



My Soul is My Own: Oral Narratives of African American Women in the Professions

Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis

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"My Soul is My Own" presents the lives of early 20th-century African-American women in a unique context - their own words. The women themselves are as extraordinary as the language they use to describe their experiences within their families, in the university and subsequently in the work force at a time when academic and professional institutions rejected both women and African-Americans explicitly on the basis of gender and race. Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis, a linguist who specializes in African-American women's spoken and written narratives, offers a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the complex lives of African-American women who dared to cross the threshold of white and dominant professions. Etter-Lewis takes exception to "tradition" and challenges long-held assumptions about the study and interpretation of African-American women's lives and speech patterns. With this multidisciplinary approach, she simultaneously offers an informative and thought-provoking analysis of the content and structure of the narrative texts.

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