, and bear children that would belong to that particular family clan. If she bore sons, they might bring her some measure of status and security as she grew

older; if she bore girls, they would be married off and move away. She then would be left alone and barren.

Each passing year that we spent in Africa helped me to better understand the shared existence of all women. First impressions had made me think that my life was a sharp contrast to theirs. And in many ways, I lived a life of relative ease. I was well-educated. I was cosmopolitan. I was relatively free from domestic toil, kinship ties, and obligations, I didn't fear physical abuse. But the longer I lived in Africa, the harder I looked, and the more I reflected on who I was, the more I began to question my first impressions and assumptions. It became clearer to me that my role and function was identical to theirs. Instead of the sharp contrast that I saw initially, it became increasingly obvious that _all_ women shared this common bond, that we all labored under the same circumstances, that we all struggled against the limiting structure of reproduction, domestic burden, and male definition.

I seemed light years away from Ontario where we had been living when we accepted the job offer from our church to go to central Africa as missionaries. Bob had been the principal of an elementary school, and after I'd left my full-time teaching job, I had been doing some part-time substitute teaching. Neither of us had been particularly happy with our situation, and we had thought that a change of scenery, literally, might be just the thing that we needed.

I had been going through some difficult years. I felt I had lost my identity, my goals, my aspirations, and I was frightened. I'd graduated from college, gotten married, and embarked upon a career as an elementary teacher. When we began a family two years after marrying, I agreed with Bob that it was best that I leave the work force and stay home with Heather. It hadn't occurred to either Bob or me at that point that a shared responsibility of childcare should be undertaken. We both easily accepted the dominant ideology that <u>men</u> <u>worked</u> outside the home while <u>women</u> <u>stayed</u> at home and took on the responsibilities there.

At first, I delighted in my new role. As Heather grew and developed, each new accomplishment of hers became mine as well. Then Danny came along, and the process repeated itself. But this time, it didn't have the same impact. I noticed that I felt increasingly discontented and frustrated with who I was and what I was doing. I had eagerly anticipated the opportunity to stay at home with our children so that they would be properly nurtured and raised the way we wanted them raised. But, after I was home full-time and the months--then years--passed by, I felt as if I was only marking time--or, lagging behind. I noticed that I was developing amnesia of self and found it increasingly difficult to find/remember my talents, my abilities, and what I had to offer. My interaction with Bob, Heather and Danny (and then Teddy Roy and Jonny), as delightful as it was, couldn't counteract the

boredom of changing and washing diapers, cooking meals, washing dishes and clothes, cleaning the same house, day in and day out. Even my involvement in voluntary organizations wasn't enough to arrest my welling discontent. However, despite the frustration with the repetitive and non-challenging aspects of my life, it was the vulnerability I felt that frightened me most. I no longer had an income; I no longer received a salary for my work. Since I had no salary--despite the fact that I knew how vital my job was--I couldn't stop the flow of frustration, even resentment, that my work was worth nothing in the eyes of society.[7] But, my vulnerability was more keenly felt because of the emphasis and strain it put on my relationship with Bob.

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[7]. Robert E. Gould writes in his article "Measuring Masculinity by the Size of a Paycheck" in Alison M. Jaggar & Paula S. Rothenberg's book Feminist Frameworks that in the American culture a person's worth is determined by the amount that they're able to earn not by their worth as a human being. He writes that there is also a prevailing belief that men should be the major moneymaker in a family and that in many marriages there is resistance to an income-producing wife. Working women can create tensions in a marriage because it can make a man feel threatened and emasculated. Phillips and Taylor (1980) write, "Women's work is often deemed inferior because it is women who do it, and women workers carry their subordinate status into the workplace with them, where this status come to define the value of the work they do" (p. 79). Certainly this has implications not only for me as the housewife but also for me as the teacher, a "feminized" profession.

At times, it seemed that Bob was my only outlet to the "real" world. I felt dependent on him, not only for my financial security, but for emotional well-being and intellectual stimulation as well. Everything I did, thought, or said became filtered through him. Not only did I view him as my access to information and social interaction, he became the unit by which I validated what I did and what I thought. I eventually arrived at the point that whenever I wanted someone to listen to me, I'd say, "Bob says..." When he'd challenge me about this, demanding to know why I had said that he had said something, I couldn't tell him. I didn't know why. But I did know that for me there was little value to what I thought or did. In my world, my role was inferior to his, and I discounted my own contribution and even my existence because of this.[8]

By the time we arrived in Africa, this devaluing process had begun to rob me of my self. I saw Diane as an extension of Bob and now felt all the more vulnerable and defenseless in a strange culture where I couldn't understand the language or

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[8]. Many books and articles have been written on the devaluing process that a great number of women experience when they leave the workforce to care for their children. Lillian Breslow Rubin's book World of Pain was written about the time that I was at the height of my frustration. One of the most difficult aspects of this experience is the feeling that you are alone. Had I known about literature such as this, I might have avoided a great deal of emotional anguish and spared my husband and children a great deal of frustration and concern.

the lives of the people around me. Suddenly, Bob had entered a world where I couldn't follow. It was as if we had a schizophrenic relationship--he had multiple lives, many of which were unknown to me, and I only had one, yet it was defined entirely through my relationship with him. His job as principal provided him the opportunity to travel, see new places, meet new people, while I remained at home, rarely leaving the confines of our small compound. Even on the compound, Bob was able to interact freely and develop friendships where I struggled to develop friendships with the French-speaking families we lived among. Everywhere I went, I couldn't fully understand what took place, what was happening. It was as if I stood on the fringes of life picking up a bit here, a little there, as I attended religious services, bartered for goods at the market, built a life for myself. But having no status and no official role was the most keenly felt part of my frustration. Everyone saw me through Bob and my invisibility became complete when I lost my name. I began lashing out at students who called me "Madame Prefet" telling them that my name was Diane and I was someone other than his wife, the principal's spouse. The students would laugh at me and tell me that I should be honored to have such a successful husband and be proud to be called "his wife". They didn't understand, and often even I didn't understand my anger and frustration. Ironically, I, like them, had placed my identity in him--allowed myself to lose my

self in Bob. I was frustrated that I did it to myself but when others did it to me I became all the more frustrated and angry.

This sense of isolation--physical isolation in a land so strange and far from my own and the emotional isolation from my husband--eventually forced me to look at myself and what I had become. After living in Africa for nearly five years, my understanding of who I was as woman began to emerge. As I looked, I knew that somehow, some way, things would have to change. Ironically, I knew I must start over again, find myself, and re-establish my own self-worth in a culture where women and their contributions were ignored at best and devalued in general. This was not going to be an easy process for me, especially in the African surroundings. Everything around me was controlled and defined in masculine terms. Even roles that were commonly associated with the feminine domain, such as domestic servants, were defined in masculine terminology: a male domestic servant was a boy; a female domestic servant was a "boyesse."

The more I looked about and was touched by the lives of the women living around me, the more I began to realize that the search to find my self was intangibly intertwined in other women's lives. It became increasingly evident that what I struggled with wasn't about me. Nor was it about them. It was about women's rights and roles. It was about the need for a changed perspective on relationships and responsibilities.

It was about the value of human life. This realization was a great awakening for me, and it was with renewed vitality that I faced who I was and what I had to offer.

In December, 1983, after five and a half years in Africa, we returned to North America. Despite the distance that separated me from Africa and my great awakening, I was determined to continue in this search and find answers to universal questions concerning the status and role of women. I knew how difficult the questions were that I was asking and that it would take a long time to find these answers.

In the fall of 1984, I began graduate studies in education, studies that would eventually, three years later, lead me back to Africa and closer to the truth. The initial realization that my search involved other women continued to grow throughout my studies and subsequent research and dramatically influenced the course that my work, my life, would take. Little did I know it then, but I was getting ready to begin my Siebren journey.

CHAPTER TWO

The Journey Begins

And just how does Madame intend
to go about her study?
(Official, Ministry of
Education).

There are always decisions to make when planning a trip,

important decisions that can make the difference between

success and failure. There are passports and visas and shots,

itineraries to plan and books to consult. But these are the

easy decisions. The hard decisions have to do with baggage.

I used to find it easy to decide what baggage to take--to

choose the things that I'll _need_ for the trip. The agony

comes when deciding what to leave behind, deciding what I

won't _need_ for the journey--things that will only add weight

and hinder progress. Baggage became a particularly important

aspect for me to consider when I went back to Africa to begin

this study. In spite of five years of experience in Africa

already, as it turned out, I took too much baggage with me.

Bob and I were to take part in developing an education

department at a French-speaking university in central Africa.

The university included students from throughout French-

speaking Africa. It would be our responsibility to prepare

secondary-school pedagogy teachers--not merely teaching

teachers to teach, which is challenge enough, but teaching

teachers to teach teachers. It was going to be a great

challenge and one thing was certain: we would need a lot of

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supplies to start up the program. As I recall, it took exactly 10 seventy-pound boxes. We bought boxes from a moving company, put them together with lots of tape and packed the supplies (mostly books and articles). But that wasn't all the baggage we had. We'd been through a move like this before, and I knew how long it could take for a crate to arrive by sea with our personal belongings. So on the plane we also took some additional baggage of household goods, clothes, food items unavailable locally, toys and other items to see us through the first few months. All of this took another 20 seventy-pound boxes, loaded to the limit.

Since I was soon to be writing my comprehensive exams and, then, starting my dissertation, I also needed supplies for this. The books, articles, papers, computer hardware and software, and supplies took another 5 seventy-pound boxes. We rented a van, loaded all the boxes, drove to the international airport in Detroit, and delighted in the amazed and incredulous looks of the check-in agents at the ticket counter as we lugged 35 boxes into the terminal, lined them up to be weighed, and paid our bill. We then sighed with relief as the boxes bumped their way along the conveyor belt to be packed in crates and loaded in the cargo hold of the plane.

All of this baggage was accounted for and the reasons for taking it were clearly understood (at least by me). But there was also a great deal of baggage that was accompanying me that I wasn't aware of, not at the start of my study, anyway. This

baggage significantly influenced the study that I conducted, particularly as I developed my proposal and gathered my data. Unfortunately, it wasn't so easily labeled, packed, and weighed. In fact, just discovering that I carried it with me became a major piece of my study.

Shifting focus of research--Discovering excess baggage

Classes that I had taken during my graduate program had a profound effect upon me. I suddenly learned a whole world of vocabulary that gave meaning to all the inequalities that I had witnessed while living in Zaire. Authors such as Anyon, Apple, Freire, Giroux, Gramsci and so many others helped me understand the social interactions that had taken place. Yet despite this knowledge that I had gained, I still naively believed that the marginal status of women in Africa could be improved through identified changes in the educational sector. I thought that gender-defined roles and patterns of interaction found in society at large were being reproduced in the classroom and that changing these patterns outside the classroom was simply contingent upon developing and implementing more equitable access policies and patterns of interaction within the classroom.

Enhancing patterns of accessibility has been the central theme of many educational studies focusing on Africa (see Bowman & Anderson, 1980; Eshiwani, 1985; Kinyanjui, 1981; Maliyamkono, Ishumi & Wells, 1982; Mbilinyi, 1973; and Njenga,

1986). These studies give much evidence to indicate that the comparative disadvantages of girls to boys still exist. Although the expansion and improvement of educational opportunities for girls in Africa have been recurrent themes and a central policy thrust for nearly two decades, attempts to achieve equal access of education have not been successful.

A wide range of studies (Adams & Kruppenbach, 1986; Biraimah, 1987; Bray, Clarke and Stephens, 1986; Cutrufelli, 1983; Davié, 1980; Deble, 1980; Finn, Reis & Dolber, 1980; Foster & Clignet, 1966; Kerner, 1986; Mukene, 1988) have shown that there is unequal representation of girls at all educational levels and that the problem is not a solely African problem. This becomes more noticeable in the higher grades, particularly at the post-secondary level. Mahony (1985, p. 34) writes that, "It is now fashionable to talk of the under achievement of girls". Sadly, the common currency of this expression aptly represents the extent of the problem.

Yet a focus on under-representation alone has always seemed unhelpful to me. Of more interest is the context of under-representation, the factors that explain how women's potential to become agents of social change has been blunted.

Boserup's (1970) key study on women in development strongly suggests that cultural norms limiting female access to education are tied to production issues. Pre-pubescent girls, who share in domestic responsibilities and care of younger siblings or extended family members, contribute

significantly to the subsistence of the family unit. Many parents fear that permitting daughters to participate in schooling could contribute to false and unrealistic ambitions for future employment outside the traditional domestic sphere of household chores, family gardening, and child care.

Boserup's work, corroborated by Adams and Kruppenbach (1986), Bay and Hafkin (1975), Giovanni and Saul (1973), and Harrison (1979), demonstrates how a girl's limited educational engagement becomes a tangled web in which future options for educational opportunities are denied on the grounds of a girl's educational deficiencies.[1] Deble (1980) writes that unfavorable social/cultural norms about the education of girls, coupled with a significant lack of female role models and the absence of relevant programs for girls, are major factors accounting for low participation rates for girls in school. Biraimah (1987) studied Nigerian patterns of access and noted that differentiated instruction favored the boys and negatively influenced girls' participation and long-term commitment to educational studies. Kerner (1986) posited that social/economic factors, including the work and income potential of girls, fear of unwanted pregnancy, inappropriate

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[1]. In many cases, girls are unable to effectively compete in the classroom with male students. The limited educational opportunities that they have been given means that they do become poorer students. This, then, serves to perpetuate the perception that girls are less deserving of educational studies.

curriculum, and lack of role models were important factors in explaining the low participation rates for girls found in most African countries.

As I developed my proposal in the fall of 1988, these studies reinforced my belief that changes in the classroom should focus on developing the leadership skills of girls. I felt that only as girls were given the opportunity to develop their leadership potential, allowing them to become change agents, would the status and life chances of women in their part of Africa improve. In view of this, my initial focus was on the classroom. I wanted to see what influence teacher-student interactions and instructional techniques had on educational outcomes, particularly in the development of leadership potential. I was struck, in perusing the scarce literature dealing with Zaire and Rwanda, that studies of inequities in these two countries generally had centered solely around ethnic differences. Yet the statistics showed much greater disparity along gender lines than along ethnic ones.

The study I proposed, then, sought to open up a comparatively new area of African educational research. It would provide baseline data for future researchers dealing with gender-related issues and would explore the meaningfulness of a number of concepts in this field developed by Western-oriented research efforts: male dominance of school space and time, male dominance of linguistic space,

boy/girl orientation to curriculum, linguistic bias, role differentiation, teacher-generated gender expectations, etc. The key research question that I would be asking of the participants in the study was: given your perception of what a leader is and what a leader does, how are students chosen and prepared for leadership roles? Two related assertions that I hoped to discuss were: (1) that girls did not project leadership positions for themselves and (2) that the limited number of adult female role models in leadership positions in central Africa significantly influenced the girls' inability to project themselves into leadership roles.

It was my plan to conduct a year-long, ethnographic study of selected schools in French-speaking central Africa. I would examine, through interviews with teachers, students, parents, administrators, and education ministry officials, differing viewpoints as to what constitutes acceptable roles for women in central African society. I hoped that by doing this, the participants' perspective, their insiders' view, would become clear to me. This did not take place and I remain very much the "outsider" in most ways. However, my struggle to understand these issues from the insider's perspective became a powerful aspect of this work.

Classroom observations would be the primary method of data collection to illustrate differential treatment of boys and girls, based on different understandings of what the role of the woman in society should be. In order to determine

whether a staged[2] effect existed and whether differences in instructional techniques and/or interactional patterns could be detected as the students moved through the educational system, observations and interviews would be conducted at both the primary and secondary levels.

I began to carry out the study with this goal and approach in mind. I began conducting interviews and performing an analysis of preliminary data from that general conceptual framework. Yet as this study evolved, it became increasingly evident that observed behaviors in the classroom represented cultural factors and belief systems. Both students and teachers were responding to expectations that had been defined and reinforced outside the classroom more than inside. The ever-present influence from strong cultural norms, which relegated to women low status and gave certain kinds of work to men and women, were continually surfacing in the statements being made to me, creating a tension and pull from outside the classroom focus.

In order to better understand this tension, it became necessary for me to develop a broader picture--to look beyond

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[2]. For the purposes of this dissertation, _staged_ refers to differences in instruction or patterns of interaction that might exist between the primary and secondary level. I wanted to determine if more or less emphasis was being given at either the primary or secondary level to the development of gender-defined roles and modes of behavior, particularly in reference to leadership capacity.

the classroom in order to understand the classroom.[3] It was in doing this, reaching out into a sea of culture unfamiliar to me, even after living there for many years, that I became painfully aware of all the excess baggage that I had carried along: ideas about the gender roles and expectations that I had for women that slowed my journey and limited the number of places I could visit. This baggage made it harder to begin understanding what could be done in order for women to achieve higher status and improved life chances.

In order to better understand this evolution, a discussion of the chronology of my study will be beneficial. Of particular interest is the role that methodology played in this study and the limitations that developed as the study evolved.

Gaining access

During the first week of December, 1988, I contacted the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for permission to conduct research. A pleasant man with wire-rimmed glasses looked up from his desk, a flicker of mild amusement playing across his face.

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[3]. As I developed my proposal initially, interviews with parents were a component of the research model. This "pull beyond the classroom" was much less a question of who was being included in the sample than of how I was analyzing and interpreting the data I received.

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"<u>Madame</u> is going to do research?" he asked. This was something new and unexpected.

"She certainly is," I replied, "and she'd like official permission to do it."

"Well," he continued. "What is Madame doing her research about?" I gave him a quick overview of my ideas about gender-differentiated schooling. He seemed genuinely interested.

"And how does Madame intend to go about doing her research study?"

I had hoped he wouldn't ask that. I knew what I wanted to do, and I knew even better what I didn't want to do, but I wasn't at all sure how he would react. "I don't want to visit a lot of schools," I told him. "Just one or two. I want to know what goes on every day. I want to know how teachers teach, how students learn, how they decide who does what. I want to know about the processes going on inside the classroom, and I won't learn anything if I can't stay long enough in one place to get to know them."

This was a new approach for the Ministry official, but I need not have feared. He thought it sounded interesting, and he said it was something the government was interested in learning more about. However, his amusement that this was to be a study by a woman and basically about the education of women was written across his face, in his broad smile, the laughter in his eyes, the chuckle in his voice. But he willingly signed the letter of permission that I had already typed up. This opened the doors and I was in, now able to

negotiate entry into the schools I wanted to visit! In early January, 1989, data collection began.

During the Christmas vacation, I asked Daniel to help with data collection. A refugee from Burundi, Daniel had just completed an undergraduate degree in education and was looking for work. It would be a difficult time of the year to find employment, so he agreed to work with me and postponed looking for a teaching position until the fall. He had studied research methods, was familiar with ethnographic research procedures, and could speak the local languages fluently. This arrangement was necessary because, even though I could now understand and speak French fluently, I was still unable to speak any of the local languages.

Preliminary interviews with local educators indicated that the most appropriate type of secondary school at which to observe, given the nature of the research project, would be a teacher training school, since girls' enrollment in the other types of schools is often very low. Furthermore, many of the secondary schools in the prefecture (an administrative region) in which primary observations were made are not co-educational. Concerned that a restricted female sampling would distort the results of the study, I chose a teacher training school as the research site. On January 9, 1989, four days after receiving permission to conduct the research project, I contacted a school.

The school was operated by one of the many Protestant church groups in the area. It was in the process of receiving accreditation from the government. I had never visited the school prior to this initial contact and knew none of the teachers or students. However, six weeks after data collection had begun, Phillip, a student teacher from the university where I was employed, began practice teaching there. Phillip ultimately became a valuable source of information concerning student performance, teacher expectations, and staff interactions.[4]

I chose a primary school that was relatively close to the area where I lived. Since the secondary school was nearly an hour's drive away, I wanted to choose a primary school that was closer. Furthermore, I was familiar with the school before this study began and hoped that my acquaintance with the director would facilitate gaining access.

Intensive fieldwork in the schools lasted between January and March in the primary school and from January to June in the secondary school. Visits were made to the two schools on

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[4]. I had concerns throughout my data collection period about the fact that both Phillip and Daniel were males. At the time this study was conducted, I knew of no women in the area who had the necessary qualifications to assist me in this study: the language abilities, level of education including an understanding of research methods, and the time to spend hours observing in the classroom, interviewing participants and getting to and from research sites.

alternate days, Monday through Thursday for an initial three-week period. On several occasions during the next month of the data collection period, Daniel observed at the primary school, thereby enabling me to follow through on a complete week of observations at the secondary school. Otherwise, periodic observations continued at the primary school until March 30, with two follow-up visits after that period. Observations continued at the secondary school until June 7, when final exams began. In the initial phase of data collection during the first month, Daniel and I would visit the school for the entire school day. As the data collection continued we spent less time observing in the classroom and focused more on interviews of students, teachers, administrators and parents. On average, we would spend 25-30 hours a week visiting classrooms or interviewing people.

During the Easter and mid-semester break, interviews were conducted with parents in the area. Informal observations and interviews were conducted at eight primary schools in the Mulaka commune. Three interviews were conducted with the government inspector,[5] as well as one interview with each of

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[5]. Government inspectors in this area serve two functions. They carry out annual evaluations of the teachers in their area (préfectyre or sous-préfecture which are administrative units) to assess if they are eligible for annual pay increases. The government inspectors also make inspections of schools to determine if the prescribed government curriculum and pedagogical procedures are being implemented.

the directors of three other pedagogy schools, a nursing school director, a university administrator, four university professors, and a local man who had attended the first school opened in the region. We also visited twenty primary schools in the area and noted the sex of students present in each grade. Eight of the directors of these primary schools were interviewed. Three subsequent visits were made at each of the eight schools in order to compare the number of students in daily attendance from visit to visit. [For results of the counts at the eight schools where the directors were interviewed see Tables 1-8 in Appendix A. For a copy of the questions the directors were asked see Interview Sheet 1 in Appendix B.] The other directors weren't available and were unable to take part in our study. Informal interviews were also conducted with university students. Near the mid-point of the data collection period, we began to focus on observations in French and math classes at all six grade levels of the secondary school. Daniel and I attended different classes in order to increase the number of hours of observation in these classes. During data collection over 600 hours of interviews and observations were recorded, and nearly 3000 miles were covered driving to and from the research sites.

Data collection methods[6]

Four principal sources and methods of data collection were used: 1) participant observations, 2) interviews, 3) a researcher-designed student questionnaire, and 4) an analysis of written documentation. Each of these methods is described in detail below. During the period that data were being gathered, I also kept a journal in which personal reactions to the data were recorded. This record contains information about possible ethical dilemmas, personal frustrations with the data collection process, ideas to pursue, and miscellaneous encounters that affected the research.

Participant observations:[7]

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6. Procedures for data collection were developed in collaboration with the Michigan State University Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects. These measures were designed to protect the anonymity of all participants involved in the research study.

7. Many of the informants participating in the study were concerned when it was explained that their names would not be used in the dissertation. This was especially true of the secondary school students and the less qualified teachers participating in the study. Despite repeated attempts to demonstrate the advantages of this and the need to protect the participants' identity, it was their opinion that if this was necessary it must indicate that they were either doing something that I considered wrong--ethically or professionally--or that information presented in the dissertation would be inaccurate. Eventually, I explained that it was university policy not to identify individuals and/or institutions. They

Three types of observations were made: descriptive, focused, and selective. Initial observations tended to be descriptive: the layout of the physical plant; the curriculum (classes and content); the actors (names, personalities, functions); the activities (extra-curricular, work study, social interaction); and the time frames (class schedule and weekly schedule). However, as data collection progressed, observations became more focused and specific individuals in selected situations were observed more closely. Eventually, from late April until I left the site in mid-June, selective observations were being made in the French and math classes at Rusimba,[8] my pseudonym for the secondary school.

In the beginning stages of the observations, Daniel concentrated on verbal interaction (which often occurred in local languages) while I focused on non-verbal interaction. I recorded most of my fieldnotes on a portable computer while Daniel took notes by hand. The computer was not used at the primary school since I had concerns that it would be too

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understood and accepted this explanation. Bureaucracy is bureaucracy no matter where you live!

[8]. For the purposes of this study pseudonyms have been used for names of participants and locations. The only exception to this are the names of my family members and Giovanni, Gianni and Concetta mentioned in chapter 1. I felt there was no need to use pseudonyms for Giovanni, Gianni and Concetta since their names were used in my husband's book from which I quoted.

disruptive.[9] On Fridays and Sundays, Daniel and I would meet to transfer the notes from his notebook to the computer, discuss the data that had been gathered, and outline ideas to pursue during the next week. The data collected by Daniel were written in French and later translated into English. For the most part, data I collected were written in English, except for interviews which were recorded (both by audiotape and in notes) in French.

Interviews:

I conducted both formal and informal interviews. For the formal interviews, I developed a guide to structure the questions that we asked. However, if interesting data were presented that hadn't been anticipated when I developed sample

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[9]. The use of a portable computer was somewhat disruptive the first time it was used in the classroom at Rusimba. None of the students had ever seen a computer before, and many were very intrigued as to how it functioned. Invariably, the first time it was used in a classroom, a student would ask "What language does your computer write in?" Or after watching the words scroll off the computer screen, they would speculate how the computer could "eat up the words." Generally, during the class break, students would gather around while a demonstration was given showing how the computer could retrieve information that had disappeared off the screen or function in many languages including French and any local language. I did not use the computer at Mupika, the primary school because I wasn't able to sit at a desk like at Rusimba. More importantly, I knew that the added dimension of a computer at Mupika would make an already disruptive situation impossible.

interview sheets, I pursued the new information. For all formal interviews, a small portable tape recorder was used to ensure accuracy, and notes were taken as a back-up.[10] I conducted the interviews with government officials, teachers, and Rusimba's vice principal and Daniel interviewed the eight primary school directors. I also interviewed the French-speaking parents, while Daniel interviewed the parents who spoke only the local language (most of the rural parents). We prepared and rehearsed a sample interview before the actual interview process began.

Interviews with the students at the primary school were also conducted by Daniel, while both of us interviewed individual students at the secondary school. We jointly conducted several group interviews with the secondary school students. However, many of these proved difficult and frustrating, as the students would quickly stray from the agenda and begin "gab sessions." Yet, however unfocused they often were, these sessions did provide valuable insights into how the students were thinking. Tapes of these discussions were transcribed as time permitted, first in either French or the local languages, with translation eventually made into English.

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[10]. Informants were asked before the interview if they preferred that the tape recorder not be used but, no one objected to its use.

Student questionnaire:

Each student in the fourth-year classroom at the secondary school was given a questionnaire consisting of demographic questions (age, gender, school starting age, parental level of education, number of brothers and sisters and their level of education, citizenship, and whether their parents lived in a rural or urban area) and two questions concerning students' educational objectives and career choices. A third question asked their opinion about working wives. The questionnaire was designed so that boys were asked to answer one question about their opinion of working wives and girls were asked to answer a similar but different question. [A copy of the questionnaire and a tally of results are recorded on Table 13 in Appendix B.] I first developed the questionnaires in English and then had them translated into French. I administered the questionnaires at the end of January. I handed them out during the morning break, and the students filled them in before they left the room.[11] Daniel gave instructions on how to complete the questionnaire in the local languages, and students were encouraged to ask for clarification if they had difficulty understanding the questions.[12]

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[11]. The students' participation was entirely voluntary but they all willingly agreed to complete a questionnaire.

[12]. The necessity of working in several languages including Kinyarwanda, Swahili, French and English caused more than its

Documents:

I collected primary source documentation. These documents included government statistics provided by the government inspector and school statistics concerning student enrollment, attendance, staff qualifications and staff experience which were collected during the interviews. I also analyzed some of the textbooks to determine how women and girls were being represented (roles they were fulfilling, comments they were making, types of activities they were engaged in, etc.) in comparison to men and boys. I also examined student work to determine the quality of work that was being completed.

Researcher role--Actor, recorder, participant?

In ethnographic research involving participant observation, the main instrument of social investigation becomes the researcher collecting data in natural settings and interacting in social situations with various informants. Janes (1961) writes that researchers in the field pass through five separate phases in establishing their role as observer:

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share of frustration and problems. These were exacerbated by Daniel's limited English and my difficulties expressing abstract ideas in French. Although double blind translation techniques were not used, efforts were undertaken to ensure that data were accurately translated. Occasional checks on the accuracy of the translation were made by other individuals, including my husband, who were fluent in the various languages.

newcomer, provisional acceptance, categorical acceptance, personal acceptance, and imminent migrant.

Gaining acceptance is a complex activity in which a researcher may be simultaneously perceived in different ways by differing informants--passing through the various phases at different times. Factors that can influence a researcher's participant-as-observer role and acceptance include the researcher's age, sex, ethnicity, and experience.

In the initial stages of the data collection period, I attempted to become acclimated to the two field sites. As a white woman with less than perfect French and no knowledge of the local languages, this presented obvious difficulties. In general, acceptance by the teachers, directors, and government officials was easily obtained since they perceived me as a colleague. However, the students found it more difficult to accept me and generally had a much more spontaneous and open interaction with Daniel who, being younger and sharing both the local culture and language, was accepted as a peer and participant. As the data collection period continued, he blended in so well that students and teachers alike "forgot" he was present. This permitted him to gather some especially important data.

Although Daniel's help was invaluable, at times it presented problems. Often he had his own ideas concerning how things should be pursued and what to look for and was reluctant to give up the agenda that he wanted to follow. The

most significant problem that developed concerned his own attitudes and cultural perceptions of the role of women in society. Even though Daniel did not always share the local attitudes and ideas that many of the men had (for example, he agreed that women should be free from physical abuse and that family size should be limited), at times it was difficult for him to accept that girls should be presented the same educational and career opportunities as those available to boys. Intellectually, he accepted that girls should have the same opportunities to attend school as boys. However, he struggled with the idea that women should not be required to remain home and raise a family, according to the "laws of nature".

His perspective and skills being different than mine meant that there was the possibility of his subjectivity shaping the study in ways of which I might not have been aware. Since a great deal of the verbal interaction, particularly with the students, was in the local language, it was difficult to know if dialogue occurred that was important to the study, but wasn't recorded because of his personal bias.

Because of this concern that Daniel's personal bias might influence the study, initially I asked local women who worked at the university with me about things that Daniel shared with me about the local culture. Without exception I found that his explanation of gender interaction, roles, rights and

rituals closely matched what they would say about the same things. My confidence in Daniel as a conscientious, almost meticulous recorder of classroom events was confirmed when he told me one afternoon that, "Madame, you must visit the math classes I've been observing. There are some things happening that I think might be important to your study." The interaction <u>was</u> significant to the study. My journal notes also indicate that Daniel's personal interest in this study increased remarkably shortly after talking to me about the math class interaction.

Daniel and I would often debate issues that were relevant to my study on the drive back and forth to Rusimba day after day. Often he would leave after a day of observing at Rusimba and be troubled that "...the girls really aren't being given a fair chance". He would begin talking about what he was observing and these discussions would lead into a "topic of the day" (generally introduced by me) that included the movement for equity for women, the rights that should be granted women, the need for women in the workplace and the consequences of working wives and mothers on the family and society in general. These discussions constituted a learning experience for <u>both</u> of us, helping each to see the problem from a different cultural perspective. Eventually, I could see how working with me on this study influenced him, as his

attitude about women's rights gradually underwent a transformation.[13]

The interaction that developed between Daniel and me was possibly the most significant interaction that influenced this study. As I developed my proposal, I had not anticipated that he would become a valuable informant. Indeed, even as I unconsciously "collected data"--stories about his life, his view of the world, his view of the study, I was unaware of the impact that it was having on me. It was only in retrospect after I had been out of the field for some time and as I reviewed the journal where I recorded my reactions to my study and what was taking place during this period that I recognized Daniel's impact on me. This was particularly evident in my understanding of the cultural context which framed the way he viewed all these issues.

One particularly enlightening topic that we discussed concerned the ethnic interaction of the Hutu and Tutsi.[14] Daniel helped me understand some of the ethnic unrest that

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[13]. Although it is hard to effectively determine this in retrospect, I'm sure a more accurate assessment would be to say that Daniel and I both changed our perspectives and found some mutual ground on these issues.

[14]. The Hutu and Tutsi are two ethnic groups living in central Africa, particularly in Rwanda and Burundi. A long history of tension exists between them which has resulted in tribal massacres among both groups. The Hutu and Tutsi will be discussed at length in Chapter 3.

took place in Burundi during 1989. He explained to me how individuals who had Tutsi mothers and Hutu fathers would be at high risk during ethnic tensions when the mother's brothers would identify their sister's children of mixed ethnicity, placing them in physical danger. It was difficult for me to understand how this could happen, and I tried to ignore this unpleasant information and the troubling implications that were associated with it. But this wasn't easy to do, and as I thought about it more, I realized that there could be gender implications embedded in this behavior.

I began asking questions about this. There was a great deal of reluctance to talk to me about this. In fact, generally it is considered impolite to refer to ethnicity when talking to anyone from Rwanda or Burundi. I was told by many informants from both ethnic groups that children of Hutu fathers and Tutsi mothers--the reverse situation in which Tutsi men marry Hutu women is much rarer--have a lower status in the family than the children of parents where both the father and mother are Tutsi. I began to question this explanation and wondered if subconsciously it could be an issue of gender as much as an issue of ethnicity--a daughter's children did not have the same status and acceptance within the family as the son's children? I wondered if this could be the result of the exchange of rights when her bridewealth was paid? Although I was unable to respond to this question in my data collection and was never able to answer the questions

that were raised, I became more aware of the need to look beyond surface responses for deeper meanings to explain the behavior that I was observing.

I never was fully accepted by the primary students. Nearly every visit I made distracted the students and disrupted the teachers' lessons because the students would not remain on task. During recesses and lunch breaks, the students would crowd around me and attempt to rub their hands over my face, arms, and legs, and pull at my hair.[15] Verbal interaction between us was nearly impossible because of the language barrier, but the students would ask Daniel questions about me. Questions answered, they would stare at me for several minutes and then, huddled in groups, hand in hand or arms about each other, run out of the room giggling and chattering in the local language. The students would run off, stop and peer back, talk, giggle, and then move away. This

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[15]. Throughout the years that we lived in Africa, this kind of behavior was not uncommon, particularly among the children. We found that the more isolated the region and the less familiar with Caucasians the children were, the more aggressive their behavior became. I asked students and local school workers why they would touch us like this but they claimed they didn't know. I was eventually told by another missionary that the people believed that we rubbed powder on ourselves to appear white, and they wanted to see if our color would rub off. Although I question that this is an apocryphal story it is the only explanation that I have received about this kind of behavior.

experience was repeated visit after visit without exception, not only for me, but for other expatriates who visited this or other primary school classrooms in the area.

Polsky (1969) writes that the researcher must monitor and exercise control over the interaction that is established between the researcher and the research population. In situations where the interaction violates the researcher's ethics or becomes difficult or uncomfortable, it is advisable to terminate observations. Initially, I made an attempt to ignore all the touching, however embarrassing and annoying. But there were continual doubts concerning the effect my presence was having on students' learning outcomes at the primary schools. Eventually, after three weeks of visits, my concern that my presence in the classroom was too disruptive forced me to stop visiting the classroom at the primary level. Consequently, from this point on, Daniel collected the primary school data on his own. Even though Daniel's notes and comments corroborated my impressions of the primary level classrooms, I remain reluctant to discuss at great length schooling at the primary level. Although I feel confident that what I saw in the first few weeks confirmed that girls were treated differently than boys and that patterns of gender interaction in society were being reinforced and reproduced in the classroom at the primary level, my discussion of this study tends to focus on schooling at the secondary level more than the primary level.

My experience at the secondary level was different. Surreptitious attempts to "touch" me at the secondary school occurred but were far more sophisticated--"accidently" brushing against my arm or hand. Once the physical contact had been made, the act was not repeated a second time. The girls were far more aggressive in making physical contact than the boys. In fact, their overall interest in me in general was greater throughout the data collection period. They would often huddle about the desk where I sat in the back of the classroom and engage in "small talk" during breaks in the day, long into the lunch period and before and after school hours. Initially, they asked me personal questions about my age, the names and ages of my children, my husband's name, and so on. Some of the girls lost interest when these initial visits to gather information about me had taken place, and I noticed that their visits became progressively shorter until eventually they stopped altogether. However, as the data collection period continued and my agenda became more clearly understood, there was a small group of girls who began asking me questions about life in America and what it was like there for girls. I don't think it is incidental that the girls who asked these questions were the same girls who expressed a desire to continue their education but were frustrated at the limited options open to them.

In this study, my role as mother and wife, not my position as instructor and researcher, had a profound effect

on my acceptance in the field with the secondary school students. They viewed the roles of wife/mother and instructor/researcher as mutually exclusive and consistently refused to believe that I was married and had four children. Daniel was repeatedly asked about the "supposed" family, and it was finally decided, at his urging, that my family should make a short appearance at the research site.

It was arranged that Bob would evaluate the student teacher from our university who was teaching there while the children and I waited by the car. The children accompanied us because we were going to have a picnic on the beach after the evaluation was completed. We arrived just as the morning break began, and I noticed that all the games came to a standstill when our children climbed out of the car. Bob and our oldest son, Danny, joined the group that had been playing volleyball, and Heather, Teddy Roy, and Jonny were surrounded by a large group of students who began to ask them questions about living in Africa. Jonny, who is very fair-haired, attracted a great deal of attention, and I finally called him aside and suggested he enter the car when some of the girls began pinching him and pulling his hair.

After this visit, the students no longer questioned the existence of my family, but it became apparent that my interaction with some students had become strained and more distant. The boys' interaction with me was noticeably reduced, particularly for four boys who did not talk to me

again throughout the remaining duration of the data collection period--approximately a four-week period. Although these four boys had never come up to me to talk on their own initiative (as many of the students did), they had always been willing to join in discussions or answer questions that I had. However, after the visit, they either ignored questions that I asked them or walked away when I approached them. When an attempt was made to determine what had affected their interaction, they indicated to Daniel that they thought it was improper on my part to pursue a career and education while young children were still at home. Until verification was made that a family existed, they effectively blocked what was for them a culturally unacceptable combination of roles. Eventually, most of the boys began talking with me again, but they made their position quite clear that "married women with children should remain home".

The girls reacted in an entirely different manner. None of them were visibly upset like the boys were and, in general, just acknowledged that I had multiple roles. A group of them began visiting me again during the break. However, this time their interest was less in me than in my daughter, Heather, who was fourteen years old at the time. They wanted to know where she went to school, whether she liked school, what she wanted to become, and whether she would write to them.

Change agent and role model

My perspective of what my role in this study should be became an increasingly more complex issue as the study evolved, particularly after the data collection had been completed and I had left the site and was analyzing my data. When I began my study, I naively believed that I would become an important role model for the girls in the school. I thought that the multiple roles that I was able to negotiate would encourage girls and convince them that life chances and future options provided by education and a career were well worth the effort. My hidden agenda as a role model totally blinded me to the racial and cultural implications associated with this. It wasn't until I reread transcriptions of the statements that were made to me by the women teachers and girls that I realized that my agenda wasn't theirs, that my agenda evolved from my cultural norms and expectations and reflected my world, not theirs. I had expected that I would be accepted enthusiastically by the women and girls because of what I offered. I was quite stunned when I realized that they had resisted me and what I represented with outright hostility at times.

It was also at this point that the tension between the objective nature of ethnographic research and the proactive methods of the feminist movement became visible to me and created dilemmas concerning the study I had completed. As I began to read feminist literature, I realized that the data I

had collected actually told a different story than I had set out to share. Ironically, even though I had seen myself as a "player and participant" in this study, I hadn't realized how much this study would eventually revolve around my personal intersection with the work.

The transformation process that took place in my study is not unusual in ethnographic work. Schwartz and Schwartz (1955) and Schwartz and Jacobs (1979) write that the researcher role can significantly impact the progression of a study as the researcher's perspectives and attitudes begin to interact with those of the research community. Janes (1961) and Becker (1958) raise key issues about how the investigation process develops and transforms as researcher and research community merge, determine agendas, and influence one another's reaction to what is being discussed and studied. However, the transformation that took place in my study raises issues about the inherent conflict embedded in one's role as observer and recorder of events in a classroom--events with which at times the researcher may feel very uncomfortable. Eventually, after my return to North America, I began to question whether through my role as researcher I was in fact giving credence to these acts and serving to legitimate what took place because I quietly sat back in the classroom recording it all.

My own university students had a great deal of influence on my study. When I developed my proposal, I didn't include

them as part of the study. I worried that including them as participants might create problems as the study evolved.[16] Consequently, I created a partition, one I now see as false, arguing that I should maintain distance between my responsibilities as instructor and researcher. But it was impossible for me to completely disassociate myself from my role as researcher as I interacted in my other roles. To disassociate myself from my research was particularly difficult when I was in my classroom. One of the major objectives of our institution is to expand educational opportunities for girls. The students were well aware that I had been instrumental in getting approval for policies such as reduced tuition rates for girls, eased admission requirements, and so forth. Consequently, my advocacy for increased participation for girls at all levels of education was a recurrent theme in class discussions and my personal research became a pivotal praxis in the classroom. Questions of equity of access and outcomes (for women, for different ethnic groups, for various minority groups, for the physically disabled and other special needs students, etc.) and the ramifications of these were often discussed in class. It was difficult for me to accept my students' views that the well-

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[16]. I was mainly concerned that it might create question of confidentiality, since my research sites were well known by my students. Furthermore, they personally knew some of the students and teachers who worked at one of the schools.

being of society is intangibly associated with women being forced to stay at home and rear children, and that enhanced educational opportunities and expanded career options disrupt this. Although I did not agree with them, it was a perspective that needed to be considered and accommodated in my work. I was only able to see these issues that we'd so often discuss in class from a broader perspective and to recognize and understand my personal biases more easily, more effectively, once I was out of the field. The self-imposed pressure of being the change agent, the model of the woman who can do it all, was no longer there, and I was able to really consider what I was advocating much more easily and critically.

Going the wrong way, detours, and getting lost

I did not continue to visit the school in the fall of 1989, but concentrated on analyzing the data. As I went through this process, several distinct themes began to emerge and I noted these for follow-up. Other ideas, seemingly unconnected at first, began to fit in with the overall patterns I began to detect. I found previously unnoticed references in the interview transcripts to "the white woman's emancipation movement" and to the limited number of jobs available to women after leaving school. I read again a very insightful comment by one of the teachers about the discordance between local cultural identity and the local

feminist "movement." On many of these themes, the men and the boys held opinions very different from those of the women and the girls.

As I began to interpret my data, I realized that a much greater understanding of how local meanings interact with gender issues was needed. I made arrangements to re-enter the site after a six-month hiatus. In preparation for the resumption of classroom visits and in-depth interviews, I spent time visiting informally with students and staff. Again, I was impressed and surprised to find them so remarkably candid in their responses.

On December 11, two weeks before Christmas and three weeks before I was to re-enter the research site, my son, Danny, was seriously hurt when he fell 20 feet from a tree. Because of the gravity of his medical condition, all research came to an end and it was necessary to make an emergency return to the United States.[17] I have not been back since then and questions continue to haunt me.[18]

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[17]. Danny has recovered nicely but remains at high risk of respiratory infection because of the loss of his spleen. His condition necessitates that he remain in North America for several years. Hence, we were not able to remain in Africa or return until Danny is much older.

[18]. Although many questions remain, the questions that I consider most are what happened to Marie's sister-in-law; what happened to Josie--did she have to drop out as I suspected then, or was she able to continue with her studies? I wonder about the impact that I had on the

Throughout the data collection period, I was beset with self-doubt about whether what I was doing was methodologically sound and whether the data I was collecting was valuable and adequate for a dissertation. Unfortunately, contact with my dissertation chairperson was difficult at best. Telephone contact was virtually impossible--too costly and too unpredictable. We did exchange letters, but I did not write as frequently as I should have, and this limited the amount of direction that I received. I now recognize that my infrequent communication with my committee members was a form of resistance, a result of some of the personal dilemmas that I was feeling, even then, about the study I was doing and the data I was collecting.

When I began my research, I thought that expanding roles and securing access and opportunities for women and girls would solve the problem of limited roles for women. I thought that barriers existed (in school and in society) that prevented girls from full participation. If these could be removed, equality between the sexes could be achieved. It wasn't until I returned to North America and began reading feminist literature that I realized that my understanding of subordination and emancipation was simplistic and underdeveloped. As I reread the stories shared with me, and

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students and their views of the feminist
movement and emancipation of women.

recognized the male control, ridicule and abuse embedded in many of them, I was forced to change my perspective.[19]

I was initially delighted with the way the adult respondents were opening up to me. As we talked, there was no ·hesitancy to share personal information with me--about their families, their attitudes on women's issues, the school's philosophy of training girls, about government reforms in women's issues and related areas. However, as data collection continued, I became increasingly uneasy about the information that was being shared, particularly by the women.[20] It was

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[19]. Acker's (1987) discussion of the differences between liberal, social and radical feminism was a particularly helpful piece that gave me a clearer understanding of the ways in which gender interactions are defined. However, Daly's (1978) book Gynecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism more profoundly influenced me than any other piece I read. It was through her writing, that I realized that fear--fear of abuse, fear of men, fear of the unknown, fear of change--was probably the most salient factor influencing why women did what they did and became what they became. It was then that I finally realized how naive my first assumptions were about changes in classrooms that would "trickle out" and create changes in society.

[20]. My concerns and frustrations about my work came to a head in the fall of 1990 when serious political tensions developed in the area where much of my data collection was done. I began to question if using specific data would put anyone at risk. Although I couldn't be certain of this, I felt that there were some things that had been said to me that might place individuals in a compromising

as if my role as the researcher had been forgotten and we were now intimate friends sharing the secrets of our lives. The tape recorder or computer was always there, and I was always recording what they were sharing, but I couldn't help but wonder if they had forgotten this was happening. Because of these thoughts, periods would arise when I struggled with the feeling that I was somehow betraying them if I shared what I had been told. At times I was overwhelmed with the trust and intimacy that developed, but I didn't want any personal commitment--I wanted to collect my data, write up the dissertation, and defend. I didn't want any snags to arise, I didn't want any unethical situations to develop, and I certainly didn't want any questions about what I was doing and the value of this study to surface. I felt that my ideas were correct, that this study was needed to shed light on what was happening in a Third World country, and I defended until the day I left Africa the position that my interpretation of women's rights and roles was what was needed in central Africa.

Summary

As this study evolved, one thing became evident-- cultural perceptions, my perceptions and the perceptions of

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situation. I continue to be concerned about this and have made every effort to ensure that the material shared in this document placed no one at risk.

the people that I talked to, were becoming a major theme. My own role as researcher, woman, foreigner, mother, and advocate of women's rights increasingly shaped my understanding of what I was learning or what should be learned and could be explained. Yet the questions asked and responses discussed were shaped in important ways as well by the local community, a community which often took a position very different from my own.

In order to better understand this community, in the next chapter I will give an overview of Rwanda and Zaire and briefly describe their histories and cultures.

CHAPTER THREE

The Place:

The Ring of Fire in the valley
by the Mountains of the Moon
near the Land of a Thousand Hills

I'm sitting in the teachers' lounge at
Rusimba.   The air is filled with the
acrid stench of sulfur from a volcano,
part of the ring of fire surrounding this
area, that erupted two days earlier. The
fumes burn my nostrils and irritate my
eyes. Looking out the window, I can see
the hazy, reddish glow that covers the
sky.

Even here, 15 miles away, ash fills the
air and leaves a telltale mark on
everything that grows. Marie, one of the
teachers at Rusimba, is telling me about
the last time (ten years earlier) that a
volcano went off in the region. Several
hundred people died and according to
Marie, at least, so did the last of the
elephants inhabiting the area.   "It's
very ominous living in a volcanic area
you know. You can never really tell when
one might go off."

She looks tired and I ask if the fear
from the volcano, or maybe the smell, is
keeping her from sleeping well at night.
She shakes her head and sighs, "Maybe a
little...but, I mostly don't sleep well
because I must take care of babies who
cry at night."   I nod my head in
agreement and she begins laughing. "Yes,
you know. You had four babies. You know
the work that children can be."
                (Field notes, April, 1989)

Slashing across the equator, rugged snow-crowned slopes

that Ptolemy called the "Mountains of the Moon" rise

dramatically from the central African plateau. An area of

geological stress and turmoil--with raging volcanos,

earthquakes and gaseous hot springs--the uncertainties that nature has dealt to the region seem to have carried over into its political and economic life as well. It is a region of exaggerated dimensions and juxtaposition--in the land, in the animals, in the people. An area "washed by the rains of a thousand storms...it is the home of the Nile--the lifeblood of Egypt and the tears, so they say, of the continent" (R. Prouty, 1986, p. 35). It is an area of hardship and power, sorrow and passion. It is also home to millions of people living in Rwanda and eastern Zaire. And it is the place of my story.   Rich in history and culture, Rwanda and Zaire are neighboring countries in French-speaking central Africa. In many respects, the two countries are dramatically different. Zaire is one of the largest countries in Africa; Rwanda is one of the smallest. Zaire is home to over two hundred ethnic groups, each with a separate language and distinct customs. Rwanda, on the other hand, is home to only three ethnic groups, the Hutu, the Tutsi, and the Twa, who share a common language, Kinyarwanda. More importantly, however, the two larger groups, the Hutu and Tutsi (comprising, respectively, approximately 84% and 15% of the population) have been intricately tied together in an uneasy, tenuous relationship that has exploded more than once into violent, bloody rebellion and tribal massacres.[1] Zaire is a land rich in

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[1].   Some historians have noted that Colonialism
        arrested the natural social evolution that
        would have eliminated the ethnic differences

natural resources with vast supplies of diamonds, copper, and gold, and almost unlimited hydro-electric potential. In contrast, Rwanda sits next door, like a poor, distant cousin struggling to survive with few resources, over-crowded, over-populated, and overlooked.

But in many ways Rwanda and Zaire are far more alike than they are different. They share a common bond historically, each a colonial territory under Belgian rule, and the psychological scars from that era can still be seen in the lives of the people and infrastructures of both countries. Despite cultural differences, the lifestyles of the rural poor--the economic reality of most of the people in Rwanda and Zaire--are almost identical as they struggle to survive with a yearly income of less than $50 US. The daily existence of vast numbers of people in both countries is very much the same. In fact, there are far greater, more keenly felt separations between the rich and poor in each country than there are differences between the poor of the two countries.

The rural poor in both countries are subsistence farmers who struggle to maintain a standard of living which barely provides for their basic needs. A small percentage of the population--government employees, entrepreneurs and professionals--form an elite in their societies who control each country's capital and assets. An emerging middle class

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and inequalities found in Rwanda (Watson, 1991).

can be seen in both countries. However, their standard of living is much closer to that of the lower classes than the wealthy elite. The emerging middle class live in small, brick homes which are better than the lower-class, thatch constructions, but the homes remain functional rather than luxurious. Indoor plumbing is uncommon in any of the homes of the lower and middle classes, as is electricity or telephones. Cooking is done over fires or charcoal burners, and the few furnishings are locally constructed. Individuals in the middle class have several changes of clothing, unlike those in the lower classes, who may not have even one change of clothing. Furthermore, the poorer individuals must walk everywhere they go. The rest of the lower and middle class share rides in taxis or possibly own a bike or a small motorcycle.

The poor are everywhere in both countries. They live in large urban ghettos as well as impoverished, isolated villages. In contrast, except for a few very wealthy large plantation owners, the elite congregate around the larger urban centers that are more developed and offer a different kind of lifestyle including expensive stores, restaurants, exclusive clubs, improved medical facilities, and a circle of friends who have similar financial circumstances. The elite have spacious homes with indoor plumbing, electricity, modern appliances, telephones, expensive furnishings, verandas, and swimming pools. They own at least one car and dress in

expensive clothes. But the most noticeable difference between the groups is that the lower and middle classes are much more traditional than the elite in both countries, who tend to be bi-cultural, having been exposed to ideas and lifestyles of Western expatriates. Consequently, for all but a small percentage of the populations in both Rwanda and Zaire, the traditional structures in the two societies are still commonly valued and practiced. Adherence to traditional structures takes on significance when one considers not only the life chances for men and women, girls and boy, but also the daily patterns, obligations, and responsibilities that they are expected to fulfill.

In order to better understand how these traditional patterns play out in the daily lives of the Rwandan and Zairian peoples, I will discuss some basic indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality, average family income, literacy rates, etc. Although, it is impossible for the Westerner living in a developed country to understand totally the overcrowding from exploding populations, the poverty and sickness and the rudimentary living conditions, it is equally difficult to imagine the hard-earned joys, the closeness, the sense of belonging and community of the traditional village setting or family rugo. And yet, it is essential to grasp a sense of it, to glimpse a small piece of the place, and to try to feel what it is like to be a woman there, struggling to fashion an existence for herself and her children.

In this chapter, I will provide a more in-depth look at Zaire and Rwanda, highlighting the history, the culture, and the life of the people that I lived among, worked with, and finally studied. First I will discuss Rwanda, then Zaire.

Rwanda

"The Land of a Thousand Hills," Rwanda lies a few degrees south of the equator. Despite its proximity to the equator, the climate is temperate throughout the country. Seasonal changes are not as dramatic as in most areas of Africa. The country consists mainly of grassy uplands and hills extending southeast from a chain of volcanoes in the northwest. The mountainsides are draped in a patchwork of gardens, and season after season, women and children dot the slopes, first planting, then hoeing, and finally harvesting their crops.

Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa. It has 600 people per square mile with some prime agricultural areas supporting well over 1,500 people per square mile (Scheffer, 1986). As you drive down the roads, mile after mile you pass an endless stream of men, women, and children. Some are students headed to school. Others are men carrying doors or pieces of furniture on their heads to sell in the towns. Still others are women, babies tied to their backs and baskets balanced on their heads, off to the market to sell their vegetables. Small children, far too young to understand

the dangers of speeding cars, sit just beyond the highway's edge, watching the automobiles rush past as they play in the patch of dirt in front of their mud and thatch houses. Even late into the night, you can still pass isolated groups of people on the roads--and at that hour, as often as not-- inebriated men, huddled together, staggering and stumbling towards home or another bar.

With a population of over seven million and an annual population growth rate of 4%--one of the highest in the world (May, 1988), it is no wonder that one of the first impressions that you have as you travel about is that people are everywhere, in endless numbers. Because over 43% of the female population are still in childbearing years, the government has given high priority to lowering the birth rate. An awareness program and development plan to assist in family planning, particularly in the rural areas, has been undertaken and appears to be making a significant impact (Rwanda, 1987). However, resistance to irreversible birth control measures is high, partially because of the high infant mortality rate (120 births out of 1000 live births)--among the highest in the world.[2] Resistance to irreversible birth control measures is understandable when one realizes the significance of children to aging parents who are no longer able to work their gardens

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[2]. Unless cited otherwise, all statistical or historical information comes from World Bank (1990) or the US government (1979, 1982) country studies for Zaire and Rwanda.

and provide for themselves (Clay, 1989). It is also worth noting that public assistance is unavailable and social security provisions are relatively insignificant.[3] AIDS is endemic in Rwanda (and through much of central Africa) as are malaria, intestinal parasites, amoeba, and a litany of other illnesses and diseases. Although medical services have dramatically improved in the past decade, it is no surprise that people in Rwanda still grow old fast and die young. The average life expectancy is only 47 years. Ironically, despite numerous births and years of hard labor, on the average women in Rwanda outlive men by more than three years.

Historically, the population of what is now Rwanda was organized into a feudal-like hierarchically-stratified, tribal system known as ubuhake, dominated by the aristocratic cattle-raising Tutsi. In the late 1800s, Germany conquered the area but allowed ubuhake to continue. Part of the German East African territories until the first World War, the area was known as Ruanda-Urundi and was later divided into the two countries of Rwanda and Burundi. The territories were officially turned over to Belgian control in 1919. In 1946, the area became a Belgian-administered United Nations trust territory with headquarters in present-day Burundi. This

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[3]. Individuals who are employed have quarterly payments made into a social security system. However, women who work in the fields or barter in the market and do not have salaries or anyone unemployed do not benefit from the social security system.

arrangement remained in effect until 1961, when Rwanda voted to become a republic, and independence was granted to both Rwanda and Burundi (Hertefelt, 1987). A pre-independence tribal rebellion in the late 1950s brought an end to the Tutsi rule, deposing the Tutsi Mwami or king, forcing him into exile, and leading to a presidential system. A turbulent period full of political unrest, tribal tensions, and bloody uprisings continued for over a decade. In the late 1960s the hostilities eventually culminated in a massacre of thousands of Tutsi (Marchal, 1987).

The first president, Grégoire Kayibanda, was overthrown in a military coup in 1973. He was replaced as president of Rwanda by Major General Juvénal Habyarimana. During these years, Habyarimana attempted to put an end to tribal hostilities and promoted equality of opportunity.[4] He presided over an era of relative political and economic stability (Harroy, 1984). But in the fall of 1990, tribal hostilities resurfaced after invasions led by Tutsi refugees living in Uganda, and the future stability of the region is very much in doubt. (Watson, 1991).

The most striking feature of Rwanda's social organization is the almost total absence of villages. Nearly every family in Rwanda lives in a self-contained compound called a rugo, which provides for communal needs--carrying the ill to the

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[4]. Since the late 1960's, the government has had basically Hutu leadership.

nearest doctor or herbalist, sharing work, and protection. So significant is this idea that the dead are buried within the family _rugo_ in order to attain eternal rest. More recently, a few urban areas and medium-sized towns have developed around administrative centers. However, traditional life styles are still very much in evidence, particularly in the rural areas, and the single family _rugo_ continues to be the predominant social unit within the country. This explains why Rwanda has the lowest pattern of urban migration in Africa (Clay, 1990).

Further evidence of adherence to the traditional life style in Rwanda is the persistence of the clientage system (a modified feudal-serf relationship), regional loyalties, and the _inzu_, a loosely organized, extended-family kinship interaction which covers several generations of family members on the paternal side (Scheffer, 1986). Fathers are the unquestioned heads of the household and must be obeyed in all situations. Until recently, the Rwandan constitution stated that although men and women are legally equal, men are "the natural heads of the family". Despite changes in the constitution and reforms aimed at enhancing females' status, adherence to traditional belief systems and life styles has meant that the status of females, particularly in rural areas,

remains marginal, and male control--legally, economically, and politically--continues virtually unchallenged (Hoben, 1989).[5]

Although Rwanda is officially a French-speaking country, the use of French is generally restricted to international commerce, diplomatic relations, some secondary school studies and university studies. French is perceived as a language of the educated classes, with much of the population speaking only Kinyarwanda. Consequently, high status knowledge of French is a form of cultural capital that controls access to secondary schooling and tertiary-level studies. It further serves to stratify the work force and limits access to high-status jobs and professions. French is known much more widely by men than by women, and much more by the younger than the older generation. Swahili is also spoken by approximately 10% of the total population--mainly by the older generation and particularly by those who received an education in the pre-independence, Catholic mission schools. In areas of Rwanda

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[5]. Recent reforms have included making credit available to women, permitting wives to open bank accounts without the previously required husband's signature, a three-month maternity leave (fathers are granted a one-week paternity leave after the birth of a child), permission to travel without needing to carry letters of permission from husbands, and government subsidized birth control. Legislation has also been enacted to protect the rights of wives and mothers (for joint possessions and custody of children) after the death of a husband or during a divorce. However, a great many women who I interviewed told me that despite these laws, gaining custody of children was still problematic.

that border Zaire, Uganda, and Tanzania, Swahili is used as a lingua franca (Hoben, 1988).

A strong sense of national identity permeates Rwandan society. Rwandans are painfully aware of the years of independence and autonomy that were lost during the colonial period and are proud of their own sovereign political agenda during the past three decades. Despite political uncertainties, economic ups and downs, slow development, and limited access to advanced technology, they remain determined to maintain their political autonomy.

The recent reforms in education expanding the use of Kinyarwanda as the sole language of instruction throughout eight years of schooling, are further evidence of the sense of national identity and cultural renewal. Unlike many countries, where French or English vocabulary words have increasingly replaced words from the local language (as, for instance, in the common Zairois expression of thanks, Merci mingi), in Rwanda the opposite is occurring. New words continue to be coined to replace such French words as "biologie", "anatomie", and "chimie". There is a tendency, particularly by the moderately well-educated, to devalue what isn't local, what isn't from their own culture. One of the best known proverbs in Kinyarwanda, "God may go elsewhere during the day, but at night He always comes home to Rwanda," best demonstrates the strong sense of pride that the Rwandans feel about their culture, their history, and their country.

For the average rural woman or young girl, life is a continual round of working, eating and sleeping. The day begins early, often long before the sun is up, and ends late at night. There is little frivolity, excitement or free time for women if one's family is going to eat. Consequently, patterns, usually tedious, repetitive patterns, are established early in the life of girls that foreshadow what the rest of their lives will be like. In an apprenticeship of marriage, young girls assume responsibility for childcare, cooking, cleaning, and gardening. (This apprenticeship of marriage is also true of girls living in Zaire.) In the central and southern regions, for example, as you pass _rugo_ after _rugo_, young girls of seven or eight can be seen, small babies tied to their backs, working together. Each with a long pounding-stick in hand, first one brings it down and then the other as they pound cassava, peanuts or grains in the wooden mortar that rests between them. Or they may rest under a tree away from the sun's rays, as they sort through peanuts, beans, wheat, or corn--all staples of their diets--while skimpily-clad babies sitting at the girls' feet play in the hard-packed dirt. Childhood is short for most girls in central Africa, particularly for the girls of the lower-class who work endlessly, only to fall farther behind each year because of local devaluations of the currency. Even though boys also have their childhood cut short like the girls, the jobs that they are relegated--herding goats and cows--provide

many moments of leisure to lie in the fields while the animals graze, jerry-rig toys out of balsa wood and string, or play run and chase games with other boys they find along the paths. Girls aren't afforded such "luxuries". Rain or shine, good health or poor, the patterns are the same. All water must be carried often for distances of several kilometers from water sources: women and girls haul most of the water in plastic five-gallon jerry cans or two gallon plastic buckets. Wood to cook with has to be gathered and brought to the rugo; women and girls take on this responsibility, often carrying loads of wood that weigh forty or more pounds on their backs several kilometers to their homes. The sick need to be attended to and young girls and women offer what services they can to the ill. Meals are simple—there is neither the time nor the means to prepare elaborate dishes. Beans, rice, white potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava, grains and greens are the staples of the diet. Occasionally, eggs, cheese, fish or chicken will be added. During marriages, New Year's festivities or some other special occasion a sheep, goat or cow might be slaughtered and cooked. But this is rarely done since these animals don't come cheaply and to buy one represents hours of hard work. What little clothes they have need to be cleaned, and women and girls carry them to the nearest stream where they wash them in the water, pounding them on rocks and then laying them out on the grass, or over small trees and bushes to dry in the sun. But washing clothes

is the sort of work that one does in spare time and there's seldom any of this. Weaving baskets and mats are also spare-time activities--the kind of thing a woman might do if she finishes her fields early and has a few moments as the beans and pâte (either a stiff corn meal mush or similar kind of mush from cassava) cook over the fire.

There appears to be little family interaction. Women are gone to the fields for most of the day while the young girls care for younger siblings. Young boys herd the animals while older boys go off to school. The men who are able to find work spend long days in fishing boats, in factories or plantations, and spend little time with their families. Unemployed men sit around the nearest store or bar and play games, drink and gossip, and avoid coming home until all the work is done. Homes appear to be gathering places where families eat, sleep and reproduce, not places of refuge where families come together and become a unit. In traditional homes women, girls and young boys wait and watch while men and older boys eat, so even what little time a family could share together is bifurcated between the sexes and the young and the old.

The interactional pattern within the family is one of the most significant differences between the classes. Upwardly mobile families tend to let go of the interaction patterns found among the rural poor and develop routines in which the family sets time apart to come together and share. But time

is the key element here. They can spare the time to become a family; the rural poor are too busy surviving as a family to really become one.

Zaire

Zaire's geographic location and astounding natural resource potential intensify its political and economic importance to the continent. In spite of 25 years of relative peace, Zaire has often been an unstable influence in the region. Many observers wonder whether the days ahead will again give meaning to Franz Fanon's famous comment: "Africa is a revolver and Zaire is the trigger." Located in the heart of Africa, Zaire is a vast country with widely varying terrain. At the time of the study, it was divided politically into eight provinces, including Kivu to the east, bordering both Rwanda and Uganda. (This arrangement has since been changed, and Kivu has been subdivided into the provinces of Kivu and North Kivu).

Zaire has the most important inland water system on the continent and one of the world's largest tropical rain forests, covering nearly a third of the country. These forests lie on the equator and are so dense that if you walk only several feet into the forest, the sunlight is almost completely blocked and darkness surrounds you. Life is a constant struggle against nature in these areas, and the daily battle is nowhere more evident than in the fight against the

forest and rains to keep narrow, dirt roads--the lifeline of the country--open. Each year since the mid-70s, the total number of kilometers open to traffic in Zaire has decreased. However, a land of many contrasts, there are also rugged volcanic highlands in the eastern area of Zaire and vast grassy, savanna regions in the central plains. Except in the highlands, where the average temperature is considerably cooler than the rest of the country, average daytime temperatures in Zaire approach 100 degrees. Excessive rainfall (nearly 80 inches) in the highland and forest areas makes the weather very humid and uncomfortable (Diallo, 1975).

Zaire has a population of nearly 30 million people and, as mentioned earlier, over 200 different ethnic groups with distinct languages and customs. Because of the linguistic variations that exist, four regional languages have been adopted for the early years of primary schooling--Kikongo, Lingala (basically the language of the military), Swahili, and Tshiluba. French is Zaire's official language and, as in Rwanda, knowledge of French is limited to the well-educated and serves to control access to secondary-level schooling, tertiary studies, high-status jobs, and professions. In Zaire, as in Rwanda, French is more commonly known by the younger generation, and by males more than by females. It is introduced much earlier in the formal schooling process, however, and is much more widely spoken in Zaire than in Rwanda.

Nearly 50% of the female population is of childbearing age, and the annual population growth rate of 3% ranks Zaire among the countries in the world with the highest rates. Non-formal educational programs focused at family planning and birth control awareness have been undertaken, but have had limited success because of the lack of a well-developed infrastructure, language variations, and limited financial backing. Furthermore, although infant mortality is lower than in Rwanda, at a (96:1000) ratio of deaths to live births, resistance to irreversible birth control measures (particularly vasectomy) remains high. Because such contraceptive measures as oral contraceptives, condoms, spermicides, etc., are prohibitively expensive for the average family, many women in both Rwanda and Zaire opt for injectable birth control and risk side effects that include cancer and hemorrhage.[6] With an average life expectancy of 52 years, women may decide that it is wiser to use the shots and avoid the high risks of multiple pregnancies during their younger years.

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[6]. Local doctors practicing in the area do not agree on the use of injectable contraceptives. Many doctors that I have spoken with (expatriate and local) are hesitant to use them because of the high risks associated with the hormones in the shots. However, these doctors recognize that the shots are more economical and offer long-term protection. Furthermore, the shots are easier to implement since the women don't need to follow through on a routine requiring the ability to read, which lessens the impact of working with a largely illiterate community.

The region that is now Zaire was heavily penetrated during the slave-trading period. Although slavery already existed on the continent, it underwent a dramatic increase as Portuguese traders began enslaving Africans in the 1500s, and for a 300-year period thousands were captured and shipped to North and South America (Kermans, 1989). After slave-trading ended in the late 1800's, new forms of economic exploitation emerged. King Leopold II of Belgium hired Henry Stanley to set up outposts along the Congo (Zaire) River. Leopold became the personal ruler and owner of a fiefdom he called the "Congo Free State." His rule is noted for its incredibly harsh and inhumane treatment of the local population and exploitation of the region by his agents. In the early 1900s the cruel conditions brought a wave of protests from other countries, in spite of their remarkably high tolerance for this sort of behavior, and administration of the region was removed from the personal control of the king and given to the government of Belgium.[7] During this period from 1908 until

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[7]. As information from reporters, church groups, etc. about the inhumane conditions and treatment of the local peoples filtered out, there was an outcry from other Western countries who placed political pressure on the Belgian government to take over the administration of the colony from the king. Conditions improved somewhat after the Belgian government administered the region, but in general, most commentators writing on the colonial administrations document the Belgians with gross human rights violations.

its independence in 1960, the region became a Belgian colony known as the Belgian Congo (Blaise, 1989).

The Belgians, who possessed almost no natural resources themselves, began developing towns, roads, medical and limited educational facilities in the Katanga (now Shaba) region, which was rich in copper and other minerals, such as industrial and gem-quality diamonds. Other than development of the Shaba region, little else throughout the country was done. Virtually no development of the infrastructure took place, with few roads built, and only a skeletal communication system developed (Daye, 1989). During the first part of the century, mission groups, notably the Catholic church, developed a rudimentary health sector and educational system in which the emphasis was placed at the primary level to the virtual exclusion of any further schooling (Kermans, 1989). Most significantly, despite petitions urging some local input and control, the Belgians refused to permit any local voice in government policy proceedings (Lemaire, 1989).

After World War II, many Africans in the Belgian Congo demanded independence from the Belgians. When Belgium refused to grant any real form of independence to the region, protests began which lead to violent rioting and civil disturbances. Fearful of country-wide insurrection, Belgium hastily granted independence to the Congo (now Zaire) in June, 1960 (Kerman, 1989).

Little preparation was given to assist the Congolese in local administration. Ethnic distrust, a woefully under-educated populace, high poverty levels, and political unrest undermined the newly formed government, and five days after independence was granted, revolt broke out and spread across the country. A tumultuous five-year period ensued, characterized by assassinations of political leaders, tribal fighting, and massacres. In 1963, UN troops were sent to end the fighting, and with the help of mercenaries, an uneasy truce was achieved in March, 1965. Years of war and destruction bankrupted the new country and left tribal groups bitter, uneasy, and suspicious of one another. Deep divisions persist to this day, and these undermine attempts to unify the country and exacerbate tensions between more developed, wealthier regions and the poorer, less developed ones (Derre, 1990).

Summary

During the past two decades since gaining independence, Rwanda and Zaire have been struggling to maintain political autonomy and stability while at the same time trying to improve poorly developed infrastructures inherited from the Belgian colonial administration.

Despite some remarkable changes in Rwanda and Zaire during the thirty years since independence, the lives of rural women and girls have changed little. Early in life they

establish patterns of endless toil in an apprenticeship of marriage that continues throughout their lives. These patterns are particularly significant when considering educational options that are available to women.

In this first section, "The Prologue," I introduced myself and my study to the reader. I also described the physical setting and socio-cultural factors that influenced the study that I completed (particularly those factors that intersect gender). In the next section, "The Dialogue," I will discuss issues that relate to student access and participation in the classroom. In Chapter Four, I will introduce the reader to schools in central Africa and the two schools, Mupika and Rusimba, where my primary observations took place. In Chapter Five I will discuss classroom interaction that took place at Rusimba, followed by Chapter Six that focuses on the life history of three women teachers. In that chapter, I will highlight factors in these women's lives that contributed to their career choice and the problems they faced as they negotiated their multiple roles. Finally, in Chapter Seven, I will discuss attitudes and expectations that influence who gets to school and who doesn't, what kind of education is desired for both girls and boys, and what effect advanced education has on the lives of females.

CHAPTER FOUR

Vignettes of Two Schools:

Mupika and Rusimba

> Madame, what are schools like in your country? Are they anything like this school? What kinds of things do they teach you in your country? (Marie, student at Rusimba)

The rooster in Mulaka is an early riser, even by rooster standards. Yet when it begins to crow, many primary age children are already up, getting ready to leave their homes and begin the long walk to school. Soon, the line of children at the side of the road is stretched out for miles. I almost find myself wondering, as I drive slowly past, what sort of building I will find that is large enough to contain all these children. But I already know the answer...

Double streaming takes on new meaning in this school... two teachers with two classes in the same classroom at the same time. One teacher to the left, one teacher to the right, and a hundred students in between, crowding together at makeshift benches and desks. And as I look around at the sea of faces, I know full well that in spite of what I see, many school-age children are not here. Only about 75% of primary-school-age children in Rwanda attend school (World Bank, 1990).

Many children remain in their villages, herd cows or goats, work in fields, watch younger children, cook or clean,

hustle in the marketplace. For them, the chance to go to school and receive an education is a dream, a myth of golden opportunity possible for some, but not for everyone, and certainly not for them. But, even for those who <u>do</u> go to school, getting <u>into</u> the school building is only part of getting educated. What happens once students are <u>inside</u> is equally important when considering equality in education.

During the past two decades since gaining independence, Rwanda and Zaire have been struggling to maintain political autonomy and stability while at the same time trying to improve poorly developed infrastructures inherited from the Belgian colonial administration. Nowhere is this improvement more noticeable and remarkable than in the development of both a primary and secondary level educational system. Starting with woefully inadequate physical plants, virtually no supplies, and a small force of poorly trained staff, what has been achieved is certainly more impressive than what has not been accomplished. But there still remains much to be done. Equality issues are still very much at the forefront of discussion in developing countries, and it appears that not only is access to education unequally distributed, but questions of equity in education remain paramount as well. In a social situation where the demand for education is high because of the payoffs in social mobility, the everyday aspects of a classroom, the routines, patterns, materials and interactions of the place are all vital links to learning,

factors that influence not only who gets in but also who gets ahead, and finally, who gets out (Secada, 1989).   '

Schools in central Africa

The poverty and conflicts of recent history in both Rwanda and Zaire underscore not only the necessity to establish a strong educational sector but also highlight the constraints that educational leaders face. Although there are some differences between schools in Rwanda and much of Zaire, the similarities between the school systems are more striking than the differences. Schools in this part of Africa tend to have poorly trained staff and extremely high student-teacher ratios. In the Kivu province in Zaire, schools appear to be less well-constructed than those of Rwanda in general, with mostly sun-dried mud and wattle, and thatch or tin-roofed structures. However, in both countries, variations in the quality of construction can be quite dramatic. Factors that influence this include sponsorship, clientele, grade level, and urban or rural settings. In general, secondary schools are better constructed and supplied than are primary schools, and urban schools tend to be better constructed than rural schools, although there are many exceptions.

Schooling in both countries is compulsory for children from the ages of seven to fifteen. Enforcement of attendance rules is sporadic. Government statistics from both countries show that about 50% of the adult population are relatively

literate and that the average number of years of schooling for the adult population is less than four years of primary school. Educational allocations have been increased in both countries in an attempt to reduce the parental cost of public schooling.[1] Despite a primary education that is nearly cost-free (less than $2.00 US annually for each child enrolled in school), families who have less than $50 a year and seven or eight children in school find it nearly impossible to educate all their children. The cost of books, papers, school uniforms, and pencils is an additional expense and is considerably more than the enrollment fees. Consequently, even those children who can go to school often don't have books or adequate supplies.

Although there are some differences in the curricula of the two countries, both have a program centered on early specialization at the secondary level. In Rwanda, a general comprehensive curriculum is provided at the primary level. Primary education is divided into two cycles: the first or what the government calls "literary" cycle of six years, followed by a two-year cycle with a general curriculum. In Zaire, there is a six-year primary program. The first two years after primary schooling consists of a <u>cycle</u>

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[1]. Of the two countries, Rwanda has been more aggressive in improving the educational sector (R. Prouty, 1987; Hoben, 1988 and 1989). For instance, the latest figures available indicate that 15.2% of expenditures in Zaire compared with 22.2% for Rwanda go to education (World Bank, 1990).

d'orientation[2] or orientation cycle in which the same national
curriculum is followed in all schools throughout the country.
In Rwanda, access to secondary level studies is controlled by
state-administered exit examinations.[3] In Zaire, access to
secondary schooling is generally school-specific, though
entrance exams are given to primary school applicants with
certificates.

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2. Technically, the orientation cycle no longer
   exists. In the early 1980s the Zaire
   government phased out the two-staged cycle
   which consisted of a two-year orientation
   cycle plus a four-year cycle of specialized
   curriculum. The two-staged cycle was replaced
   with a six-year long cycle. However,
   interviews with government inspectors indicate
   that in reality, nothing changed but the name
   of the cycle. The two-year general curriculum
   orientation cycle which is followed by the
   specialized four-year cycle still remains.

3. Government statistics for Rwanda indicate that
   only 25% of students advance as far as the
   fourth grade (82% of girls and 81% of boys who
   are school-age are enrolled), fewer than 2%
   reach secondary school (with a 100:35 boy to
   girl ratio of enrollment) and approximately
   10% of the secondary school graduates go on to
   study at the university level. Only 15% of
   tertiary enrollments are women. It is further
   estimated that a large percentage of school
   leavers or those students who do not continue
   to secondary-level schooling are girls. 1990
   statistics estimate that 76% of primary age
   children in Zaire are enrolled in schools with
   a 64% female enrollment rate at the primary
   level. Attendance at the secondary level
   drops off with 22% of the school-aged children
   enrolled (15% of these are girls). Fewer than
   2% of the post-secondary age population are
   enrolled in tertiary studies. I was unable to
   find any percentages for female enrollments at
   this level (Biraimah, 1987; Boserup, 1970; and
   World Bank, 1990).

Several factors influence selection of secondary-level program of studies: 1) proximity to schools, 2) math and science scores, and 3) whether or not the school has boarding facilities.[4] Sections (or subject matter specializations) that students can choose from, subject to wider local variation, include math/physics, biology/chemistry, teacher training, business, social work, literature, technical, nursing, veterinary, administrative law, and agriculture. As in most parts of Africa, enrollment of girls tend to be significantly higher in teacher training and nursing sections, while their participation in math/physics, biology/chemistry and administrative law sections, are dramatically lower. (Abrahia, Beyene, Dubale, Fuller, Holloway & King, 1991; Eshiwani, 1988; Hughes & Mwiria, 1989; and Stamp, 1989 all have found that girls have limited participation in the sciences, math, and technology in countries throughout Africa.)

There are two distinct differences between the educational systems of the two countries. One is the language of instruction and the second concerns the secondary-level exit examination. Instruction in French begins at a much lower level in Zaire. Generally, French is the language of all instruction by the fourth year of Zairian primary school.

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[4]. In order to attend secondary level schools in Rwanda and Zaire, many students, particularly those in rural areas, must board in dormitories or live in the towns with relatives.

Until that point, the option exists to give instruction in the local language of the region. In Rwanda, however, all instruction at the primary level is given in Kinyarwanda, with the exception of second-language French classes offered several hours a week. A transitional period during the first semester of secondary school, in which teachers are permitted to use Kinyarwanda to clarify when students don't understand concepts in French, supposedly facilitates the shift from Kinyarwanda to French. However, many of the teachers continue to use Kinyarwanda to facilitate coverage of the material and to enhance student comprehension long past the transitional first semester. Because of the earlier start in French, students in Zaire have a much higher level of fluency and are able to complete all their secondary-level studies in French without any need to supplement instruction in a regional or local language.[5]

In Rwanda, there are three types of schools: 1) government schools, 2) government-accredited but privately operated and sponsored schools; and 3) unaccredited private

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[5]. Although most students from Rwanda were very fluent in French and able to communicate in it effectively at the university level (where all studies are completed in French), there were still noticeable differences between the fluency and correctness of the Rwandan and Zairian students at this level. A number of the teachers that I spoke with--several who were native French speakers from Europe-- indicated that this was most evident in the students' written work.

schools.[6] Although students enrolled in all three types of schools complete the same basic curriculum, government-accredited and recognized schools (types 1 and 2) have the advantage that school-designed and -administered exams and daily work averages are included into a student's final grade to determine whether or not the average is high enough to receive the secondary-level diploma. However, in unaccredited private schools (type 3) students complete the same curriculum as students enrolled in type 1 and 2 schools, but receipt of a secondary school diploma is wholly contingent upon successful completion of the state exams. No school-administered tests or daily work are considered for the secondary level diploma. Despite strong averages in school courses, students who fail the state administered exam will not receive the diploma. Because of this, acceptance into government-accredited schools is valued.[7]

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[6]. All three schools offer the same type of curriculum depending upong the section. The main differences are: 1) where the money comes for operating costs, physical plant construction, and teacher salaries; and 2) how state exam results are factored into a student's receipt of a secondary-level diploma.

[7]. When I began observations at Rusimba, it did not have government accreditation. However, it was in the process of completing the necessary government evaluations to upgrade its status. Before data collection was completed, the director had received notification from the Ministry of Education that the school had satisfactorily completed all requirements and government accreditation had been granted.

In Zaire under an arrangement established in 1977, all teacher and administrator salaries are paid by the government, but the responsibility for administration, upkeep and construction is generally held by the organizations that sponsor the school. The government does assume sole responsibility for some schools, although a large percentage of the schools are sponsored through religious organizations. Despite differences in sponsorship, the curriculum and requirement for receiving a diploma are identical at both private and government schools. Unlike the situation in Rwanda, all graduating students in Zaire, whether enrolled in private or government schools, must sit for the state exams. Receipt of a secondary-level diploma is contingent upon a passing grade on the government-administered exit examination (R. Prouty, 1987).

Charges for students at the secondary level in Rwanda vary considerably depending upon the type and accreditation of the school. Government schools are relatively cost-free but are extremely difficult to get into. Private schooling is more accessible but very expensive, costing as much as the equivalent of several hundred US dollars a year. When access to accredited schools is limited, parental preference is to send sons to accredited schools where a diploma is more certain and to pay the significantly higher fees for private schooling for daughters where a secondary school diploma is less certain. Although enrollment figures at all three types

of schools in Rwanda were unavailable, statistics that I obtained for the region under study showed that the percentage of girls enrolled was higher in the non-government schools. However, the overall participation of girls, including participation rates in both private and government schools, remained significantly lower than that for boys (100:35 boy to girl ratio of attendance).

In Zaire, student enrollment at any given school is significantly influenced by a school's pass-rate history. Schools with a record of high pass rates are more competitive and attract more and better students. Other factors such as boarding facilities and an urban location are also important considerations, particularly for girls whose families may be reluctant to permit a daughter to leave home to attend secondary school. Higher enrollments of girls can be found in both Rwanda and Zaire at church-administered schools where parents believe social interaction between the boys and girls is more closely monitored than in the government schools.

Mupika

Nine kilometers from the paved highway on a rough and poorly constructed dirt road that weaves its way around the base of the dormant volcano, Karisimbi, lies the commune of Mulaka. It is an out-of-the-way and almost forgotten agricultural community in one of the more isolated sections of the country and as I drive down the road, small barefoot

children run up to the car, waving wildly, shouting "<u>Muzungu,</u> <u>muzungu</u>"[8] as I drive past. Set back 100 feet on a hill that gently slopes up from the road is a complex of mud buildings with tin roofs that appear to have a definite slant to them. They look as if they could lose their fight with gravity at any moment and topple to the ground. The buildings are surrounded by hundreds of children, hundreds of noisy children, children chasing one another, children chasing cows or goats, children dancing and talking and laughing. I don't need to ask where I am. I already know. This is Mupika, one of the larger primary schools in Mulaka. Indeed, there are hundreds of children here. School records at Mupika indicate that there are nearly 650 children to be exact--some who walk over 8 kilometers one way, six days a week to come to school. However, the school enrollment records are hard to verify and the exact number attending daily varies considerably. Daily attendance records are not kept, and although monthly reports are sent to the government reporting the percentage of students in attendance during the month, one can only guess how many children are here from day to day.

The school complex has three buildings arranged to form a large U-shape and four outhouses in the field behind the classrooms. In a center area between the three classroom

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8. Technically, this word in Swahili means "european" but it has come to mean (euphemistically in some cases) "white person."

buildings near the lower end of the field, a make-shift soccer
field has been constructed on the uneven ground that lies
between the classroom buildings. The area that's left over
becomes the playground for the children who don't play soccer.
Both the soccer field and playing area have sharp outcroppings
of lava rocks, constant reminders of the powerful volcanos
looming in the distance, encircling the region. In the hard-
packed dirt, little tufts of grass try to force their way
through but are quickly eaten by herds of cows or goats that
graze around the school buildings. During the rainy season,
rivulets of water running down the hill from the fields of
wheat growing in back of the school flow through the play
area, searching for gullies left behind from previous rainy
seasons. In the lower areas, the water forms an immense mud
hole, a constant source of entertainment for the younger
children who play together in separate clusters of boys and
girls. The muck reaches their ankles in places and the
students cautiously bend low, reach down, and bring up
fistfuls of mud that ooze out between their fingers and drip
down their arms. No one seems to notice, and by the end of
the day, the mud carried in on their feet has started to dry
and will be swept away the following morning before school
starts.

At Mupika, like many of the schools I visit, the long-
horned cows and pygmy goats roaming around the schools
outnumber the teachers, and animal feces can be seen

everywhere around the school yard. Chickens strut between the buildings and peck away in the hard packed dirt searching for bugs. They squawk loudly, furiously flap their wings in mock flight, and run in circle patterns whenever they are disturbed. In the far corner of the play area, a lone pig roots for food. One end of a rope is bound around the pig's rear leg and the other is tied to a stake. The pig grunts loudly, tugs at the stake and pulls the rope taut in the search for morsels of food to gulp down. For me, with mental images and memories of red-bricked schools, neatly kept lawns, playgrounds with swings and slides, the scene before me seems surrealistic--dilapidated buildings, animals, mudholes, hordes of children. Features about the scene make me know it is a school, and yet I can't help but wonder if this is really a school.

I notice that outside, the boys dominate the playing space. Girls congregate in clusters around the sides of the classroom buildings and play jumping games or dance as they talk or sing together. Boys take control of most of the playing area and maintain control of access to this area. Boys don't congregate in small clusters, possibly because of the size of the space they control. Instead, they chase one another around the area, often wave sticks in the air as they play different chasing games and push and tumble activities and soccer with a grass ball tied up with string. It is not uncommon for typical playing patterns to stop when the teacher

organizes recess activities, which include lining up and
marching in-step and competitive race games (generally girls
against boys).

> Some of the girls are playing bamuda--
> they form a circle and jump and clap in
> unison. They also sing as they play but
> it's not always the same song. It
> appears to be similar to hop-scotch but
> more complicated.
> Several groups of boys with sticks keep
> running towards the girls playing here--
> the boys wave the sticks in the air and
> threaten to slap the legs of the girls.
> Twice two groups of girls have broken up
> their circle and run off. One girl
> appears to be angry. She's shaking her
> fist and shouting at the boys. However,
> most of the girls run off and return
> laughing.
>
> * * * *
>
> The boys monopolize the space on the
> playground. The girls congregate around
> the buildings. It seems that when girls
> venture into the free space, they do so
> hesitantly. Four times now during
> recess, I've watched several little girls
> walk cautiously towards the inner space,
> look around and then run across the space
> until they near the far side where they
> look behind them and slow down.

When girls venture into the boys' area, they are either
chased off in a threatening manner with the sticks, or if
invited, join in the chasing games with the boys. It appeared
that gender hierarchies in the playing area have been
established, although this was difficult to pursue because of
the language difficulties. Work by Davies (1989), Lever
(1976, 1978), and Thorne (1986) have shown that playing
patterns and hierarchies develop in the gender interactions in

school playgrounds.[9] Thorne (1986) found that there were defined playground borders for girls and boys, with boys controlling the larger part of the playing space. These borders were affirmed by chasing games between boys and girls. She also found invasions in which both boys and girls would attempt to disrupt the play activities of the various groups by crossing the borders that had been established between the girls' and boys' play areas. She writes that "(borders) help maintain separate, gender-linked subcultures, which,...may result in different milieux for learning" (p. 181).

If distinct gender-defined sub-cultures are a key characteristic of the playing area, over-crowding would be the key characteristic of the classroom. The fifth-grade classroom that I observed in had two classrooms meeting in one room with well over 110 students in attendance. The assistant director told me that since the grade seven teacher was attending a <u>recyclage</u> (an in-service training program) and would be absent for several weeks, it was arranged for one of the grade five teachers to substitute in the grade seven room and for both grade five classrooms to meet in the same room until the seventh grade teacher returned.[10]

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9.   Although these studies have been conducted in developed countries, my data indicates that the playing patterns are similar.

10.   The two classrooms met together for the duration of the 10 weeks that observations were made in this classroom.

Recyclage is an important part of upgrading the teaching staff at most primary schools. Mupika, like most of the primary schools that I visited, had a teaching staff with limited educations. All the teachers had a secondary-level normal school degree--the D6 (a six-year diploma) all that the government requires to teach at the primary level)--and the director held no degree from university but had attended for a short period. There were no staff meetings at Mupika, teachers were assigned what to do and had little voice or autonomy about teaching load, classroom assignment, etc. Consequently, the highly centralized system of tight control trickled down from the government into the prefectures, individual schools and finally it filtered into the classrooms where similar patterns of control and conformity could be observed in the teacher-student interactions.

I walk through the door into the fifth year classroom. The room is a sea of faces--children are everywhere. There's no place to sit, and I squeeze a folding chair partially in front of the open door. I try to make an exact student count but it's impossible. The students tend to sit at the same place all day long, but there are many exceptions. There are no assigned seats; indeed, there are no individual seats. Ten-foot planks precariously resting on top of six stacked bricks or balanced on a large piece of lava serve as benches. Each plank seats twenty or more students. Several of the planks have wide cracks running nearly their whole length.

The plank arrangement is quite unstable, and several times a day the planks tip over and students topple to the floor amidst a series of suppressed giggles and comments. There are a few groups of students sitting at desks with attached benches. However, at three of the desks, the side supports on the benches are no longer attached, and several times during the day these, too, fall apart. If the students weren't packed in so tightly into the classroom, both bench supports and students would have toppled to the floor.

The front two rows of students sitting on planks are mostly girls and the last two rows, nearer the back wall, are mostly boys who sit at desks. In the middle six rows, boys and girls are seated together on planks. Since the school is built on a hill, the floor of the classroom consists of three levels with different rows arranged on each level. The middle level is twice the width of the first and third levels and six rows of benches are placed in this section. The teachers teach to the students seated in the last two rows of the classroom where mostly boys sit. They direct their gaze to this area, and it is from this section of the classroom that most of the interaction between them and students takes place (questions asked of students, student-generated questions, teacher reinforcement, etc.) My attempts to determine if this occurs because the teachers are making sure the students farthest away can hear are unsuccessful. I wonder if the teachers' preference for this particular section is because

it's closer to eye level and easier to maintain eye contact with this group. Both teachers are shorter than me, and I notice that when I stand up I have to look up to be at eye level with the students in the back section.

As I glance around the room, I can see that there is one small blackboard and that a few geometric shapes cut out of white paper have been stuck to the white-washed walls opposite me. There are no windows in the room, so the door is generally left open, except during the rainy season when torrents of rain blow into the room. During periods of heavy rain, instruction halts as the rain pounds and thunders down on the tin roof, drowning out even the loudest sounds in the classroom. The room I'm in is no exception: none of the classrooms at Mupika have windows. Instead, the classrooms have two fiberglass skylights, and on sunny days two bright streams of light shine through the sunburned fiberglass; on cloudy days the sunlight filters through and casts ghostly shadows in the room; on rainy days the light is obscured and water drips in around the edges and a telltale puddle of water collects on the floor of the classroom. Two small ventilation holes are placed near the ceiling on the side walls. However, they don't provide an adequate amount of fresh air, and the air in the classroom is stale. Not only is it stale, but a lethal combination of odors--mold, urine, unwashed bodies, strongly spiced food, and perfume--blasts you as you walk through the door.

I observe that boys are called on twice as often as girls. One-on-one interaction with students is nearly impossible because of the crowded conditions, and individual praise and positive reinforcement are nearly non-existent. The lessons proceed at a fast pace as students are called upon, one after another, to go up to the board and complete problems. A non-stop shuffling of books, people, and paper as students laboriously make their way up to the front--climbing over planks and people--takes place throughout the day. While this continual stream of students moving back and forth to and from the board occurs, other students sitting at the benches are shouting out answers to questions they are being asked. At times, I felt that I was in an electrically charged atmosphere in which students spewed out the answers like automatons. Clearly, the more aggressive and verbal students received the limited teacher attention that was available. With few exceptions, these were the boys who dominated the time and attention of the teachers, while the girls were more timid, reticent to take turns, and less willing to take risks in the classroom. Fieldnotes taken during the first two weeks of observation underscore the interaction patterns that occurred.

> The teacher nearest the desk has called
> on 10 students--4 to go to the board and
> 6 to answer questions--5 of the 6 were
> boys in the back section, and 3 of the 4
> that went to the board were girls sitting
> in the front row.
> No girls have offered an answer while
> boys repeatedly shout out answers to

> questions...a group of girls near me have
> been raising their hands to answer
> questions. They wait until the teacher
> calls on them to answer but a boy
> generally calls out the answer before
> they get called on. The other teacher
> has called up 15 students to look in
> their notebooks--10 were boys, 5 were
> girls.

Less than a third of the students have books, and some
have no paper notebooks and write on cardboard slates with
chalk. (As the number of books available is limited, students
are encouraged to pay the required $1.25 yearly school charge,
the minerval, as soon as possible to ensure getting the
necessary books.) Because of the limited number of books
available, the teachers commonly teach using a method called
the résumé. They'll cover the material for the day in a short
lecture and then spend the remainder of the period writing the
pages from the book (or their lecture notes) out on the board.
As the board becomes covered up with the writing, a student
erases the part that the others have already copied into their
notebooks.

At Mupika, two of the taller girls sitting near the front
of the room were assigned the task of wiping the board.
Cleaning the board was a common practice at all the schools I
observed, although each school appeared to have different
systems of assigning the task. The only other daily work
routine that I observed at Mupika was sweeping the classroom
floors before school. A group of girls who lived near the
school shared the responsibility for doing this job. At no

time during the period that observations were made at Mupika were boys observed cleaning the boards or sweeping the floors. Girls cleaned and tidied the rooms, assuming responsibilities similar to those jobs women did outside of the school setting.

There is a 2:1 ratio of boys to girls. When I ask about this, the teacher explains that there is a much higher percentage of absenteeism with the girls. However, although there are usually more boys present from day to day, their attendance is more sporadic. I ask the reason for this. I'm told that boys prefer to earn money by herding cows, whereas the girls who are enrolled and are consistently sent to school generally come from homes where the parents are more concerned about educating their children and are more zealous in following through on attendance. However, in general there are high absenteeism rates for both boys and girls. I'm told by local doctors that nearly 70% of the student population suffer from chronic bronchitis which often necessitates absences from school. I don't doubt that these estimates are correct, since a constant chorus of coughs, sniffles, and sneezes accompanies the teacher's lessons. I ask the two teachers in the room where I am observing about their attendance-keeping system, but I sense that they are uneasy answering my question, so I change the topic and instead ask them about their books. I decide to ask the local official at the commune down the road about attendance records.

When I walk into the commune building, I don't need to introduce myself. They've all heard about the "white lady" who has been visiting the schools in their area. The man in charge is very friendly, very accommodating and welcomes me into his office. I thank him for permitting me the opportunity to observe in the schools in his region. He is almost apologetic that they are "so poor and uninviting" and reassures me that "priority is being given to improving the schools here. We don't have much money and there are many things that have to be bought."

I agree that money is always a problem. Then I ask him about the attendance records and student enrollment in schools. He leans back in his chair, first turns his gaze out the window, and then, suddenly, leans forward and places his elbows on his desk and folds his hands together as he looks at me intently. The smile that greeted me as I walked into his office is no longer there. Instead, he shakes his head slowly and quietly, cautiously replies:

> Ah, Madame, that is a difficult question you've asked me. We have tried time and again to get all the children in this commune enrolled in school but it is very difficult, very difficult. Unfortunately, this commune reports the lowest percentage of primary school enrollment of any commune in the prefecture.

Rusimba

Rusimba, the secondary school is situated two kilometers from the center of a small border town. It has been in

operation for fifteen years but has only recently begun to offer the _cycle long_, the last two years of the full teacher training cycle. The fifth year was first offered in 1986-87 and the sixth year in 1987-88. The physical plant, completed in four stages, includes three adobe and tin-roofed classrooms and teachers' lounge (the original class buildings), a block of six classrooms, and another block of administrative offices and teachers' planning lounge, girls' dormitory, a laboratory, cafeteria, and student dispensary. All classrooms, except for the fifth and sixth years, have windows only on the wall opposite the classroom door. The other two rooms have windows looking out from both side walls of the classroom. On the land surrounding the school buildings there is housing for some of the staff and other mission workers, a primary school, a wood and metal working shop, the main church, a hennery, gardens, and an open grassy area used for grazing a small herd of livestock, including a few goats, cows and sheep. The school employs three female teachers in a staff of fifteen teachers (Table 14, Appendix B) under the direction of a European missionary. With the exception of one teacher who only held a D6 (the secondary-level diploma) from Rusimba, all the teachers at Rusimba had at least the _graduaté_, the first level university degree. Like Mupika, school administration was quite authoritarian and allowed little staff interaction or input into the school policies, program, scheduling, etc. While I observed there were no staff meetings and teachers

indicated that this was quite typical. Most of the teachers told me that they preferred this approach and didn't want the added burden of teacher's meeting, planning committees and "added work that we don't get paid for."

During the period when the study was conducted, enrollment was 302 students, of whom 161 were girls. Many of the students were members of the Protestant church that administers the school. However, church affiliation is not a requirement for admission, and many different churches and religions were represented, including Islam, Catholic, some traditional animists, and various Protestant churches.

There are 26 girls and 16 boys in the fourth year classroom I'm visiting. They range in age from 18 to 27 years of age with an average age of nearly 20 years old. With few exceptions, all students have the necessary textbooks for all of their classes. The books, provided by the school for a small rental charge, are withheld until the rental fee has been paid.[11]

Classes are held Monday through Saturday from 7:30 to 12:00 and 1:00 until 5:00 with the exception of Wednesday and Saturday which are half-day sessions. However, dormitory students are expected to attend Wednesday and Saturday

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[11]. Needy students who are unable to pay can apply for assistance from a worthy student fund donated by church sponsors in Europe. Selection for assistance, I was told, is based on financial need, academic performance, and church affiliation.

afternoon religious services. Although day students are not required to attend the services, their attendance is strongly encouraged. With the exception of two religion classes each week, a Tuesday afternoon assembly, and two hours of work study, the government-developed, teacher training curriculum is followed. This includes: art, pedagogy, geography, history, physical education, French, language (Kinyarwanda), math, biology, chemistry, music, methods of arithmetic, and English. Several class periods a week are also included for classroom observations at the primary school (leçon pratique) and in a pedagogy laboratory. With the exception of two second year classrooms, there is one classroom for each year (or grade) at Rusimba. Students remain in the same classroom for the duration of the day and teachers make the rounds of the various classrooms teaching their courses.

Students stream into the school compound shortly before the opening ceremonies begin each morning. They congregate in small groups, talking until the "bell" rings and they are expected to line up in fourteen rows. There are two rows for each room--one for girls and one for boys. The flag is raised, the students sing the national anthem and the class "chef" then takes attendance in each room. The only exception to this routine is on Fridays or special occasions when the students conduct a short animation,[12] a special national song

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[12]. In Zaire this can become quite an "energetic" experience as the students dance, jump and sing. Frequently, one gets the impression

and dance routine after the flag is raised and the national anthem is sung.[13] After the flag raising routine, the directress usually makes any special announcements followed by a closing prayer by either the vice principal or one of the students. The students then break their formations and head into their classrooms ready to begin another day.

The classroom atmosphere at Rusimba is a total contrast to Mupika. My first memory as I enter the classroom at Rusimba is the orderliness of the classroom. Each student is seated on a four-legged stool at a wooden desk. The desks, which are neatly organized into rows, are the type with the lids that open and almost each desk is padlocked. Nearly all students have books and limited but adequate supplies. Although the walls are bare, sunshine pours in the windows that line one wall, and a gentle breeze blows through the open windows. Absent are the over-powering smells that made Mupika a test of endurance, the cacophony of sniffles, sneezes and

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that the students are resisting more than they are being patriotic. In Rwanda, things tend to remain calmer and one senses that the students genuinely respect the ceremony that is being performed.

[13]. In the spring of each year, secondary-level schools in each prefecture gather together and have a grand-scale animation in which the various schools in each prefecture gather in the prefecture seats and compete to place first in the animation dance and theatrics presentations. This festival lasts much of the day with visits from dignitaries, soccer matches and guest performers such as the national dance team for volleyball team.

coughs and the general sense of bedlam resulting from the overcrowding. Also unlike Mupika, generally there is little talking among the students as they work quietly at their own desks.

Patterns of interaction vary dramatically from one teacher to the next, but basic modes of presentation are remarkably similar.[14] The résumé tradition is very strong and teachers seldom stray away from the tried and true method inherited from the colonial legacy. Teachers generally lecture, or occasionally conduct discussions, for most of the period with the remaining ten to fifteen minutes left to write out the résumé of the lesson on the blackboard while the students copy it in their books. Consequently, classrooms are generally teacher-centered with a one-way transmission of textbook or résumé material from teachers to students. Teaching and learning tends to focus on lower order thinking skills and rote memorization. There are some noticeable exceptions to this and some teachers at the school, such as Jacques (the math teacher) or Celeste (the pedagogy teacher) try to get the students into higher order thinking skills.

Each classroom at the secondary school has a "chef" (boy) and "chefette" (girl) selected by student vote. Their responsibilities include taking class attendance, opening the classroom before school starts, locking it up at the close of

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[14]. Patterns of interaction at Rusimba will be discussed at length in Chapter Five.

the day, supervising the work assignments for that classroom, and taking messages to the office. The "chef" is normally responsible with the "chefette" assuming responsibility only during the absence of the "chef." Consequently, the "chefette" serves more as an assistant than as a co-leader. The students are also expected to erase the blackboards as needed, both during and after the lectures. According to the assistant principal, the responsibility systematically passes row by row through the classroom until each student has assumed the responsibility once. At this point it returns to the student who cleaned the board the first time. This process is repeated in each classroom until the end of the school year. (Both the blackboard responsibilities and the <u>chef/chefette</u> organization will be discussed at more length in Chapter Five.)

Summary

Classrooms in central Africa tend to be poorly equipped and over-crowded. Teachers and students work and learn in poorly constructed buildings that often lack the basic necessities such as blackboards, water supplies, bathrooms, and didactic materials.

Girls have unequal access to schools. This begins at the primary level and continues through the secondary-level until university where girls make up less than 15% of the student enrollment. Girls who do continue to the secondary level tend

to be enrolled in care-taking type programs such as nursing or teaching. Interaction patterns favor boys in the classroom and often girls learn through a secondary-mode instruction. Boys are called on more than twice as often as girls and have fewer absences. Not only do boys dominate time in the classrooms they dominate space as well. Playground borders designate significantly more space to the boys who zealously guard girls from crossing their borders and entering their games unless invited.

At the primary level girls are taught to be passive students. They learn that boys are there to ask and answer questions, control the space, control the supplies, and occupy the teachers' time. Primary schools become a <u>right</u> <u>of</u> <u>way</u> for most boys leading them to secondary-level educations which they desire because of their privileged sex. However, for girls schools become a <u>rite</u> <u>of</u> <u>passage</u> (and too often a short one at that) leading to marriage and motherhood, roles which they deserve because of their sex.

In Chapter Five we will take a closer look at the interaction patterns that take place at the secondary-level classroom at Rusimba. Although, privilege in the classroom begins at the primary level, it is at the secondary-level where the differentiation becomes most pronounced most damning to the girls.

CHAPTER FIVE

Two Separate Worlds:

One for Boys and One for Girls

> In our culture, particularly in my
> parent's generation, it's almost as if
> there are two separate worlds for men and
> women.   That's just the way it is.
> (Ferdinand, February, 1989)

Several weeks of observations at Mupika (and other primary classrooms) were enough to see that boys dominated space and time in classrooms. Male privilege in school was established at the primary level and my visits to Rusimba confirmed that this privilege continued throughout their secondary studies. However, the interaction that I observed at Rusimba helped me to better understand the pressure that girls were under to leave school and begin fulfilling the role of wife and mother with all the obligations and responsibilities implicit in those two words.

As many studies have shown, it is easier for girls to disengage from their academic roles, terminate their studies, and assume their "true" roles as reproducers and producers than it is to remain in school and constantly resist (Brewster, 1980; Payne, 1980; McRobbie & Garber, 1975; Willis, 1977).   Payne (1980) describes how this process takes place and how it reinforces cultural perceptions of what the role of women is.

> Girls are socialized into the expectation
> that their primary role will be one of
> wife and mother and once this expectation
> is   accepted   and   internalized,   the

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> continuation of the existing sexual
> division of labor is ensured. The
> results are observable. Girls expect to
> be wives and mothers, they make decisions
> about their lives in the light of this
> expectation and they become wives and
> mothers thereby providing the evidence
> that the primary role of girls is to
> become wives and mothers. (p. 32)

In this chapter, I will describe how the interactions that I observed during the five months that I visited classrooms at Rusimba confirmed these societal pressures. The stories that I share are only a small representation of the stories that I collected. In the hundreds of hours that I observed in classrooms there, I saw excellent teaching, compassion and concern about student learning, and a genuine desire to give each and every student there an equal chance to excel. But I also saw how difficult it was for individuals to disassociate from their cultural ideology, an ideology that ordained that some should lead and some should follow, some should labor and some should delegate, and that some should win and some should lose.

Boys with boys and girls with girls

It's recreation period and the students swarm out of their classrooms. Almost immediately, a group of about twenty boys begins a game similar to volleyball (but everyone plays in a circle) in one corner of the grassy area between the classroom buildings, while another group of boys begins a soccer game in the other corner. Students mingle all around

the edges of the classroom buildings. Most of the boys are jostling, pulling, and hitting one another good-naturedly. Some of the other boys cluster and talk, listen to their radios, and dance to the music. The girls line up on the cement sidewalk in front of each classroom--a few join the volleyball game, others watch the soccer game in progress. Most of the girls, however, cluster in groups of five to ten (usually from their own rooms), and laugh, sing (none of the girls have radios) and dance. A few groups of girls join the boys and dance--boys with boys and girls with girls--never together.

It's the _total_ absence of any boy/girl partnering that is so striking in the interaction that's taking place. I can't detect even one couple in all the talking, dancing, and playing together that occurs. This seems all the more remarkable considering the age of these students (mid-teens to early twenties). Even the mixed interaction that I do see appears to be on unequal terms. The girls who play volleyball play less aggressively than the boys and tend to play in an outer part of the circle where the ball is less likely to arrive. Whether by choice or decree, the girls are peripheral to the game.

I notice that even in the dancing, where the groups are gender-segregated, the boys are able to dominate, control. The girls dance in small, tight circles barely lifting their feet off the ground. They sway their hips in hypnotic, almost

sensuous motions, gracefully wave their arms around their heads, clap their hands, and snap their fingers in beat to the music. But the boys spread out across the space almost encircling the girls dancing in their midst, and in fast, powerful movements combine gymnastics and dance. They leap across the lawn, jerk, and turn in movements that scream out their agility and strength. I'd seen this dance before, a variation of the marriage dance performed at traditional marriages, yet I'm still mesmerized by the force of the dance. The power of the scene before me is all the more impressive knowing that the hidden message of freedom and confinement, control and subordination that's taking place in this dance on the outside of the classroom represents all too well the interaction that takes place inside the classroom.

Learning their roles

Inside the classroom, the interaction and control of the classroom is similar to Mupika. Boys are more aggressive as students, asking more questions, raising their hands more frequently, and generally talking about the need for an education more often than the girls. Attendance records for the fourth year classroom, where most of my observations were made, show that the boys are tardy and absent less than the girls. The boys express more of an interest in their studies and talk about the necessity to do well so that they can go to university, get a good job, and earn a good salary. Even the

girls who frequently speak about continuing their education at the university level do not participate as actively in the classroom as boys, with the exception of Josie, a sullen, somewhat bitter girl, who is noticeably competitive and pursues her studies with a relentless determination. (She will be discussed at more length in the last chapter.) Josie is an exceptionally capable student, clearly the best or second best student in this classroom. This impression was confirmed when I checked the academic records. Josie consistently scored among the top 5% of all students in the school. Most of the girls, however, assume a passive role, waiting for help, or waiting to be singled out to respond, rather than asking for help or offering an answer to the work being discussed. Selected fieldnotes underscore the passive engagement of the girls.

> All of the boys are in their seats and ready to start work. About a third of the girls are standing around talking. Henri and Thomas have their books out and are going over yesterday's work. They had difficulties with the work yesterday and they're checking with another student, Joel, about the work in their notebooks. 2/14/89--Biology

> Today only two girls ask questions about the work. Five boys raise their hands and ask for clarification about doing the problem. Three girls don't have their homework done: all of the boys completed theirs. 2/22/89--Math

> Céleste offers the students an opportunity to get involved in a special activity. Three boys offer to help and only one girl. 3/22/89--Pedagogy

> The girls' patterns of engagement remain
> the same. Today, more boys ask questions
> than girls (nearly twice as often), they
> offer answers more and don't wait to be
> called on. 4/18/89--Pedagogy

The observation that the girls are passive learners has been noted in many studies. Edwards and Whiting (1976) found that girls are taught to acquiesce to the boys in schools a learned behavior that profoundly influences their engagement in the classroom. Fleming's 1972 study found that, in general, girls have a fear of success[1], receive lower marks, are trained to have less incentive to achieve and are socialized to be more passive and less competitive in their learning.

The girls' classroom engagement at Rusimba seems more profoundly influenced by teacher gender than by any other factor. Even though there are ten more girls than boys in the fourth-year classroom, the instructors who were men call on boys nearly twice as often. The exception is a history

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[1]. Fleming's (1972) assumption that it is "fear of success" can be challenged as a patriarchal perspective that blames the victim. In my study, it could be argued that "fear of failure" was the more powerful force generating the girls' behavior in the classroom. They had been raised all their lives to believe that their main role was to become wives and mothers. Anything that risked success in this area, particularly success in school, would be seen as failing to fulfill their most important role. Fleming's study does provide evidence, however, that there is a learned behavior that encourages girls to become passive in the classroom.

teacher, Henri, who is the father of five daughters and has no sons.

I ask Henri's views on girls' interaction in the classroom. He assures me that his expectations are the same for the girls, even though he's often disappointed with their performance.

> But girls are only acting out what they've been taught to do. Girls are passive, accepting, and constantly pushed into responsibilities outside the classroom. In essence, they're taught to be poor students.
>
> Before I had children I felt like most everyone does that girls were less capable than boys. At the very least I thought that educational opportunities should be given to the boys in the family rather than to the girls. Once all the boys in a family were educated, then you could worry about educating the girls.
>
> But I don't have sons. I don't think that way anymore. Girls are as good as boys. They have as much potential. But I'm afraid my way of thinking is not the norm. Very few people think like I do. And I probably wouldn't think this way if I hadn't been forced to realize what girls have to offer by watching five daughters day after day.

Thus, the influential factor for Henri's difference is his personal biography and having daughters rather than sons. But personal biography doesn't totally erase the expectation that boys should be more active, aggressive, and self-directed as students. The three women teachers at Rusimba, Marie, Celeste and Stella, who share a life history and experiences similar to so many of the girls in the school, also favor boys

over girls in their interactions and positive reinforcements, although at a less pronounced level than in most of the men's classes.

One day during the morning tea break, the three women teachers, Celeste, Marie, and Stella, sit together. I join them and we begin to discuss the subject of teacher expectations for student engagement. Marie, the English teacher, explains that boys are better students.

> They work harder. The girls don't really want to be here. Why should I waste my time with them? I have better things to do than try to teach someone who doesn't really want to be in school. If they don't want to work hard they should just leave and go to the fields or get married because that's where they'll end up.

Céleste sips her tea and shakes her head in agreement and Stella interjects, "Yes, that's true, I totally agree." I ask Marie how she can tell who really wants to learn and be in school.

> I know by who sits up in their chairs attentively, who completes homework assignments, who participates more actively in classroom discussions, how involved they get in classroom activities.

Marie's attitude about girls' limited engagement and passive interaction is evident as she teaches. Marie's teaching style is very consistent, visit after visit. She rarely moves around the classroom. Instead, she generally stands near the far right corner of the room by the desk. Four or five times during the period, she walks to the board,

writes vocabulary words in English, and has the students read orally from their books. Like many of the teachers at Rusimba, Marie rarely calls a girl by name.[2] Marie generally uses _monsieur_ when she calls on boys and just looks at a girl when she wants them to answer a question. However, she seldom asks girls a direct question. Even in classrooms where girls outnumber boys, Marie calls on boys more often than girls and in some classes, nearly three times as often. Even Marie's interaction with students who are disengaged demonstrates her biases about the expectations for schooling and girls.

During one visit, I record ten occasions when Marie discovers students off task. If it's a girl who is off task or several girls talking together, she tells them to "get busy," walks over to them, nudges their elbows, and taps them on the head. If the girls follow through and "get on task," Marie moves on; if the girls don't, Marie continues to stand there for a short time, observing, monitoring, but not pushing them to start working.

On one occasion, Marie waits for four minutes, and the girls still aren't doing the work on the board. Marie shakes her head, mumbles, "You girls are such poor students. Why are you here?" and walks away. Her reaction is different with the boys who are off task. When boys were off task I observed that Marie moves towards them and taps them. If this

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[2]. Only five of the fifteen teachers at Rusimba called students by their names. The five were Céleste, Stella, Faustin, Henri and Jean.

manoeuver isn't successful and the boy remains off-task, she warns him that he'll lose points for that day's work. Generally, this technique is successful. However, if the boys still aren't engaged, Marie reinforces how important it is for him to get a good education and how vital good English is to that education. Marie's gender differentiated interaction and response with off-task students was consistent visit after visit.

> Marie gives the students an assignment to do in the book. Two of the five girls in the room look out the window and whisper to each other. Marie walks over and taps one girl on the head. She says, "Do your work." They work for a minute but start whispering again. Marie stands there, she's watching them, doesn't say anything. Waits. The girls keep talking together. Marie walks away, "You girls shouldn't be here to waste my time if you don't want to work."

* * *

> Joel is doing work for his math class. Marie discovers him working in the wrong notebook. She shakes her finger and tells him to take out his English notebook or "I'll deduct points from your grade." Joel starts to take it out but as Marie walks away, he starts working on the math again. Marie notices again that he's not doing English, "You want to get to college? Do your English—you need it to pass the exam."

* * *

> Marie has had to talk to Lamec several times during English class for not doing his work. She's come to his desk three times, each time she's tapped the desk with her pen, told him that "You need to learn English to go to school—do your work so I don't lower your grade."

I ask Marie why she presses boys to engage but basically ignores the girls who are off-task. She shrugs her shoulders and waves her hands in a gesture of indifference and replies: "I don't have time to wait for girls."[3] Ironically, that's exactly what she did. When girls were off task, she would just stand by their desk and wait.

Boys learn and girls lose

Gender-differentiated interaction patterns are most pronounced in the mathematics classes. Girls are called upon more often than boys by the teacher, Jacques, to do board work. The verbal interaction that takes place when doing board work reinforces the marginal status girls have in his class. The girls called to the board tend to be the poorer students. If the girl called to the board can not complete the work, comments are often made by the teacher and boys alike concerning the girl's ability to complete the task. "Is this too hard?" "Do you need someone to help you?" or "Do I need to tell you what to do now?" Commonly, the teacher calls upon another girl of comparable low ability to assist the girl at the blackboard. Often the teacher then calls upon one of the more capable boys to complete the problem.

Although Jacques' biased interaction is the most extreme, the interaction patterns that are developed show that teachers

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[3]. The significance of "time" and the perception that one "waits" for girls, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

do not expect girls to perform well in class. Vignettes from field notes underscore the marginality and negative experience of the girls during math instruction:

> The teacher, Jacques, continues to address the boys by monsieur and the girls by nothing or by saying allez [go-imperative voice] in a loud, guttural voice. Jacques is going around the classroom looking at the student workbooks. He tells four boys that they're doing excellent work and shows two boys where they've made a mistake in their work. So far he hasn't commented on the work of any girl, even though he's gone by Josie (one of the better math students--possibly the second best student in the class). He helps one girl with a problem. Two girls are talking in the corner--I think he notices them but doesn't say anything to them.

Jacques' interaction in this classroom relegated girls to an inferior status. Like Marie, he addressed them in an inferior, less respectful way and reinforced that their work was less important in the way he allocated more time and effort to boys and their work than to girls and their work.

> Jacques just told Sophie that her workbook is very legible. As he walks off he comments that "...if the work looks as good in your head as in your book, that'll be good." The whole class laughs, and Sophie puts her head down on her desk for a few minutes. Sophie stops taking any notes and disengages, looks out the window and doodles in her workbook. The class period finishes--Sophie's interaction in class halted after the teacher made the comment to her.

References are frequently made about the appearance of the girls' work, placing emphasis on the form, what it looks

like, instead of the substance, the girls' ability to correctly do the work. Girls are seldom praised for their intellectual contribution to class discussions or individual work in their notebooks. Boys are often praised for their contribution, even in cases where their work is incorrect.

> Jacques gives the students a problem to do. He's asks them to raise their hands when they've completed it so that he can come by and check their work. Josie raises her hand--she's the second student done in the room. Everyone else around her is still working at the problem. The teacher comes by and checks her work. He says it's OK, but asks her if she didn't cheat off the boy who sits next to her-- the boy is still working at the problem. A minute later he raises his hand to get his paper evaluated. His response is incorrect.

Jacques' challenge that Josie may have cheated off the less capable boy sitting near her is a further indication of the status that girls have in his classroom. Actually, Jacques' question is really more of a "statement of fact" than a question. Despite Josie's superior abilities in math, Jacques' cultural expectations that women are dependent on men, even when men aren't as good or contributing as much as women, prompted him to <u>suggest</u>, to reinforce, that it really <u>was</u> the boy next to her that had enabled Josie to get the correct answer.

Four months into the data collection period, several girls in the fourth year classroom started straightening their hair. Each day for a week, comments are made during the math

class about this "beauty technique." The following vignette

is an excerpt from the dialogue that took place one afternoon.

> Jacques notices a girl who has changed her hairstyle. He says to her, "Don't come into this classroom again with your hair burned like that."
>
> Later he notices that several of the other girls have also changed their hair styles. "You try to make yourselves look beautiful, but you don't know how to do it." He keeps coming back to this business of the girls' hairdos. He asks the boys if they think that the girls straightening their hair makes them look nicer, and the boys respond collectively "NO!"
>
> One girl sitting near me angrily whispers to a seat mate, "A teacher doesn't have the right to look at us like that." Near the end of the period, Jacques calls on one of the girls with a straightened hairdo to go to the board to do a problem. He says, "Go to the board. You have the time to fix up your hair. Now you have time to do schoolwork."

In this interaction in Jacques' classroom, the theme of

form over substance surfaces again. This time it is the

girls' appearance, their personal form, that triggers Jacques'

response that they would be unable to come up with a product

that had any substance. Jacques' ridicule and the ganging up

of the boys evidenced on this and many other occasions helped

me to better understand why the girls would so easily accept

the subordinate role that they had in his classroom. Any

resistance that I observed, such as the angry response of the

girl sitting near me, was short-lived and tended to be

whispered behind Jacques' back or after he'd left the room.

The possibility that _they_ might be the next one he would focus on or the fear that his abuse might only get worse muted the girls' voices and effectively defused any reaction they might have had.

During an interview with Jacques, I mention that one girl has indicated that she hopes to study math at the university level. Jacques expresses great surprise and tells me that "there isn't a girl in any of the classes who would be capable enough to pursue a degree in math." I mention that Josie appears quite capable. He replies that "...she isn't any good in math. It is well known that boys are better in math than girls. _That_ has been shown scientifically through hemispheric research." I ask Jacques if he supports equal education for both girls and boys--does he hope to educate his daughters as well as his sons? Jacques replies: "Most girls benefit from primary schooling, but the value of secondary education is questionable for the majority of girls since they will _just be marrying_ [my emphasis]."

During subsequent interviews, Jacques reiterates how strong his feelings are about girls being allowed to get "a certain level of education" and describes what he does to "give girls as well as boys the same chance in (his) classroom such as giving them the same opportunities to work at the board, and answer and ask questions." However, even though he believes that girls deserve an equal chance for an education

he also tells me that limited resources necessitate choosing
between educating sons and daughters.

> Logistically, it just isn't possible to
> educate everyone in a poor country. With
> so few resources to put into education
> and so many children that need to be
> educated, one has to choose which ones
> would benefit from an education.
> Clearly, there are no easy ways to choose
> which children will most benefit from an
> education. So, we do it the most logical
> way--we educate those who <u>need</u> it most--
> those who are expected to support the
> family and run the government. But, yes,
> girls do need to be educated and have
> equal chances with boys.

I pursue the question of need--aren't girls in the
greatest need of an education, since for generations they have
been denied an education, which limits to a large extent the
kinds of roles they can fill? Jacques replies that there are
different types of education, and women have been given the
kind that they need most.

> I don't want my wife to work outside the
> home. Her job is to care for the
> children, prepare the meals, take care of
> the house. I doubt my daughter will
> follow my wife--she says she wants more--
> but I think all of society benefits from
> women staying at home...But, yes, girls
> do deserve to get some schooling.

I ask Jacques if his classroom is one in which girls are
given the same opportunity to learn. Does he think girls are
equally encouraged to learn, given the same information to
learn, are the expectations for them to do as well and learn
as well the same as they are for the boys in his classroom?
"Yes, I think so. I think that I treat everyone the same."

Jacques, like so many of the teachers I observe, <u>talks</u> about the desire and need to treat all students equally in the classroom when he is <u>outside</u> the classroom, but once he is <u>inside</u> the classroom, he is incapable--for whatever reason--of putting it into practice. He thinks that his classroom is an equitable place in which girls are encouraged to participate as freely as boys. Sadly, the reality is quite different.

Smitherman (1981) describes push-pull tensions existing in African-American culture. The push from the white community for linguistic conformity, for example, confronts the pull from the black community for cultural identity through distinct linguistic expression. A similar push-pull tension exists in the schools I observe, where the push for gender equity[4] confronts the cultural pull by which certain roles are assigned to women. Jacques is caught in these tensions, which effectively limit his positive interaction with girls and reinforce, for both the girls and boys that he teaches, that girls have less status in his classroom and are less able to perform well in his course. Furthermore, he is caught up in an endless struggle to defend the gender status quo, despite his stated commitment to equality in the classroom. Studies by Payne, Hustler, and Cuff (1984) and

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4. The push for reform comes mainly from government policies mandating equal access for girls. It should be noted that monies from development agencies such as World Bank and UNESCO are powerful incentives for the government to implement policies that promote equitable enrollment patterns.

Riddell (1989) have demonstrated how teachers get caught up in defending the gender status quo despite inequities that this presents for the girls in their classrooms and which serve to further reinforce gender stereotypes. In her study on clerical workers and their training, Valli (1986) found that classroom teachers, even women teachers who identified themselves as feminists, taught their students one thing even when they meant another. Valli found that many of the women teachers sent double messages to their women students when they would encourage them, for example, to develop a professional appearance by looking through <u>Glamour</u> magazines that would show them how to dress without being <u>too</u> [my emphasis] provocative. Jacques was caught up in the bind of a double message mentality. He thought that his classroom was a place where all students were treated in the same manner and given the same encouragement to excel; he would tell people that his classroom was a place where all students were treated in the same manner and given the same encouragement to excel, but despite what he thought or what he said, it wasn't. This double message mentality made it more likely that a self-fulfilling prophecy would take place. When girls do not perform well in his class, it reinforces his belief that they are less able to do well because he thinks it was a place where girls were given the same opportunity to learn and do well. This perpetuates negative stereotypes for him as well as for the students.

Although the gender-differentiated patterns of interactions that took place in Jacques' class were the most extreme, the patterns of gender interaction in French were, in many respects, the most enlightening. I observed during the first visit I made in a French class at Rusimba that students there did not like French. My probing at other schools and interviews with French teachers, directors and students at these schools about French classes in their schools, verified that, in general, students didn't like French and that the behavior I observed at Rusimba wasn't an isolated phenomena.

Comments such as these were frequently expressed by the students at Rusimba when referring to their dislike of French: "We shouldn't have to learn another language like this." "Just because we're a small country shouldn't mean we have to learn another language--Japan is small and all they need to learn is their own language." "If the rest of the world wants to communicate with us, let them learn our language." "Our language is part of who we are. It's our culture, our tradition." Students talked at length about their cultural perspectives and traditional heritage, argued that Western ideas are not wanted, not needed, and would destroy who they were and the culture that they valued. "This is just another example of how our authentic heritage is being usurped. We don't need French, we don't need Western ideas. Your countries are full of problems, destroyed. Why do we want to become like them?" Because of this dislike, student behavior

during French class was quite disruptive and out of control. Often I observed organized resistance by the students. There was an added dimension in the student behavior and resistance, however, that I found particularly significant in my study-- that is, the role of the girls in this resistance. The boys <u>talked</u> about their dislike more than the girls; the girls tended to <u>act</u> out their dislike more than boys.

There are three French teachers at Rusimba: Jean, Pierre and Henri. All three are men. The fourth-year French teacher, Pierre, is one of the newest teachers at the school and the most inexperienced of the French teachers (five years of teaching experience). Student behavior tends to be more disruptive in his class than in any of the French classes. However, student behavior with the other French teachers is similar, although not as pronounced. Each day during French lessons, a struggle for classroom control takes place between students and teacher, often consuming a quarter of instructional time. Although the boys generally lead in the disruptive behavior at the beginning of the class period, the girls perpetuate the resistance long after the boys have become engaged in class work.

Student resistance includes repeated deliberate mispronunciation of words during oral recitations; mumbling the words while holding their hands over their mouths; sliding their desks and chairs across the cement; asking for oral directions to be repeated four or five times in succession;

waiting until oral reading has begun and then indicating that

there is an insufficient number of books; and negotiation of

homework assignments and examination dates. Following are two

vignettes which demonstrates how the students, particularly

the girls, use resistance to control the classroom environment

and alienate themselves from the high-status knowledge which

French represents.

Pierre comes into the classroom. The students continue talking among themselves even though he's clearly ready to start class. He waits several seconds and then raises his voice and tells them that they have to get their books out and turn to page 80. One boy who has been talking to a group of boys near the front saunters back to his desk. He jiggles his pencil on the desks of the other students as he walks back--they all laugh. Pierre watches him as he slowly walks back. Pierre is displeased--he's frowning and he glares at the students.

A girl near the front raises her hand and asks the teacher what page they're supposed to turn to. He repeats it again in a much louder voice and tells them to do it quickly. On the right near the back several students start moving their desks, scraping the legs across the cement floor. A girl near the front says she can't hear because everyone is so noisy. A group around her laughs. The teacher glares at them and tells them to open their books.

Monique, near me, says she doesn't have a book and Pierre says she should share with the student near her. "You already know that. You should have moved by now. We're ready to start class." Even though there's a student in the row ahead with an empty desk near her and she has a book--Monique moves her desk across the row to another student farther away from her. First she drags her desk along the

cement and then she drags her stool.
Pierre gets angry and tells Monique that
if she doesn't hurry, she'll have to
leave class. Someone near the front
shouts out something--I can't tell what
it is--but everyone laughs and turns
around and looks at Monique. She sits
down mumbling something and turns to the
student beside her, Sophie, and angrily
pulls the book over so it rests partially
on her desk.

A girl has raised her hand. Pierre calls
on her, and she tells him her French
workbook was left in her dorm room and
she'd like to go back and get it. Pierre
says no. Students have been talking and
moving desks around. Very few have
actually opened their books. (Six
minutes have passed and Pierre hasn't
started class yet.) He tells them if they
don't hurry up and get busy they'll have
a test tomorrow. One boy turns around
and glares at a group of girls talking
and tells them to shut up. They keep on
talking.

Pierre walks away from the desk to the
center of the room and asks the girl in
the left hand corner of the classroom to
begin reading at the top of the page.
Slowly, students are opening their books.
Most of the boys are now following along.
The main pockets of resistance seem to be
about five girls in the class--they keep
clearing their throats and grating their
desks across the cement. One of them
says she can't hear--Pierre ignores her.
She laughs.

Several weeks later in another French class this time

taught by Jean, this interaction took place:

The students are doing oral recitations
from the book. Jean repeats the same
word more than five times in a row--each
reader mispronounces it. First one desk
will move and then another. It's like a
round in music--it never stops. The
students cough now--Jean looks around the
class and asks them to be quiet. A desk

> moves. Jean asks Antoinette to start
> reading--she asks him where to start--she
> isn't following. Jean tells her where to
> start, but she can't find the place, so
> another student leans over and points to
> the spot.

Jean, a very soft-spoken, quiet, patient man is generally liked by the students. I find it surprising that the students' behavior in the other content-area classes that Jean teaches is dramatically different. Student resistance is almost totally absent. Students engage in work quickly and keep themselves on task. I ask him about the difference in the students' conduct during French class, and he tells me that the disruptive behavior is very frustrating and that even though French is his area of study and he feels less qualified to teach the other classes, it is very difficult to stimulate student interest in French.

> This is particularly true when the
> students are working in the book. If we
> just discuss things--and I try to teach
> French through that context--things go a
> lot better. But I can't teach everything
> they need to know in this way.

Therefore, the pressure to cover the government-outlined curriculum and to do well on the government exams influences Jean to limit the use of a successful instructional technique and instead follow the text. However, I did not feel that this pressure that limited Jean's use of innovative and more effective teaching techniques was the force behind the resistance that I observed--particularly the girls' resistance.

> I'm not sure what can be done about this.
> A great deal of class time is lost in
> this way. I've spoken to my classes
> about it on occasion but it's made no
> difference. This is a very sensitive
> issue. At first I thought it was just
> cultural identity with the French and
> all...but it's very interesting what you
> say about the girls...maybe it's
> something quite different.

Stories in the books tend to cast women and girls in very traditional roles--working in the gardens, doing all the housework, caring for the children. This is not unusual. Studies by Frazier and Sadker (1973), Lobban (1976), Maccia, Coleman, Estep, and Shiel (1975), Nilsen (1975), Showalter (1971), and Spender (1980) have documented the ways in which gender roles are reinforced through textbooks and tradebooks. Furthermore, studies have shown that textbooks in developing countries are particularly restrictive in the messages that are transmitted about women (Anderson & Herencia, 1983; Karugu, 1987; Obura, 1986; Owino, 1987; Stromquist, 1989; and Tembo, 1984). Silva (1979) asserted that textbooks represent women as caretakers doing domestic-type work which was perceived to demand little education, while men portrayed in textbooks were professionals involved in work that required an education. Women were also portrayed as weak and men as strong; women were passive and men were active.

Because the girls perpetuated the classroom resistance long after the boys had engaged, I ask Jean if he thinks that the texts themselves and the patriarchal (paternalistic) attitude represented in many of the stories might be

contributing to the girls' behavior. Did he think the girls resented the traditional roles for women that were represented in the texts?

I discuss one of the stories that's in the fourth-year French book. It's a dialogue between a father and son about the drought in Ethiopia and what should be done about it. The mother and sister are listening. At one point in the dialogue, the mother asks a question and the son says, "You don't understand these things, Mother. I will explain them to you."

Jean's first reaction to my question is one of disbelief that I find the text patriarchal.

> Women don't understand these things.
> Besides, when two men are discussing
> something like that, women are not
> allowed to enter in--that's a custom that
> we have here. However, I can't see why
> these girls should be upset over that.
> They're going to school.

I consider pursuing this idea by talking to the girls about their reaction to the French texts, but I am afraid that my probing will be perceived as subversive and I will lose my access to this field site. But even though I don't talk to the girls about their reaction to this particular story and others like it that reinforce negative stereotypes about women, I continue to believe that the material presented in the texts contributes to the girls' resistant behavior.

However, I interview four of the girls whose resistance is most noticeable to ferret out the reason for their behavior

in this particular class. Antoinette tells me that she dislikes the way, Pierre, her French teacher treats girls. "He's not fair with girls." I ask for specific examples of the way girls are mistreated, but she is unable to cite any and continues to insist that he isn't fair. "You can tell by the way he teaches--I'm not sure, but I don't think he likes the girls." Even though Antoinette is unable to give examples of Pierre's gender-differentiated instruction and patterns of interaction, my observations confirm what she suspects. Pierre calls boys by name or "Monsieur"; girls are pointed to or looked at when he wants them to respond. He calls on boys more frequently and responds to them more quickly when they ask for help. Furthermore, boys are commonly called on to correct or verify French mistakes the girls make. And finally, the limited praise that is given is more frequently given to boys than to girls.

However, a more complex interaction may be taking place in Pierre's classroom (and the other French classes) than discontent over a teacher's gender-differentiated interaction pattern. Similar behavior in the two other French teachers' classes, teachers who had less pronounced gender-differentiated interaction, forces me to consider other reasons why the girls resist longer than the boys.

Three of the girls mention that they dislike French. I ask if they think their behavior would alienate them from knowledge needed to pursue a higher education, and the girls

indicate that they wouldn't need French to get married. Yet this statement contradicts earlier statements by two of these girls that they hope to pursue university studies. I refer to their previous conversation with me about continuing their education. One girl replies, "It's true I want to go to university. I know I probably won't. Everyone in my family expects me to marry when I finish secondary school." Another one of the girls tells me:

> I get angry with the whole situation. Why do I need to know French? Will I need it for what I will do? Probably not. If I don't go to university, and I probably won't, I'll get a job teaching at primary school somewhere and I won't need this [points to French book lying on desk].

French class, representing something which isn't traditional and from their own culture, appears to serve as a proxy through which the girls can act out their hostility about male dominance and the limited options available to them. This explains the remarkable consistency of their behavior from one day to the next, as well as the intense negative feelings that are expressed. It is probable that they themselves don't realize fully what it is that they are protesting, but this only renders their resistant behavior all the more poignant. Since their resistant behavior in French class will not be perceived as counter-hegemonic, there will be less risk for the girls in playing out their frustration in this way. Consequently, their silence concerning their own

cultural restrictions is maintained as they vent their anger, literally in a different voice.

Another force that intersects the classroom seemingly confirms that the girls are willing to resist something that's not from their culture. Continuing their resistant behavior with culturally defined roles and expectations is much harder to do, entails more risk. This second force that I observed, their role as nurturer and caretaker, a role that they have been in apprenticeship for for years to learn, is powerfully played out in the classroom at Rusimba and helps to explain why they accept their subordinate status in the classroom..

Boys delegate and girls work

Each classroom at Rusimba has a "chef" and a "chefette". Students are nominated by their peers and voted into these offices. The chef's responsibilities include latching classroom windows and securing doors at the end of the day and opening the classroom before school opens in the morning. The chef is responsible for keeping the daily attendance record and completing the forms at the end of the month. S/he allocates the weekly work assignments (cleaning the outdoor bathrooms, sweeping the classroom, picking up garbage, stacking wood, doing yard work, and assisting in the kitchen) and writes out the work assignments on the blackboard. Other jobs, tacitly understood to fall under the chef's (or chefette's) jurisdiction, include taking messages to the

offices, lining up the desks into rows and columns, etc. In the fourth year, a further responsibility is to ring the "bell," a tire rim hung by wire on an upside-down U-shaped frame, at the close of each class period. Even though the jobs have little authority associated with them and in many respects represent trivial responsibilities, the students who are selected to hold these posts take the responsibilities very seriously and are quite proud that they have been voted into this office by their classmates.

I ask the students how the "chef/chefette" responsibilities are divided and discover that the chefette assumes responsibility only when the chef is absent from school. In other words, the chefette (or girl) takes over the responsibilities only if the boy isn't there. The one exception to this is ringing the "bell" at the close of each class period. In the absence of the chef, Lamec, a boy who sat in the corner nearest the window, rings the bell. I ask why this is, and a boy tells me that, "it's because it has to be someone who has a watch." (The chefette wears a watch and sits near the door. Lamec sits in a desk along the window well away from the door and has no watch.)

Work assignments at Rusimba are clearly allocated on the basis of what is culturally perceived as gender-appropriate work. Girls are assigned work that involves cleaning and tidying, such as sweeping out the room, picking up garbage in the room, cleaning the outside lavatories. Boys are given

jobs that include taking out and burning garbage (there seldom is very much), helping stack and cut firewood, etc. My data shows that all cleaning tasks, inside and out, are assigned to the girls. Boys are rarely assigned any of these jobs and are never given any that involve cleaning or assisting in the kitchen. Gissi (1980) writes that when men are present in the home, they assume responsibility for that arena and delegate domestic work to women and younger children, supervising the women and girls as they work. At Rusimba it was no different: the rule applies. Students learn that boys can avoid work and the slack will be picked up by the girls. Furthermore, students learn that men delegate jobs to women and that women assume the responsibility of taking charge or delegating work only when men are absent.

I ask the students about work assignments and how the work is delegated. Their answers indicate that both the boys and girls are satisfied with the work assignments. Dialogue about significantly changed roles is as uncomfortable for the girls as it is for the boys. Each time I make a comment about the boys doing anything that is commonly viewed as "girls work" (or vice versa), the boys shove each other, laugh, and talk in Swahili saying that "she [the researcher] thinks we could _sweep_ the floors..." or mockingly, "let's go clean the choo (outhouse)!" Generally, the girls cluster together and glance at me nervously and eventually laugh off suggestions that the boys could try to do some of the jobs that are always

assigned to the girls. "It wouldn't work. They'd never do some of these things." "It wouldn't be right for them [the boys] to do these things." "It really isn't that bad." "It's easier for us because we've been taught how to do it." "We're used to it and they're not."

It wasn't only the work assigned by the "chef" or "chefette" that boys were able to avoid doing. At Rusimba there was a school routine that each student assumes responsibility for erasing the blackboard for a day and then passes on the task to the student seated behind him or her the following day. However, in actual practice, there is a tacit arrangement in which the boys can pass the responsibility to the person seated behind them if they choose not to erase the board. I attempt to find out how this works but am unsuccessful. It appears that if a boy chooses not to do it, he avoids the task until his avoidance technique is clearly evident, and the following individual--more significantly--the nearest girl, assumes the responsibility. At no occasion during the time I observe did a girl use this sort of avoidance technique. The girls assume the jobs, and there is no indication of displeasure or annoyance at having to assume the responsibility for one of the boys.

Gilligan[5] (1982) found in her work that the ethic of

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5. To a certain extent, studies that discuss a woman's caretaking role such as Gilligan's (1982) work, are culture bound. However, despite differences in the way this caretaking/nurturing role is manifested in

caring was a significant force in women's interactions. She writes that women "proclaim [their] worth on the basis of the ability to care for and protect others" (p. 79). Chodorow (1989) and Lewis (1990b) have also found that women are comfortable with and feel secure with the care-taking role and responsibilities associated with it. MacKinnon (1983), Rowbotham (1989, Walkerdine (1985), and Wolpe (1978) write that women resist changes in their role as care-taker because it is a known quantity and one which makes women feel secure. Even when they are angry with the responsibilities and restriction that comes with care-taking, to change and face the unknown is too threatening so women comply.

The ethic of caring and acceptance of responsibility so common in women is clearly evident in the girls' responses to my suggestion that boys accept responsibility for some of the work that the girls do. It was also evident in the ways that the girls so easily assume the responsibilities when boys opted out from their work obligations such as cleaning the blackboard. It is interesting to note that for a girl to cross the gender line and do "boy's work" brings forth no litany of protests from the boys or the girls. It is not uncommon for women to cut, carry, and stack firewood. In

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various cultures, there still remains the expectation that it will be women and young girls who predominantly care for children and assume domestic responsibilities. From a very young age then, young girls are taught (mentally, emotionally and spiritually) to fulfill this role.

fact, there are very few labor-intensive jobs that are perceived as being jobs exclusively for men. And with the exception of supervisory roles, very few jobs assigned to men are seen as gender specific. The girls' conformity and acceptance of work assignments seems to indicate that they are comfortable with the care-taking (and chore girl) role they are assigned in the classroom (roles which they are also assigned to at home). Despite their frustration and resistance during French class with the reproduction of socially construed and limited roles, to challenge this in everyday life becomes difficult to contemplate. They are caught in the double bind of needing to speak about their anger while at the same time feeling pressured to remain silent and conform in order to secure some measure of security and survival in the classroom. Furthermore, the "comfortable fit" of these tasks helps to explain how the cultural ideology of the woman's role in society is so easily maintained--a reaction in which people become what society expects them to become. No one in central Africa expects women to take charge or to refuse the work that's placed in their domain because the forces of silence, conformity and fear of the unknown are too strong.

The care-taking role that girls were assigned at Rusimba were a continuation of their "apprenticeship for marriage" that had begun years earlier in their parents' homes. The expectation that women, African women, will never do anything

but marry, bear children, plant gardens, and maybe teach or nurse (also care-taking professions) was poignantly expressed in this discussion with the students that took place one afternoon after school. A second troubling belief that only white women can resist, gain agency in their lives and improve the options they have was also expressed.

Daniel and I are discussing politics and political figures around the world. At one point in our conversation, I ask the students if they think that there could be a woman president in their country in the next twenty years. Almost unanimously, all the students answer "No." Later, one of the girls, Elizabeth, asks to talk to me about this some more.

"Madame, when you asked us about a woman president and we told you it would be impossible because women can't be officers in the military, well, that's not the real reason. The real reason is that no one [my emphasis] wants a woman as president.

"Why?"

"Because it just wouldn't work Madame. Besides, there's never been a woman president--anywhere--ever."

"What about Margaret Thatcher?"

"Well, yes...but she's not a president. Besides, she's white. That would never happen here--women don't do those kinds of things."

"What do African women do?"

"Not much I guess...work gardens mostly, but, <u>that</u> <u>doesn't</u> <u>count</u> [my emphasis]. If she's lucky, she'll become a nurse or maybe a teacher.

<u>Summary</u>

Gender boundaries that limit women to certain kinds of work are salient factors that influence how the girls view future options available to them. These boundaries are keenly felt and influence the everyday living of both men and women. Living with the pressures of "woman as reproducer and woman as caretaker" day after day becomes almost impossible to resist and most girls leave school, marry, have babies and face a lifetime of planting, hoeing, and harvesting. There are avenues of escape from this, however. If girls can manage to survive in the classroom and receive a secondary-level education, it is a way for them to gain agency in their lives. This agency allows them to find jobs, primarily as teachers or nurses--also care-taking types of roles, which can provide them more autonomy and better options in their lives.

In the next Chapter, I will discuss the lives of the three women teachers, Marie, Celeste and Stella, who worked at Rusimba. They are three women who gained the agency in their lives that education provided. However, their stories are very different and demonstrate that education alone will not make the difference.

CHAPTER SIX

Three Women and Their Lives:

Tensions and Dilemmas

> It wasn't easy being a female and trying
> to get an education. I had to work _very_
> hard, especially after the babies came.
> When I think about it now, I wonder if it
> was worth the struggle. I had to work
> from sunrise until late at night when I
> was in college. I was always tired then.
> I _still_ work from sunrise until late at
> night. I'm _still_ always tired. So, tell
> me, what has changed? (Marie, English
> teacher, February, 1989)

In Chapter 5 we saw how girls were given differential access to schooling. Despite statistics by both development agencies and the government that showed equal participation of boys and girls, girls were less represented in schools than boys. Reduced participation for girls started in the primary grades and became exacerbated as they moved through the system. But access issues don't tell the whole story. In the classroom girls were shown different teacher interaction and received less teacher attention.   Teachers had lowered expectations for girls to do well in school which reflected their assumption that most of the girls would only be wives and mothers--roles that they believed needed little education. The belief that girls would take on these roles not only limited the kind of education girls received but also influenced the kinds of things they were asked to do in school.   Girls became chore girls and caretakers in the

classrooms, completing tasks very similar to the kinds that they did in their parent's home and would eventually do in their husband's homes. The inequities and work obligations that existed in schools were the reality of the classroom. Yet, what the girls found there only foreshadowed the inequities and work obligations that they would face as adult women in the homes of their husbands or as single women struggling to survive in a social system that has no place for unmarried women. Grumet (1988) writes that school is a passage where "patriarchal identifications... (are) ...mediated and reconceived" (p. 33), a time and place where a woman's consciousness is redefined and forces intersect her life shaping who woman is in private, who she is in public.

As my study evolved, these forces that intersect the lives of women--forces that started when girls were young, were reinforced in schools, and continued in adult life-- became increasingly more evident. I began to focus on the stories of women and girls, to note their life histories. Of the stories shared with me, none were more revealing, more poignant, than those of the three women teachers at Rusimba, three women struggling to meet the demands of work responsibilities and home obligations.

Weiler (1988) writes that cultural norms and expectations impact the lives of women teachers and create tensions to which they must respond in their attempts to "transform the reality they have inherited" (p. 73). Friere (1981, 1986,

1987) discovered in his work with the rural poor of Brazil that only as people critically confronted their life history in terms of the dominant societal forces around them would they be capable of actually transforming their realities and grow. He writes that this confrontation is the praxis of liberation, a dialectical process called <u>conscientizaço</u> or enlightened pedagogy. Identifying the forces that intersect one's life and understanding how these influence the choices that are made are key parts of developing agency over structures and situations.

In this chapter, I will examine the lives of the three women teachers at Rusimba--Marie, Celeste and Stella. I will highlight the forces that are acting upon their life histories and discuss their efforts to gain agency in their lives.

Marie--Tired, angry, beyond caring

Marie was the English teacher at Rusimba. I was fascinated by her when we first met. Perhaps it was the fact that she spoke English beautifully. Or maybe it was that both Marie and I were mothers of four small children. I'm not sure, but all I know was that I felt an immediate connection with her the first time we talked. She had a complexion of milky chocolate skin that perfectly contrasted her broad, brilliantly white smile. Her features were delicate and looked as if they had been chiseled by a master artisan. I

suppose most people would say she was beautiful. I don't know--I couldn't get beyond her eyes.

Eyes capture my attention. They fascinate me. I think they're the mirrors of the soul. So, I've spent a lot time in my life watching people's eyes. But I don't think I've seen eyes before that could hold me captive in their power like Marie's did. Dark brown and somber, for me her eyes were pools that portrayed a sad tale full of fatigue, anger, and bitterness. It didn't take me long to discover that I had read her eyes well.

Of all the people that I talked with during the time I spent in the field, none were more drawn to my study than Marie. I'd often spend the lunch break sitting in the teachers' lounge with the other staff members who taught at Rusimba. Day after day, Marie would join me at the table where I'd sit and tell me that she'd want to "practice (her) English with (me) and talk about women's rights." At first our talks were general and we'd discuss government reforms--or the _need_ for government reforms. Eventually, however, Marie began sharing more intimate details of her own life that helped explain some of the frustration that was so evident in the stories she shared. "I can tell you my stories because these are the kinds of things that women talk about," she told me one afternoon. "You've had four babies, I've had four babies. We have a lot in common. Neither of us sleeps at night, right?"

Marie was amused that I, a white women, had four babies and often referred to the fact that we "have so much in common." But the stories that Marie shared with me weren't things that we had in common. They were stories about things I found very difficult to understand, things I found very troubling to listen to. I began to realize that Marie <u>needed</u> to share these stories with me. Her pretense of practicing English was the guise she used to share stories with me that troubled her too, things too sensitive to share with anyone within the local circle; things that she knew I wouldn't understand. And because I wouldn't understand, I became a safe confidante to entrust with stories of the victimization and abuse of women. And because I was a woman, I became someone who enabled her to break her silence on these troubling subjects.

Marie had grown up in a small, out-of-the-way village. Neither of her parents were well educated: in fact, her mother had received no primary schooling at all. But things were different for Marie. Government reforms opening up education to women shortly after independence had given her the chance to further her education.

> At first it was a fight to go to school. My father was very angry, he said that schools weren't good places for girls to be. But he was afraid that people would think he didn't support the new government so he was afraid to forbid me to go to school. So, all talk of making me stop, even his threats to beat me if I continued to go to school, came to an

end. He couldn't refuse but I think he
really wanted to.

It was when she was in secondary school that arrangements were made for her marriage, and while at university the marriage took place. Marie and her husband began university studies, but for Marie the dual obligations of wife and student made her task much harder. It became even harder when the babies began to arrive.

> I'm the only female who graduated from my secondary school who went on to university.[1] It wasn't easy. The teachers made it hard on (the women). I worked hard and made it through, but I learned that no one is going to make it easy for you. I did it all on my own. I had to work much harder than the other students because of the babies. Even my husband wasn't much help--he'd tell me that he couldn't do woman's work--so I was left to do it all by myself. Before I finished university, I had three babies.

When Marie and her husband (a math teacher at a Catholic school nearly 20 miles away) moved to the area, he was the one who decided that he should commute back and forth to work so that she could continue taking care of the children, the domestic responsibilities, and most importantly, the family garden.

> I get up early in the morning to get a taxi. Then I work all day, I get home

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[1]. In Marie's class at university there were only four girls who graduated with her in a class of forty. She didn't tell me how many girls started in her classes the first year of university but I had the impression that it was a very small number.

tired in the evening, and then I have to clean and cook. I don't have time to do much to prepare for school or grade papers. I'm always working and I'm always tired--work, work, work--that's my life.

Some of the men here complain about the work that they have and say they can't keep up with it all. I laugh at them and tell them that they don't know what work is. They have all the time to prepare their lessons but do I? No, I get up early to work at home and stay up late at night to do work at home. Tell me, when can I prepare for school?

I hear you talk about women going to school and prepare for a career. Why should we? Don't we do enough work already? I remember talks that the men in my class at the university used to have. One time they discussed whether or not women really made good teachers. I can't remember what they decided but I can remember thinking then that women usually don't have the time to be good at anything--they're too busy working doing everything to become really good at anything. Little did I know then how true that would be.

You could see the fatigue that plagued Marie's life. You could see it in her eyes, in her walk, in the way she talked, in the way she taught. Marie _was_ too busy working to be a good teacher. And because she wasn't good it made it a little bit easier for everyone to believe that women _weren't_ as good as men, that women _couldn't_ be as good as men.

One day, however, Marie was particularly tired, and I asked her about it.

I guess it's the added burden of my husband's youngest brother's family that is making me so tired. The baby was just circumcised yesterday and he is very

fussy.   And his mother was very upset
last night, so I didn't sleep much.

Marie has talked to me before about her husband's sister-
in-law. Young, uneducated, widowed with two small children,
by local custom she must live with her husband's family since
they are the ones who provided the money to pay for her
brideprice. "Last night we told her that once the baby is
weaned she must return to the home of her parents." I ask
about the children. Marie explains that they must remain with
her and her husband. "What can she do for them? Her family
is very poor, they may not even want her to come back home.
If she's lucky she'll remarry, if she's not, well..." Marie
stops, shakes her head and then sighs.

> You don't understand, I can see. But you
> don't know how it is for women here. We
> have no rights, we don't even know what
> that word means. Rights for women--for
> white women, not for African women. So,
> she'll lose everything--her children,
> everything that she owns.   It'll be
> divided between the members of her
> husband's family.

Although I knew that most of the countries in central
Africa generally believed that fathers were the primary
guardian of children, this information shocked me. I had
always assumed that the widowed mother would continue to be
the primary caregiver to her children and live with one of her
husband's family members. I ask Marie what will become of the
young widow--what will she do, how can she fight for the
rights of her children? The fatigue that constantly weighs
Marie down becomes overpowering, suffocating. She slowly sits

down in the chair near me and cradles her head in her hands.

> Local people can't understand young men
> dying. To them it seems unnatural. He
> died in a car accident--but in her small
> village everyone will think that she put
> a fetish on him. Witches...that's what
> they say...when a young husband dies, the
> wives become witches. Would <u>you</u> marry a
> witch? No! So, what will happen? She
> can either beg for a living or maybe
> become a prostitute. Who knows? Who
> really cares?

"Don't you?" I ask.

Marie studies me for a minute and then answers. "I have my own problems." She slowly walks to the door, opens it and turns towards me.

> Women's rights, emancipation, that's <u>your</u>
> world not mine. We have no rights. We
> have to listen to our husbands or suffer
> for it. Men have their ways of making us
> do what they want here, ways that you
> don't know and even if you did, you
> wouldn't understand.

I was shocked by Marie's story of the young widow's plight. I began talking with other women about this hoping that they would reassure me that this was an exceptional situation, that the isolation of her village maybe, or that the limited education of the dead husband's parents accounted for the loss of all her rights. Women were <u>very</u> reluctant to speak openly about their rights to their children, but eventually they began to tell me that despite laws to protect them, their rights in a divorce or after a husband's death would be very hard to protect. Several women, well-educated women who had good jobs, told me that they were tolerating

abusive marriages only because they had no other options if they wanted to keep their children.

Marie's story of the young widow profoundly affected me. Of all the stories I heard, it was probably the one that I found the most difficult to understand. I tried to imagine what it must feel like, what I might do if I were in a similar situation but I was completely overwhelmed by the pathos of her story. I think that all young mothers at one time or another face the nightmare of losing their husband. These fears can surface during real or imagined crisis, but whatever the cause it forces one to consider how they'd provide for themselves, take care of their children, manage alone without their husband. I have faced those moments myself, real moments when I was afraid that I might not have Bob there to help raise the children. These were frightening times for me but I never considered that I might be left alone, forced to give up the children that I'd labored so hard for. But my situation wasn't like theirs. I didn't have a "price" on my head and Bob or his family didn't "buy" me.

In a traditional society with brideprice payments and marriage contracts, the power invested in men over women was very strong, controlling, and keenly felt. A woman's status in the home, as wife or daughter, was negligible. Daughters weren't viewed as permanent family members since they would marry and move away. Once married and brideprice paid, wives joined their husband's family clan which maintained tight

control over their lives and relegated marginal status to them.

In most of Africa, one form or another of marriage transaction occurs (Gough, 1971; Keesing, 1976). Goodenough (1970) holds that a marriage transaction "established a continuing claim to the right of sexual access to a woman" (pp. 12-13). Others, including Delphy (1977), Goody (1973), and Rubin (1975) suggest that bridewealth is tied to production issues and are associated with hoe agriculture where women do the bulk of labor in the fields. Still other anthropologists (Comaroff, 1980; Gray, 1969; and Mitchell, 1963) write that brideprice addresses lineage. This theory maintains that the rights that are transferred in marriage contracts are for the bride's unborn children. Marriages become primarily economic relationships (or political liaisons) between groups as opposed to sexual relationships between men and women. Consequently, men are placed in power over women and a woman's reproductive role becomes a commodity that is marketable, bargained for, and sold by her male relatives to the highest bidder.

Evans-Pritchard (1951), Gluckman (1954), and Reyna (1985) suggest that bridewealth payments serve as primitive insurance policies and work to stabilize marriages. They reason that in lineage societies, the higher the price the man's family must pay in exchange for the woman's economic output and fertility, the more complete is the transfer of rights over her from her

natal family to her husband and his family. If a large sum is paid, there are economic factors for both families to insure that the bride's position is secure and respected in her husband's family. If the marriage is dissolved or the bride becomes ill, her family must return some of the brideprice that has been paid. Therefore, efforts will be made to guard that she is well taken care of and satisfied with the relationship and her position in the family. Because of the financial investment made in her, efforts will be made by the man's family to insure that she receives proper medical care, her work load isn't prohibitive, and that she isn't physically abused. Not all studies support the Evans-Pritchard hypothesis and Gluckman theory. Goodenough (1970) and Leach (1971) posit that the Evans-Pritchard hypothesis overlooks that brideprice primarily serves to establish relationships between families and do not focus on individuals within the families. Furthermore, brideprice contracts usually continue long after the death of one or both of the spouses. It should also be noted that there is growing concern that the incidence of abuse of women and mutilation (or female circumcision) is currently increasing in Africa which challenges the hypothesis that brideprice acts as an insurance policy protecting women from abuse (Heise, 1989).

Many of the married women I talked with shared Marie's view that men controlled their lives and were able to maintain this power because of the exchange of rights. From their

perspective, however, if brideprice was an insurance policy, it was an insurance policy that protected male patriarchy--not women. Marie's story also raised serious concerns about the abuse that threatened women--abuse that I didn't know and couldn't understand. Each time an opportunity presented itself, I asked people about ways that "men controlled women." Many of the women and girls that I talked to referred to the consequences and disciplinary measures that could be imposed on them by men. However, most were quite reluctant to talk about what these might be. Perhaps their silence and reticence on this subject speaks more powerfully, more poignantly, than had they spoke of these things. Although a study by Lewis (1990b) addresses domestic abuse in developed countries, she found a similar resistance by women to break their silence on abuse. Gilligan's (1982) work which compare the ways in which men and women respond to situations discusses how some men use violence to control and manipulate women and resolve problems. Marie's admission that men there have ways of making women do things or suffer for it implies that men's ways of responding are different than women's and men's ways are violent. Shortly before I left Africa I found out about one way that men "used."

Because none of the women I talked with had shared any stories about female circumcision, I assumed that this area of Africa didn't practice it. One afternoon I was visiting with an English doctor who had lived in Africa for over ten years,

five of them in this area. I mentioned that female circumcision must not be commonly practiced there since no one had mentioned it to me. Amazed, the doctor replied:

> Do you <u>really</u> think that it's not practiced here? Let me tell you, I get out to a great many rural clinics and I see many women who have been circumcised.[2] Of course they don't talk about it. Once the white man hears about these things, they make them stop. Female circumcision is too important a part of their culture to share it with a white person.

Female circumcision is intricately tied up with pollution theories and taboos in which women are unclean during menstruation and need to be isolated (Douglas, 1966; Stephens, 1961; and Young & Bacdayan, 1965) and the power over creation and life (Sanday, 1981; Schebesta, 1963; and Turnbull, 1961). The flow of blood is strongly symbolic of both life and death, power and creation. Because of this, tribal societies often develop rituals which demand the flow of blood in female circumcision. Female circumcision is also associated with male power over female orgasm, faithfulness and pleasure seeking. Although it's not a man who holds the knife and violates the woman, the control that men have over which women are marriageable and which women are not is the force that perpetuates the practice. In a traditional society where the sole option for girls is to marry and become mothers, a role that a girl has been placed in "apprenticeship" and trained

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[2]. A discussion of the three types of female circumcision follows.

for for years, if circumcision is a criteria for marriage, parents will comply. The power that men wield here is hard to understand. Recently, a university professor from Kenya currently working in America told me, "You will never understand the mentality that keeps this practice going. Women believe that men will not marry them—and many men won't—unless they are circumcised. It's a very important part of the culture. So, it's done."

There are three basic types of female circumcision practiced in Africa: sunna, excision or clitoridectomy, and infibulation. Sunna is the mildest form in which the prepuce or foreskin of the clitoris is removed. Excision is a more radical form in which the entire clitoris and part of the labia minora are surgically removed. Infibulation is the most severe form. In this procedure, all of the clitoris, labia minora and majora are removed. Both sides of the vulva are then sewn together, except for a slither of wood that is placed in the incision. Alternatively, the vulva are scraped raw and the girl's legs are tightly bound, and she must remain motionless until the wound heals. If the girl survives the procedure, the healing time can take weeks during which excrement builds up and soils the bandage. After this surgical procedure, the vagina is completely closed except for a microscopic opening allowing for the passage of urine and

menstrual blood.[3]   But the horrors only continue.   Before marriage, a woman must again be cut and an artificial penis must be introduced in the wound in order to keep the sides from closing together (Daly, 1978).

Heise (1989) writes that a wide range of medical complications arise out of these procedures which are carried out without anesthesia, often with primitive and unsterile cutting implements.

> Long-term effects include chronic urinary
> track infections, pelvic infections that
> can   lead   to   infertility,   painful
> intercourse, and vicious scars that can
> cause tearing of tissue and hemorrhage
> during childbirth.   In fact, women who
> are infibulated must be cut open on their
> wedding night to make intercourse
> possible, and more cuts are necessary for
> delivery of a child.   Babies born to
> infibulated   women   frequently   die   or
> suffer oxygen deprivation due to the
> prolonged and obstructed labor (p. 7).

Even in the domain of biological reproduction and through female circumcision, men can subordinate and control women. Imagining the horrors of what being circumcised must have been like, I understood why Marie and the other women maintained their silence on this subject, a silence that Roberts (1976) claims is born of subjugation.

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[3].   Although this would appear to be biologically
impossible, all the sources that I read gave
similar   descriptions   of   the   process   of
infibulation.   It could be that individuals
who have done research on this have been
unable to physically examine women who are
infibulated and incorrectly describe what has
been done.

As I reflected on all of this control and violation of women represented in kinship patterns, brideprice and female circumcision, I couldn't help but wonder how getting an education would intersect with all of this. Marie's story spoke of abuse, at least the fear of abuse. It spoke of endless work and fatigue. And it also spoke of the victimization of women. Even though Marie's question about the value of her education, "What has changed?", was a rhetorical one, my response to her would have to be "from your perspective, very little indeed."

Celeste--Trapped in her career, single, and no options

"I can't think of anything I'd rather do than teach. As long as I can remember, I wanted to become a teacher. Of course, there weren't too many options for women...but it is what I always wanted to do."

Celeste, the pedagogy teacher at Rusimba, was a little whirlwind of thunder and lightning in the classroom. Her energy and enthusiasm seemed to charge the atmosphere and engage the students who would hang on to her every word and action. Petite, slender, generally soft-spoken, Celeste's interest in life and joy from the day-to-day interactions and occurrences radiated from the sparkle in her eyes and quick smile and laugh. Celeste was constantly on the move, quickly walking up and down the aisles, stopping before a student's desk, pointing to the student and then asking a question. Her

lessons were quickly paced, encouraged lots of student input, and she frequently used humor in her instruction, a technique I rarely observed in other teachers' classrooms during my observations.

"I spend a lot of time preparing for my classes. I try to make them interesting, I want to model good teaching." Celeste <u>was</u> a model of good teaching and everyone knew it. At Rusimba she was one of the most well-liked and respected teachers by both students and staff.

> I began teaching fifteen years ago in Zaire--at the secondary school where I'd completed my studies. The sisters were so pleased that I'd come back. They had been so supportive when I was in school there, I was glad to be able to return and work for them.

Celeste had grown up in a large, urban area in eastern Zaire. During our conversations, she shared with me that her ability to learn quickly and do well in school was obvious from an early age.

> I loved going to school. I loved learning. At first, my parents were very supportive, but as I neared the end of my primary studies, my father told me that I couldn't go to school anymore. I began sneaking out early in the morning and would get to school before my father was awake. When I'd come home at night, he would threaten to beat me--but I would continue to go to school. I had to disobey my parents to continue in school. Eventually, things became so bad that I had to leave home. But the nuns encouraged me to continue and helped me financially. My parents were very angry and ordered me to stop, but I had no intention of becoming like all the other girls around me. A girl must be very

strong, very aggressive, if she wants to
get an education. I don't think it's
worth the effort to most women.

But even at the risk of physical abuse, getting an

education was worth the effort to Celeste. With the help of

the Catholic sisters, she continued with her studies, first

finishing with top grades at the secondary level, and then

obtaining a graduaté and finally acquiring an MA in psycho-

peda at the national university.

My parents were so proud of me when I
finished. My brothers had all left
school by that time--I was the only one
who had received a secondary-level
diploma and was earning a salary. I'm
the only one who can really help them
now. For my parents, it's wonderful that
I'm educated. All the refusals to help,
threats, beatings--they've forgotten all
about that now. All that's remembered is
that I'm the one who helps them.

During one of our conversations, Celeste shared with me

what it had been like going to school as a young girl.

I didn't realize how hard it was to do
well in school if you were a girl until I
was out of school for awhile. It was
when I was a teacher that I recognized
how hard everyone made it. Girls were
absent more often. Girls had to come
home after school and then help watch the
other children or prepare the meals.
Boys didn't have these kinds of respon-
sibilities placed upon them. When you
consider just the time commitments that
are placed on young girls, you begin to
realize how much this interferes with
learning.

When it becomes harder to finance the
school bills, parents automatically cut
the support to their daughters. Most
girls give up--they stay home and accept
that that's their life. They take over

many of the home responsibilities, watch
their younger brothers and sisters, work
in the gardens.

Celeste's portrayal of the difficulties that girls face
while trying to obtain an education is well documented in
literature on the education of girls in Africa. In his expose
on crises facing the Third World, and in reference to
educational opportunities for girls in Africa, Harrison (1984)
succinctly states that:

> Although Eve took the first bite of the
> apple of knowledge, it was Adam who
> appropriated the greater part of the
> fruit. Education is the path to higher
> pay, productivity and skills but it is a
> path strewn with many more obstacles for
> women than for men (p. 442).

Robertson and Berger (1986) have shown that increased
educational opportunities ironically do not always benefit
women in Africa. In many cases, it works to their
disadvantage in competing with men for limited salaried jobs.
They write:

> Their presence in primary schools in
> ever-growing numbers is economically
> dysfunctional in that it encourages their
> removal from the labor force as children
> and adults and promotes their dependence
> on men. Rather than leading the way to
> equality and greater opportunity, then,
> education for most women in Africa
> functions as an instrument of oppression
> to reinforce subordinate roles (p. 92).

Studies of the labor market, like Smock's (1977, 1982)
studies in Africa, demonstrate how education can oppress women.
She has shown that there is a U-curve between female labor-
force participation and education level. Two groups of women

are employable--lower class women who have either no education or a poor education. The second group, significantly smaller, consists of very well-educated, upper-class women who often have high status, influential friends and political pull. The large numbers of women with primary or minimal secondary level schooling have high unemployment rates and are disadvantaged in competing for the few jobs available. Unfortunately they are left with a paucity of options. Eliou (1973) poignantly comments, "The road which leads (girls) to school is in fact only a detour which leads them back to the home" (p. 39). Jones (1982), Robertson (1984), and Tardits (1963) have noted that since schooling for girls in Africa is perceived as threatening men's options, the solution is to keep a girl's education lower in quality and quantity. Consequently, unlike Celeste who struggled against overwhelming odds, most women make a "rational choice" to remain illiterate and keep earning some income in order to stay afloat, to gain a measure of dignity, self-respect, and resiliency. Robertson and Berger (1986) write:

> The African women's primary education or lack of it will continue to make them an underclass unless they themselves act to break the pattern. But most women are too desperately busy assuring the survival of themselves and their families to spend time on self-improvement and self-confidence that would facilitate their involvement in either activity (p. 112).

The sources of a woman's educational handicaps lie mainly in the home. The expectation is there for them to assume the

responsibilities of adult work at a much earlier age than boys (and continue with this work as an adult, long after their counterparts, adult men, have "retired"). Pellow (1983) has shown that girls are brought up with an explicit understanding of what it means to be a woman.

> They know what behaviors are associated with femaleness. They are delegated responsibility at an early age for the care of younger siblings, for marketing, cooking, cleaning—in other words, the domestic tasks that define the female role. There is a female stereotype to which men and women alike pay heed and which helps create female group boundaries (p. 4).

Societal expectations about gender boundaries and roles for women in Africa are well-documented. Ardener (1975), Ifeka-Moller (1971), LaFontaine (1978) and VanAllen (1972) are just a few of the many researchers who have studied this.[4] Research indicates that in a cultural context in which the extended nuclear family or local village remains the primary social unit, crossing gender barriers and ignoring gender boundaries means risking social ostracism, rejection, and possibly worse. Societal expectations of what girls or boys should do become strong conforming agents. Gertz (1973)

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[4]. Although there are geographical variations in the cultural expectations that exist concerning women (such as women in west Africa are less financially dependent on men because of their market and business activities and investments, women in South Africa have more mobility to travel, etc.) in general, women throughout Africa all struggle with the subordinate status they have been relegated.

suggests that "symbolic templates" serve as guides for the organization of sex-role expectations. These sex-role plans explain how men and women should interact and are interwoven into the tapestry of all aspects of daily living.

The "symbolic templates" within the ethnic group where Celeste grew up ordained that girls should receive minimal education, remain in the home, get married, and have children. Furthermore, a culturally held belief that extended into nearly all facets of life was that men are superior to women. Men are thought to be physically stronger, intellectually superior, more able to make major decisions, and therefore the natural leader and decision makers (Firestone, 1970; Millett, 1971). This biology-as-destiny viewpoint (Leibowitz, 1978) is accepted as natural, just as the "superior" characteristics of men are accepted as natural and one not to be challenged, particularly by women who aspire to enter into the male arena. During one conversation, Celeste spoke of the "superior" viewpoint that they were taught in school.

> They teach us that (men are superior) in college, you know. We're taught to have different expectations for girls and boys. But of course, because you believe that, you teach them differently. By the time they get to my classes at the secondary level, the boys out-perform the girls. I don't have time to remedy the situation--I deal with the students at the level they're at, at the abilities that they have when they get to me. Not much else can be done by this point. I hadn't really thought about it much before, but there is a cycle that's taking place, and the girls become trapped.

Celeste's response is very similar to Marie's in Chapter 5 when she told me that she didn't "have time to wait for girls." Grumet (1988) writes that forces in schools contribute to the subordination of women and the role that they have in society. In classrooms at Rusimba, two of these forces were time and work. Women, and in this case women teachers, were too busy working to take the time to break the cycle of subordination, the cycle of preparing girls less for learning, of giving them less in school. Even when a woman understood the cycle and how it worked, as Celeste came to see the cycle and realize how it worked, she was too busy in the patriarchal system (teaching the patriarchal system) to do anything about it.

All three of the well-educated women who taught at the secondary school were very much aware of the shared experience that they had in their schooling, an experience that placed more value on a boy's education than on a girl's, and which taught and encouraged boys to interact more freely in the school environment. I frequently observed interactions at the primary level in which girls were taught in a "secondary mode" by following the interactions and instruction that were directed toward the boys (i.e. listening to directions and the clarification given to boys, watching from a distance as examples were written in a boy's notebook, etc.). Marie and Celeste knew about "secondary mode" learning, they knew that boys dominated the school environment, and they knew that girls

assumed a more passive role. However, despite this recognition that girls entered secondary classrooms with a learned behavior which made them less well-equipped to compete against the boys, teachers, even women teachers like Marie and Celeste, <u>still demanded</u> that girls perform in the classroom in the same manner and in the same amount as the boys. So, when the girls were unable to meet these expectations, and few girls were able to compete against the boys and meet the teacher's expectations, they failed and reinforced the stereotype that men were superior to women, that girls were less able to learn, and, as Marie's father had told her, schools were not good places for girls. Consequently, the girls' lack of success at the secondary level served to validate the cultural ideology that girls were less deserving of an education than boys. Furthermore, the three women teachers at Rusimba frequently referred to their struggles in their secondary level or university classes as a lone quest for an education, when all the other women had given up the fight. Therefore, the well-educated, successful women that I interviewed perceived themselves as aberrant women, exceptions to the rule. Thus, they continued to maintain the same gender roles and expectations for most women as the rest of society and willingly accepted that schools were places where boys performed but girls just waited and wasted time.

Our discussions about this learned behavior and subordination cycle troubled Celeste. "I don't like the role

I have in this all. It's troubling to be involved in something like this." During one of my first interviews with her in mid-February, she asked me if I was recording the interactions that were taking place and noting whether it was a boy or girl who she had called upon or who was participating. "I'd like to know once and for all if the boys are out-performing the girls." I told her I was recording that information and had noted that my data seemed to indicate that boys asked and responded to more questions. I did mention, however, that she generally called on boys more frequently and stopped before a boy's desk and pointed at boys more commonly than girls. When I told her this, she threw back her head, chuckled, and said, "Well, what do you know? My peda instructors would be proud of me!" She then became very serious and told me:

> This bothers me, but I'm not sure what to
> do. You know, I have to cover the
> material for the state exams. All the
> students are counting on me to get them
> through it and help them pass [pauses].
> This is a pedagogy school, I'm the main
> teacher in this school, if I don't get
> them through it, I would have failed them
> all. The girls just don't follow through
> like the boys...Hmmmm, I'll have to work
> on this.

Celeste did make an effort to change. After sessions when I would tally interaction patterns, levels of questioning, etc., she would come to the desk where I'd sit at the back of the room and ask me, "How did I do today?" However, she frequently became frustrated over the lack of preparation and

passive engagement of the girls. After one session that she

termed "very trying," she told me:

> I guess they just don't understand what
> this is all about. School for many of
> them means nothing. Elizabeth is <u>never</u>
> prepared. She's absent as often as she's
> here.   I asked her where she was
> yesterday...the market...at the market
> buying bananas, that's what she told me.
> They have a test next Tuesday and she
> doesn't care.   I think there are five
> girls in this class who <u>really</u> want to be
> here...by sixth year maybe we'll be down
> to those who really want to learn and be
> here.

Celeste's comment raised some interesting questions about

the "survival of the fittest" process which sorted out students

unable to compete. That more girls were sorted out didn't

surprise her. She accepted it as natural that more girls would

leave and more boys would stay. Celeste questions that the

girls understood what it was "all about." However, possibly

it was Celeste who didn't understand what it was all about--

after all, <u>she</u> is the one who challenged the system and

continued to pursue an education long after all the other girls

had figured it out and given up. When I asked her what school

was "all about" for her, she began to answer, then stopped,

considered my question for a short while and then replied,

> I'm not sure. I'm not really sure when I
> think about it in the broader context--for
> females in general. When I think about it
> for me personally, it means I'm able to be
> independent, to be on my own. But, in a
> larger context, well, then I just don't
> know.
>
> This idea about being independent, that's
> a real interesting concept. I <u>have</u> to be

independent <u>because</u> of my education. After I received my secondary school diploma my chances to marry were greatly reduced. When I went off to university, it became even more difficult for me to marry. I thought I might still be able to marry when I began, but I really didn't think about it too much when I started. But most of the boys who took classes with me made comments about it. They'd say things like, "You'd better get married now while someone is still willing to take you" or "If you don't find a husband before you leave here <u>no one</u> will take you--they'll all know you won't make a good wife after all this school." After a while I began to realize that I <u>wasn't</u> going to get married. Then I <u>really</u> realized the choice I had made. I knew I'd be alone.

On more than one occasion, Celeste shared with me her concern that she was single, living in a world where single women weren't socially accepted. Furthermore, Celeste indicated that in general most men reacted negatively towards her because of her high level of education. When I asked Celeste what she would do if she had the opportunity to marry, she replied:

I love teaching. I'm a good teacher--I know that. But if I had the choice, I'd get married. Single women aren't socially accepted. Everyone you know thinks a woman should marry and have children. That's a heavy burden to live with all the time. If I don't marry, who do I have to take care of me when I get older? I have no sons. I worry that I might become destitute when I'm too old to work anymore. There's no question. I'd choose to marry. I'd give up teaching today if I could get married. But I don't think any man will marry me now. I'm too well educated. [Celeste laughs, waits a moment, continues talking.] Who could afford my brideprice?

As much as Celeste loved her teaching, a job she had aspired to from her youth, the personal satisfaction and enjoyment her work brought to her couldn't counterbalance the emptiness that she felt over being single. Even more frustrating was that Celeste felt that her career advancement was being negatively influenced because of her femaleness.

> Several times I've considered applying for
> an administrative position. Each time
> I've applied I've been refused because
> they're worried I might need time off for
> a pregnancy. The first time it shocked me
> and I replied--indignantly--"But, I'm not
> married." The interviewer who was male
> indicated that that made no difference.
> The expectation is there that I'd marry
> given the opportunity.

Celeste's concerns about being destitute as she grows older and becomes unable to work and support herself are strong deterrents against advanced education and pursuing a career instead of marrying. In fact, this factor was as significant to her as the social stigma of being single. Furthermore, Celeste's femaleness created a dual dilemma. The option of a profession and career was problematic because of her sex. But having made the decision to remain single, the possibility that she might follow through with her biological potential--having babies "legitimately" or not--became a constant handicap which limited her options in the workplace. Expectations that Celeste would eagerly throw herself into marriage and motherhood, given the opportunity if some man wanted her, were influenced by societal expectations that women "...hold their identity in...the man by whose name she will be known, by whose

status she will be defined, the man who will rescue her from emptiness and loneliness by filling the inner space (Gilligan, 1982, p. 12)." Celeste's dilemma was not unique. Only a few of the women that I talked to were able to consider getting an education and pursuing a career without seeing this as an exchange at the expense of marriage and children. Even those who considered marriage and a career did so reluctantly because of the difficulty of juggling the heavy demands of home responsibilities and work obligations. And the problems that working women face don't stop in the home. Celeste's aborted career advancement is not atypical. Many women face discrimination on the job. One of the questions that I always asked school directors when I'd interview them was, "Given two equally qualified applicants, a man and a woman, which one would you hire?" Without exception, the response was "The man because I won't have to fear giving extended time off for maternity leave."[5]

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[5]. These attitudes and feelings that Celeste exhibited weren't unusual. Nor were the job frustrations that she experienced as a woman. Okin (1989) writes that a woman's biological potential limits her employability and career advancement in the workplace. Connell (1987), Maroney (1986), Newland (1980), Rose (1986) and Yeatman (1986) all write about the struggles that working women face juggling the obligations of home and career. Backhouse and Cohen (1978), Date-Bah (1986), Farley (1978), Riddell (1989) and Whitbread (1980) all discuss the difficulty that women face in getting hired. They also write that women face more discrimination in the workplace particularly in aborted career advancement. Although most of these studies have looked at these issues in

Numerous studies have demonstrated the ways in which women are discriminated against on the job and in the career ladder. Gutto (1971), Mwiria (1987), and Ruigu (1985) write that family demands serve as barriers for the advancement of women in the workplace. Other studies focusing on job opportunities and career advancement for women in Third World countries, including Hughes (1986), Hughes and Mwiria (1989), Ruigu (1985), and Smock (1977), write that family obligations contribute to a woman's hesitancy to take risks on the job including job changes, pursuing advanced training, and relocating. Consequently, the domestic obligations and responsibilities that hold a women down in the home hold her back on the job as well. It was true for Marie who was unable to successfully meet her commitments at work because of the work at home. And it was true for Celeste whose potential to take on the role of wife and mother became a "phantom family" that plagued her in the workplace. Clarricoates (1980) writes that its true for most women teachers who must constantly struggle with tensions between home and school.

Celeste's and Marie's stories reflected the worldview that there are few choices for women: women marry, women have children. Celeste's regret at having to choose a career at the expense of marriage and children is poignantly reflected in her

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developing countries the findings demonstrate that Celeste's struggle wasn't a Third World struggle but that this is an issue that women worldwide must face.

statement that she'd marry given the choice. Marie's frustration at the burden, work and constant fatigue resulting from her decision to engage in the multiple roles of wife, mother, and professional is yet another manifestation of how women have limited choices and must weave a solution to their dilemma on their own. Both Celeste and Marie knew that ultimately, their survival was dependent on "being able to find a man to marry" (Griffin, 1981, p. 211) and that breaking away from the traditional role of women as wife and mother left them vulnerable to economic and social consequences (Radford-Hill, 1986). But with marriage comes "...socially caused and distinctly asymmetric vulnerability...[which] makes wives far more likely than husbands to be exploited both within the marital relationship and in the world of work outside the home" (Okin, 1989, p. 138). For Celeste and Marie, like many women world-wide, marriage is a no-win situation. They're damned if they do, and damned if they don't.

Celeste: dynamic teacher, role model to girls at Rusimba, a successful career woman who could encourage girls to persevere and challenge the system. When I spoke to her about this she told me her advice to girls would be: "Forget going to university. Get married."

Stella--Obey? No way!

Tall, svelte, and sophisticated, Stella was the epitome of an upwardly mobile young professional. She always wore

stylish outfits, pieces of good quality jewelry and expensive perfume. Stella had a degree in secretarial science and taught typing (mostly on cardboard mock-ups) at the school and was the personal secretary to the director at Rusimba. Since Stella's husband, James, was the assistant principal at Rusimba, I was fortunate to be able to observe them as they interacted in the workplace as well as at home.

Theirs was an unusual marriage in many ways. James was a Burundi refugee who had met his wife, a Zairian, while they both were studying at a university in Zaire. James and Stella shared neither tribal backgrounds nor citizenship. More importantly, however, by most standards, their marriage would be considered a very liberated one. They had mutually agreed that it would be easier if they didn't live anywhere near either set of parents, an arrangement that Dinan (1977) has shown to lessen the impact of kinship obligations and which allows a wife to develop more autonomy in a marriage. Furthermore, they decided that they would limit the number of children that they had to two, that both their children, a girl and a boy, would receive equal financial and emotional support to pursue educational studies leading to a career, and that marriage arrangements would not be made for either of their children.

During one conversation the three of us discussed their marriage and the factors that lead to its success. Stella told me that the distance that separated her from his family made

her feel much more secure in her rights, particularly if she

were widowed.

> Not living near our families has made it
> much easier on both of us but not living
> near his parents has made it easier
> particularly for me. My education has
> benefitted us both a great deal. We are
> able to afford a much better lifestyle
> than we would have if I were unable to get
> a good job. And certainly, I feel more
> secure since I have an education. I think
> that I'm less vulnerable because of it.
> For instance, if anything were to happen
> to James, I would be able to fight for my
> rights--I would have some status and
> credibility in the courts. There are laws
> to protect women now, I know that, lawyers
> know that, government people know that.
> But my husband's parents are peasants and
> they don't understand that. If James were
> to die, they are the ones that I have to
> deal with. It would not be easy to fight
> for my rights--my children--in that kind
> of situation.

James agreed with Stella.

> There's one important factor here (to the
> success of the marriage)--neither of us
> lives in the region where we grew up. We
> both live long distances from our families
> and there's less pressure on us to follow
> traditional rules when the extended family
> isn't here to enforce certain kinds of
> behavior.

However, he indicated that he still struggled with the

prevailing view that men should take control of a marriage and

make wives do what husbands wanted them to do. He shared with

me that:

> At times it would be easier if she would
> just do everything I said to do...but we
> have learned to compromise.

I asked Stella which factor, the distance from her husband's family or her education, offered the greatest security if anything were to happen to James. She replied:

> I don't think that education alone would protect me. Certainly, because of the distance I live away from them, I would have some time before they'd come. But, eventually I would have to face the situation. Maybe the fact that I'm educated makes the biggest difference. I wouldn't be afraid to confront them for the children.

In a society that relegated few rights to women and expected few women to resist, Stella's determination to keep her children and prevent her husband's family from taking her children away from her would mean she'd have to stand up to the system and gain agency in her life. Stella saw her education as a means of doing this, a way to fight the system and win. She'd already won one fight because of her education--the struggle for autonomy in her marriage with James. She shared this story with me one afternoon:

> When we were first married...ah...it was terrible! He kept telling me what to do, what not to do, and when to do it! I was very much afraid to confront him at first, I even considered running away. But then, what would I have if I did that? So, we talked. I told him that I didn't like his rules, and we were going to have to change things.
>
> I remembered the struggle that I had when I wanted to go to school. My parents took it to the family council and they decided that it was "best" if I didn't go. I was about 13 at the time and I can remember being so angry that they had said, "No." So, I ran away and went to school anyway. I was gone for maybe two months when my

> father came to where I was staying and
> told me that he wanted me to come home. He
> told me that if I promised to obey and do
> all my work at home, I could go to school.
> I promised him. I think that he thought
> I would be too tired to do it all--and I
> was tired--but I kept going to school.
>
> When things became difficult between James
> and me, I remembered this. I told myself,
> you've worked too hard to give up now. If
> you run away, you'll just have to come
> back and promise to obey and do all the
> work. (Stella laughs and then continues.)
> So, instead I shouted at him, and argued
> with him. Oh-h-h was he surprised! But
> it worked!

But even though Stella didn't have to promise to obey

James, she found herself still having to do all the work.

> We can afford a domestic now so I don't do
> the work in the house anymore. He does
> help occasionally with the children--but,
> talk of equality and liberation aside--I
> am still the one who assumes the bulk of
> the responsibility for the home. James
> walks away from it, but I dwell there.

Stella's response gives priority to her continued

relationship with James. She confronts James to change the

rules and negotiates to resolve the dilemma in their marriage.

Gilligan (1982) found in her work that women typically give

priority to relationships and negotiate compromise in the

dilemmas that they face in personal interactions. However,

Stella is only successful at negotiating a partial resolution

to her problem with James since she accepts total

responsibility for home obligations while James avoids it. His

response, not unlike many of the men that I spoke with, was

that his wife was free to seek help for these domestic

obligations. Equality for women for him meant that Stella had the option to hire someone to help her--work often considered degrading and which serves to exploit lower class women (Connell, 1987; and Cock, 1989).[6] Ironically, Stella's dilemma of an over-worked working wife employing some other woman to assume these responsibilities enabled James to further remove himself from any responsibility and obligation at home. Consequently, even though James was under less corporate or extended family pressure to conform to gender roles and boundaries, his liberal attitude didn't cross over to equality in the domestic sphere and shared responsibilities for childcare. He could not see that equality in division of family obligations meant changes in the patterns of interaction that men have within the family and domestic sphere. So, in this sense, Stella's story is similar to Marie's. At home, Stella was on her own.

But Stella's story doesn't stop there. It is a remarkably different story than those of Marie and Celeste. Her story is one of hope and promise. Her story tells us that women who are willing to risk, women who are willing to fight the system, women who are willing to challenge the patriarchy can change things for themselves and their children. Her story also tells us that an education can make a difference for a woman. It tells us that when the impact of kinship obligations and

[6]. A discussion of the implications of domestic help will be discussed at more length in Chapter 7.

patrilocality can be lessened, women are freer to develop and negotiate compromise in their marriages, in their reproduction and in their children's options.

Summary

Marie, Celeste, Stella--three women in a shared struggle to survive, to get ahead in a world that placed many obstacles in their way. Three women who saw education as a way to break out of the cycle that trapped women. Three women who responded in different ways to the opportunity that education offered and who ended up with remarkably different stories.

Marie--traditional wife and mother--burdened down and burned out from the overwork of career and home. Marie's education provided little release from the subordination that most women faced. Indeed, it worsened her struggle and just made the bondage more unbearable. Unable to earn a salary that might make a real difference in her lifestyle, Marie was forced to trudge on alone and became increasingly bitter from the fatigue, control and repetitiveness in her life.

Celeste--single, independent, a woman with a career--it's a career she's good at and a career she enjoys. But it's also a career that has come at great price--marriage and children. Living in a traditional society where girls are raised to believe that all women must marry in order to achieve long term economic security, the social isolation and fear about her future that she faces daily weighs Celeste down. Even though

Celeste is unencumbered with the burdens of domestic obligations that Marie daily faces, the fact that she <u>could</u> be married and have children prevents her from achieving the professional advancement and reward that she'd like. For Celeste, her education is the double-edged sword in her life. It provided her with the qualifications to enter a career which gave her some autonomy. However, it also cut off the option to marry which forced her to be on her own. And ultimately, even her education couldn't change things enough to provide her the same career opportunities as a man. In this respect, it failed her.

In some respects, Marie and Stella have similar stories. They both are wives, mothers and professionals. They both struggle with the dual burden of work at home and work in the career. They both have husbands who too easily accept the cultural ideology about "women's work and men's work." But Stella's story is one of agency in her own life and one of negotiation for change in her relationships, reproduction and rights. Finally, Stella's story tells us that a woman who is educated can confront the system and effect change for herself. But more than Stella's story brings hope that things will be remarkably better for her, the promise of her story is that because of the negotiation that has taken place between her and James in their own marriage, a better future exists for their children particularly for their daughter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

After All, They'll Just Be Marrying

> Madame, you say that girls should have
> the same educational opportunities as
> boys. Why? It costs a lot of money to
> educate children and we can't educate
> them all--it's impossible. Girls don't
> need a lot of education, after all,
> they'll just be marrying (Justin,
> university student, March, 1989).

Down the road from where we lived was an old pyrethrum
plantation which was purchased in the mid-forties by a genteel
American woman who hails from Martha's Vineyard in
Massachusetts. This lady, I'll call her Lilly, is really
quite a remarkable woman. After she bought the place, Lilly
began raising flowers which she sold throughout central Africa
and Europe. She got the place on solid ground financially,
weathered out the turbulent period during independence and
became an early advocate for the plight of the rural poor.

Everyone in the area knows Lilly and considers her a
force to be reckoned with. Personal acquaintances include
most of the ambassadors to the country and the President
himself. It's Lilly's interaction with the rural poor,
though, that is most remarkable. She nurses sick children,
sends food to hungry families, provides school fees for
exceptional students too poor to pay their own way. Every
year during a New Year's feast, she covers her lawn with
donated clothes and villagers from miles around come to share
in the bounty. Lilly also provides for weekly entertainment.
Weather permitting, each Sunday, surrounded by the fragrance

and beauty of hundreds of flowers, the best of the local
dancers make their way to Lilly's garden to put on a show.
Men and young boys, with the traditional bells around their
ankles, and wrap-around cloth about their waist, stomp, and
jump while women and young girls, many with blossoms woven
into their hair, dance in tight circles and sway their hips
hypnotically as they clap and wave their hands gracefully
above their heads. Throughout the dances, Lilly, sitting in
a corner in her rattan chair, describes the various movements,
explaining that what you are watching are variations on the
marriage dance. The faster the man dances, the higher he
jumps, are all indications of how virile he is. The men
encircle the women, a symbolic representation of the closing
in of the circle that married women have, of the powerful
control that men have in women's lives. It's an exciting
performance, one that demonstrates agility and athletic
prowess for both the men and women. It's a powerful
performance to watch. And as you consider the implications of
the dance, it's a powerful performance to think about too.

This dance is performed at almost all marriages,
certainly at the more traditional ones. Marriage feasts can
last for days as family and friends eat and dance and carry
out numerous rituals at specific points in the rite of
passage. Although I know very little about the rituals of a
marriage ceremony, I have been told that one of the most
important is the dance, the same dance that is performed each

Sunday in Lilly's garden, a dance that represents the authority and control a husband assumes over his wife. When you consider marriage from the perspective of the ritual marriage dance, it takes on a whole new meaning.

When you consider marriage from the perspective of my study, it takes on new meaning as well. As my study evolved, it became increasingly evident that factors dealing with marriage--the ways in which girls were inculcated with the "marriage mentality", the system of brideprice and manner in which women became a commodity, the promise/threat of education and risk of educating a girl out of the marriage market--all of these became crucial aspects to consider. In this chapter, the ways in which cultural expectations about gender, gender boundaries and future options for girls and boys get played out and intersect with educational opportunity will be discussed. I will look at how this influences parental compliance with government policies for compulsory school attendance, division of labor within the domestic sphere and finally, brideprice and marriageability.

So, they're enrolled. Now, why don't they come?

One of the first things that I noticed when I began observing at Mupika was that boys appeared to outnumber girls in attendance. Because World Bank and government school enrollment figures indicated near equal enrollment of girls and boys, I made spot checks at other schools in the area. I

found that, in general, boys outnumbered girls in daily attendance at the primary level. I spoke with the local government and school officials to verify enrollment figures. The records that I saw showed that there was a relatively equal distribution of boys and girls. When I questioned the inspector about the unequal representation that I had observed at the schools, he told me that despite government policies which could impose harsh prison sentences on parents if their children were not enrolled in school, many parents failed to enroll and send their children--particularly their young daughters.

Another government official indicated that the region where I was conducting the study was less developed than many others in the country. It was his opinion that this general underdevelopment was most evident regarding parental support of schooling. He mentioned that there were concerns by government officials that parents were not being diligent in sending their children to school and that this was particularly true for daughters. "Parents are reluctant to follow through because daughters help out a great deal in the gardens and in the care of other children. They want them to stay home and help with the work that must be done."

In view of this, I made periodic counts at eight primary schools in the area to determine the ratio of boy/girl participation in the schools (Appendix A). I visited each school four times during a three-month period and counted the

number of students present in each classroom. Interviews were also conducted with the directors or a representative of those schools that participated in the survey (Appendix B) to determine to what extent absenteeism or truancy was influencing the disparity between my attendance counts and official enrollment records.

These counts showed that there were generally more boys in attendance than girls. (In some cases, the number of boys at school was nearly double the number of girls, but this was unusual.) The data gathered indicated a relatively even distribution of boy/girl attendance in the first three years of primary schooling. Slightly higher percentages of boys were present during the fourth and fifth years. By the sixth year, more boys were attending schools than girls, although at a few schools, the number of boys and girls remained relatively equal. Boys attendance patterns continued to be greater until the last year of primary schooling.

All the directors felt that absenteeism and truancy were severe problems that dramatically influenced who was getting educated. There was a general agreement that absenteeism was more pronounced for girls. When asked what kinds of reasons were provided by the parents for their daughters' absences, the directors gave reasons such as "the need to watch other children (not necessarily siblings)," "work in the family's gardens," "do housework," "because of sickness." The directors stated that absences for girls increased

significantly as the girls got older, and absences because of "sickness" were the most frequently cited excuse after grade five. With few exceptions, the directors shared the opinion that absenteeism and truancy became increasingly evident as the school year continued and as the students advanced through the grades. One director commented:

> In grades 6, 7 and 8, parents say their daughters have to stay home because of their menstrual cycles. Many also say that their daughters must stay home because they have no clothes. Girls are absent a great deal--much more than boys.

Another director stated:

> The absences of girls are more common because they have so much work to do in the homes. Also, parents frequently keep them out during their menstrual cycle.

Yet another said:

> Parents say that girls are physically weaker than boys and the long walks to school are too hard on them. Parents say that girls will arrive at school too late.

Interestingly, two directors commented that:

> Parents often punish boys who aren't obeying at home by keeping them out of school. But our teachers are trying to educate the parents and have been talking to them about keeping their sons out.[1]

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[1]. Note that the director didn't indicate that his teachers have been talking to parents about keeping daughters out. This may have been an oversight or it could be that only absences where parents were punishing sons and keeping them out of school were addressed and not when parents kept daughters out to help with domestic responsibilities.

> Even though boys like to be vagabonds and
> not come to school, parents say _they_ keep
> boys out to punish them for disobeying.

Parental compliance in attendance patterns send several messages to their children. One is that a son's attendance in school matters. In fact, it matters so much that it is used as a punishment _not_ to be sent to school. However, for daughters the message is quite different. The message that they're given is that being in school doesn't matter. To the contrary, parents elect to pull their daughters out when their help is needed at home. Many excuses are given with themes reminiscent of pollution theories (keeping them out when they have their menstrual cycle) and the feebleness (and futility) of educating girls (too sick, too far for a girl to walk, too weak, girls will arrive too late.)

Diminished parental support for their education tells girls that meeting domestic obligations is their primary responsibility and that getting an education isn't necessary to complete these tasks. Furthermore, it shows that the opportunity cost for girls is too high to send them to school. Men are more valuable _with_ an education that they'll need to work _outside_ of the home but women are more valuable _without_ an education to work _inside_ of the home. Given the kinship patterns that are found in this part of Africa and the division of labor that exists, parents make a _rational_, _logical_ choice to provide less support for their daughter's education than for their sons. Given the cultural context,

for the average father to do otherwise would be fiscally irresponsible. Also, given the marriageability situation for most young girls, for a parent to do otherwise would be negligent. A parent's principle concern is to educate a daughter to the optimal brideprice without wasting money on her education or detracting from her immediate use at home. Given the division of labor and work responsibilities that exist in the home, most girls would be foolhardy to insist on an education and risk increased obligations outside the home in addition to her workload inside the home. And if a girl were to desire advanced schooling, from the corporate family point of view, it is a real sacrifice, a risky decision, to invest in her education further. This could decrease her brideprice, increase opportunity cost without her help with the workload at home, and risk social isolation if she were not to marry and have children. Consequently, a father like our math teacher Jacques would be more than typical when he says that he would be quite reluctant to educate his daughter beyond the primary school level because "she'll just be marrying." It also helps us to better understand how a father, such as Celeste's father who beat her to keep her from attending school, isn't a mean, malicious parent. From his perspective, beating Celeste to keep her from going to school is the best thing he can do for her, the only thing he can do, to prevent her from jeopardizing her brideprice with too much education and risk marriage, her means of personal fulfillment

and main source of security. So, everyone in society comes to believe as Marie's father believed that schools are not good places for girls.

Findings in studies by Kinyanjui (1981, 1987), Kirui (1982), Ram (1980), and Stromquist (1989) are similar concerning parental support of education. Girls received less financial and emotional support for their schooling and were absent more frequently. Generally, absences were caused by heavy work responsibilities that were placed upon them which their male counterparts were not given. Consequently, even when girls were able to attend, they were less likely to do as well because they had less time out of school to devote to their studies.

But even when parents complied with attendance regulations, there are other ways in which they can influence their children's learning. Having adequate supplies, particularly textbooks, is one of the ways a parent can affect a student's learning. Although it was difficult to assess who had books at the primary level and who didn't, interviews that I conducted with parents helped me to better understand how parents decided which children in the family would be provided with textbooks and which children wouldn't. Conversations with three parents are typical of the comments that were made to me about textbook purchases.

> I don't earn much money. I can't afford to pay for school books for all my children. I buy for the oldest child first. When I have books for him, then I

think about the others...I have eight
children--five boys and three girls.
(Rural father)

* * * *

I can only pay for some school fees and
books. I buy books for my sons. My sons
will take care of me when I am old and
can't work any longer. I invest in them
for myself. That's the way it is here.
(Rural father)

* * * *

I buy (textbooks) when I can. If I can
only buy some, I will probably buy them
for Jean-Marie because he is my son. He
will take care of me when I can no longer
work my gardens. Anna (her daughter)
won't have time to worry about me. Her
responsibility will be to take care of
her husband and children.
(Rural mother)

Again, parental expectations that an education for a son
is important and necessary but not so for a daughter is
evident in the responses of these parents. Without exception,
the less educated parents in the rural areas gave preference
to their sons, particularly their oldest son, when purchasing
supplies for school. Many of the parents who lived in the
urban areas indicated that they would make every effort to
equally distribute the supplies they were able to purchase,
but even among them, there was noticeable reluctance to
indicate that they would not give priority to their sons'
educations. The fact that parents in the urban setting were
better educated and perhaps more significantly that the
mothers were better educated than either rural parent seemed

to have a strong positive impact on the parental support that was shown to daughters going to school.

Nearly all the girls in the fourth year room at Rusimba had parents who were more highly educated than the parents of the boys. This supports studies by Birdsall (1985), Cochrane, Mehra and Osheha (1985), Hughes (1986), and Stromquist (1989) which show that both higher income levels and parental educational level increases a parent's desire for their daughter's education. The girls' responses on the questionnaire also seemed to indicate that more of their siblings were in school and had achieved a higher level of education than the siblings of the boys.

In an attempt to better understand why this might be, I asked the girls at Rusimba why their parents were sending them to school. Their responses to my question could be categorized in three main groups: to enhance their daughters' brideprice and desirability as wives. Meleis, El-Sanabary and Beeson (1979), Seetharamu & Ushadevi (1979), and Stromquist (1989), found that parents commonly sent their daughters to school up to the level where they would capitalize on educational investment in brideprice payments.

> Marie: My _dot_ (brideprice) is being paid now and my family feels that my education will raise it.
>
> Anna: I have more education than my sisters and my _dot_ is higher. But, I have to leave school at the end of this year so that it (brideprice) won't go too high.

Other girls at Rusimba told me that they were at school to meet well-educated suitors. Studies by Ahmad (1974), Kirui (1982), and Singhal (1984) found similar educational benefits for women particularly in societies where girls were educated in co-educational systems. I also found that the girls who were from rural areas where the unmarried boys in their home villages were less educated indicated this factor more frequently than the girls from urban regions. Statements by Sylvie and Monique typify comments made to me about being sent to school to meet educated boys:

> Sylvie: My parents want me to have an educated husband. So, I'm in school to meet him.

> Monique: I'm in school to meet the right kind of husband. I want an educated husband who can afford a domestic. I don't want to work in the gardens. My family agrees with me.

Finally, some of the girls at Rusimba also mentioned that they were in school to remove them from the young boys of the village. Although this contradicts some studies, such as Boserup (1970), Moore (1988) and Stromquist (1989) that suggest that parents do not send daughters to school because of the fear of sexual assault, immorality or promiscuity, the unique situation at Rusimba probably accounted for the parents' confidence that their daughters were in fact safer in the mission school than in their home village. Comments by Helen and Denise, are representative of comments made about control of social interaction.

| Helen: | I come from a village where many girls got pregnant. My family thought it would be better for me to be here in school where the missionaries keep track of the girls. |
| Denise: | My father says it's better for me to be in school than doing "other" things--my sister got pregnant so I guess he's afraid of that. |

For all but two of the girls who indicated that their parents wanted them to get an education and go on to university studies, schools were primarily serving purposes other than as an institution of learning. Reasons that the girls at Rusimba gave me for why their parents sent them to school show that parents saw schools as waiting places for future wives or places in which the value of a future wife could be enhanced (only to a point however--too much education could mean no marriage). Schools were also places of refuge to keep girls from getting pregnant, which might possibly prevent marriage or at least lower brideprice. And finally, schools were scouting grounds where desirable husbands could be discovered for daughters. Consequently, if the daughters represented their parents correctly, for all but a very few girls at Rusimba, parents saw a secondary school education as intricately caught up with marriage options in one way or another. Therefore, most of the girls at Rusimba were really there in the role of <u>future wife</u> not <u>student</u>. And certainly, by the fourth year, the pressure was being placed on the girls

that school had served its function and that the time was right to get on with life and marry.

Interviews with the girls indicated that a significant number of them felt a societal/familial pressure to marry after terminating secondary school studies.

> Denise: This is the last year that I will be in school. My family is arranging my <u>dot</u> so that I will get married soon.

> Ruth: My father doesn't want me to continue in school any longer...he wants me to get married. My marriage is being arranged now.

Only two of the girls in the class indicated that they would pursue university studies despite parental pressures to terminate their studies. One of the girls, Désirée, later returned to the desk where I was writing my notes and told me that even though she wanted to go to university, she probably wouldn't.

> It's really hard to not do something that everyone keeps telling you you should do, like get married and have children. Besides, it's very difficult to pursue a career if you're female. If I want to succeed, I really don't think I can get married.

Shortly after I began my study at Rusimba, I had this conversation with Elizabeth and Anne:

"Elizabeth, you told me yesterday that you'd probably be leaving school soon. Why?"

> My family wants me to get married. My father says my grades aren't that good and that it's probably best that I get married fairly soon.

"So, what's soon?"

> If I do well on my exams I'll be able to
> come back next year. If not, well, maybe
> this summer.

"Do you want to get married?"

> Well, I guess I don't mind...it's not
> bad.

> (Anne joins conversation.)

> We all have to marry. My family wants me to
> get married soon so I don't know how much
> longer I'll be going to school. I'd like to
> go until I get my diploma.

Cultural expectations for these girls were to marry and
reproduce. These were the only roles that either the girls or
their parents anticipated they would fill. The limited number
of women in the work force who were well-educated and pursuing
a career, potential role models for girls at Rusimba, appeared
to be one of the reasons that there was little incentive for
the girls to continue their educations. (Hughes & Mwinia,
1989; Stromquist, 1989; University of Nairobi, 1983; and
Vaudrin, 1983 discuss the negative impact that the limited
number of women as role models has on educational
opportunities for women.) It may have been a salient factor
influencing limited parental support for advanced education of
their daughters as well. One of the girls in the fourth-year
classroom, Monique, told me, "When you look around, you don't
really see a whole lot to convince you to go to school." When
I asked her to elaborate on her comment, she told me:

> I don't see women doing very much. Women
> become nurses, secretaries, or teachers.

> I don't want to be a nurse or secretary,
> so that leaves a teacher. Now, look at
> this school. There's the directress—of
> course, she's white—and Céleste. They
> aren't married. Céleste is a good
> teacher and all, but she's not married.
> Stella and Marie are married but they
> have to do all their teaching work _and_
> work at home, too. If I'm going to have
> to do all the work at home, besides
> outside—if I have a career—well, I
> might as well not work at a career. The
> best thing I can do is marry a rich
> husband.[2]

Monique's statement, not unlike many others that I heard, demonstrates that a limited number of female role models (and most in caretaking roles such as teacher, nurse or secretary) wasn't the only factor explaining her reluctance to pursue an education and career. She was fully cognizant of the tension between home and career obligations and quite reluctant to add additional responsibilities. If a choice were inevitable, she saw only one option—marriage came first. The girls at Rusimba continually wove the assumption that they _would_ marry and that they _should_ marry and that they _must_ marry through all their conversations with me.

Rural parental expectations and attitudes

After talking with the girls at Rusimba about what they perceived their parent's reasons to be for sending them to school, I wanted to compare what _parents_ would say when asked why they sent their sons and daughters to school. Nearly 200

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[2]. Including the female directress from Europe, there were only four women working at Rusimba.

interviews with predominantly rural parents were conducted. As I interpreted the data I found that there were four basic themes that parents talked about.

The first theme was that girls were in less need of an education because of the "passive/private" role that they would play in society as mothers and wives. One rural mother said: "You send daughters to school to learn the secrets of reading, but you send sons to school to learn the secrets of the world." Consistently, rural parents, both fathers and mothers, indicated that daughters were sent to school to learn how to better care for their family and take care of their homes but that sons were given an education to serve society. The belief that a woman's world was limited to the domestic sphere, nurturing children, caring for a family, and that this required less of an education was expressed by nearly all the rural parents that were interviewed.

A woman's childbearing role was intangibly and intricately interwoven with the childrearing role and the domestic responsibilities that that entailed. This finding is not surprising. Kinyanjui (1987) noted in his work in Kenya that "girls' educational and occupational aspirations tend to be shaped by the educational system to conform to the existing definition of the role of women in the society" (p. 32). In her work in developed countries, Thorne (1987) writes that "women have no lives apart from children, that mother and child exist in an isolated dyad" (p. 97) and that a woman's

autonomy is caught up in her role as reproducer and child bearer, a role relegated to her by nature. Most rural parents believed just that. Nature relegated women to what they perceived as a lesser role than men, one that required little or no education. Thus, parental expectations for girls to perform outside that domain were virtually non-existent. (Collier, 1974; Lamphere, 1974; Lembert, 1985; Moore, 1988; Okin, 1989; Ortner, 1974; Ram, 1982; Riddell, 1989; Rosaldo, 1974; Stromquist, 1989; and Yoeman, 1985, discuss how parental expectations for a daughter's educational opportunity is negatively influenced because of her role as reproducer.)

However, there were several rural parents with dramatically differing views. Two fathers indicated that girls needed an education equal to boys in order to "emancipate women" and "to help their sex." (Like so many things even emancipation was not a shared responsibility!) Others mentioned that "girls have the same right to develop their intelligence as boys." Almost 30% of the rural parents indicated that girls should receive an education equal to boys but gave dramatically different reasons for why boys should go to school and why girls should go to school. Another 60% of the parents indicated that a girl's education should be limited to primary schooling since they would only be working in the home and gardens. Comments such as these were frequently given by parents concerning the education of their

children: "I send my daughters to school to learn to read and write. I send my sons to school to enter a career." "My daughters received a primary education because they need to read and write so that they can guide their house. I have sent my sons to school--to university, first for their personal growth and so that they can participate in the development of the country." Another parent told Daniel, "Daughters only need to read and write; but sons need to become leaders." Most parents recognized that daughters needed to be educated so that they could "guide their children" and "develop a good home" but indicated that this required a minimal amount of education. (Okin, 1989, found a similar attitude in developed countries in her work.) Ten percent of the parents indicated that their daughters had the right to an education equal to their sons "so that they can marry an educated husband who will provide well for them." (This father's response corroborates what several of the girls at Rusimba offered as reasons why their parents had sent them to school.) None of the rural parents that were surveyed indicated that a girl should receive an education to pursue a career or lead in society whereas this was the second most frequently mentioned reason for boys after "so that he can get a job to help his parents."

A second theme was that educational investment in daughters should be limited because they don't remain with their natal families and provide little future profit for the

corporate family. One mother commented, "After a girl marries, she doesn't count anymore." A father told Daniel, "Women are the goods [my emphasis] of some other man, so why would I educate her?" Still another father said:

> My daughter is at the same level as my sons, but I can't continue to afford to send them all. Since my daughter will be marrying and leaving my home, I have chosen to continue with the education of my sons. My daughter can work at home in the gardens.

A third reason given why parents were hesitant to permit their daughters to continue their educations was the risk of pregnancy after puberty. Concern that a daughter's interaction needed parental supervision accounted for reluctance to send adolescent daughters to school. Also, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, a girl's menstrual cycle was one of the major reasons parents gave for keeping daughters home from school. One mother succinctly told Daniel, "Girls are more immoral than boys." A father told him, "I sent my oldest daughter to school, and she got pregnant. I learned my lesson with her." The belief that girls were less moral, less able to control their sexual relationships, and consequently, more in need of supervision was mentioned by a significant number of rural parents. Sadly, woman as the evil seducer and destroyer of society and morality is not an uncommon theme in developed or developing societies and is repeatedly used to justify limited educational opportunity for females (Daly, 1978; and Okin,

1989). Boserup (1970), Brokensha (1973), Ponsi (1988), Porter (1988) and Smock (1977) all write that parents in developing countries fear that an education will make their daughters discontent, immoral, and at a greater risk of getting pregnant outside of marriage because of compromises in their cultural heritage and religious integrity.

At the very least, parents were concerned that it would be the girls, their daughters, who would be left with the responsibility (and stigma) of a pregnancy. A tragic story that Jean-Baptiste, one of the teachers at Rusimba, shared with me underscores why parents do not want their daughters to continue school after puberty.

> There's risk involved sending daughters to school. When I have children, I'd be hesitant to send my daughters to school. It's not easy to get a daughter through. They drop out along the way or they get pregnant.

> When I finished my fourth-year here at Rusimba, there were nineteen girls in my class. Ten of them began fifth year. In sixth year there were two. One left the program—it was too hard for her. The other one got pregnant—it was sad because she was really smart, particularly in math. She used to help a lot of the boys in that subject. But, she had to leave. The school has the rule that any girls who are pregnant can't stay in the school.

What about boys—the fathers—can they stay? Or does the school expel them as well if they find out who they are?

> If the school knows who the father is, and he's a student here, they'll kick him out, too. But you know, few of the girls ever tell. The boy convinces them that

> they'll "take care of them" if they just
> don't tell.   So,   the   girls   don't.
> They're given empty promises--the boys
> don't come through and the girls are left
> taking care of the baby.   Or they get
> abortions.

What about the father in this case?   Was he a student

here?

> She insisted that he wasn't, but I think
> he was.

So, what's that girl doing now who left school because

she had a baby?

> She's dead--she died in labor,   It's sad
> because she was _really_ smart.[3]

A parent's reluctance to send a daughter to school,

particularly at the secondary-level when it became necessary

to board, raises some interesting questions about ways in

which daughters are valued and how parental concern for

daughters and support for their educational investment is

played out. From a parent's perspective, it would appear that

it is a better investment in their daughter's future to limit

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[3].   Most schools would not permanently expel a
girl because of pregnancy.   Normally, a girl
is asked to leave until she's given birth to
the baby and found a suitable person to care
for the child. Generally, there would be
little interest in the identity of the father,
at least by the school authorities. Although
this   arrangement   is   less   discriminatory
against girls, nonetheless, it's still the
girl who "pays the price." The situation was
different   at   Rusimba   because   it   was   a
conservative Protestant school with, some
might   challenge,   Puritanical   views   that
inadvertently perpetuated the victimization of
women.

her education since schooling can hinder her marriage options in two ways: 1) the risk of unwanted pregnancies resulting from the largely unsupervised interaction that takes place between girls and boys and 2) the risk of over-education that reduces eligibility and raises brideprice exorbitantly. However, when one considers brideprice issues, the question must be asked if this concern is for the daughter's future options or the corporate family's future financial investment?

A fourth theme mentioned was how an education influenced brideprice. One father told me that "with a limited primary education a girl's brideprice is about $15.00, but through a fourth year secondary-level education, it can reach as much as $700.00."[4] However, a significant number of parents indicated that too high an education would not be good and would decrease the possibility that a family would be willing to pay the brideprice. One father told me:

> You don't want your daughters to have much more than a secondary level education. About the fourth year is high enough. Much more and they won't be able to get married, and then what would they be able to do?

Although I was unable to ferret out what was so magical about the fourth year, I suspect that the age of most of the

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4. This father's comment, combined with statements by the girls at Rusimba about parental pressures to leave school and get married help explain the dramatic decline in the girls' enrollment after the fourth year. It would appear that this is the point in a girl's education where the financial investment drops off.

girls in the fourth year--most were nearly twenty--was the key factor. Men commonly married when they are between 28 and 30 years of age. Since they often married girls five to ten years younger than themselves, the girls at Rusimba in the fourth year would be just the right age to begin the marriage negotiations. Statements by the girls would seem to corroborate this theory.

That rural parents were less supportive of higher education for daughters is not surprising. Rural parents were generally poorly educated with most of the parents having less than three years of primary schooling themselves. Many had never attended school and were struggling on limited incomes to educate large numbers of children. (The average number of children in the sample of rural families was eight, with a range of living children from one to twelve.) The need to choose which child would benefit from educational investments has been a practice in developing countries for generations. Parents choose the children who they think will provide the best pay-off for the parents and the siblings (Bowman & Anderson, 1980; Kinyanjui, 1981; Mbilinyi, 1973; Mwiria, 1985; and Stromquist, 1989). Because women often leave professions to care for children and/or have limited career options (such as in Celeste's case), it is felt that to invest in their education will result in only a limited payoff for the family.

Even when the necessity to choose between children because of limited financial support does not exist, education

of girls appears to be problematic. One father, who had only one child--a daughter--when asked "Why did you send your daughter to school?" replied, "I didn't send my daughter to school. The school was too far away." Ironically, he lived less than two miles from the local primary school where his daughter would have attended. Possibly, one father provided the most germane reason for parental support in the education of girls. He succinctly replied that he sent his daughters to school "because it's the law."

In contrast to rural parents, urban parents demonstrated a stronger interest in support of higher education for their daughters. In general, parents living in towns had a higher level of education (many had studied up to the second or third year of secondary school) and had some outside income or form of subsistence other than family gardens. Many of the parents had made the choice to move from the rural areas in order to be nearer to the secondary schools where their children could attend school more cheaply because there would be no boarding fees. The comments of one father and mother, Isaac and Rahab, both secondary-level trained nurses at a small dispensary, are representative of the kind of things that urban parents told me. They were the parents of three daughters and two sons and were explaining to me their hope to educate all their children to the same, relatively high level of education. Isaac told me that "We are planning on educating all our children the

same. Our daughters deserve as much as our sons--besides, it takes two incomes to survive in our economy."

When I asked them what they would do if they didn't have enough money to provide educational support for them all Rahab, continued:

> It's not a question of choice. We <u>must</u> educate them all the same. We'd borrow money from family and the older ones would help educate the younger ones.

Obed and Eugenie are another couple who indicated that they were determined to educate all their children to the university level. Obed was a secondary school director and his wife Eugenie worked in an insurance office as a typist. Eugenie told me:

> I finished school one year short of a D6. I guess that's not bad really. But, I wish I were better educated. I want my daughters to have a better education than I had. They will have so many opportunities that I missed out on. I was lucky though that I was able to marry an educated man so it worked out OK.

Obed then said:

> Yes, that's true. But when we got married it didn't matter so much that the wives were well-educated. But now, if we want our daughters to get ahead, they must be well educated.

What does "getting ahead" for your daughters mean?

> Eugenie: Having the option to choose a career and study something that they want.

> Obed: I agree with my wife. Having a decent standard of living. Meeting the right kind of husband.

Would you expect your daughter to marry then?

[Obed chuckles and then answers.]

> Of course, but I have that expectation
> for both my daughters and my sons.

And what if she chose not to marry? Or marry but not have children?

> It would be her choice of course, but I
> would encourage her to give serious
> thought to not marrying.

How about you Eugenie? What do you think?

> I think most women with an education and
> career would chose to marry--that's just
> the way it is here. I would certainly
> encourage her to marry.

The expectations for daughters to marry were equally prevalent for both urban and rural parents. However, the key difference in their expectations was that urban parents could project their daughters into roles other than wife or mother. However, unless dramatic changes occurred in the sharing of childcare obligations and domestic responsibilities, these daughters might become the next generation of Stellas and Maries, burned-out and fatigued from holding down the dual obligations of home and work and possibly bitter at the prospect of doing so.

A more surprising finding was that, in general, fathers desired a higher level of education for their daughters than they did for their wives. This was particularly true of the better educated men that I spoke with. Leonard, a university professor, told me that, "My daughters will be better educated

than my wife was—maybe they'll all be able to finish university." He paused for a moment and then continued:

> I would never have married Eunice if she had been university educated, I guess that sounds strange, but that's how I feel. All the same, I certainly hope that my daughters will be university graduates. At the very least, they <u>must</u> have a secondary level education.

Obed made a comment very similar to Leonard's.

> Eugenie didn't attend university and it was best, but I certainly hope that my daughters will all get a university degree.

Studies by Beckett and O'Connell (1976), Biraimah (1987), Desta (1979), Henries (1974), Korson (1970) and Sanguinetty (1983) have demonstrated the role that fathers (and other male authority figures) play as significant gatekeepers in the education of girls. However, there appears to be little literature that addresses how men compare the value of education for their wives and daughters. I can only speculate about their reasons for desiring higher educations for their daughters than for their wives. Stromquist (1989) writes that upwardly-mobile parents desire a higher education for all their children than they themselves had. (Studies by Bowman & Anderson, 1980; Hughes, 1986; and Njenga, 1986 discuss the correlation between parents' level of education, occupation and income level with expectations for a daughter's level of education. Their findings show that the more highly parents are educated, professional parents and parents with a higher level of income are all more supportive of education for

daughters.) A personal communique from Rita Gallin (May, 1991), at Michigan State University's Women in International Development Center, suggested that the reason for this might stem from the family alliances that could be created from a daughter's marriage into an influential and wealthy family. Perhaps, James (the assistant principal) summed it up best.

> Things are changing. We now know that a
> good education for all children benefits
> the whole family. Even daughters--
> married or not--contribute to the well-
> being of the family.

However, when I consider the comment by the rural father who implied that daughters were "goods", possibly the best explanation is that educated men are "astute" enough to realize that their "goods" can be educated and sold to the highest bidder and become somebody else's "problem". But a wife needs to "obey" and should be a bargain.

Womens' work, mens' work

The dual (or triple) obligations that career women struggled with became a frequent theme in my discussions with the students. Early in the data collection period, I asked all the students in the fourth-year classroom what their attitudes were about working wives. When first asked the question, "How do you feel about your wife working?" and then, "Would you be willing to help your wife in the home duties if she worked outside the home?," several of the boys indicated that it would be fine with them for their wives to work. None

of the boys were strongly in favor of their own wives working, although most of the boys recognized that in order to support the type of lifestyle that they wanted, it would necessitate both the husband and wife holding full-time salaried work.

However, it was evident by _all_ the boys that a wife's career should not interfere with responsibilities in the home, particularly domestic duties that were culturally perceived as being woman's work.[5] A comment by Josef, one of the married students in the fourth-year classroom, succinctly describes how most of the boys felt about wives and careers (and the obligation and time commitment of domestic duties). "My wife doesn't work, but if she had to, as long as my meals are ready when I want them and I don't have to take care of the children, I won't complain."

As our discussion of women and careers continued, the boys became more emotionally involved in the discussion-- talking in a loud, boisterous manner, interrupting one another, shaking their hands and fists to emphasize their points. When the discussion eased off and the students began to walk away, the boys clustered in small groups and continued their discussion about the "problems of working wives." When a few of the girls walked out the door, three of the boys called after them in Swahili, and the girls stopped, turned

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[5]. The boys' resistance to wives working outside the home particularly after there were children was dramatically brought home to me when they reacted so strongly to me after my family's visit to Rusimba.

around, shouted a comment to the boys, then walked out the door, huddled together laughing. I was later told that the boys had made a comment to those girls about "thinking [they could] be working wives" and the girls had indicated that "they'd show them."

The attitudes of the teachers who were men were very similar to those of the boys. During the interview sessions with the staff members, I asked a similar question about working wives. Only three of the ten male staff members indicated that they would not mind if their wives worked outside the home _if_ domestic help were available. However, because of financial constraints from their limited incomes as school teachers, many of the wives of the teaching staff were forced to find work outside the home. Without exception, none of the staff members, men or women, that I spoke with considered working in the family gardens, a job that entailed hours of work outside the home and which contributes vitally to the subsistence of the family, as anything but working at "domestic duties." When I spoke to the men about the need to assist "working" wives with the domestic duties, the men were adamant that it was culturally impossible for them to do that. The shared ideology of acceptable macho behavior was clearly evident. They felt that certain kinds of responsibilities with the children such as "carrying the children as we walk down the street," "helping the children get ready to go to school" would be marginally acceptable male assistance. But

many other kinds of assistance, such as "sweeping the yard around the house" or "helping to prepare the meals," "bathing the children," "feeding the children," or "helping in the garden plot" would be unacceptable. One of the men, André, told me:

> I would help my wife with these tasks inside the house as long as none of my neighbors saw me doing them [long pause, uneasy laugh], but if anyone was there who might see me do such things--I would be forced to act differently.

The youngest male teacher in the school, Jean-Baptiste, told me that:

> Younger men are more liberated than older men. I know that women are equal to men and can do things as well as men. I want to marry a well-educated girl who can get a job...but quite frankly, I don't want to do all those women things like cook, clean, care for children. Why should I? My wife can hire someone to do those jobs if she works--that's what being equal is all about. She is free to hire someone to do the work.

Jean-Baptiste's response mirrors James, Stella's husband, (Chapter Six) and raises questions about gender justice in shared responsibilities of childcare and domestic obligations. His response also reflects the common perception that men assume authority in the marriage. Being liberated meant that Jean-Baptiste would allow his wife to hire a domestic. Furthermore, his question, "Why should I?" powerfully suggests that he is in control of the situation, he is not expected to assume any responsibility here, and clearly he will not assume any responsibility here. Ironically, his comment if she works

also suggests that the difference between being a liberated man and an unliberated one rests in the recognition that some women (well educated women with careers) <u>can</u> be productive and <u>can</u> work--at least outside of the house.

In general, men's response to overworked working wives was "hire a domestic." There appeared to be no realization that there should be a shared responsibility for domestic obligations and childcare. Nor did there appear to be any realization that hiring a domestic just shifted the problem of being an overworked working woman over to another woman. In fact, the hired domestic would probably be in a much worse situation since her limited salary--much lower than a teacher's salary, which is low enough--would not cover the additional expense of a domestic for herself to assist in her own daily domestic obligations. This situation which is commonly found in central Africa is one which intersects <u>gender</u>, <u>class</u>, and <u>age</u> since many of the domestics are young girls of primary school age. Often these young girls are family members who have been orphaned or who are "dispensable" in their own parent's home and would be provided room and board for their services.

Moore (1988) writes about a similar situation in South Africa and suggests that young girls working in homes like this are the epitome of the invisible woman. Other researchers who have studied domestic patterns in Africa, including Cock (1980), Gaitskell, Kimble, Maconachie and

Unterhalter (1983), Hansen (1986) and Jelin (1977), indicate that hiring of domestics is a way in which women further subordinate other women.

As I looked for patterns in the kind of work that men would assist women with, I found that men would not do anything that involved getting dirty. (Maybe this ties in with pollution theories--only women who are <u>already</u> <u>unclean</u> should do unclean work?) The men's resistance to assist their wives was most noticeable in regards to working in the family garden plots. I was told that working in gardens was a woman's job, and men <u>were</u> <u>not</u> permitted to do this kind of work. One of the teachers, Faustin, told me:

> If the garden plots we're talking about are those that provide food for the family, I would be quite hesitant to take an active role in assisting in the work. However, if the plots are being used for growing food to sell at the marketplace, I'd be more willing to work in them-- except hoe--that is a woman's job.[6]

Even men who were unemployed and spent hours sitting in front of their huts playing cards or other games while they listened to the radio and their wives worked in the gardens from sunrise until sunset indicated that they couldn't do that

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[6]. At the time Faustin told me this I didn't question his response. However, as I thought about this more, very few of the women who barter at the market garden themselves. They are small scale businesswomen who spend long days in the marketplace and evenings negotiating for the produce that other women may have in excess. Consequently, it would appear that Faustin's response was just a way of getting around the question!

kind of work even if they were willing to. Perhaps, the comment made by one amused university student during an interview best represents a man's perspective when it comes to working. "Why, I can't do that. That's what I'll get a wife for."

Marry her? Why, she's educated!

As the data collection period continued, it became evident that a great number of the men (students at Rusimba, at the university and married men on staff at various schools) had strong feelings about marrying women with a similar or higher level of education than themselves. My first indication of the boys' reluctance to marry well-educated women was when I administered the questionnaire to the girls and boys in the fourth-year classroom. Even though I did not ask the students about their reaction to well-educated women and marriage, the boys began talking about marrying "educated career women" as they left the room, after completing the questionnaire. Their subsequent interaction and dialogue, after leaving the room, underscore the strong emotional reaction that they had against marrying educated women:

Lamec: I guess I won't be marrying any
          of _these_ girls if they think
          that they'll be going to
          university!

Joel: [Shoves Lamec towards the
          classroom wall] You don't want
          an educated wife? _She'll_ tell
          you what to do!

[The group of 6 boys laugh]

Lamec: Never!

Henri: (He's married.) That's why you have to marry them early like I did-- before they get any ideas.

When I discussed this question about working wives on the questionnaire with the boys later, they told me things like, "educated women don't want to work in the fields;" "they think they can do what they want and they won't listen to their husbands anymore;" "they will want to go to bars;" [7] "they get strange ideas about being equal after getting an education;" "I don't want an educated wife at all...educated women cause problems." And finally, one asked me, "You're educated--do you do what your husband tells you to do? I don't think so...I don't want a wife like that!"

Again, themes about delegation and authority that Jean-Baptiste raised, surfaced in the boys' reaction to my question about working wives. However, their response raises the issue of how an educated woman is perceived as a problem. An educated women will be less likely to obey, challenge her husband's authority (and society's norms), work less in the fields, resist her subordinate status. I represented everything to these boys that they did not want in a wife. Consequently, their rejection of me near the end of my stay in

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7.   Several informants told me that married women can't go to bars, althoug singe women can.

their classroom wasn't only a message to me of how distasteful what I was doing was to them, it was also a warning to the girls in that room not to become like me.[8]

Conversations with older men revealed equally strong sentiments about marrying a well-educated woman, particularly

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[8]. Many of the men and boys that I talked with were quite anxious to convince me that my perspective on women was wrong. Aware of my missionary status and religious orientation, they would quote the Bible in support of their beliefs, assuming I would be unable to refute what they considered the ultimate source for female subordination. Unfortunately, the Bible has often been used to advocate the subordination of women. Csapo (1981), Daly (1978), Okin (1989) and Robertson and Berger (1986) have all discussed how Christianity and the Bible have been used in this way. In response, I would point out that Jesus was an advocate of women's rights. There are many incidents in the New Testament when Jesus challenged the prevailing views about women. In John 8 when the town leaders were ready to stone Mary because of her adultery, Jesus confronted her male accusers and sent them away challenging the double standard and the victimization of women. Jesus challenged social norms again in the story shared in Luke 10 when Mary joined the disciples as Jesus taught his disciples. When Martha complained that Mary wasn't helping her prepare his meal in the kitchen, Jesus told Martha that "Mary hath chosen the better part." In Mark 10 he challenged the divorce laws of the day that victimized women; in John 4 he spoke to the Samarian woman at the well and challenged racism and social class as well as the victimization of women. Time after time Jesus challenged the views that women had less worth, had been delegated to certain roles and were subordinate to men. His success is evident in the role that women played in the early Christian church. Unfortunately, social norms and mores are powerful forces and the change wrought by his teachings was short-lived.

if she were better educated than themselves, sentiments that
echoed what the boys at Rusimba had said. "They are
demanding." "They don't want to work in the fields anymore."
"They don't want as many children." "They try to tell the
husbands what to do." "They don't want to stay home anymore."
"They won't take orders." "No man would ever consider
marrying a wife more highly educated than himself; it
wouldn't work. Even a wife with the same level of education,
well, I just don't think it would work. Problems, that's all
there'd be is problems."

Even very well-educated men were reluctant to marry a
well-educated, equally educated, or better educated woman. If
anything, the more educated a man was, the stronger were his
convictions about the level of education his wife should have.
As one university educated man replied:

> When my family pays the brideprice to get
> me a wife, they expect one who will obey.
> If her education will prevent that--it's
> better to marry a less educated woman who
> will obey without thinking, than one who
> will think about obeying.

Another student told me that:

> All this talk about higher education for
> girls makes me feel very uneasy. I'm not
> at all comfortable with discussion about
> changing roles, increased education, and
> career options for women.

The reluctance to marry well-educated women and men's
anxiety evidenced as we'd discuss this question and other
issues concerning women's rights and changing roles for women,

is not unusual.[9] Steedman (1985) writes that increased education creates a promise/threat situation for women. Higher education promises certain kinds of life changes, particularly in career options, but threatens to create tensions and problems in their everyday lives, particularly in heterosexual relationships. Her work found that many men suggested that a woman's education represented negative images of power for them in the form of success and independence. Rockhill (1987) made similar assertions that education becomes a threat/desire dichotomy for women. Women wanted the possibilities that education would provide but were frightened by the problems that it created for men and familial relationships when men were unable to accommodate the changes resulting from increased education. Moore (1988) and Robertson and Berger (1986) both write that parents in developing countries fear that increased educations will cause their daughters to become too independent. Both Marie and Celeste daily confronted the promise/threat dichotomy. Certain options were open to them because of their advanced educations but each of them faced a distinct albeit different type of dilemma because of it as well.

Several men spoke out in favor of marrying a well-educated woman. One was Leonard, a university professor.

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[9]. Although, many of the citations used in this chapter come from studies done in developed countries, the similarities in findings would seem to indicate that these responses are quite universal.

Leonard had married shortly after finishing his undergraduate work and had given in to paternal expectations and married a less educated girl from his village. Although Leonard indicated that he was very content with his marriage and relationship with his wife, he expressed regret that her education was so limited.

> Even though my wife is well-educated compared to many women (she had continued through two years of secondary school), I regret that she isn't more educated. When we first got married it didn't bother me much, but I now realize how much she's suffered from her lack of education. She lacks self-confidence and there's so much that she won't try. Life is so expensive now that we both have to work but the only work she can get is menial...working in the school's gardens. I have encouraged her to go back to school and she has started taking a few classes but it's very hard.
>
> I'm now considering going back to school to get a PhD. We'd have to leave Africa to do that. That thought frightens her terribly and she begs me not to go...So, here we are, both of us trapped by her limited education. It's too bad more of the unmarried men you talk to aren't receptive of what you have to say. They have no idea how much listening to you now might help them in the future.

Despite Leonard's understanding of his wife's restricted life chances because of her limited education, his point of reference appears to remain focused on how it has impacted his future. Even his concern about my message and the reception it had received, is projected towards a male audience--how it might help men in their futures. His concern does not seem to be directed towards an audience of women and how important it

is that _they_ listen to what I was saying. Even for men who appear to have a more liberal attitude about higher education for women, there remains an underlying assumption that increased education is essential for women because of the way it impacts and influences the lives of men.

Conclusion

As young girls growing up in a traditional society, they are daily taught--at home, at school, in church--in nearly every social context that exists that their primary function is to become wives and mothers. Long before they begin school they have assumed a major portion of the domestic responsibilities that accompany these two roles. They clean homes, they cook food, they care for younger siblings, they work in gardens. This apprenticeship for marriage becomes an opportunity cost limiting their access to school and lowering their success in school. Their future roles as wives and mothers also limits the kinds of schooling that they receive and how much schooling they can get. Gender interaction patterns in school respond to these cultural expectations. Girls receive limited and different kinds of attention from teachers, have fewer learning materials, and assume a care-taking role in the classroom. As girls become older, less support is given for their education until finally (generally long before they finish primary school), they are permanently pulled out and arrangements are begun to marry them off.

Given the social context there in which girls go to school, its quite remarkable that as many of them take schooling as seriously as they do.

Findings from my study show that two closely linked factors contribute to limited educational attainment for women. The first factor is kinship patterns and brideprice. In a patrilineal-patrilocal system, a daughter's value to her family rests in her role as a marriage commodity. Parents primarily base decisions on how much to educate a daughter on the principle that she must be educated enough to maximize her brideprice without pricing her out of the market. The second factor that contributes to a girl's education centers on division of labor patterns that exist in central Africa. It is believed that women have the limited role in society of caring for children, tending the home and working the gardens. These activities are perceived as passive and private activities which require less education than the active and public kinds of responsibilities that men assume and which are perceived to have a greater need of an education.

Although this cultural expectation exists, there are girls who resist and struggle--against social isolation and even emotional and physical abuse--to achieve an education. However, this is achieved at a price. Many well-educated women sacrifice marriage and children at the expense of a career. Others who do marry become burdened down and burned-out from the dual obligations of career demands and home

responsibilities.   Negotiation   with   men   for   shared
responsibilities in domestic obligations rarely exists and
even if they do, the usual response is to hire outside help to
assist with the work load--a response that raises concerns
about social class, gender, and age.

Another important finding of this study is that parents
generally do not see schools (at least at the secondary level)
as places of acquiring academic and disciplinary knowledge for
girls. Instead, schools are waiting places, places of refuge,
scouting out places and brideprice enhancement places--all
functions that revolve around a girl's marriageability. Once
these functions are served, a girl's education is terminated
and she is be strongly encouraged to assume the role that
she's been under apprenticeship for for years.

This finding raises important questions about the
possible dysfunction between what educators--local and
Western, developmental agencies and governmental officials--
perceive the function of schools to be and what parents
perceive the function of schools to be. Governmental reform
policies focused on enhancing student outcomes based on
academics may well be counterproductive and ineffective
because of a parental lack of response to these issues.
Further study needs to be given to this issue with particular
emphasis placed on ways that women's educational options can
be improved which may not come from the educational sector.
One such possibility that I have considered is that improving

the roads would do more for women's education than anything in the classroom. Improved roads would cut down on travel time that married women would need to visit their families and could result in increased interaction and contributions between a married daughter and her natal family. This would moderate the impact of patrilocality by changing a girl's relationship to her natal family after marriage and lessening the significance of brideprice.

While conducting the literature review for this study, I noticed that a plethora of research has been conducted which attempted to assess the value of a woman's education in Third World countries. Studies existed that correlated decreased infant mortality rates and mother's level of education, family nutrition and mother's level of education, height of children and mother's level of education, improved agricultural production and women's level of education (Behrman & Wolfe, 1987; Benavot, 1989; Cleland & Rodriguez, 1988; Cochrane, 1979, 1983; Lockwood & Collier, 1988; Schultz, 1989; and Timur, 1977 among many others). Nearly every study imaginable demonstrating how educating women was beneficial existed. I found it ironic that of all these studies that have been done demonstrating the value of education, I found none that correlated anything with the value of a man's education. As researchers we need to ask ourselves if these studies--ones that focus so exclusively on the need to justify educational costs for women--respond to Third World biases or our own?

Research studies such as these reinforce that there needs to be justification given for monies spent on the education of women. Furthermore, they tend to correlate educational studies with outcomes that focus on the domestic and childcare responsibilities that women have, further reinforcing that these are the natural, most important benefits from educating women. It is incidental that studies have been done to provide data that demonstrate the inequalities that exist for girls in school in hopes of improving conditions for them; or to show the benefits that are gained from educating girls. Even when rationale are given to the local populations for studies that they take part in, it is unlikely that they think about these things in the same way that the researcher does. Unfortunately, all to often, I'm afraid that within the local community definitions and explanations are developed that respond to their own world-view--creating a tension between what is being done and what is perceived is being done.

The tension between what I thought I was doing and what my informants thought I was doing, became an important part of this study, one that I didn't fully recognize until I had left the field and returned to the West. In Chapter 8 I reflect on some of these tensions and record my personal responses about this unforeseen consequence of the study I was doing.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Point of Beginning[1]

> Most of the girls in the rural areas will
> end up like their mothers having child
> after child, hoeing in the fields from
> sunrise until sunset, dying young.
> James, Vice Principal

I have taken four journeys that have significantly influenced my life. The first journey was when I was a sophomore in college and I studied in England for one year. It was the first time I'd left North America and I became painfully aware of just how ethnocentric I was.

The second journey was when I first went to Africa in 1978. Although my stay in England heightened my cultural awareness, I was totally unprepared for the realities of living in a Third World country. Everything--the poverty, illness, primitive living conditions, and overcrowding-- overwhelmed me. Furthermore, I had suddenly become a minority

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[1]. During the month of May, 1991, my parents came to live with me so that they could take over the domestic obligations that I had as a "single mother" of four children while my husband was on a month-long business trip to Africa. My mother not only gave me emotional support but continually proofread my material. During one session, I mentioned to her that after all the data collection, analysis and writing, I felt as if I had come back to the beginning again. She thought that was very interesting and told me that a surveyor's term, The Point of Beginning, was used to verify accuracy in a survey. If the surveyor didn't arrive back at the point where the survey was first begun, it indicated that somewhere a mistake had been made. She then suggested that the term might be appropriate as the title for the last chapter.

living in a culture I didn't understand among people who expected so much from me.

The third journey was my trip to Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the fall of 1989. I had just completed my data collection for my study and had an overwhelming desire to take a vacation. I now suspect that I needed to get away from the confinement and pain that had been shared with me. However, at the time, I didn't realize this.

When I spoke with my husband, he regretfully told me that since he'd been left responsible for the university, he could not leave. I felt trapped. For the past three years my message had been that women needed to be independent and lead lives of their own. I had encouraged women not to allow men to hold them back. I had preached (to the point of vapidity for some I'm sure) that if there was something that they really wanted to do, they should go for it! Everyone at the university knew that I wanted to make the trip. They also knew that my husband was unable to go away. And I knew that they were waiting to see what I would do. So, I decided to take the four children and go without Bob.

My decision to go on my own received mixed reactions. Nearly everyone doubted I would actually follow through with my decision. The children were dubious about going without their father. And Bob was concerned that this time I might be just a bit too adventuresome and suggested I reconsider. Fortunately, I did listen to Bob and reconsidered. I decided

that it would be best if I took only the two oldest children and left the younger two with their father.

When I left, dry season was almost over. Layers of dust covered everything. The bushes, trees, even the houses and people walking alongside the road seemed to be slowly dying from a lack of rain.

I couldn't help but notice how much the terrain seemed to reflect my mood. I was frustrated that I was caught in my own web. Most importantly, for all my talk, I was angry that I was afraid to make the trip. Afraid that we might be detained by soldiers, that there might be car problems, that there might be border difficulties, that we might be robbed by bandits. Afraid to go without Bob. Afraid I couldn't do it on my own.

It was the time of slash and burn when we traveled. Fires blazed in the distance, smoke billowing up and covering the horizon. At one point in Zambia near the end of the trip, I had to drive through a tunnel of flame. Menacing fingers of fire reached out to engulf the car. Smoke filled the air making it difficult to breathe and nearly impossible to see. The heat was oppressive. I was afraid to drive too fast or too slow: afraid that I might meet a car that would force me to drive closer to the raging inferno on my side of the road. But when the fires died and the haze lifted, the plains opened up, confinement disappeared and the parched earth was ready for the life-giving rains.

When I returned the rains had come. Everything was green, vibrant, alive. It seemed like a new world. And I was a new person. The journey was my odyssey. It had been a catharsis for me, a journey of self-discovery that I could do it on my own. I'd been detained by soldiers, but I managed. I'd had car problems, but I managed. I'd had border difficulties, but I managed. And I'd been robbed by bandits, but I managed.

Each phase of the trip created new challenges. In Burundi, the car was winched onto a ferry with all our belongings. When we were unable to board later that night, several other stranded tourists joined me, Heather and Danny on a two mile hike past a hippo-infested beach to the nearest phone and a taxi. (Prior to our departure from the university, Bob had made me promise not to drive down that same section of road after dark since it was so dangerous.) For over half a mile a group of drunken men shouted obscenities at us and threatened to rob us of our "goods." Once on board, during the three-day trip down Lake Tanganyika, we were harassed by drunken male passengers and crew members until we finally resorted to locking ourselves in our bunkrooms. (I convinced the crew and officers that I was 60 years old and since age is generally greatly respected there, it served to gain me a bit of respite from their "attentions".) Sanitary conditions were deplorable; food was questionable; mosquitoes were omnipresent; the heat was

unbearable. But the scenery was incredible and we'd watch fascinated from our screened window as dugout canoes, full of goods to barter and passengers to load on (or off), would skim across the sparkling blue waters as the ferry made its way along Tanzania. At night, men carrying blazing torches would stand in the stern of the dugouts and the women on shore and in the dugouts, would sing in unison as the men paddled to the rhythm of their music. When we landed in Zambia, there was no gangway to walk on and I had to jump off the boat, twenty feet above crocodile-infested water onto a pier two feet from the boat's side. At one point of the trip near the southern part of Zaire that juts down into Zambia, I was stopped by machine-gun-totting soldiers and ordered to count out all of our money in front of them. Heather spotted large pieces of artillery placed high up on cliffs that bordered each side of the road. I looked out on the sea of faces around me. Not one was a woman's and none seemed friendly. Wherever I went, I was continually asked where my husband was and questioned why I was traveling alone. (Obviously, the children didn't count.) Memories of traveling alone in Zaire and being required by law to carry a letter of permission from Bob haunted me and I wondered if I were breaking the law there, traveling without my husband's letter allowing me to journey without him. In Malawi, where the government requires women to wear dresses which must cover the knees, mobs crowded around us as we donned swimsuits to snorkel in Lake Malawi. Only in Zimbabwe,

where there are larger numbers of whites, was our presence taken for granted. However, the animals took over where the people stopped. As I drove around Wange game reserve, hopelessly lost off the main track, a huge elephant crossed my path, flapped ears and bellowed menacingly until I backed up several feet to let it pass by. I noted with amusement that, just like all the other confrontations we'd had on our trip, it was a male who'd crossed our path!

My third journey is intricately interwoven with my fourth journey, also a journey of self-discovery. In many respects, my fourth journey has been the most difficult one that I have made. I lost baggage along the way. Many times I got lost, wondered where I was going and questioned if I knew the way. But, as all journeys come to an end, so does my fourth journey, my Seibren journey, come to a close. In this last chapter I will discuss my Seibren journey, highlighting important aspects of it. I will share what I've learned about my understanding of women and how this study has influenced my thinking. Ironically, like a surveyor, I have come back to The Point of Beginning as I consider the impact of this study on me, on my informants and on others.

Feminism--The White Woman's Movement

It has become established dogma of the women's rights movement that gender justice and an expanded role definition for women are concepts equally valid for developed and

developing countries. Calman (1987), in her paper, (which serves as the basis of definition for my use of gender justice), "Are Women's Rights 'Human Rights'?", questions if gender justice exists. She writes that the general principles of equality include economic, political, educational, and female reproductive rights. She further states that it includes the right to be free from the threat of emotional or physical abuse and freedom from unequal domestic obligation.[1]

In 1984, following a presentation at Michigan State University, Gloria Steinem was asked whether the attempt to extend the movement for women's rights to Third World countries was not a form of cultural colonialism. She responded that even within Third World countries, spontaneous movements for women's rights had emerged and that women's organizations were simply responding in support of home-grown efforts which had essentially the same goals. However, my research would suggest that this view of home-grown goals having a global application may be naive. Consequently, the time may have come to re-examine the relationship between women, the women's movement, and cultural identity in Third World countries.

I had a strong sense of identification with the women in my study and was strongly motivated to help them change their

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[1]. Although she also includes the right to a career and equal pay for equal work, in a response to the cultural resistance that I observed, for the purposes of this study, I classified these under "role expansion".

situation.   I believed that as women we had a shared oppression, and I felt that what was right for me must be right for them as well.   Furthermore, I saw myself as the voice representing the rights of those women in my study. Ironically, because of this agenda of speaking _for_ the women instead of _with_ them, I effectively muted their voices and made them the "other" in my research.[2]

It wasn't a reciprocal relationship, and many of the women and girls had a great deal of trouble identifying with what I represented.   My life of relative ease was in stark contrast to theirs.   Where I had a husband who was the major source of financial support for me, most of the women who spoke to me had the dual obligation of domestic responsibilities and serving as the primary source of financial support for their families.   This tension in relationship that I experienced existed between the local women as well: between lower class women and upper class elite women.

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[2].   Ardener (1975) was among the first to write about muted groups and identified it as a male bias in a male model of research.   Others, including Moore (1988), Reiter (1975), Rosaldo (1978) and Snyder (1979) have substantiated this, writing that women have become the "other" in research models which creates frustrated communication between researcher and research community.   Moore (1988, p. 3) writes, "Women cannot use the male-dominated structures of language to say what they want to say, to give an account of their view of the world.   Their utterances are oblique, muffled, muted."

The tension between women is particularly significant when one considers the feminist movement currently developing in central Africa. Women activists calling for reform are either white, expatriate women, or elite, well-educated women who can identify with the cultural context and feminist agenda of the Western nations which, to a large extent, have developed an "isomorphic" perspective on the needs of women. Delmar (1986), Mies (1986) and Moore (1988) write about the dangers of "isomorphic" concepts in which feminists (and developmental agencies responding to the feminists' agenda) naively assume that women globally have a shared oppression and similar needs. The struggle that Third World women face is not recognized in the white, middle-class agenda which narrowly confines itself to gender discrimination, so the movement is rejected as is the term feminism in many Third World countries (Johnson-Edim, 1991).[3] Mohanty (1991) writes that "Western feminist discourse and political practice is neither singular nor homogeneous in its goals, interests, or analyses (but) it is possible to trace a coherence of effects resulting from the implicit assumption of 'the West' as the primary referent in theory and praxis" (p. 52).

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[3]. Hood (1984), Hooks (1981), Joseph (1981), Joseph and Lewis (1981), Moraga and Anzaldúa (1981), Okeyo (1981) and Savane (1982) have discussed these isomorphic tendencies and have variously labeled them as a bourgeois, singularly antisexist, white, middle class struggle of the developed world.

To a large degree, the reform and feminist movement in central Africa is "isomorphic" in its orientation. The model operates from the top down, creating a disparate relationship between this political agenda and traditional values and lifestyles. Class issues are a key concern since the assumption is made that reform relevant for the elite will ultimately have a positive impact for middle and lower class women, an effect that I refer to as "trickle-down gender equity."

Unfortunately, this is not the case. Lower- and middle-class women, particularly those in the rural regions, consider many of these reforms a Western imposition and they question the validity of these changes in their own lives. You will recall James and Stella, both teachers at Rusimba. During one conversation with them, Stella shared with me some of her thoughts on the local feminist movement.

> I like the idea that they're trying to improve the life of the rural women particularly in the area of domestic abuse. But it's unfortunate that the women who need this the most are the ones who have trouble identifying with it because they don't understand what it's all about.
>
> The whole concept is so foreign to them. I think the government is trying very hard to make changes—and to a certain extent they have been very successful. But these kinds of changes take so long. I hope that as more women become involved in the movement, a role model that rural women can identify with will emerge. Well-educated women who have a career, are just as "different" to rural women as you are.

James adds:

> I think a very serious stratification is
> developing here. Rural families who
> follow the traditional lifestyle are very
> resistant to change. For instance, they
> may comply to a certain extent with
> reforms that say they must educate their
> daughters. But in the end it won't
> happen. They'll find ways to avoid it.
> And most of the girls in the rural areas
> will end up just like their mothers
> having baby after baby, hoeing in the
> fields from sunrise until sunset, and
> dying young.

Nearly all of the women I talked with had concerns about the feminist movement and how changes associated with it would influence their lives. One phrase that repeatedly was mentioned was that it was a "white woman's" movement and unrealistic in their culture. Of all the women that I spoke with, none were more vocal than the girls at Rusimba. They argued that the current economic situation offered little hope of employment and indicated their frustration that current reforms designed after "a model for white women" failed to meet their needs or cultural expectations. None was more adamant than Josie.

Josie was a student in the fourth year at Rusimba who demanded attention, commanded respect. This was due in part because she was strikingly tall, slender, sinuous. She was also unusual in several respects. In a world where girls are passive students, Josie was assertive, noticeably competitive, and an outstanding student. She was also a leader in the classroom and appeared to direct much of the resistance

against French that I observed. Interestingly, she seemed aloof and condescending towards me unlike, the other girls in the classroom. From the moment I entered the classroom, Josie intrigued me because she was so atypical. Even from the beginning I knew that she would have an interesting story to tell. I tried to get to know her better. With few exceptions Josie resisted my overtures, ignored me, walked away. In some respects, Josie managed to control parts of my research (just like she controlled some things in the classroom) through the way she manipulated my access to her, filtering a bit of information to me now and then through Daniel.

One afternoon during a particularly lively discussion with many of the other students in the room about the possibility of a woman president in their country, I observed that Josie was sitting in her corner carefully listening to the interaction taking place. After everyone had left and I was gathering up my things to go, Josie decided it was time to "talk." I could see the fire in her eyes, the anger in her walk, the defiance in her stand, and prepared myself for what she might say.

> You tell us to get an education and enter a career. But they're just words. What do you know? You're a white woman and it was easy for you. Do you know how hard it is just to get <u>here</u>? You don't understand our struggles. These are just words to you but to us they are a fight against family and traditions. <u>You just sit here and write this all down</u> [my emphasis]. And what you say, they're just a white woman's words.

Josie finished and stood silent before me for several seconds then walked out the door. Her words stung me. Agonizingly I went over the words that she had flung at me word by word, phrase by phrase. Her message was clear, for me, for anyone. And, as it turned out, her message pointed out three things that I had failed to recognize before.

One thing was Josie's resentment over the white woman's agenda in the feminist movement which I represented. Because of this, she resisted just like so many of the other women resisted. They resisted because they had very little choice. If they had dreams of pursuing their educations and entering a career, a contradiction existed, a push-pull (Smitherman, 1981) sort of dilemma. They didn't want the roles of their mothers--over-worked, bearing child after child, prematurely aging or the endless stream of work that women like Marie with careers and domestic responsibilities faced. But neither did they see any avenue in which to avoid this role since the feminist activists that they saw were the white expatriate women and elite women who modeled lives of relative ease, full of material possessions, high status, and exposure to Western ideas and lifestyles. Consequently, they daily faced the paradox of accepting the traditional role which would limit their futures but achieve social acceptance and a certain, limited form of security in the form of marriage and kinship obligations. Or they could pursue an education and career and

risk the opportunity to marry, have children and obtain social acceptance.

Resistance to change in traditional roles is not uncommon. Forray and Hegedüs (1989) found similar resistance in Romani females in an attempt to preserve ethnicity. Kusha (1987) writes that during the White Revolution Regime, Iranian women were caught in the dilemma of fighting for women's rights that at times were in total opposition to their fight for cultural identity, causing them to forego change in the one in order to preserve the other. Williams (1986) explains that in Central America traditional viewpoints concerning woman's status and roles are defended by women as well as men and resistance to change in these areas is very strong. VerEecke (1989, 3) writes that Fulbe women in Nigeria "struggle to retain their distinctiveness" and resist changes that other West African women have adopted. Trask (1984) poignantly shares her struggle as a Hawaiian feminist:

> For a woman like myself, educated but indigenous, there is really no question of _choosing_ to fight. In the language of Third World analysis, I am a colonized woman of color. If I wish to survive while preserving something of my integrity and that of my people, I have no choice but to fight, and I have no other vehicle than the cultural solidarity of my people (p. 15).

Just as Trask fought back, so did Josie when it appeared that the feminist movement challenged her belief system and required a substantial shift in cultural identity (Strathern, 1987 and Rosaldo, 1980).

Throughout my study, this resistance to change in woman's role because of cultural identity was a great paradox for me. Historical accounts of the colonial period have documented the ways in which colonial administrators and mission groups introduced Western gender-stereotypes and dramatically worsened women's status in Africa. These changes were far-reaching and affected all facets of life (Phillips, 1989). They affected the division of labor and production (Boserup, 1970; Bossen, 1975; Sacks, 1975; and Seymour, 1975). They introduced cash crops for men and new domestic obligations for women (Pellow, 1986; Quinn, 1977; Sanday, 1981). They developed laws to deny women land rights and inheritance (Obbo, 1980 and Tadesse, 1984). They limited women's educational opportunity and technological knowledge (Bryceson & Mbilinyi, 1979; Dennis, 1984; and Feldman, 1981). And they eliminated women's access to power (Moore, 1988; Mullings, 1976 and Robertson, 1976). Bay and Hafkin (1976) write that "...the process of deterioration of status that beset women under colonialism has continued...into post-colonial Africa" (p. 17).

It wasn't until I had left the site and returned to the West that I realized that my hidden agenda served to reinforce the resistance to the feminist agenda. Resistance because of the agenda's racial implications. Resistance because of the agenda's Western origins and assumptions. Resistance because

of the agenda's class implications. Resistance because of the hopelessness of it all.

I should have been more observant of the signs along the way, warning me how incongruous my agenda was in this cultural context. One sign came after I had finished a final evaluation of one of our pedagogy students, Jerome, a student I had known since our first stay in Africa many years before. I had offered him a ride home in the car. After we arrived at his home, we sat in the car for quite some time as he regaled me with snatches of his childhood and shared with me his hopes for the future.

> I am the first person in my family to graduate from secondary school and attend college--it has been very hard and all my family have sacrificed so much. It is very hard but they know that if I can get my degree I will be able to help educate the others in my family.
>
> My family comes from a very isolated region. I'll never forget the first time I left my father's home. My father, younger brother, and I walked for several days to get to the secondary boarding school that I would be attending. All three of us were barefoot--I was 15 years old and had never worn a pair of shoes. When we got to the school we saw these gray-colored, hard, straight paths.
>
> My father was afraid and told me that I mustn't walk on them--they must be some kind of fetish that someone had put out-- maybe the white teachers at the school. So we walked in single file on the grass alongside the hard paths. [He stops talking, looks down at his shoes and chuckles]. Concrete sidewalks, that's what they were. I had so much to learn. My father is still concerned about my

> walking on them so I tell him that I
> still walk on the grass alongside them.

The sun had long since gone as we sat there, and we both knew that one of our last visits was quickly drawing to a close. I started to turn the car back on when Jerome quietly asked, "Madame, can I speak with you? You have asked me about my future, now may I talk to you about yours?"

> I know that you think that your talk
> about changing roles for women is right,
> but I can't help thinking it won't work
> here. I think of my mother and consider
> your ideas. Our lives are so structured
> here--there are certain things that women
> can do and cannot do and that men can and
> cannot do. If we begin to change this,
> well, I'm afraid our society will fall
> apart...[Jerome pauses and hesitantly,
> almost apologetically continues]...like
> yours has.

> I want to marry an educated girl. I
> don't mind her working at least before
> our children arrive. But once we have a
> child, I would want her to stay home with
> them. Maybe you misunderstand the value
> that children play in our society. They
> are our future, who we are. Just as I am
> my family's future, so will my children
> become my future taking care of me as I
> become old and cannot care for myself.

I ask Jerome if it isn't possible for men and women to share in the responsibility of nurturing children. In fact, wouldn't he see this as a better arrangement, giving both men and women an opportunity to impact the future?

> No, I don't think so. Women were made to
> have and care for children. Not men.
> These roles mustn't be changed. If I
> were to tell my mother to do something
> else, she would be unhappy and would
> wonder why I don't want her to care for
> me. No, our way is best as it is.

> I guess for you these changes are OK but
> within our society this is not only best,
> it's the only thing that will work
> because we all have faith in the
> traditional belief systems. If we begin
> to question some of the system, we will
> begin to question it all and then who
> will we be?

I ask Jerome if this belief system is about male power and authority and control. He considers my question for a moment and then replies.

> Yes, but it's much more involved than
> that and hard to explain to someone from
> outside the culture. Even if I can
> explain it to you, you would never
> understand.

Jerome's message was no less impassioned than Josie's. But Jerome openly addressed the fear. Fear of losing one's cultural ways and worldview, everything that one knows, feels and is. But, also, it was about men's fear of losing power.

Another sign I should have noticed was a "mama" I met on one of the visits that I made to an isolated school miles from the main road. A question that she asked me should have made me aware of how absurd my agenda, as role model, was in their eyes. But I was so determined to accomplish what I thought needed to be done, I failed to see her message.

For over half an hour I'd been competing with the long-horned cows for ground as I tried to navigate the car through mudholes and around giant lava rock outcroppings. Daniel and I were visiting local primary schools in the area and we had one left to visit. The sky was an ominous gray, and I knew that the afternoon torrents were on their way and would soon

make a nearly impassable road all the more impossible. We arrived at the school, and I parked where I could see the children but they'd be unable to see me. I'd been through this before. If I parked where they could see me, they'd run away from the school in order to surround my car in an attempt to touch me, talk "at" me. If they disobeyed their teachers and refused to return to school, the teacher would come with a switch and slap at their bare legs. Chaos would break out as the students would scream and run away, avoiding the stinging switch. It's a role I'm uncomfortable with and try to avoid, so I'd hide while Daniel would go into the school to count the students in attendance and interview the director.[4]

> The school has been built in two blocks
> made of sun-dried brick. There are no
> windows on any of the walls that I can
> see, just one or two small ventilation
> openings near the top of the walls. Only
> one of the buildings has a roof; the
> other has joists but no covering. I look
> out the window and watch the black,
> threatening clouds roll in and I wonder
> what the classrooms in the building
> without the roofs will do.
>
> As I write, a lady with a baby tied to
> her back and who has been working in the
> field nearby walks up to the car and
> peers inside. Her top is badly torn,
> exposing large parts of her upper torso
> to the chill. She chews on a piece of
> grass and I notice that her nails are

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4. This behavior objectified me--I became the object of their study and I didn't like how it felt to be an object or oddity. My own feelings of uneasiness with this kind of behavior, should have cued me in to the complexity, the incongruity and incompatibility, of what I was doing there.

broken and chipped, and dirt from working in her garden is caked around her fingernails. The cloth wrapped around her waist is frayed and dirty. Her feet are bare and covered with mud.

Every now and then the baby on her back begins to whimper, and the mother begins to gently rock back and forth while she reaches her hand around to pat the baby on its bottom. Flies are everywhere. They land on the baby's face, on her face, on the car. She seems oblivious to them.

Her gaze hasn't faltered, and I turn to look at her more closely. She looks away, and brings her hand up over her face and begins to laugh nervously. She wasn't expecting to be noticed.

Daniel comes back to the car and climbs inside. She says something to him in the local language, and he answers back.

"She wants to know who you are and why a white woman would come out so far from the road. I told her you are a teacher, and that you are trying to find out about this school." I ask him to ask her if she went to school. He does. She laughs in reply.

She looks pregnant--it's hard to tell. I have Daniel ask how many children she has. She thinks for a moment and then says, "Just as many as I can plant a garden for." This time it's our turn to laugh because we know that however many children she has that would be her reply. I ask Daniel to ask if she's happy with all the work she has to do. She smiles broadly, and I notice that several of her teeth are gone. "I have a house, for the moment my children aren't sick, a husband who leaves me alone, gardens to work in. What more could I want?" [I recall the local saying: "May you sleep where you feel the bedbugs bite". In other words, be happy that you're alive and alert to life in all its facets, good or bad.]

> I start the car, and she says something
> to Daniel again. I ask him what she
> said, and he tells me, "She just <u>can't</u>
> understand why you came out here so far
> away from the main road just to see this
> school. She wonders what's so important
> about <u>this</u> one."

I'd often thought that rural women were street level philosophers. This one, with one small question, had forever removed any doubt. Here we were, two women, from two cultures, mirror images in so many respects, yet one was hard at work struggling to eke out an existence for her family while the other was driving around the countryside alongside the cattle to count noses, seeing herself as the role model to the women in that area, the person who could help them address the problem of women's subordinate role in life.

Even though the storm thundered in and poured out its vengeance all about us, my fears that we might become mired in muck miles from the paved road were forgotten as I pondered her question. I chuckled all the way back to the road (and still do today when I recall this incident). I often wonder if that mama I met on the road still wonders what's special about <u>that</u> school. Maybe she's even shared with her community what she observed and "learned" that day.

Yet, as amusing as it may appear, the irony and tragedy of this short interaction between two women from two different worlds can't be dismissed, especially by me. Just what <u>was</u> I doing there?

Just another strange, white woman

If I stepped outside the front door of my house, the panorama that surrounded me was breathtaking. We found that travelers to the area were fascinated by the region in which we lived because of its beauty and juxtaposition of modern with traditional. They would be particularly interested in our proximity to the gorillas and Karisoke, the research site that Dian Fossey had founded high up on a saddle between two of the larger volcanos, Karisimbi and Visoke, near our compound.

Although I have always been impressed with the work that Dian did, I found it difficult to understand her. I wasn't alone in this. Dian grew more and more withdrawn and bitter in the last years of her life, antagonistic to those whose cooperation she most needed in her work. Except for a small circle of friends, Dian's work was increasingly devalued and even rejected by some (personal communique, Alan Goodall, April, 1989). She was intensely disliked by many of the people who lived in that area. Nearly all of the local people believed that she was a "strange, white woman" who felt more at ease with animals than with her own kind. At the very least, I believe that Dian had tunnel vision and failed to see the larger picture before her. I often wondered how a person could become so short-sighted and eclipse the work that needed to be done by behavior like she often exhibited.

As I reflected on that mama's question more, I was literally shocked to realize that from the local perspective, I was probably just another strange, white woman who had come on the scene.[5] As I considered my personal experience, I began to better understand why Dian acted as she did. After all, I had gone "crazy" in the market one afternoon.

When we returned to Africa in 1987, I was determined to effect change in the church policy that married women employed by the church in Third World countries were on a different pay schedule than men working alongside them doing very similar work. I felt it was a policy that reinforced a cultural bias about a woman's contribution and I argued that whatever a woman's marital status, there should be equal pay for equal work. I also wanted to effect change that would give a) woman employees job security, b) unemployed[6] wives service credit and retirement benefits for years served as missionaries

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[5]. I do not mean to be presumptuous here and imply that I accomplished anything so impressive as what Dian Fossey had accomplished. My point is that from the local perspective, my agenda and behavior was no more understandable than the other Dian's was.

[6]. "Unemployed" was a misnomer in many respects. Not only did it ignore the incredible demands of running a household under less than ideal circumstances but it also didn't acknowledge that it was the wives who held no salaried positions at mission compounds who assumed the bulk of the work entertaining official visitors, a job that could become quite exhausting and physically demanding.

overseas and c) all women representation at all levels of the administrative hierarchy.[7]

Initially, I talked a great deal about my concerns to anyone who would listen but particularly to two groups: my women colleagues and church administrators who were in a position to effect change. When it was obvious that this wasn't enough, I began to write letters. I then spearheaded a group of three other women who assisted me in sending out a questionnaire (in both French and English) to over three hundred women working in our division (a church administrative area) concerning these policies that discriminated against women. I also organized a petition requesting that these policies be re-evaluated. When it became apparent that change was not forthcoming, I resigned.[8] My lack of success in

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[7]. Of all the things that I struggled to accomplish I was only able to effect change in one area. The university agreed that a woman needed to be on the administrative council and placed the campus M.D. on the committee. Much later I learned that the church's development agency, Adventist Developmental Relief Agency (ADRA), was forced to place several women on their administrative committee at the division level in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, if they wanted to continue receiving development funds from the U.S. and other Western countries.

[8]. Although Bob gave me a great deal of emotional support in my efforts to change these policies he felt that his role as an administrator limited how personally involved he could be in my various campaigns. When I finally chose to resign from my post as an assistant professor at the university and indicated that I would be forced to find employment elsewhere within six months if the situation could not be resolved, it was a great shock to the church

negotiating any change was well known and it was particularly difficult for me when I'd discuss educational equity for women with my students and they'd retort, "But Madame, why should we invest in a girl's education? Why, look at <u>you</u>, a white woman, with all your education even you can't get a salary equal to a man!" I had tried all the system's ways of addressing problems to no avail. The system didn't work for me because <u>I</u> wasn't part of the system. I was a woman and women had no official voice, no official channel of operation. All that was left for me was to utilize ways and means that would be difficult to understand, ones that would appear even irrational and crazy. This was the only way as a woman I could draw attention to my cause. My frustration over my personal struggle for equity in the workplace, the data I was collecting, everything about the subordination of women, came to a head one afternoon at the marketplace.

I consider moneychangers to be a particularly untrustworthy class of people. I made it a habit to avoid them and generally encouraged visitors to the area to beware of the moneychangers' sleight of hand when exchanging monies. It was difficult to ignore them totally, however. They hung

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administrators that my husband agreed to leave in support of my resignation. This was particularly troubling for them since it was assumed that Bob would take over as rector of the university at about the same time my six-month period would elapse.

around the marketplace in droves and you had to pass through them whenever you went to buy fruit and vegetables.

One morning before I headed off to Rusimba, Bob asked me to do him a little favor. He needed to get some money exchanged for a student's bill and wanted me to stop by "since [I] was going right past the market anyway" and could exchange the money. I told him that I wasn't used to changing money and preferred not to do this. He ignored my pleas and with parting words of "...make sure you get 120 to 1", waved me out the door.

At the market later that afternoon, I reluctantly began to negotiate for a "120 to 1" trade. Most of the moneychangers lost interest when I refused to lower my rate and only two men continued to discuss the transaction with me. Finally, worn down by my insistence that "I knew the rate", they agreed and handed me the local currency to count. After I handed them the bills, 20 new twenty-dollar bills, they told me that I couldn't get that rate for twenties, only for hundreds. I'd kept my eye on the money in their hands all the time and agreed to trade back the money. However, when I counted, 80 dollars was missing. When I asked them about this, they told me that I was trying to cheat them and stalked off in anger to a nearby store. Just as they did this, rain came pouring down and the marketplace cleared as people ran for cover. I considered my options. I vividly recall thinking that I wasn't going to let these two men take my

money. I was fed up with the male system. But more than anything, I wanted to show them, Daniel, and any men who'd hear of my being shortchanged that women could take care of themselves; they didn't have to be victims.

Quickly, I swung the car around, pulled up to the store where they were standing, ran out of the car and grabbed one of the men by the lapels of his jacket. I began shaking him demanding in French that he give me back my money. Everyone standing there stopped talking and watched, eyes wide with wonder, as I shook the taller man and grabbed his cohort's coattail as he scooted off to escape my vengeance. I screamed at them to "get in my car--we're going to the police." Meekly they obeyed and climbed in.[9] I climbed in the car behind them and headed down the road towards the police station. I had a dilemma. I couldn't go to the police. Even though there was a tacit arrangement that this moneychanging could take place, technically it was illegal. I had to decide what to do. I wanted my money back. I was determined to get my money back. So, I decided to drive back to the university and get it back up there somehow.

When I passed the police station, my passengers in the backseat, still subdued from being accosted, asked me where I was going. When I told them, Daniel (who was also wide-eyed in amazement) later told me that they began whispering

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[9].   Our car had no back seat doors, so, once in
        they were captive!

together in the local language, "We can't go <u>there</u>, it's all white people up there. What will they do to us?" The taller man began shouting at me and when that didn't work, began hitting me on my arm, on the back of my head, on my back. Driving the car with one hand, I swung my other arm back at him, hitting him in his face and on his chest. At one point when he grabbed my fist and began to wrench my arm back I shouted at him in English, "Let go of me <u>NOW</u>! Touch me again and you'll be sorry." He complied but we continued to swing at each other as Daniel and the other man sat bolt upright in their seats, amazement mixed with terror.

When I was nearly halfway back to the university, the money was flung at me. "Here, here's $80, now let us go." My reply surprised even me. "No, not until you admit that <u>you</u> stole the money." Finally, the men admitted to their crime. I stopped and they angrily climbed out, shouting that I needed to pay for their taxi ride to get back to town.

I drove a short distance away, stopped the car and rested my head across my arms on the steering wheel. Daniel, who hadn't said much until now, turned towards me, shook his head in amazement, and commented, as respectfully as he could under the circumstances, "Madame, you were crazy to do that. They could have had knives." He paused, kept shaking his head for a moment, and then slowly, whispered, "No one is going to believe <u>this</u> one!"

I was warned by friends not to visit the market for several weeks because these men might try to damage the car. Three weeks later, when I fearfully stopped at the market to buy food, it was my turn to be amazed. As I stepped out of the car, everyone stopped bartering and just looked at me. Suddenly, a mama near me starting dancing and shouting, intermittently clapping and pointing to the two men I had accosted, "Voleurs, voleurs" (thieves, thieves) she shouted as others joined in the chant. For months after that incident, people at the university, at Rusimba and throughout the market would point at me, laugh and talk about what had happened. At the time, I was actually quite pleased to think that maybe I had struck a blow to the belief system that relegated women to such low status, showing everyone, and women in particular, that you don't have to be victimized. However, now I'm not so sure and I wonder how much harder I made it for someone like Josie to find anything in what I said or did to identify with, to relate to.

Conflicting agendas: Feminism and anthropology

As the months passed and I continued to ponder Josie's statement, I noticed another message--one small line--embedded in her statement. One line that represented all her anger and frustration that I could sit there and objectively write down all that I observed in the classroom; that I could reduce to

mere words all her struggles and fight for an education. "You just sit here and write this all down."

In recent years, a great deal of literature has addressed the question of objectivity in scientific research, particularly ethnography and anthropology (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Gonzalez, 1984; Lather, 1991; Moore, 1988; and Tiffany, 1985, among others). Clifford (1986) writes that the ethnographer, although central to the research process, is expected to firmly implement "...the impersonal standards of observation and 'objective' distance" (p. 13). To do otherwise is taken as a sign of weakness (at least in style), bringing into question the researcher's credibility.

Moore (1988) writes that the major thrust of anthropology is to record the differences among cultures. In order to do this, the researcher is expected to create a certain emotional distance from the field. This is necessary because of the cultural bias imported by the Western anthropologists.[10]

Gonzalez (1984) shares how objective fieldwork methods create an ethical dilemma for her.

> I have always been uncomfortable doing my fieldwork with the idea that one's informants, who become one's acquaintances and friends, are the objects of study. Anthropology, as a science, reduces the human actors to the data of ceremonies, kinship structures, exchange modes, and so on. Friends and fictive family are transformed into

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[10]. It should be noted that the assumption that all anthropologists are Westerners is in itself a bias.

> ethnographic data...As feminists and as
> anthropologists, we must question and re-
> think a methodology framed in scientific
> terms that objectifies humans and reduces
> fieldwork to a judgement of who has the
> most courage or stamina to go to the most
> dangerous or distant place (p. 15).

Since Malinowski, a delicate mix of objectivity and subjectivity has been introduced, and researchers like Mead, Firth, and Leiris introduced their own voice and reactions to stories that were shared and things that they observed. More recently, however, feminist anthropologists have questioned basic assumptions about fieldwork, methodology and recording. Concerns about male bias in anthropology have created a new perspective in the discipline. Collier and Rosaldo (1981), MacCormack (1980), MacCormack and Strathern (1980), Ortner and Whitehead (1981), and Leacock (1981) all write that a redefined perspective of participant/observer interaction is needed as well as a more intimate researcher's voice in writing and reporting about the field experience.

Lather (1990, 1991) writes that fieldwork should offer a more collaborative approach between observer and participant creating participant ownership in the research study through dialectical, interactive research approaches, and reciprocal reflexivity and critique; by bringing back the "I" in using a stronger, more reflective, and personal researcher voice when reporting research findings; and rediscovering subjectivity and creating research forms that are "less alienated to lived experience." (p. 158) Tiffany (1985) has a similar

perspective and writes that the purpose of "...feminist anthropology is to reformulate the 'Science of Man' by asking different questions and by constructing new frameworks that contribute to an integrated understanding of human experiences" (p. 20). Marcus and Fischer (1986) write that researchers need to develop experimental writing, conceptual risk-taking and a more interactive observer/participant stance when writing realistically about culture. Consequently, for Lather and others like her, feminist inquiry involves a reflexive stance. It demands self-evaluation and a changed perspective in researcher/informant relations. It involves a redefinition of the process of fieldwork, construction, and interpretation. And finally, it necessitates a new understanding of intracultural variations.

Unfortunately, in my own work, I failed to convey this. Josie saw me as the unattached, unemotional researcher sitting in the back of the room writing about her life without collaborating with her about it. From her perspective, I was personally removed from the struggle and pain that she daily faced. She saw me as someone who could easily maintain objectivity as I observed and recorded all that was going on around me. From her perspective I recorded her life but wasn't a part of her life.

But this could not have been farther from the truth. To a certain extent, I was "objectified" by the research I was doing, anesthetized to the pain around me, something I allowed

to happen to ease the emotional trauma. But only to a degree. In fact, it was a constant battle for me to resist the urge to take action and respond to what was taking place around me. I had to lose my self and become an actor playing the role of "non-judgmental researcher" in order to continue with my work.

This dimension became necessary because of my concern that if I were to respond and take action, I might lose access to my fieldsite at the secondary level. During informal conversations with the teachers, particularly the three women teachers, I was able to share my own views and reactions to things that intersected my life as a woman and things that I observed at Rusimba. However, once in the classroom when I was observing I felt constrained to mask how I felt and to mute my own voice.[11] Ironically, despite my grandiose agenda of "role model personified" I, too, was being subordinated by the male patriarchy around me.

The more I reflected on this new dimension of my study, I came to realize that inadvertently, in my role as the muted researcher, I had validated for Josie and the others in that classroom the subordination that I observed and was told about. The mere act of silently recording it without response placed a certain value upon it. Unknowingly I had reinforced that this behavior of subordination was not only right but

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[11]. It was only as my committee members urged me to reevaluate the voice that I used to write this work, that I became aware of how much I had responded to the patriarchal system as I collected my data.

necessary as well. I also better understood how myths like the ones that I daily observed in this classroom were "retold" and given credence and eventually became reality just because people watched them, people like Marie, Celeste, Josie, Jacques, and me.

They're just words

The third idea embedded in Josie's statement was her frustration that all I could offer her were empty promises. Shortly after my first visit to Rusimba, it was evident that Josie wanted to get an education, pursue a career. On one occasion she spoke to Daniel and shared with him her hopes to go to university and become a mathematician or possibly a doctor. She also indicated that already there was family pressure to leave school and get married. Financial support was diminishing, and she feared that it would end before she had finished her secondary studies. But she was hopeful that she would be able to convince her family to let her stay in school and continue on to university. Just before we left the classroom in June, Josie's already intensive study habits and interactional patterns became even more intense. When Daniel commented on this to her, she replied, "I must work hard--I always have to be the best. Girls don't get second chances."

When I entered the classroom to begin my observations, Josie was already caught up in her fight to get an education. She had already begun the struggle as a feminist to gain

rights that weren't easily granted. My words--words about women being equal to men, words about women becoming leaders, words about women taking charge of their own lives, words that women didn't have to be victims--were always promises just out of reach, just out of her grasp. And to someone like Josie, a veteran in the struggle and a true role model to her peers, my words lacked truth and any real substance. However, I now realize that to a certain extent, Josie <u>had</u> to reject all these words that I shared with her, with anyone who would listen, because I was a dangerous woman. I was a dangerous woman because I asked questions that challenged all that they believed in and my ideas represented an imperialistic import of the most challenging kind. Josie's struggle focused on her right to continue with her education and enter a career. But my words focused on her right to challenge the patriarchy in the system and the ideas of my words confronted her fear, as it did Jerome's fear and Marie's fear and everyone else's fear who really listened to what I had to say.

The last bend in the road, almost home

I began this study in an attempt to find myself and recognize who I was as woman. In many respects I have come around full circle to where I was when I began. Although I have learned a great deal about Africa, colonialism and feminism, I still have many unanswered questions. However, I

have emerged from this study stronger, more confident, committed.

As I've shared my work, I have discovered that men react strongly to the results of my study. Initially, when I began my data collection, I found that many men were amused by my research. This was particularly true of African men who found it astonishing that I would make the effort to do this study. Interestingly, nearly all African men that I have spoken with have told me that "in my country, women are treated equally, and you won't find any subordination." One man whom I spoke with while in the field indicated that "it [was] a pity that I had done this particular study. If [I] had wanted to do one of value, [I] should have done a similar one on men." Now that I'm finished, I find it interesting that the amusement has turned to denial. I have had long and intensive conversations with some of them as they try to convince me that women are meant to be wives and mothers and that to do otherwise is selfish, undermines society, harms children, and endangers their future.

The most interesting male interaction resulting from this study, has been my own interaction with Bob. He has been very supportive and contributed a great many hours in proofreading and editing and suggesting avenues to pursue. We have spent hours talking about my study, the implications that it has, and what needs to be done. However, at times we have disagreed about what the role of a woman should be and what

the expectations should be for women. But despite these momentary lapses in our now enlightened (!) perspective on a husband's and wife's rights and obligations in a marriage, Bob understands me better and has taken an active interest in women's development issues in his own work. He is also determined that our teen-age daughter, Heather, a member of the next wave of feminists, not face the same frustrations that I did. I can only hope that as time passes, things will improve for women and that Heather's world is better than mine.

Epilogue

I have now come to realize that my journey has not truly come to a close but that I have only begun. I repeatedly ask myself, "What does all this mean? What have I learned? What does my work offer educators, policy makers, development agencies, feminists, Jerome, Josie, the mama along the road?"

School is more than pupils on benches and teachers at blackboards. I found that learning about schooling has little to do with counting noses. I believe that one outcome of this study conclusively demonstrates that an emphasis on initial enrollment rates will do little to enhance the education which girls receive. My findings show that a) these rates as published are not particularly reliable and b) it's what happens after the students arrive at school that makes the difference. One can make the obvious argument that unless

girls arrive at school in the first place, little can be done to ultimately improve the circumstances in which they live. I believe that this is approaching the problem backwards. Unless the education which girls receive _in_ the classroom provides equal access to learning, there is little point in worrying about how to provide equal access to that classroom. Indeed, education as currently constituted may well be contributing to an erosion of equity.

By placing limits on the range of experiences available to girls, schools also place limits on the range of experiences available to boys. Girls are disproportionally victimized, but all of society suffers.

Most current attempts to change the status quo reflect an unfortunate poverty of thought. By putting the focus on numbers, we have given ourselves a false frame of reference. Not false because the numbers are false, although they often are, but false because we have diverted attention from the more consequential issue--that of how to bring about meaningful, qualitative, culturally relevant, sustainable change.

The social fabric outside of school has a significant impact on what takes place inside school. In central Africa, poverty, diseases, and illiteracy are only a few of the factors that educators must deal with. Possibly of more importance, when considering the education of girls there, are cultural norms such as patrilocality and patrilineal kinship

structures and the exchange of rights that takes place with brideprice. But central Africa is not entirely different from Western society in the makeup of its social and cultural fabric. AIDS, teen-age pregnancy, and abuse in the home are fast becoming universal common denominators in the world or schooling.

Policymakers, development agencies and educators must ensure that policies being implemented or research being conducted are clearly understood by the communities they will affect. My study demonstrated that parents did not see schools in the same way that policy makers or development agencies saw schools. Consequently, parental support was lacking for policies that did not fulfill the parents' purposes for sending daughters to school. Priority needs to be given to find out how rural populations in particular react to educational policy. Ways also need to be found to "package" new ideas so that they appeal to traditional values and lifestyles. My study also raises questions about the type of research project that will provide the kind of information needed to address parental resistance in educating daughters.

I was disturbed by the finding that most of the women I spoke with and virtually all the girls in the school at Rusimba, see the movement toward greater participation of girls in schooling and in society as largely external and foreign to the frames of reference which define their lives. As my own thinking evolved, I felt myself torn in the conflict

between feminist thinking and ethnographic idealism. It was increasingly difficult for me to find and occupy some sort of defensible middle ground position. I found to my discomfort that those with whom my ideas coincided the most were often themselves the most out of step with their own society.

As feminists,[13] it is important to reassess what our agenda is. Is there a global perspective to the issues that Western feminists pursue or are they also culturally bound and incompatible with the needs of Third World women? This means that we must confront the inherent racial and class issues as well.

I believe that my work, my journey, provides a link between the career woman, who can more easily identify with aspects of the feminist agenda, and the traditional wife and mother who has often felt alienated from what the movement represents. Ultimately, this means that as feminists we

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[13]. I am reluctant to use this term so generically since there is such a wide range of objectives and points of reference that the various feminists--social, liberal, radical, marxist, psychoanalytic, existentialist, postmodern-- use to identify themselves. I quote Rosemarie Tong's (1989) response to the dilemma of finding some umbrella that encompasses all the various "species in the same genus" (p. 1) and use this as my definition of a feminist. She writes that the groups are joined together "...both to lament the ways in which women have been oppressed, repressed, and suppressed and to celebrate the ways in which so many women have 'beaten the system,' taken charge of their own destinies, and encouraged each other to live, love, laugh, and be happy as women" p. 1-2).

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cannot forget the children. I was repeatedly challenged that my perspective was a selfish one, one that if implemented, would destroy society because of the dysfunctionality it would create in the family, with particularly egregious consequences for young children.

In this respect, Jerome and Josie have a valid argument. They question our ability as Westerners to understand the core values, the key concepts that perpetuate their society. Their perception of the family as a key element in the perpetuation of a healthy society challenges our present situation.

For this reason, to Jerome and Josie I first reply that we can learn from each other how to make this a better world for women, for children, for men. I share with Josie the belief that with an education come obligations. More demands are placed upon the lives of educated women in the home, in the workplace, in the community, demands to which they must respond. To Jerome I respond that men are also the losers as they maintain a restrictive image of the male role that limits their interaction both in the home and in society.

Finally, to the mama alongside the road who questioned why I was there, I reply that I was searching for someone like her who could help me understand that although my message was right, I was wrong.

* * * *

As I write this closing paragraph I can hear the voices of my four children echoing in the upstairs as they run about.

There are dishes in the sink that need to be done and a pile of laundry is waiting by the washer. Bob left an hour ago on a plane headed to Washington, D.C. and his job. For nearly three months we have been a weekend family as he jets back and forth to and from his new job there. As I look about me, I am reminded of Stella who struggled to find her identity and survival techniques in her marriage to James. I realize that despite my level of education and modern technology, when Bob, like James, walks away from the obligations of home as he heads for his new job, I'm left behind to assume all the work and hold things together. So, like Stella, I dwell there too.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Enrollment and Attendance of Boys and Girls
at Eight Primary Schools

KEY TO TABLES 1-8

Place: Name of school

Actual Enrollment: Number of children enrolled on government
     forms indicating number of boys and girls <u>enrolled</u>.

Sex of teacher: Gender of teacher(s) in each classroom at
     school.   Classrooms are listed by grade level.

Date of visits: Date that each visit was made by Daniel
     to the school with a record of number of boys and
     girls in <u>actual</u> <u>attendance</u> on the day of visit.

TABLE 1

Enrollment and Attendance of Girls and Boys
at Ganbungo Primary School

Place: Ganbungo

GRADE	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT		SEX OF TEACHER	DATES OF VISITS							
				3/7		3/8		4/18		5/10	
	B	G		B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
1A	35	40	F	29	35	30	32	30	31	31	38
1B	42	35	F	40	29	33	27	36	30	28	32
2A	27	27	F	16	23	19	20	24	23	20	25
2B	21	20	F	12	15	19	18	17	15	13	17
3A	36	26	F	34	22	29	21	28	18	34	23
3B	35	26	F	33	22	30	19	31	18	32	24
4A	40	35	M	38	30	36	28	34	29	34	32
4B	38	45	M	33	35	35	33	34	38	31	43
5A	40	38	M	36	34	35	31	37	31	32	35
5B	43	33	M	41	26	39	26	36	26	37	27
6A	30	25	M	27	17	28	19	25	17	22	16
6B	31	25	F	30	16	27	15	22	13	29	8
7	40	30	M	37	22	37	20	36	18	35	20
8	43	35	M	41	26	39	24	38	25	34	27

TABLE 2

Enrollment and Attendance of Girls and Boys at Kanzela Primary School

Place: Kanzela

GRADE	ACTUAL ENROLL MENT		SEX OF TEACHER	DATES OF VISITS							
				2/10		2/24		3/17		4/19	
	B	G		B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
1A	75	55	F/F	69	50	71	36	68	37	67	40
1B	79	25	F/M	71	69	69	65	75	61	73	70
2A	25	25	F	21	19	22	16	20	18	17	18
2B	20	25	F	19	18	18	16	17	16	16	18
2C	30	37	F	28	22	25	37	25	21	27	20
3A	32	25	F	28	20	29	15	27	17	29	16
3B	35	25	F	29	19	30	17	29	18	32	16
4A	35	35	F	32	32	33	29	31	22	26	24
4B	30	40	M	25	38	27	32	29	26	23	24
5A	35	35	M	25	20	24	18	25	17	21	19
5B	30	34	M	22	25	20	22	17	22	18	22
6A	30	15	F	26	13	27	11	24	10	25	12
6B	30	30	M	21	16	24	14	20	16	19	16
7A	35	30	M	29	30	27	22	27	23	25	21
8A	35	30	M	28	26	26	24	27	20	27	19

TABLE 3

Enrollment and Attendance of Girls and Boys
at Kuba Primary School

Place: Kuba

GRADE	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT		SEX OF TEACHER	DATES OF VISITS							
				2/10		2/24		3/24		5/5	
	B	G		B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
1A	40	40	M	38	25	37	24	39	21	37	19
1B	40	40	M	35	28	34	26	32	22	35	20
2A	39	38	M	29	35	32	34	35	30	30	32
2B	35	40	M	27	38	30	35	29	27	28	29
3A	42	40	M	39	35	40	33	39	31	37	32
3B	40	40	M	35	36	34	33	37	30	29	27
4	30	38	M	26	37	24	33	26	25	27	31
5	35	35	M	27	23	28	21	30	24	28	20
6	25	28	M	23	22	19	21	21	17	20	17
7	25	20	M	20	13	22	11	23	12	16	14
8	28	22	M	22	8	20	11	23	10	21	10

TABLE 4

Enrollment and Attendance of Girls and Boys
at Gora Primary School

Place: Gora

GRADE	ACTUAL ENROLL MENT		SEX OF TEACHER	DATES OF VISITS							
				2/17		3/17		3/31		4/14	
	B	G		B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
1A	35	40	M	32	38	31	36	27	38	28	38
1B	35	40	M	30	34	30	33	29	32	28	28
1C	35	35	F	25	35	25	34	24	32	26	29
2A	25	23	F	22	20	19	18	21	19	20	15
2B	25	25	F	18	20	16	19	16	20	16	14
3A	30	30	F	21	30	22	29	22	28	20	25
3B	30	30	F	26	25	24	25	26	23	26	22
4A	30	30	F	29	27	29	25	28	22	27	23
4B	30	30	F	27	26	27	24	27	25	24	20
5A	30	25	M	26	15	25	14	24	12	26	12
5B	30	25	F	25	20	26	19	25	17	23	17
6A	20	20	M	13	19	17	17	15	11	13	16
6B	20	20	M	19	20	16	20	18	15	19	15
7	40	35	M	33	27	37	25	36	25	34	21
8	40	35	M	33	35	31	35	32	28	33	26

TABLE 5

Enrollment and Attendance of Girls and Boys
at Mukonga Central Primary School

Place: Mukonga Central

GRADE	ACTUAL ENROLL- MENT			DATES OF VISITS							
				2/10		2/24		3/17		4/21	
	B	G		B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
1A	50	50	M/M	46	42	47	38	45	42	44	39
1B	30	30	M	24	25	26	25	26	24	25	26
2A	30	30	M	24	25	26	22	23	17	24	18
2B	30	30	M	25	20	25	18	23	19	25	18
3A	40	40	F	37	34	38	31	36	30	35	29
3B	40	40	F	31	37	35	35	33	30	35	32
4A	30	30	F	21	27	22	25	24	23	19	22
4B	30	30	F	24	25	23	22	24	19	23	17
5A	25	30	M	20	26	21	25	22	19	22	21
5B	30	25	F	25	22	25	20	24	20	26	19
6A	30	20	M	25	18	26	17	25	17	24	17
6B	25	25	M	23	14	22	15	21	14	17	13
7	25	15	M	21	10	22	11	23	10	22	10
8	45	25	M	42	23	43	19	41	19	42	20

TABLE 6

Enrollment and Attendance of Girls and Boys
at Kananzi Primary School

Place: Kananzi

GRADE	ACTUAL ENROLL-MENT		SEX OF TEACHER	DATES OF VISITS							
				3/10		3/31		4/21		5/10	
	B	G		B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
1	25	25	F	17	11	19	13	18	14	19	12
2	25	25	F	16	8	17	10	17	9	16	8
3	25	25	M	19	10	20	13	20	12	20	10

TABLE 7

Enrollment and Attendance of Girls and Boys
at Mutembo Primary School

Place: Mutembo

GRADE	ACTUAL ENROLL-MENT		SEX OF TEACHER	DATES OF VISITS							
				3/10		3/31		4/21		5/10	
	B	G		B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
1A	45	45	F	42	40	43	39	40	38	39	40
1B	45	45	F	40	39	41	42	41	38	43	37
1C	55	45	F	52	42	53	41	54	40	50	39
2	25	30	F	23	29	24	26	24	25	22	21
3	35	25	F	30	19	29	18	31	18	32	17

TABLE 8

Enrollment and Attendance of Girls and Boys at Cabazelu Primary School

Place: Cabazelu

GRADE	ACTUAL ENROLL-MENT		SEX OF TEACHER	DATES OF VISITS							
				3/10		3/24		4/13		5/11	
	B	G		B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
1A	40	40	M	38	38	38	35	37	39	36	34
1B	45	45	M/M	42	32	41	30	43	33	41	33
1C	40	40	F	25	39	26	38	27	36	26	35
2A	30	25	F	24	20	24	19	23	20	25	19
2B	35	30	M	27	22	26	19	27	21	26	19
2C	30	25	F	26	20	23	19	24	20	25	18
2D	35	30	M	26	16	27	15	25	15	27	14
3A	30	30	F	25	17	22	16	23	17	24	16
3B	30	30	F	24	16	25	14	23	15	22	13
3C	35	30	F	32	22	32	20	31	19	33	18
4A	30	30	F	24	21	24	20	24	19	23	17
4B	30	30	F	24	24	25	20	23	18	23	19
4C	30	30	M	19	28	25	27	25	26	26	27

APPENDIX B

Interview Sheets, Questionnaire,
Teaching Staff and Student Breakdown

TABLE 9

Interview questions primary school directors

1. How many students do you have in your schools? Girls? Boys?

2. In your opinion, why do parents send their children to school?

3. If they don't send their children to school, give the reasons that they tell you why they don't send them.

4. How much of a problem is truancy and absenteeism in your school at the beginning of the year? (Give percentage if possible.)

5. Does truancy and absenteeism increase as the school year progresses?

6. What are the reasons that parents give for the absences of their sons?

7. What are the reasons that parents give for the absences of their daughters?

8. In your opinion, is the problem of absenteeism and truancy greater for girls or boys? Why?

9. What measures do you think can be implemented to lower the problem of absenteeism or truancy?

10. Have you been a director of a school in another region? Where? Were you a director or teacher?

11. In your opinion, are the level of absences and truancy in this particular school higher than normal?

12. How many years have you worked at this school?

TABLE 10

Student Questionnaire

1. **What is your age.**
        mean age for boys: 20.5
        mean age for girls: 20.9

2. **What is your sex?**   Boys - 13   Girls - 24

3. **At what age did you begin school?**

boys: age:	#	girls: age:	#
5	2	5	0
6	3	6	5
7	5	7	16
8	1	8	1
9	2	9	0
		12	1
		NA	1

4. **Are you an intern or extern?**

boys: intern	extern	girls:	intern	extern
1	12		14	6

5. **What is your country of origin?**
        Information not available

6. **Where do your parents live?**   in the village _____
                                     in the country _____

boys: country-city		girls: country-city	
11	2	16	8

7. **What is the level of education for :**
        a)   your father? _____
        b)   your mother? _____

        boys: mean level for father - 4.6 years
              mean level for mother - 2.8 years

        girls: mean level for father - 7.8 years
               mean level for mother - 4.4 years

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

TABLE 10 (cont.)

9. Among your brothers, how many have finished:
   a) primary school? _____
   b) secondary school? _____
   c) university? _____

   for boys:
        66.2% of brothers are educated

   for girls:
        85.25% of brothers are educated

10. Among your sisters, how many have finished:
   a) primary school? _____
   b) secondary school? _____
   c) university? _____

   for boys:
        38.7% of sisters are educated

   for girls:
        59.2% of sisters are educated

11. a) Given you have no financial problems, do you
       plan on continuing your studies at the
       university level?

       boys: 13 indicated that they plan to go to
               university

       girls: 15 indicated that they plan to go to
               university

   b) What faculty do you want to pursue?

       boys: 1 math; 2 letters; 2 pedagogy; 2
               psychology; 1 history; 1 medicine; 3
               unsure

       girls: 2 geography; 1 language; 10 pedagogy; 1
               math; 1 business; 1 unsure

12. After you finish your studies, what type of
    profession do you want to enter? (For example:
    businessperson, doctor, teacher, nurse, etc.)

TABLE 10 (cont.)

> **boys:** 3 unsure; 2 writer; 1 government official; 4 university professor; 1 doctor; 2 other
>
> **girls:** 10 teacher; 3 secretary; 2 nurse; 1 accountant

13. **For the girls to answer:**
    After your marriage, do you anticipate continuing work in your career?
    > 100% of the girls indicated that they plan to pursue a career after marrying

14. **For the boys to answer:**
    a) After your marriage, would you encourage your wife to pursue a career?

       8 said yes (for financial necessity): 5 said no

    b) If you would, would you be willing to help your wife with certain responsibilities that are traditionally viewed to be women's work. Things like: bathing the children, doing the cooking, cleaning the house, etc.?

       2 said yes; 8 said no; 3 were unsure

TABLE 11
Interview Sheet for Parents - 170 administered

Place:_____ Date: _____

1. Circle: Sex - male female   2.   _____

3. What is your highest level of education? _____

4. What is your spouse's highest level of education?

5. Number of children: boys_____ girls _____

6. Give the level of education attained by each child in your family:

7. Make a list of the reasons why you sent your children to school. (Or why you didn't send them.)

8. Give the reasons why you sent your daughters to school.

9. In your opinion, why is it important for a boy to have a primary level education? Secondary level education? (Give reasons.)

10. In your opinion, why is it important for a girl to have a primary level eduation? Secondary level education? (Give reasons.)

11. How many gardens do you own?

12. How many cows do you own?

13. Circle the correct response. Who are the members of the family that own the following objects?

watches   radio/cassettes

father
mother
daughters
sons

TABLE 12

TEACHING STAFF AT RUSIMBA

1. <u>Eunice</u>: Nationality--Norwegian Education--MA in History, Theology and Psycho-Pedagogy Position--directress of school Work Experience--35 years experience in Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi

2. <u>James</u>: Nationality--Burundian Education--MA Psychology Position--principal and psychology teacher Work Experience-at this school as an administrator since 1984; five years at another in the area teaching

3. <u>Jacque</u>: Nationality--Zairois Education--BA Math Position--Math and physics teacher Work Experience--at this school since 1981, 8 years at another in the area

4. <u>Henri</u>: Nationality--Rwandan Education--MA History Position--History, religion and geography teacher Work Experience--at this school since 1984 and another school in the area for 9 years

5. <u>Lamec</u>: Nationality--Zairois Education--MA Chemistry Position--Science teacher Work Experience--at this school since 1985 and in two other schools in Rwanda and Zaire since 1964

6. <u>Jean</u>: Nationality--Zairois Education--BA French Position--French, music and physical education teacher Work Experience--at this school since 1985 and in another school in the area since 1977

7. <u>Stanley</u>: Nationality--Rwandan Education--BA Philosophy Position--local language, civil education, history teacher Work Experience--at this school since 1986 and another school in the area since 1982

8. <u>Faustin</u>: Nationality--Rwandan Education--BA Psychol-Pedagogy Position--Methodology teacher Work Experience--this school since 1987

9. <u>Marie</u>: Nationality--Rwandan Education--BA English Position--English, health and geography teacher Work Experience--at this school since 1986 and at another school since 1976

10. <u>Celeste</u>: Nationality--Zairois Education--MA Psycho-Peda Position--Pedagogy, music and art Work Experience--at this school since 1986 and at another since 1979

TABLE 12 (cont.)

11. <u>Jean-Baptiste</u>: Nationality--Rwandan Education: D6 (secondary diploma) Position--Work-study program, biology, physical education and theology Work Experience--graduated from Rusimba the year before

12. <u>André</u>: Nationality--Rwandan Education--MA Social Sciences Position--Local languages, physical education, math Work Experience--at this school since 1985 and at two other schools since 1979

13. <u>Stella</u>: Nationality--Zairois Education--BA Business Position--Economics, religion, secretary to directress Work Experience--at this school since 1985

14. <u>Pierre</u>: Nationality--Rwandan Education--MA French Position--French teacher Work Experience--at this school since 1987 at another school in area since 1983

TABLE 13

Student population break down at Rusimba
based on school government records*

GRADE	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTALS
1	39	5	44
2	25	46	71
3	24	26	50
4	16	26	42
5	22	14	36
6	15	5	20

*   Although observations were not made for extensive
    periods in all the classrooms, my records indicate
    that these were relatively accurate counts. It
    should be noted that absenteeism was high (not as
    high as at Mupika however) but careful daily
    records were kept and the school administrators
    attempted to address the issue of excessive
    absenteeism or truancy.