

"PERSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTS:
FROM LINCOLN WEST TO 2001"

REMARKS OF RONALD WELLINGTON BROWN, ESQ
FOR THE WORKSHOP ON
SOCIETY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE MINORITY MALE

AT THE CONFERENCE

CRISIS OF THE MINORITY MALE:
NEW JERSEY ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

MARCH 28, 1989

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK MR. GEORGE HAMPTON, VICE PRESIDENT FOR URBAN AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY OF NEW JERSEY, FOR INVITING ME TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP. IT IS A PLEASURE TO MEET DR. PRICE AND TO SAY HELLO AGAIN TO DR. ROOSEVELT WEAVER. I WOULD BE REMISS IF I FAILED TO MENTION THAT AFTER I WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE MONTCLAIR BOARD OF EDUCATION, THE FIRST INVITATION I RECEIVED FOR A SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT OUTSIDE MONTCLAIR CAME FROM DR. WEAVER.

AS HAS BEEN MY PRACTICE WITH ALL SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS, I WOULD LIKE TO STATE THAT THE VIEWS I WILL PRESENT TODAY ARE PERSONAL, AND SHOULD NOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO OR DEEMED TO REPRESENT THE POSITIONS OR VIEWS OF ANY INSTITUTION OR ORGANIZATION.

LET ME ASK TWO SIMPLE QUESTIONS.

PLEASE RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND IF YOU KNOW WHAT A "MALE" IS.

HANDS DOWN.

NOW RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND IF YOU KNOW WHAT A "MINORITY" IS?

HERE IS ONE RECENT DEFINITION OF A MINORITY FROM A SET-ASIDE PROGRAM: "A PERSON WHO IS BLACK, HISPANIC, PORTUGUESE, ASIAN AMERICAN, AMERICAN INDIAN, OR ALASKAN NATIVE. HISPANIC MEANS A PERSON OF SPANISH, OR PORTUGUESE CULTURE WITH ORIGINS IN MEXICO, SOUTH AMERICA, CENTRAL AMERICA, OR THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS. ASIAN-AMERICAN MEANS PERSONS HAVING ORIGINS IN ANY OF THE ORIGINAL PEOPLE OF THE FAR EAST, SOUTHEAST ASIA, THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT, HAWAII OR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS."

FOR PURPOSES OF MY REMARKS TODAY, I WILL RESTRICT MY COMMENTS ON MINORITY MALES TO THOSE MALES WHO ARE BLACK. AS MY TIME IS LIMITED, THE MAIN FOCUS OF MY REMARKS WILL BE ON SOCIETY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO MINORITY MALES IN THE AREA OF EDUCATION. I WILL USE A MINORITY MALE NAMED

"LINCOLN WEST" AS A VEHICLE FOR THESE REMARKS. I BELIEVE SOCIETY MUST INSURE FIVE THINGS FOR LINCOLN WEST NAMELY THAT HE:

- o AS A FUNDAMENTAL DEMOCRATIC RIGHT, IS LITERATE.
- o IS TAUGHT NOT TO ENGAGE IN SUBSTANCE ABUSE.
- o CAN FIND MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT.
- o CAN ENJOY GOOD HEALTH.
- o KNOWS HOW TO BE A GOOD HUSBAND AND FATHER IF HE DECIDES TO MARRY AND HAVE CHILDREN.

ALL OF THESE ACTIVITIES RELATE TO SOME FORM OF EDUCATION.

EARLIER THIS MONTH T. EDWARD HOLLANDER, CHANCELLOR, NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION DELIVERED AN ADDRESS AT THE RUTGERS UNIVERSITY COLLOQUIUM, "CHALLENGE '69: RETROSPECT AND NEW VISIONS." THAT ADDRESS WAS ENTITLED "EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY: HOW FAR WE HAVE COME---AND WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?" CHANCELLOR HOLLANDER STATED:

"THE STUDENTS WE EDUCATE TODAY WILL INHERIT THE WORLD OF THE 21ST CENTURY. THEY WILL MANAGE THE HOSPITALS, THE SCHOOL SYSTEMS, THE GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES. THE SMALL BUSINESSES AND LARGE CORPORATIONS. THEY WILL BE WORKING IN THE CITIES, IN THE SUBURBS, AND ACROSS THE OCEANS. THEY WILL BE SERVING ON OUR LOCAL PLANNING COUNCILS AND COLLEGE TRUSTEE BOARDS. THEY WILL BE OUR POLITICAL AND CIVIC LEADERS. THEY WILL BE OUR TEACHERS AND PROFESSORS. AND THEY HAD BETTER BE REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL OF OUR POPULATIONS, OR WE WILL ALL BE SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS IN A FIRST-CLASS GLOBAL ECONOMY." (AT 14).

I CONCUR WITH THAT VIEW AND CHARGE ALL OF US WITH MAKING SURE LINCOLN WEST FREELY PARTICIPATES AS A FIRST CLASS CITIZEN WHOSE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE KEY TO WHETHER HE HAS ACCESS AND THE MEANS TO SUCH FULL PARTICIPATION.

THE TITLE FOR MY TALK IS "PERSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTS: FROM LINCOLN WEST TO 2001." SOME OF YOU MAY BE WONDERING WHO IS LINCOLN WEST, WHAT IS 2001 OTHER THAN A MOVIE, AND HOW DO THE ANSWERS TO THOSE QUESTIONS HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE.

LINCOLN WEST IS A MINORITY MALE. IN TWELVE YEARS IT WILL BE THE

YEAR 2001 AND LINCOLN WEST COULD BE GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL. WE NEED TO BE SURE HE WILL DO SO, BE ALIVE, ALERT AND WELL, WITH FUTURE PROSPECTS THAT ARE AS BRIGHT AND UNLIMITED AS A WELL EDUCATED MIND, A HEALTHY BODY, A POSITIVE ATTITUDE, A STRONG SPIRITUAL AND SECULAR FAITH WILL ENABLE ANY OTHER GRADUATING SENIOR --- REGARDLESS OF RACE, GENDER, COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, ETC --- CAN EXPECT.

I FIRST MET LINCOLN WEST WHEN I WAS READING THE WORKS OF THE POET LAUREATE GWENDOLYN BROOKS IN HER POEM, "THE LIFE OF LINCOLN WEST." A POINT OF THE POEM AND FOR THIS CONFERENCE: HOW OTHERS SEE US OR REACT TO HOW THEY SEE US CAN HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON HOW WE FEEL ABOUT OR SEE OURSELVES. LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO LINCOLN WEST AS I WAS INTRODUCED TO HIM AND THEN LET US THINK ABOUT LINCOLN'S PROSPECTS IN THE YEAR 2001.

HOW OTHERS SEE US OR REACT TO HOW THEY SEE US CAN HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON HOW WE FEEL ABOUT OR SEE OURSELVES. (THE FAIRY TALE OF THE UGLY DUCKLING IS ONE EXAMPLE.) THE POET GWENDOLYN BROOKS POIGNANTLY CAPTURED THIS FACT IN ONE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE IN HER POEM "THE LIFE OF LINCOLN WEST." (THE FORERUNNERS: BLACK POETS IN AMERICA, COPYRIGHT 1981, HOWARD UNIVERSITY PRESS, AT PAGES 23-27):

THE LIFE OF LINCOLN WEST

UGLIEST LITTLE BOY
THAT EVERYONE EVER SAW.
THAT IS WHAT EVERYONE SAID.

EVEN TO HIS MOTHER IT WAS APPARENT---
WHEN THE BLUE-APRONED NURSE CAME INTO THE
NORTHEAST END OF THE MATERNITY WARD
BEARING HIS SQUEALS AND PLUMP BOTTOM
LOOPED UP IN A SCANT RECEIVING BLANKET,
BENDING, TO PASS THE BUNDLE CAREFULLY
INTO THE WAITING MOTHER-HANDS--THAT THIS
WAS NO CUTE LITTLE UGLINESS, NO SLY BABY WAYWARDNESS

THAT WAS GOING TO INCH AWAY
AS WOULD BABY FAT, BABY CURL, AND
BABY SPOT-RASH. THE PENDULOUS LIP, THE
BRANCHING EARS, THE EYES SO WIDE AND WILD,
THE VAGUE UNVIBRANT BROWN OF THE SKIN,
AND MOST DISTURBING, THE GREAT HEAD.
THESE COMPONENTS OF THAT LOOK BESPOKE
THE SURE FIBRE. THE DEEP GRAIN.

HIS FATHER COULD NOT BEAR THE SIGHT OF HIM.
HIS MOTHER HIGH-PILED HER PRETTY DYED HAIR AND
PUT HIM AMONG HER HAIRPINS AND SWEETHEARTS,
DANCE SLIPPERS, TORN PAPER ROSES.
HE WAS NOT LESS THAN THESE,
HE WAS NOT MORE.

AS THE LITTLE LINCOLN GREW,
UGILY UPWARD AND OUT, HE BEGAN
TO UNDERSTAND THAT SOMETHING WAS
WRONG. HIS LITTLE WAYS OF TRYING
TO PLEASE HIS FATHER, THE BRINGING
OF MATCHES, THE JUMPING ASIDE AT THE
WARNING SOUND OF OH-SO-LARGE AND
RUSHING STRIDE, THE SMILE, THAT GAVE
AND GAVE AND GAVE-UNSUCCESSFUL!

EVEN CHRISTMASSES AND EASERS WERE SPOILED.
HE WOULD BE SITTING AT THE
FAMILY FEASTING TABLE, REALLY
DELIGHTING IN THE DISPLAYS OF MASHED POTATOES
AND THE RICH GOLDEN
FAT-CRUST OF THE HAM OR THE FESTIVE
FOWL, WHEN HE WOULD LOOK UP AND FIND
SOMEBODY FEELING INDIGNANT ABOUT HIM.

WHAT A PITY WHAT A PITY. NO LOVE
FOR ONE SO LOVING. THE LITTLE LINCOLN
LOVED EVERYBODY. ANTS. THE CHANGING
CATERPILLAR. HIS MUCH-MISSING MOTHER.
HIS KINDERGARTEN TEACHER.

HIS KINDERGARTEN TEACHER-WHOSE
CONCERN FOR HIM WAS COMPOSED OF ONE
PART SYMPATHY AND TWO PARTS REPULSION.
THE OTHERS RAN UP WITH THEIR LITTLE DRAWINGS.
HE RAN UP WITH HIS.
SHE TRIED TO BE AS PLEASANT WITH HIM AS
WITH OTHERS, BUT IT WAS DIFFICULT.
FOR SHE WAS ALL PRETTY! ALL DAINTINESS,
ALL TINY VANILLA, WITH BLUE EYES AND FLUFFY
SUN-HAIR. ONE AFTERNOON SHE
SAW HIM IN THE HALL LOOKING BLEAK AGAINST
THE WALL. IT WAS STRANGE BECAUSE THE
BELL HAD LONG SINCE RUNG AND NO OTHER

CHILD WAS IN SIGHT. PITY FLOODED HER. SHE BUTTONED HER GLOVES AND SUGGESTED CHEERFULLY THAT SHE WALK HIM HOME. SHE STARTED OUT BRAVELY, HOLDING HIM BY THE HAND BUT SHE HAD NOT WALKED FAR BEFORE SHE REGRETTED IT. THE LITTLE MONKEY. MUST EVERYONE LOOK? AND CLUTCHING HER HAND LIKE THAT ... LITERALLY PINCHING IT...

AT SEVEN, THE LITTLE LINCOLN LOVED THE BROTHER AND SISTER WHO MOVED NEXT DOOR. HANDSOME. WELL-DRESSED. CHARITABLE, OFTEN, TO HIM. THEY ENJOYED HIM BECAUSE HE WAS RESOURCEFUL, MADEUP GAMES, TOLD STORIES. BUT WHEN THEIR MORE ACCEPTABLE FRIENDS CAME THEY TURNED THEIR HANDSOME BACKS ON HIM. HE HATED HIMSELF FOR HIS FEELING OF WELL-BEING WHEN WITH THEM DESPITE-EVERYTHING.

HE SPENT MUCH TIME LOOKING AT HIMSELF IN MIRRORS. WHAT COULD BE DONE? BUT THERE WAS NO SHRINKING HIS HEAD. THERE WAS NO BINDING HIS EARS.

"DON'T TOUCH ME!" CRIED THE LITTLE FAIRY-LIKE BEING IN THE PLAYGROUND.

HER NAME WAS NERISSA. THE MANY CHILDREN WERE PLAYING TAG, BUT WHEN HE CAUGHT HER, SHE RECOILED, JERKED FREE AND RAN. IT WAS LIKE ALL THE RAINBOW THAT EVER WAS, GOING OFF FOREVER, ALL, ALL THE SPARKLINGS IN THE SUNSET WEST.

ONE DAY, WHILE HE WAS YET SEVEN, A THING HAPPENED. IN THE DOWNTOWN MOVIES WITH HIS MOTHER A WHITE MAN IN THE SEAT BESIDE HIM WHISPERED LOUDLY TO A COMPANION AND POINTED AT THE LITTLE LINC.

"THERE! THAT'S THE KIND I'VE BEEN WANTING TO SHOW YOU! ONE OF THE BEST EXAMPLES OF THE SPECIES. NOT LIKE THOSE DILUTED NEGROES YOU SEE SO MUCH OF ON THE STREETS THESE DAYS, BUT THE REAL THING.

BLACK, UGLY, AND ODD. YOU
CAN SEE THE SAVAGERY. THE BLUNT
BLANKNESS. THAT IS THE REAL
THING."

HIS MOTHER-HER HAIR HAD NEVER LOOKED SO
RED AROUND THE DARK BROWN
VELVET OF HER FACE-JUMPED UP,
SHRIEKED "GO TO-" SHE DID NOT FINISH.
SHE YANKED TO HIS FEET THE LITTLE
LINCOLN, WHO WAS SITTING THERE
STARING IN FASCINATION AT HIS ASSESSOR. AT THE AUTHOR OF HIS
NEW IDEA.

ALL THE WAY HOME HE WAS HAPPY. OF COURSE,
HE HAD NOT LIKED THE WORD
"UGLY."

BUT, AFTER ALL, SHOULD HE NOT
BE USED TO THAT BY NOW? WHAT HAD
STRUCK HIM, AMONG WORDS AND MEANING
HE COULD LITTLE UNDERSTAND, WAS THE PHRASE
"THE REAL THING."
HE DIDN'T KNOW QUITE WHY,
BUT HE LIKED THAT.
HE LIKED THAT VERY MUCH.

WHEN HE WAS HURT, TOO MUCH
STARED AT-
TOO MUCH
LEFT ALONE-HE
THOUGHT ABOUT THAT. HE TOLD HIMSELF
"AFTER ALL, I'M
THE REAL THING."

IT COMFORTED HIM.

IMAGES ARE IMPORTANT. HERE IS ONE TO WHICH LINCOLN WEST COULD HAVE BEEN
EXPOSED, AND FOR WHICH THERE MUST BE ALTERNATIVES:

"FOR INSTANCE, THE KILLING OF A YOUNG AFRICAN-AMERICAN IN
OAKLAND WHO WAS INVOLVED IN DRUG TRAFFICKING AND
DRUG-RELATED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY RECEIVED NATIONAL PRESS
COVERAGE. PRIOR TO HIS DEATH THE LOCAL MEDIA GAVE HIS LIFE
AND RISE TO 'KINGPIN' OF THE DRUG CULTURE A KIND OF "ROBIN
HOOD" AURA OR MYSTIQUE. REPORTS OF HIS ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES
WERE ALMOST ALWAYS JUXTAPOSED WITH THE FACT THAT HE OFTEN
FED HUNGRY FAMILIES, TOOK GROUPS OF KIDS TO AMUSEMENT PARKS,
TOSSED BASKETBALLS OUT TO NEEDY KIDS FROM HIS WHITE ROLLS
ROYCE, ETC. UPON HIS DEATH, NO OTHER ISSUED OCCUPIED THE
MINDS OF THE COMMUNITY. PARTLY DUE TO THE ATTENTION HIS

DEATH RECEIVED FROM THE PRESS, AN INORDINATE AMOUNT OF DISCUSSION CENTERED AROUND THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A CONVICTED CRIMINAL AND KNOWN DRUG-DEALER. CONSEQUENTLY, HUNDREDS, IF NOT THOUSANDS, OF YOUTHS WITNESSED THE POWER AND IMPORTANCE OF DRUG-RELATED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY WHEN THE CASKET OF A CRIMINAL AND DEVIANT DRUG DEALER WAS LITERALLY CARRIED ACROSS THE ENTIRE CITY BY A HORSE-DRAWN GLASS HEARSE, FOLLOWED BY FIVE WHITE LINCOLN STRETCH CONTINENTALS, A BLACK LINCOLN LIMOUSINE, AND NUMEROUS OTHER SIGNS OF PRESTIGE AND IMPORTANCE

IN THE LIVES AND MINDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, THE LIFE-STYLE AND MEANING OF THIS DRUG DEALER HAD, AND STILL HAS, GREATER PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE THAN THE LIVES AND DEATHS OF MEN LIKE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., LT. COL. RONALD MCNAIR, OR MALCOLM X. HENCE, DRUG, DRUG RELATED BEHAVIOR, AND THE IMAGES OF POWER, PRESTIGE, AND PRIVILEGE ASSOCIATED WITH THEM ARE COMBINING TO CREATE A PECULIAR PSYCHO-SOCIAL PHENOMENON FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN AND ADULTS." ("DRUGS IN THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY: A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER", NOBLES AND GODDARD, IN THE STATE OF BLACK AMERICA 1989, AT 169-170)

TOO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE BEING PRESENTED WITH IMAGES IN THE MOVIES, VIDEOS, AND TELEVISION WHICH ELEVATE HOODLUMS, THUGS, MACHO TOUCH GUYS, AND OTHER ONE DIMENSIONAL CHARACTERS TO MYTHIC PROPORTION.

THERE MUST BE COUNTER-IMAGE PROJECTIONS. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SAW A BLACK MAN HOLDING HANDS WITH A WOMAN, HUGGING OR READING TO A CHILD, BRINGING HIS MOTHER OR SISTER A PRESENT, GOING TO CHURCH, STUDYING, LISTENING TO GOOD MUSIC, ENJOYING A SPORT FOR RECREATION NOT JUST COMPETITION, OR RECEIVING AN HONORARY DEGREE? IT MAKES YOU WONDER ABOUT WHICH FIGURES ARE MYTHS IN MEDIA, AND MAKES ONE RECALL THE WORDS OF PLATO IN BOOK II OF THE REPUBLIC:

"FOR THE YOUNG ARE NOT ABLE TO DISTINGUISH WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT ALLEGORY, BUT WHATEVER OPINIONS ARE TAKEN INTO THE MIND AT THAT AGE ARE WANT TO PROVE INDELIBLE AND UNALTERABLE."

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAGES WAS FURTHER UNDERScoreD BY DR. SUE E. BERRYMAN, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL CENTER ON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT, TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, IN HER PAPER "SHADOWS IN THE WINGS: THE

NEXT EDUCATIONAL REFORM. (PAPER PRESENTED AT THE EDUCATION POLICY FORUM SPONSORED BY THE AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION AND THE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON D.C. MARCH 13, 1987.) DR. BERRYMAN STATED:

"MY THINKING THIS AFTERNOON ABOUT AT-RISK YOUTH HAS TO DO WITH THE CHILD'S VISION OF HIS OR HER ADULT "PLACE" IN THE WORLD. I SUGGEST THAT ALL CHILDREN DEVELOP AN IMAGE OF THEIR NICHE IN THE ADULT WORLD --- IN THE ECOLOGICAL SENSE OF NICHE. THEIR IDEAS ABOUT THE ECOLOGY OF ADULT "PLACES" MAY BE DISTORTED AND ARE USUALLY PITIFULLY PARTIAL. HOWEVER, THEY SEEM TO WORK OUT NOTIONS OF THEIR BASIC FUTURES AND OF THE TRAJECTORIES RELEVANT TO THEM, EVEN IF THEY CANNOT STATE THESE EXPLICITLY. AND THEY ACT ON THESE IDEAS -- ELECTING INTO OR OUT OF ADVANCED MATHEMATICS, DEPENDING ON THEIR SENSE OF OCCUPATIONAL DESIGNATION.

FOR EXAMPLE, I ANALYZED DATA FROM A NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL SURVEY OF YOUTH, CONCENTRATING ON THE 14 TO 17 YEAR OLD IN THE SAMPLE. THE PURPOSE WAS TO UNDERSTAND THE DYNAMICS THAT UNDERLIE THE TRADITIONALITY OF YOUNG GIRLS' OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES. BUT, AS IS OFTEN THE CASE IN RESEARCH, THE UNANTICIPATED FINDINGS WERE MORE INTERESTING THAN THOSE EXPECTED. WHAT DROVE THESE GIRLS' OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES WERE FUNDAMENTAL CHOICES ABOUT WHAT KINDS OF COMMITMENTS THEY EXPECTED TO MAKE AS ADULTS. THE ADULT AGENDAS THAT THESE GIRLS HAD FOR THEMSELVES REVOLVED AROUND THE BASIC ISSUE OF FAMILY VERSUS WORK. THEIR COMMITMENT TO ONE OR THE OTHER (OR TO SOME BALANCE BETWEEN THEM) DROVE THE TRADITIONALITY OF THEIR OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES, WHICH IN TURN DROVE THE FUTURE EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENTS THAT THEY EXPECTED TO MAKE. WE CAN NOTE THAT THESE AGENDAS WERE FULLY DEVELOPED EVEN FOR THE 14 YEAR OLD, INDICATING THAT THEIR CONCEPTS OF THEIR FUTURES HAD TO HAVE BEEN FORMING WELL BEFORE THE AGE OF 14." (AT 6)

HER CONCLUSIONS:

"FOR EXAMPLE, I SUGGEST THAT THE GIRL WHO BECOMES A TEENAGE MOTHER, ALTHOUGH WE HEAR A GREAT DEAL ABOUT HER 'WANTING SOMEONE TO LOVE', IS MORE FUNDAMENTALLY TAKING THE ACTION THAT LETS HER OCCUPY THE NICHE OF 'MOTHER', A PLACE IN THE ADULT FIRMAMENT THAT BEST FITS HOW SHE SEES HER TALENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES. (NEVER MIND THE DESTRUCTIVE POTENTIAL OF THAT CHOICE AND WE CAN SEE.) FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE A DECISION TO KEEP THE BABY IS ESSENTIAL TO IMPLEMENTING HER SENSE OF PLACE IN THE WORLD -- AND OUR ATTEMPTS TO CONTAIN THE DAMAGE OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY BY TRYING TO PERSUADE HER TO PUT THE BABY UP FOR ADOPTION ATTESTS MORE TO OUR DIMNESS THAN TO HERS.

SIMILARLY, THE CHILD WHO DROPS OUT -- OR BEHAVES SO INTOLERABLY THAT HE OR SHE IS PUSHED OUT -- MAY NOT BE

- BLACK WOMEN WILL OUTNUMBER BLACK MEN IN THE WORKFORCE BY THE YEAR 2000."

DR. COBBS BELIEVES WE WILL ALL NEED WORK IN WHAT HE CALLS "ETHNOTHERAPY" IN ORDER TO GET ALONG IN SUCH A CHANGED SOCIETY. DR. COBB'S DESCRIBES SOME OUTCOMES OF ETHNOTHERAPY: "ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS TO BUILD PERSONAL AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS SO LEGITIMATE DISCUSSION OF DIFFERENCES CAN OCCUR," TO "GET INDIVIDUALS TO EXAMINE THEIR ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT OTHERS", AND TO "ELIMINATE STEREOTYPES AND FORCE PEOPLE TO ENGAGE IN THE CRUCIAL TASK OF INDIVIDUALIZING OTHERS (AT 158)". THAT RESULT WOULD BE A GOOD ONE.

MS. EDELMAN ON BLACK YOUTH (AT 64):

"TODAY COMPARED TO 1980, BLACK CHILDREN ARE NOW MORE LIKELY TO BE BORN INTO POVERTY, LACK EARLY PRENATAL CARE, HAVE A SINGLE MOTHER, HAVE AN UNEMPLOYED PARENT, BE UNEMPLOYED THEMSELVES AS TEENAGERS, AND NOT GO TO COLLEGE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION.

- A BLACK BABY IS ALMOST THREE TIMES AS LIKELY AS A WHITE BABY TO BE BORN TO A MOTHER WHO HAS HAD NO PRENATAL CARE AT ALL.
- A BLACK INFANT IS MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY AS A WHITE INFANT TO DIE DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF LIFE.
- A BLACK CHILD'S FATHER IS TWICE AS LIKELY AS A WHITE CHILD'S FATHER TO BE UNEMPLOYED. IF BOTH PARENTS OF A BLACK CHILD WORK, THEY EARN 84 PERCENT OF WHAT A WHITE FAMILY EARNS.
- A BLACK CHILD IS 40 PERCENT MORE LIKELY THAN A WHITE CHILD TO BE BEHIND GRADE LEVEL IN SCHOOL AND 15 PERCENT MORE LIKELY TO DROP OUT.
- A BLACK YOUTH IS TWICE AS LIKELY AS A WHITE YOUTH TO BE UNEMPLOYED. A BLACK COLLEGE GRADUATE FACES ABOUT THE SAME ODDS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AS WHITE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE WHO NEVER ATTENDED COLLEGE.
- A BLACK MALE TEENAGER IS SIX TIMES AS LIKELY AS A WHITE TEENAGER TO BE A VICTIM OF HOMICIDE.

WHAT AMERICA NEEDS IS COMPREHENSIVE, LONG-TERM INVESTMENT IN POLICIES

AND PROGRAMS WHICH HELP ALL POOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES. WE NEED A NEW NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO ENSURE AS WELL AS WE CAN THAT EVERY CHILD, BLACK AND WHITE, HAS BASIC HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND GOOD SCHOOLS, TO DEVELOP STRONG BASIC ACADEMIC SKILLS, AND TO BECOME ECONOMICALLY INDEPENDENT AS A YOUNG ADULT."

MS. EDELMAN ALSO ADVISES THAT AIDS IS A SIGNIFICANT KILLER OF BLACK ADOLESCENTS; "BLACK CHILDREN CONSTITUTE MORE THAN HALF OF ALL REPORTED CASES OF AIDS IN CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN AGE 13" (AT 71).

ROBERT B. HILL, PH.D. ON THE SHORTAGE OF MEN (AT 56):

"ALTHOUGH SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES GREW AT ABOUT THE SAME PACE AMONG BLACKS AND WHITES DURING THE 1970'S BLACK WOMEN HAD MUCH LOWER REMARRIAGE RATES THAN WHITE WOMEN BECAUSE OF THE GREATER UNAVAILABILITY OF MARRIAGEABLE BLACK MEN. AMONG PERSONS OF ALL AGE, THERE ARE 95 WHITE MEN TO 100 WHITE WOMEN, WHILE THERE ARE ONLY 90 BLACK MEN TO 100 BLACK WOMEN.

AMONG PERSONS AGE 25-44, THERE ARE ONLY 85 BLACK MEN FOR EVERY 100 BLACK WOMEN, WHILE THERE ARE ABOUT EQUAL NUMBERS OF WHITE MEN AND WOMEN IN THAT AGE CATEGORY. HOWEVER, WHEN ONE CORRECTS FOR THE DISPARATE UNDERCOUNT OF BLACK MEN, THE GAP NARROWS MARKEDLY TO ABOUT 96 BLACK MEN FOR EVERY 100 BLACK WOMEN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 25-44."

MR. HILL CONCLUDES (ID):

"IT IS CLEAR THAT THE FUNCTIONING OF BLACK FAMILIES CANNOT BE ENHANCED BY THE YEAR 2000 --- UNTIL HIGHEST PRIORITY IS ASSIGNED TO INSURING THAT BLACK BOYS, MALE YOUTH, MALE YOUTHS, ADULT MEN, AND FATHERS ARE ABLE TO FULFILL THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AS PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF THIS SOCIETY."

THERE ALSO SEEMS TO BE A DIRECT LINK BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT RATES AND MARRIAGE RATES. MS. EDELMAN REPORTS (AT 67):

"THE DECLINE IN THE EMPLOYMENT RATES AND IN GOOD PAYING JOBS AMONG BLACK MALES HAS HAD A DEVASTATING IMPACT ON THE NUMBER OF MARRIAGES AMONG YOUNG BLACKS. PROFESSOR WILLIAM WILSON, CHAIRMAN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

HAS STUDIED THE LINK BETWEEN BLACK MALE JOBLESSNESS AND DECLINING BLACK MARRIAGE RATES EXTENSIVELY. HE SAYS THAT BOTH THE BLACK DELAY IN MARRIAGE AND THE LOWER RATE OF REMARRIAGE, EACH OF WHICH IS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH PERCENTAGES OF OUT-OF-WEDLOCK BIRTHS AND FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS, CAN BE DIRECTLY TIED TO THE LABOR MARKET STATUS OF BLACK MALES. OUR DATA SHOW THAT BLACK WOMEN, ESPECIALLY YOUNG BLACK WOMEN, ARE FACING A SHRINKING POOL OF 'MARRIAGEABLE' (THAT IS, ECONOMICALLY STABLE) MEN.... THE PROBLEM OF BLACK JOBLESSNESS SHOULD ONCE AGAIN BE PLACED AS A TOP PRIORITY ITEM IN PUBLIC POLICY AGENDAS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE STATUS OF FAMILIES.

A LOOK AT CURRENT PROPORTIONS OF MARRIAGES AMONG YOUNG BLACKS AND YOUNG WHITES BEARS THIS OUT. AMONG ALL WHITE 20-TO 24-YEAR-OLD-WOMEN, ALMOST 40 PERCENT ARE MARRIED. BUT AMONG BLACK 20-TO-24-YEAR-OLD WOMEN, ALMOST 80 PERCENT ARE STILL SINGLE. AMONG WHITE MALES AGED 20 TO 24, 22.6 PERCENT HAVE MARRIED; AMONG BLACK MALES OF THE SAME AGE, ONLY 10.7 PERCENT HAVE MARRIED. AMONG WHITE MALES AGED 25 TO 29, 66.1 PERCENT HAVE MARRIED; AMONG BLACK MALES OF THE SAME AGE, ONLY 39.7 PERCENT HAVE MARRIED."

THE FEBRUARY 2, 1989 EDITION OF BLACK ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION CONTAINS A SPECIAL REPORT ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, AND AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "PAUCITY OF BLACK MEN STYMIES COLLEGIATE ENVIRONMENT" WRITTEN BY SAUNDRA GREGG. THE AUTHOR PRESENTS A SOBERING AND SOMETIMES STUNNING PICTURE WHICH MERITS QUOTATION AT LENGTH. CONSIDER HER WORDS:

"IN MANY PREDOMINANTLY WHITE COLLEGES AS WELL AS HISTORICALLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS, BLACK WOMEN OFTEN OUTNUMBER THEIR BROTHERS TWO TO ONE.

ACCORDING TO CENSUS BUREAU DATA, COLLEGE ENROLLMENT OF BLACK MEN FELL MORE THAN 7 PERCENT BETWEEN 1976 AND 1986, FROM 34.5 PERCENT OF THOSE WHO WERE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES TO 27.8 PERCENT. UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND DATA ALSO SHOWS A STEADY DECLINE IN MALE ENROLLMENT FROM 45 PERCENT OF THAT COLLEGE POPULATION A FEW YEARS AGO, TO 42 PERCENT TODAY.

A STUDY OF BLACK HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN ATLANTA BY UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO RESEARCHER JUNE PATTON POINTS TO NATIONAL PATTERN: 'BLACK MALES WERE THE GROUP LEAST LIKELY TO APPLY TO COLLEGE, THE LEAST LIKELY TO BE ACCEPTED, AND THE LEAST LIKELY, IF ACCEPTED, TO ENROLL.'

THE SHRINKING NUMBERS OF BLACK MEN PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION CASTS A CLOUD OVER COLLEGE CAMPUSES. SOME ADMINISTRATORS ARE STEPPING UP EFFORTS TO RECRUIT

MALE STUDENTS. OTHERS RESIST THE IDEA OF TARGETING A SPECIAL RACE OR GENDER GROUP. BLACK FEMALE STUDENTS COMPLAIN THAT THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH MEN TO DATE, AND OTHERS ARE CONCERNED THAT THEY WILL NOT FIND 'AN EQUAL' TO MARRY WHEN THE TIME COMES.

WOMEN AT TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY HAVE DETERMINED THAT THE FEMALE/MALE RATIO IS EIGHT TO ONE. IN FACT, ACCORDING TO UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS, THE 3,400 STUDENTS ARE 56 PERCENT WOMEN AND ALMOST 44 PERCENT MALE.

STACY HERNDON, A WASHINGTON, D.C., NATIVE WHO IS A SENIOR AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, ALSO FINDS SLIM PICKINGS AT HER SCHOOL AND, CONSEQUENTLY, HAS NOT DATED MUCH. COMING FROM WASHINGTON, WHERE THERE IS A LARGE, BLACK MIDDLE CLASS, STACY SAYS SHE IS ACCUSTOMED TO HANDSOME, MOTIVATED YOUNG MEN. 'THE CREAM OF THE CROP HERE IS NO WHERE NEAR WHAT I WAS USED TO IN D.C.' SHE SAYS. MOREOVER, A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF HER MALE CLASSMATES HAVE DROPPED OUT. THOUGH THEY ARE BRIGHT STUDENTS, THEY SEEM TO HAVE TROUBLE ADJUSTING TO COLLEGE. THEY ARE LESS WILLING TO SEEK HELP FROM THEIR FRIENDS STACEY ADDS. THE FACT IS NOT UNNOTICED BY BLACK FACULTY AT PRINCETON WHERE ONLY 89 OR THE 270 BLACK STUDENTS ARE MEN. FLOYD THOMPKINS, PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY, HAS TEAMED UP WITH THE UNIVERSITY COUNSELING OFFICE TO ESTABLISH A BLACK MALE SUPPORT GROUP, BUT THEIRS IS ROUGH WORK. 'BROTHERHOOD' ISN'T WELL DEVELOPED IN THE AMERICAN MALE, AND LESS SO IN BLACKS.

BLACK MALES...WHO MANAGE TO STAY IN SCHOOL ARE OFTEN RELUCTANT TO PARTICIPATE IN CAMPUS ACTIVITIES, LEAVE MANY OF THE LEADERSHIP DUTIES TO BLACK FEMALE STUDENTS AND THEN RESENT WOMEN FOR SUCCEEDING. 'THERE'S SOMETHING DESPERATELY WRONG GOING ON HERE' THOMPKINS LAMENTS. WHAT IS WRONG, SUGGESTS THOSE WHO ARE STUDYING THE PROBLEM, IS THAT BLACK BOYS ARE SOCIALIZED IN A MANNER THAT HANDICAPS THEM EARLY ON, AND IT IS AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL THAT SOME SOLUTIONS TO THE COLLEGE CRUNCH CAN BE FOUND.

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS ARE NEARLY ALWAYS WOMEN--OFTEN WHITE WOMEN -- MAKING A BLACK BOY THE MOST DIFFERENT OF ANYONE IN HIS CLASS. AT LEAST BLACK GIRLS FIND COMMON GENDER GROUND WITH THEIR TEACHERS.

AUTHOR JAWANZA KUNJUFU POINTS OUT THAT BLACK YOUTHS MAKE UP 17 PERCENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL POPULATION, BUT 41 PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSES."

LINCOLN WEST, WHEREVER YOU ARE TODAY WE MUST ALL COMMIT TO ENSURE YOU ARE MORE THAN JUST "COMFORTED". YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REACH YOUR FULL POTENTIAL AS A MINORITY MALE. TO BE LITERATE. HEALTHY. PREPARED FOR AND ABLE TO FIND EMPLOYMENT IN THE ADULT WORLD WHICH YOU WILL ENTER IN THE 21ST CENTURY, A WORLD IN WHICH LITERACY MAY COME TO BE DEFINED BY THE COMPUTER LANGUAGES YOU READ AND WRITE. A WORLD IN WHICH INSTEAD OF FILLING OUT A JOB APPLICATION ON A SHEET OF PAPER YOU WILL BE TOLD TO BOOT UP THE SYSTEM, LOAD THE FLOPPY DISK CALLED EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION, USE THE CURSOR TO COMPLETE IT, PRINT OUT ON THE LASER PRINTER, SIGN OFF AND SIGN OUT ON YOUR WAY OUT.

WHAT IMAGES WILL SHAPE YOUR THINKING ABOUT A "NICHE" IN THE ADULT WORLD? WILL YOU FALSELY SEE THAT DEAD DRUG PUSHER IN OAKLAND AS A NEW AGE BLACK "ROBIN HOOD" OR TRULY SEE HIM AS A NEOLITHIC NEANDERTHAL BLACK MAN WHOSE TIME LIKE THAT OF THE DINOSAUR HAS PASSED?

I BELIEVE SOCIETY HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP YOU SUCCEED IN TODAY'S AND TOMORROW'S WORLD LINCOLN WEST. AND "SOCIETY" IS EACH ONE OF US.